



Chronicle of

COVA @ **30**
Peace Network

Service through Social Transformations!

30th Anniversary - 20th July 2025

Reflections

On The Partnership and Contributions
To Recreate the Journey of

COVA @ 30
Peace Network

Link Volunteers

Community Members, **Volunteers**, Staff, **Network Members**,
Board, **Partners**, Students, **Teachers**, Schools, **Resource
Persons**, Officials, **Elected Representatives** Academics
Thought Leaders, Policy Makers, **Donors**, Patrons and
Members of Media

The Chronicle of **COVA @ 30** Peace Network

Service Through Social Transformations

Engagements from Slums of Hyderabad to Twin Cities, 7 States, National, Southasia,
Multi Laterals to the UN - 30 Important Causes and Issues in 30 Years

Successful Structural Transformations to Prevent Violence and Promote Peace, School Education And Financial Inclusion*

Vision: Social Harmony, Equality & Global Peace Through Responsible Citizenship

- **COVA** is a Confederation of Voluntary Associations working for communal harmony and community empowerment in India and peace in South Asia.
- COVA was established in 1995 in Hyderabad- 30 years back and has worked with over 750 organisations and institutions in the 7 States of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, North East, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal
- COVA also works to promote peace through people to people contacts and campaigns with partner organisations in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives
- COVA Peace Network is also engaged with state and national governments and multilateral bodies like G20, BRICS, SAARC, UNHCR and others for structural transformations to make society more equitable, sustainable, just and peaceful.
- Members and partners comprise of community groups working at grassroots to national and international organisations and networks undertaking advocacy and policy interventions.



Recognition for COVA & Member Organisations

- ❖ Government of Telangana as COVID Warrior
- ❖ The Government of Jammu & Kashmir for Earthquake Relief
- ❖ Asia Star Peace Award by Association for Communal Harmony in Asia
- ❖ UN My World Award for work on MDGs in New York

Recognitions

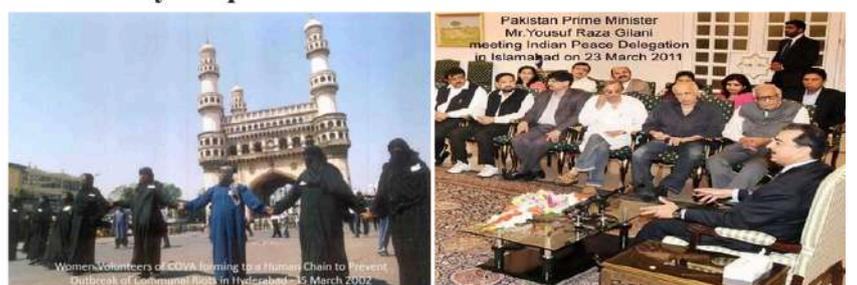
Challenges to Peace & Responses by COVA at Micro Level

- **The Problem:** Communal Riots in Hyderabad
- **Response:** Riot Prevention in 42 communally sensitive localities of Hyderabad by making warring communities as Peace Vanguards
- **Problem:** Disintegration of Society through development Programs by organisations working with their own communities like Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Dalits, Reddys, Yadavas etc and excluding others.
- This results in reduced interactions between different communities, misconceptions, stereotyping and hatred that could result in violence and riots.
- **COVAs Responses:** Promoting Development as a Strategy for Integration- inclusion of members from different communities and castes in all our programs and activities- Board and Members of COVA comprise of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis and Buddhists. Staff also has diversity.
- Formation and Facilitation of Citizens Action for Peace in Manipur.

