

• Interfaith dialogue

The CSSS believes that there is no issue which cannot be sorted out through dialogue, however contentious it may be. The CSSS organises such inter-faith dialogues of one-day duration, inviting religious figures of all major religions to discuss contemporary issues. The participants include academicians, journalists, legal professionals and social activists.



• Internship programmes

The internship programmes are meant to provide intensive training to a batch of 10-15 college students over a period of one month on Peace and conflict transformation, secularism, democracy, women's empowerment and allied subjects.



The student-participants engage themselves in library work on the subject of the internship programme, listen to experts, have group discussions and come up with essays.

The internship programme lasts for one month, during which the internees are taken on a field trip to places that have witness clashes in the recent past or to historical places. The internees are provided free lodging and boarding and are reimbursed their travel cost. The participating youth are selected by their respective colleges and NGOs and represent different states. Staying together for a month, the participants develop camaraderie and understand the differences and similarities in the various cultures and traditions.

• Research Wing

The CSSS has a research wing with 5 Research Fellows, who work on contemporary issues and come up with reports. They are guided in their work by the Director (Research), Dr. (Mrs.) Vasundhara Mohan, an experienced teacher and researcher of the Mumbai University.

The reports of the Research wing are published in the form of books/booklets and used as source material in the Centre's workshops and training programmes. Recent publications include:

- Muslim Women and Secular Courts
- Sachar Committee Recommendations

Community workshops

The community workshops are meant to reach out to the poor and illiterate or semi-literate population living in urban slums. At these workshops, the Centre looks into their problems especially in realising the benefits of Government-sponsored schemes, like the Prime Minister's new 15-Point Programme for the minorities. Besides social activists, government officials in-charge of the implementation of the schemes are invited to address the participants. In the process, not only the participants realise the schemes available for their benefit but the officials also come to know of the lacunae in the implementation of the programmes.



- Police and Communalism

- Prime Minister's 15-Point Programme

For some of the subjects assigned to them, the research fellows carry out empirical survey and interviews to base their reports.

• On-going Projects

- Role of Muslim Women in Indian Politics
- Attitude of Muslim Girl's towards Education
- Jihad: Its doctrines and practice in history from classical to contemporary period
- A Historical Account of Mappila Muslims of Kerala
- A Critical Study of Fatwa Issued on Muslim Women
- Codification of Muslim Personal Law

• Publications

The Centre publishes Indian Journal of Secularism, a Quarterly Journal, besides Secular Perspective, a fortnightly newsletter. Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer is the author of over 60 books, apart from a number of articles in national international journals.

• Library

The CSSS has a well-stocked library of books and journals, which are useful for researchers working on Islam, Secularism, Women's empowerment and other subjects.

• Open Invitation

The CSSS invites all peace-loving individuals, organisations and Institutions to join its efforts in promoting the culture of Peace through multiculturalism, inclusive democracy and promote the secular credentials of India through organisation of joint workshops, seminars and training programmes for students. The Centre's staff will also be happy to visit the Colleges for lectures.

• Support CSSS

Donations to CSSS are eligible for deduction under Sec.80G of the Income Tax Act

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Location Map of CSSS, Mumbai



Contact

Centre for Study of Society and Secularism

602 & 603, Silver Star, 6th Floor, Behind BEST Bus Depot, Santacruz (East), Mumbai-400 055, India

Telephone : (Off.) 022 26149668, 26102089

(R) 022 26630086, Fax: 022 26100712

Email : csss@mtnl.net.in

Web : www.csss-islam.com

AdvantEdge: 2665223

Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai

Profile of the centre and an open invitation to peace-loving individuals, organisations and institutions for collaboration

A brief description of the aims and objectives of the centre and its programmes



CENTRE FOR STUDY OF SOCIETY AND SECULARISM

#602-603, New Silver Star, Prabhat Colony Road, Santacruz- East, Mumbai-400 055

Established in 1993, the Centre for Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS) is a Non-governmental Organisation (NGO), headed by Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer, renowned Islamic Scholar. Besides a number of awards from all over the World, he is the recipient of the Right Livelihood Award, which is considered the alternate Nobel Prize.



Aims and Objectives of CSSS

The following, among others, are the main aims and objectives of the Centre:

- To build up a force constituting youth, women and activists to counter communal propaganda and bridge the gap between conflicting communal forces by creating public awareness and opinion against communalism;
- To deepen the idea of justice, peace and human rights, particularly justice for minorities and women, promote cultural democracy and dialogue-based conflict resolution;
- To reaffirm deep conviction in the continuing validity and relevance of the objectives of secular movement as an important force in building peace;
- To establish networking and strengthen cooperation between like-minded organisations for ensuring greater involvement of peace activists;

Who are associated with us?