Riot Prevention in Localities



A National Network of Voluntary Organisations Working for Communal Harmony & Community Empowerment In India And Peace In South Asia



Initiatives for Structural Transformations - Compassionate Citizenship Program

- ❖ Objective is to Take Students beyond Textbooks and Classrooms for experiential learning that could transform them into compassionate beings and responsible citizens.
- ❖ A Pilot Program was undertaken during 2022-23 in 122 Schools of 4 Districts in collaboration with the Education Department, Government of Telangana
- ❖ Enthused with the results, Education Department of the Government of Telangana has included this Program as part of the curriculum and this Program will be implemented in 3000 schools of Telangana State starting from September 2024
- ❖ **Compassionate Citizenship Program is bringing a Paradigm Shift in School Curriculum.**

Perspective & Attitudinal Transformation



A Social Scientist in Making



Submitting Representation to the Secretary, Education



<https://youtu.be/j6IcblxJ9s?si=rDmESDKiKVNSXRg6>

Economic & Political WEEKLY

HomeWeb Exclusives

Can the G20 Summit 2013 Deliver?

Vol - XLVIII No. 36, September 07, 2013 | Mazher Hussain

Recognitions

- **Financial Inclusion**
- Government of India accepted 9 Recommendations of COVA for Financial Inclusion from a G20 Study in 2013
- 5 of these Recommendations were incorporated in the MUDRA Scheme Including the Concept of eMUDRA
- HRD Ministry accepted 4 Recommendations from a Study for BRICS Summit of 2016 to transform Job Seekers into Job Creators
- GECS -Proposal of a Comprehensive Matrix of Growth, Equity, Conflicts and Sustainability (GECS) Audit replacing only GDP measure that is in vogue now and that is grossly inadequate to measure the multi dimensional implications of Growth- **Economic and Political Weekly -2013**

Research and Studies by COVA

COVA has undertaken over 25 Studies and Research Projects covering local to international issues in collaboration with national and international organisations including:

- Royal Tropical Institute Netherlands - Ford Foundation - Oxfam - University of Hyderabad- Rajiv Gandhi Foundation- CBGA-TISS- UNICEF- VANI- WNTA and others

Some Select Research Projects:

- Death by Dignity for the Lower Middle Class COVID19- 2020
- Status of Micro and Small Enterprises in BRICS Economies- 2016,
- Muslims and Union Budget of India- 2015
- Financial Inclusion in G 20 Countries with Focus on India- 2013
- Proposal of Growth, Equity, Peace and Sustainability (GEPS) Audit-2013
- Tax Justice-2012
- Study on Ward Committees of GHMC- 2011
- Empirical Study on Taxes Paid By Poor- 2010
- Messages of Oneness 2009
- Religions of the World- 2009
- Basic Services and the Marginalised- 2007
- 1000 Years of Conflicts and Peace in the Deccan- 2005
- Muslims - Reservations & Employment- 2003
- Action Research on Women Elected Representatives 2002,
- Status of Minorities in India- 2001



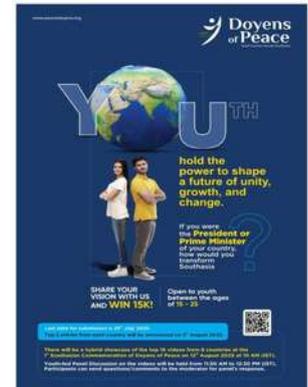
Setting Trends Flags for Peace and Partners in Victory Campaign



Cricket Matches between India and Pakistan were converted into battle grounds with citizens of both countries their flags as symbols of aggression

In 2004, COVA initiated the practice of spectators in stadiums waving flags of both countries together.

This is now a trend with people waving flags, wearing dresses, painting on their faces flags of both countries during cricket matches between India and Pakistan anywhere in the world.



Doyens of Peace Southasia

- **Doyens of Peace: Pan Southasia Network** of NGOs, Youth Groups, Educational Institutions, Unions and Professional Bodies etc. interested in promoting Vision for and exploring common concern of Southasia and collective initiatives to address them.
- This Platform provides a unique opportunity to Collaborate / Participate Online in Events and Programs by Member Organisations of Southasia.
- This Platform privileges youth from different countries of Southasia to facilitate their vision and expression for the Region.
- **1st South Asian Commemoration 12th August 2025**
- **Youth between 15 and 25 years to submit 5 Minute Videos on; My Vision for Southasia if I am the President / Prime Minister of My Country**
Website: www.peacedoyens.org

COFI Networks Program

- enables participants to gain mastery over 8 social media platforms to secure cyber space for peace/
- COVA trained participants from 8 Countries of South Asia and Far East and 10 cities in India to promote peace through cyberspace Combating Fake News:
- COVA trained 100 activists, faith leaders, academics and media persons to decode and expose Fake News through The CHECKIT Program.

Addressing Emerging Challenges: COVA in Cyber Space



Recognitions

Addressing Emerging Challenges - Religions as Weapon

Religions are being increasingly used to spread hate and violence against other communities COVA has started the Intra Faith Program to Deweaponise Religions **Intra Faith Program consists of Two Actions**

- **Self Critique** : Faith Leaders assess and critique misuse, abuse or incorrect use of their own religion
- **Internal Corrections** : Secure corrections and ensure their religion is not exploited or weaponised to bring discords and promote violence in society.
- Two Activities by Faith Leaders
- Speak against misuse of their religions during their congregations
- Invite Faith Leaders of other communities to address their congregations during festivals with messages of peace
- Able to ensure peace during Milad Un Nabi and Ganesh Procession in Hyderabad in 2023 with active contributions of Muslim and Hindu religious leaders

Intra Faith Action, Hyderabad- India



Addressing Emerging Challenges

Detoxing Social Alienations

- Today there is Little knowledge about ones own religion
- But more about other religions- negatively- Thanks to social media
- There is drastic reduction in direct interpersonal interactions
- Leading to mistrust- alienation- stereotyping- hatred- violence

The Answer by COVA is Multi Faith Celebrations

Encouraging people to invite neighbouring families of other communities for their festivals

This is providing better understanding and appreciation of the beliefs and traditions of other religions and can eventually lead to harmony and peace in society

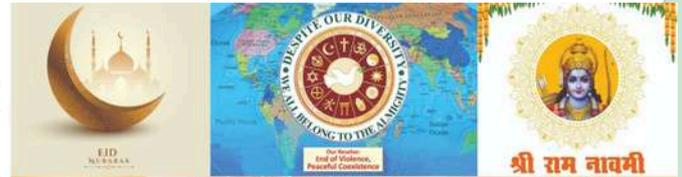
Started in September 2023 and over 28 festivals of 7 religions are covered so far in Hyderabad and other cities of India.

An example is the Multi Faith celebrations in April 2025 for Eid and Ugadi on 31st March, Ram Navami on 6th April, Mahavir Jayanti on 10th April, Baisakhi on 14th April, Goof Friday on 18th April and Easter on 20th April.

Multi Faith Celebrations were organised in 20 Cities across India including, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkotta, Bangaluru, Varanasi, Ahmadabad, Srinagar and Hyderabad etc.

COVA Peace Network - Work with Refugees

- There are 9,000 refugees in Hyderabad from 8 Countries (Myanmar, Sudan, South Sudan, Palestine, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iran and Eretrea)
- 8000 are Rohingya Refugees from Myanmar
- Education Support for Rohingya Refugee Children
- Monthly Rations support to 135 most destitute Rohingya Refugee families to enable them to live with dignity.
- Livelihood Grants to 300 small Refugee Entrepreneurs to start and sustain their own business
- Emergency medical treatment



Multi Faith Festivities for all Religions : Every Time! Every Where!!

Greetings for Ugadi - Eid Ul Fitr - Ram Navami - Mahaveer Jayanti - Baisakhi - Easter

Come Lets Celebrate Together in Hyderabad

On Saturday, 5th April 2025 at Gandhi Gyan Mandir, Koti

- 10 a.m. to 3.00 pm :** Blood Donation to add Compassion to all Celebrations
Inviting Youth from All Faiths to show their Care for Humanity across all Divisions
- 12 Noon :** Annadaanam : Lunch for the Needy
- 12.30 p.m. - 3.00 pm :** Cultural Expressions - The Stage Awaits Your Soul
Sing - Dance - Chant - Shlokas - Sufi Music - Skits or Plays
- 3.00 p.m. - 3.30 pm :** Panel Discussion by Youth
My Ideas for Celebrating Festivals
- 3.30 p.m. to 4.30 pm :** Multi Faith Assembly with Faith and Thought Leaders

Multi Faith Festivities are being Planned in 15 other Cities of India

Also

Experience the Magic of Multi Faith Festivities By inviting Your Neighbours to Celebrate with You!!