The CSSS carries out its programmes and activities at the advice and guidance of renowned scholars and Social Activists. The following are some of the luminaries associated with us either as Members of the Executive Council or Advisory Committee:

- Prof. K.N.Panikkar, Chairman, Kerala Council for Historical Research, Thiruvananthapuram
- Justice Mr. Hosbet Suresh
- Shri Satish Sahney, Director, Nehru Centre, Mumbai
- Prof. (Mrs.) Vibhuti Patel, SNDT University, Mumbai
- Prof. S.M. Michael, University of Mumbai
- Mr. Shahjahan, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
- Mr. Ajit Muricken
- Dr. Ram Puniyani
- Prof. Uday Mehta, Social Scientist
- Mr. Feroze Ashraf
- Adv. Irfan Engineer
- Ms. Sophia Khan, SAFAR, Ahmedabad
- Dr. (Ms.) Muniza Khan, Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi
- Dr. (Mrs.) Ranu Jain, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Who support us?

Being a non-profit organisation, the CSSS has no source of income. However, recognising the yeomen service rendered by the Centre to the Society, a number of National and International Donors have been extending financial support to the Centre's activities, both in the field and in research. Among them are:

- The Ford Foundation

- Bread for the World
- Action Aid India
- Henrich Boll Foundation
- Misereor
- Indian Council for Social Science Research, Government of India
- Indian Council of Historical Research, Government of India
- Singh Foundation

Our Partners

The CSSS has been conducting its activities in several States in India in collaboration with reputed educational institutions, NGOs and Government Departments. The following are some of our partners in our effort:

- University of Mumbai, Department of Civics & Politics
- University of Mumbai, Sociology Department
- Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai
- SNDT University, Mumbai
- Maharashtra Institute of Technology, Pune
- Indian Institute of Sociology, Bengaluru (Karnataka)
- Gandhigram Rural Institute (Deemed University), Tamil Nadu
- Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA), Hyderabad
- Aman Foundation, Hyderabad
- Sanchetana, Ahmedabad
- SOCO Trust, Madurai, Tamil Nadu
- Police Departments of various States

Apart from extending logistic support, our partners help our programmes by selecting participants, resource persons and taking follow-up actions at the grass-roots levels in their local areas.

Our Activities

The activities of the CSSS fall into two broad categories: Sensitisation of the society and Research.

Unlike several European countries, which have declared that multi-culturalism has failed, India is a shining example of countries where vibrant Secularism has been thriving, in spite of India being home to a number of religions, castes and sub-castes and scores of languages. It is true that India has been witnessing occasional bouts of conflicts and violence between people belonging to different religions, castes, languages and place of origin. Almost every one of these incidents has nothing to do with religion; for no religion preaches and advocates violence. The actual basis for such conflicts is far removed from religion, for the simple reason that people of different religions and languages have been living in peace in India for centuries. India believes in Sarva Dharma Samabhava and in the old adage Sarve janaha sukhino bhavantu. With a strong belief in these adages, the CSSS has been striving to make people, especially the younger generation, understand that what promotes all-round development is not the absence of war but living in peace, respecting diversity. It is in this context that women, who have hardly been playing any role in the prevention of conflicts comes into picture. It behoves the responsibility of the mothers to bring up their children as good and peace-loving citizens. This cannot happen unless the women break out of their shackles (imposed by men or religion) and are empowered. Finally, the decision makers in the Parliament and Legislatures and the law-enforcement agencies have to understand the grave

responsibility vested in them in treating every citizen of this great country, irrespective of his/her religion and language, with an unbiased attitude, keeping in view the fact that every citizen is entitled to the exercise of his/her fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution.

It is in the above background that the CSSS has been organising the following programmes:

• Workshop-cum-training programmes for the youth

These are of 3 to 7 days duration, where the participants stay together facilitating better interaction. They are exposed to interactive lectures by experts, assignments, group discussions and field work. The entire expenditure on their travel, boarding and lodging are borne by the CSSS. The participants are encouraged to interact with families that have experienced violence, understand the actual reasons therefore and draw their own conclusions through no-holds-barred group discussions.



• Empowerment and capacity building of women

The CSSS organises workshops for women in general and exclusively for Muslim women. These workshops are meant to apprise women of their rights under the Constitution and exhort them to fight for the realisation of their socio-economic and political rights. Besides stressing on the importance of educating the girl child, women are urged to play an active role in preventing conflicts instead of remaining mute spectators. In the case of Muslim women, they are made to understand the rights granted to them under the Quran, which are denied to them by the patriarchy of the community and the religious leaders.



These workshops are usually of 2-3 days duration. Eminent experts on women's rights and Islamic scholars are invited to address the women. The participating women are reimbursed the cost of travel and provided boarding and lodge for the duration of the workshops.

• Workshops for Policemen

Conducted in collaboration with the Police Departments, these workshops are aimed at sensitising the Police, both men and officers, to the need for exhibiting an un-biased attitude during communal disturbances. They are reminded of the Code of Conduct and urged not to get influenced by vested interests, including the politicians in dealing with people belonging to different religions. These workshops are of one-day duration.