Organisers :
Arya Samaj, COVA, Gandhi Gyan Mandir, Gurudwara Sri Akalsar Sahab, Hindu Muslim Ekta Committee, Institution of Preventive Medicine, Government of Telangana, Montfort Social Institute, Rubaroo, Sikh Heritage Foundation of Hyderabad Deccan, Sri Ajit Parshawa Yuva Sanghatan., Tehreek Khair E Ummat, Youngistaan Foundation

For Details of Programs and Partners of Multi Faith Festivities Please Visit: <https://jointcelebrations.covanetwork.org/>

Policy Changes through Advocacy and Pils

- Advocacy with Telangana Government for Rations for Migrant Workers during COVID- 3.5 Lakh Migrant families received rations and cash support for 2 months
- High Court of Andhra Pradesh ordered services of teachers of Government schools should be used for census and other duties only during vacations
- On a PIL by COVA, Telangana High Court directed that Ward Committees of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation should be constituted as per Rules. This is facilitating participation of citizens in the local governance processes to some extent
- Order by AP High Court to make sale of whiteners to children below 18 years a criminal offence
- Ongoing PIL in Telangana High Court for 25% Free Admissions for poor students in private schools as per Sec 25© of RTE Act- With the Order from the High Court expected anytime now, 16 lakh poor students will get free admissions in Private Schools



Dealing with Disasters
COVA Addressed Man Made and Natural Disasters:

Riots, Earthquakes and Floods
Riots: In Hyderabad, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir and Manipur

Floods: Hyderabad, Kurnool and Jammu & Kashmir

Earth Quakes: Gujarat and Jammu & Kashmir

Kashmir Earthquake: 6000 houses in 136 villages of Uri and Tangdar Tehsils provided relief and shelter 196 houses in 36 villages constructed for the most destitute.

5000 houses worth Rs. 8 billion saved through facilitation in Retrofitting

Hyderabad Floods: Produced two Documentaries on floods due to encroachments on lakes and water bodies: **And Nature Replies (2000)** and **Why Hyderabad Drowned (2021)**



Documentary on floods in Hyderabad - 2000

10 Game Changers from COVA	Mega Moments
Riot Control Strategies	Peace Rallies
Peace and Equity Audit	Global Vigils for Peace
Pre- Matric Scholarships	International TechCamp
Flags for Peace Campaign	Joint Signature Campaigns
Social Issues in Curriculum	Bharat Yatra for Child Rights
3rd Generation Philanthropy	Festival of the Sub continent
Advocacy for Migrant Workers	Human chain to Prevent Riots
Entrepreneurship in Curriculum	UN Award Acceptance Speech
Transforming Banking for the Poor	Linking MPs and Hurriat Leaders
Inter Faith Forum for Social Causes	Celebrating 125th Gandhi Jayanti

Reflections

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Part 1- Prologue

LALITA RAMDAS

Former Chairperson, Greenpeace International

I am delighted to be invited to say a few words about COVA on this special 30th anniversary.

For any organization to be able to make it through 30 years in these challenging times speaks volumes for their dedication and their special ability to navigate the stormy waters of touching on matters of faith, peace, harmony, violence, and conflict.

To mention just a few of the many areas in which COVA has entered and has set original and interesting benchmarks and trends. They have never hesitated to address complex and sensitive areas, be it Kashmir or the ever-present and troubling interfaith issues in our diverse land.

The latest in a long line of path-breaking initiatives taken by COVA has been their program called No Ends for Peace, which boldly breaks new ground in engaging young people across South Asia in imagining a new, harmonious, and peaceful region.

The totally dynamic and original concept has been designed in a way of paying tribute and remembering some well-known figures, especially from the historically troubled nuclear armed neighbours, India and Pakistan, who believed that peace and dialogue between our two nations and our peoples was the only way to build progress and fraternity and the well-being of all the peoples in South Asia.

My late husband, Ramu Ramdas, will certainly be among those smiling down and showering their blessings and congratulations to the entire COVA team so ably led by our good friend and comrade Mazhar Hussain. Salaam, Namaste, Jai Bhim, Jai Jagat.

“A dynamic and original concept has been designed in a way of paying tribute and remembering some well-known figures, especially from the historically troubled nuclear armed neighbours, India and Pakistan.”

— Lalita Ramdas



FR CEDRIC PRAKASH

Human Rights Reconciliation and Peace Activist/Writer

COVA, the Confederation of Voluntary Associations, completed 30 years this July 2025. Born in 1995, COVA has done significant work in the past 30 years. It has been a platform for communal harmony, peace, justice, social inclusion, and the empowerment of the poorest of the poor of the country.

Let me, at the outset, wish every single person who has been behind the vision of COVA these 30 years, people who have worked at the grassroots, those who have worked in providing training and empowerment, the very best, not only for its 30th year of existence but for the road ahead.

I would like to highlight four dimensions in which COVA has contributed immensely to the lives of people all over India and, in fact, South Asia.

The first is of inclusion. COVA is a platform that promotes inclusion, breaking down barriers such as religion, ethnicity, nationality, and language, thereby ensuring inclusivity for all.

The second aspect is integration, which is not only included but has also been integrated.

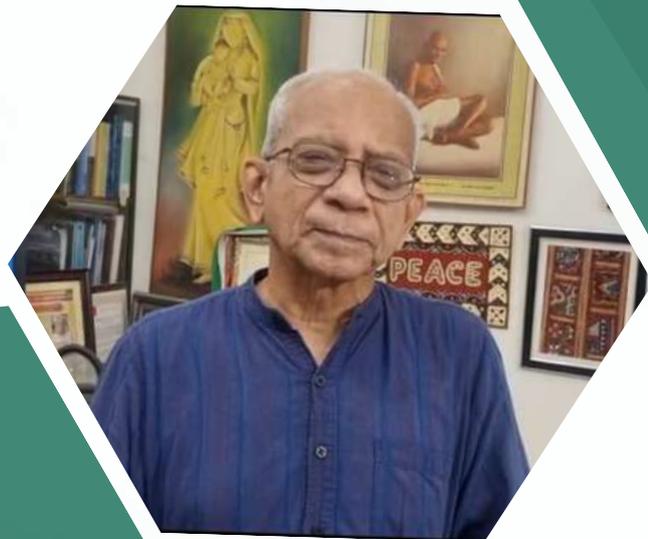
The third is involvement. COVA has been actively involved in the lives of ordinary, poor, and diverse individuals over the past 30 years, transforming society and fostering friendships between India and Pakistan through various initiatives.

The final is inspiration. COVA has been a source of inspiration for me and others in India, South Asia, and globally for the past 30 years.

On this special day, I pray that COVA continues to inspire millions worldwide, focusing on the four I's for which I believe COVA is most effective.

“It has been a platform for communal harmony, peace, justice, social inclusion, and the empowerment of the poorest of the poor of the country.”

— Fr Cedric Prakash



SYEDA SAIYIDAIN HAMEED

Former Member, Planning Commission of India

Congratulations on the 30th anniversary of COVA.

We have a very old association with COVA. Mazhar Hussain, a dynamic personality, has significantly elevated COVA to new heights.

I have a lot of memories and a deep connection with COVA, particularly the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, which caused significant damage in Srinagar.

The Planning Commission team collaborated with COVA to visit numerous villages and address rehabilitation gaps, bringing back many memories and addressing field issues.

The 11th and 12th 5-year plans for India were developed, incorporating grassroots realities into government policy and long-term vision. Mazhar's involvement in planning aspects like GDP, equity, conflict, and sustainability was appreciated.

The team actively worked on communal harmony and civil society initiatives, including a successful exhibition on Muslim women's leadership roles during and after the independence movement, called Path Breakers.

Suraiyya Tayyabji, a Muslim woman, designed the Indian flag, a fact that many people are not aware of.

COVA has been a constant companion in our endeavors after the Planning Commission, providing support and guidance throughout our visit to Hyderabad.

Wishing a bright future for COVA, wishing for greater heights and relief for those suffering, expressing gratitude for the team's sensitivity and responsiveness

So my duas and my blessings.

Thank you.

"The team actively worked on communal harmony and civil society initiatives, including a successful exhibition on Muslim women's leadership roles during and after the independence movement, called Path Breakers."

— Syeda Saiyidain Hameed



SOMESH KUMAR, IAS

Former Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh

Since 1995, my association with COVA has been over 30 years, closely working with Mr. Mazhar Hussain and his team. We have enjoyed meeting extempore and attending programs, recognizing the great work of COVA.

The CSO and government can bring significant change when working together, as demonstrated by Mr. Mazhar's call for consideration of migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Telangana economy relies heavily on migrant workers, who are essential to various industries and establishments. However, sudden closures and a lack of records have impacted their livelihoods.

We developed an app and enrolled migrant workers, which was approved by the chief minister, Mr. KCR, and provided rations through the government and organizations.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, many returned to Telangana, India, as they remembered the promised warmth from the government.



The Greater Municipal Corporation in Hyderabad has introduced an easy-to-memorize number for citizens to address civic problems, providing answers as two-seven times one.

Over 250 local community-based organizations and Mr. Mazhar Hussain's team worked hard to popularize two and seven times one numbers, resulting in over 500,000 downloads.

COVA has gained a lot of popularity today. And there were other occasions when the whole city appeared in a tense manner. I served in a variety of roles, and COVA and his staff have always been a friend, and this has been a true test of time for the organization's expansion.

Under Mr. Mazhar Hussain's leadership, organizations like NGOs and CSOs are expected to make significant impact in India and South Asia, fostering peace and harmony, and fostering global responsibility.

The COVA team's work with schools has been a significant achievement in nurturing real values, paving the way for future achievements.

“The COVA team's work with schools has been a significant achievement in nurturing real values, paving the way for future achievements.”

— Somesh Kumar, IAS



NOEL SWARANJIT SEN, IPS

Former Director General of Police, Government of Andhra Pradesh

I am honoured to be here on behalf of COVA, the Confederation of Voluntary Associations, founded by Mazhar Hussain, who has unwavering aspirations and a clear intention to improve society and people, regardless of religious beliefs.

Through various schemes, he educates COVA members about religions, promoting a broad, secular movement. Appreciated for his contributions and wishes him the best for the future.

COVA has made significant strides in educating the youth about a peaceful, harmonious, and understanding life.

The country faces significant challenges, necessitating the establishment of more organizations focused on bringing unity, as COVA's efforts are crucial for achieving a peaceful future.

I've known them for about 15-20 years now, and they have gone from strength to strength and it's been a pleasure to be associated with them.

“COVA has made significant strides in educating the youth about a peaceful, harmonious, and understanding life.”

— Noel Swaranjit Sen, IPS



RAJESH TONDON

Founder-President, PRIA

Congratulations, dynamic team.

COVA, a vibrant network located in Hyderabad. COVA has been actively promoting peace, inclusion, and dignity for all communities in and around Hyderabad for the past 30 years.

Its work on education and learning with youth has been most exemplary.

Priya has established numerous partnerships, and our collaboration with COVA has provided us with valuable insights.

Mazhar's leadership has significantly contributed to the establishment of an independent, effective, and accountable civil society in India and South Asia.

Once again, best wishes for the next 30 years.

“COVA has been actively promoting peace, inclusion, and dignity for all communities in and around Hyderabad for the past 30 years.”

— Rajesh Tondon

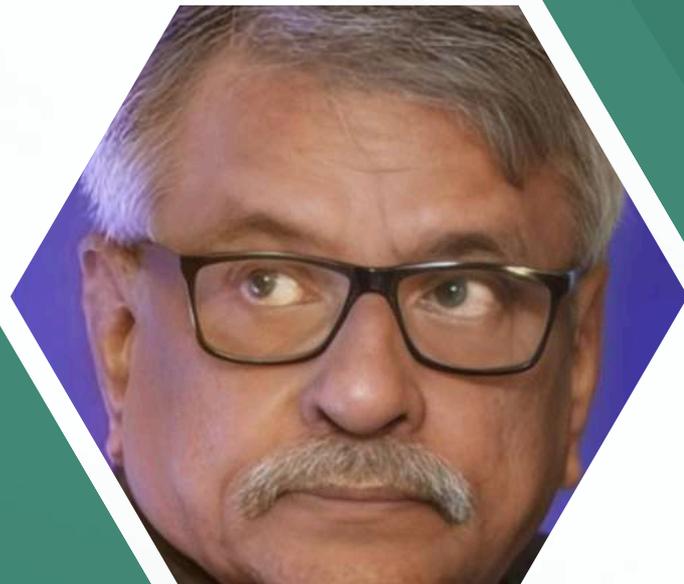


J. HARINARAYAN, IAS

Former Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh

In the 1990s and 1995, when Hyderabad had regrettably seen some riots, I first met the organizers of COVA. At that time, a group of young people led by Mr. Mazhar Hussain came together to form COVA with the goal of spreading the idea of peace and humanity throughout society as well as helping those who were negatively impacted by such riots.

Later, while I was serving as the state's chief secretary, I became aware of COVA. During that period as well, I discovered that they were actively advancing the notion of social harmony as a broad concept among people, not only in Hyderabad but in many other places.



In that regard, I had inadvertently contributed to COVA's very special kind of endeavour, an intervention that they had conceived and carried out, which involved visiting different schools to educate young people and young minds about the importance of being socially conscious, sensitive to various societies, religions, and individuals, as well as the necessity of living in harmony and peace in the end.

Their program, in my opinion, was really well accepted, and I sincerely hope that it will eventually spread to include many schools in the state and even the entire nation. Consequently, I'm thrilled to hear that COVA has been expanding steadily. In addition, I recall that I had come to see the opening of the new office building and campus that COVA had established in the old city, laying the groundwork for future events of this kind.

The concept has, in my opinion, struck a chord with a lot of progressive individuals across Southeast Asian nations, and I'm happy that this trend is continuing.

I wish you all the best.

"I discovered that they were actively advancing the notion of social harmony as a broad concept among people, not only in Hyderabad but in many other places."

— J Harinarayan IAS



VIJAY MAHAJAN

Rajiv Gandhi Foundation

Congratulations

COVA for your 30th anniversary.

COVA has done remarkable work throughout its three decades, starting with a very difficult phase in the history of Hyderabad when the city was riven with human rights violations. The work that COVA did at that time not only helped stop the riots but also laid the foundations for a longer-term building of trust and mechanisms of communication within the area where all these troubles used to happen.

Since then, communal incidents have been minimal, and COVA has expanded to address livelihood needs, income generation, and financial inclusion, particularly for women in Hyderabad's old city.

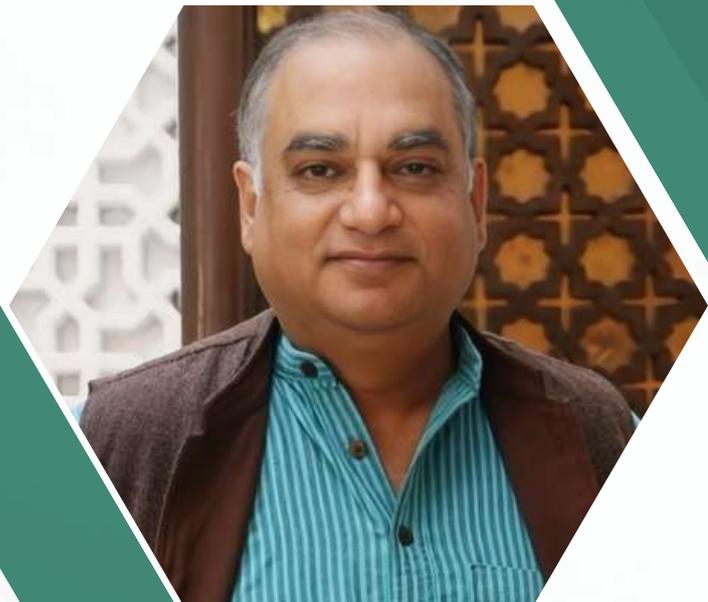
COVA's program promoting compassionate citizenship among children is foundational, promoting justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, as compassion is essential for fraternity in the Constitution.

More than any particular programme, I think it's COVA's example as a vibrant, active, responsive citizens' organisation which is simultaneously able to speak truth to power but also collaborate with government and other civil society organisations and indeed the world of business and commerce to create a better society.

My best wishes for COVA's coming 20 years. I hope we can celebrate its 50th anniversary with similar joy.

“COVA's program promoting compassionate citizenship among children is foundational, promoting justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, as compassion is essential for fraternity in the Constitution.”

— Vijay Mahajan



GAGAN SETHI

Jan Vikas

I congratulate COVA for 30 years of promoting communal harmony, particularly Mazhar bhai for his indomitable spirit in battling against the tide in the country.

Since 2002, COVA and Jan Vikas, CSJ, have been collaborating on rehabilitation and youth work, serving on a committee under Dr. Syeda Hameed's leadership.

Mazhar Bhai and other creative narrative builders are constantly meeting in various spaces to push their narratives both domestically and globally.

I find the most beautiful aspect of COVA's work, aside from its ground-based activities, which they are familiar with.

So, congratulations, COVA, Mazhar bhai, continue to do the great work that you're doing.

And from my side and from all the organizations I represent, really hearty congratulations to you all over again.

All the best

"I find the most beautiful aspect of COVA's work, aside from its ground-based activities, which they are familiar with."

— *Gagansethi*



MATHEW CHERIAN

Global Ambassador of Ageing HelpAge International

The initial interaction with Mazhar bhai fostered communal harmony, leading to peace in the Charminar area during the nineties. COVA's interaction, persistence, protection of minorities, and their special issues were taken up, which provided great succour to the people and lasting peace

Multi-faith festivities contributed to community unity. Former VANI Chair, I had interactions with Mazher Bhai on accountability and new regulations. COVA organized special meetings during the formation of the Credibility Alliance, supported the accountability movement, and inducted new program members. During COVID-19, COVA carried out a huge relief programme in Hyderabad.

Apart from work with migrants, refugees, and the local destitutes, COVA initiated support programs for vulnerable private school teachers, involving numerous organizations in Hyderabad and other cities, resulting in hundreds of teachers. I played a small role in introducing COVA to schools.

COVA is promoting school outreach to educate young people about interfaith issues, to spread the virus across the country. I wish COVA the very best for the future and many more accolades. May we all live and understand one another.

“Apart from work with migrants, refugees, and the local destitutes, COVA initiated support programs for vulnerable private school teachers, involving numerous organizations in Hyderabad and other cities, resulting in hundreds of teachers.”

— Mathew Cherian



PROF. RATTAN LAL HANGLOO

Vice-Chancellor and Chief Representative of Nobel International University (Toronto, Canada) USA campus

COVA, a Hyderabad-based organization, has long emphasized moral sensibility in human life under the visionary leadership of Mr. Mazhar Hussain.

The COVA task, aimed at assisting marginalized women, neglected and needy communities, has been challenging yet a significant service to humanity, aiming to illuminate human experiences across cultures and time.

COVA has always focused on providing resources, aid, and support to communities, individuals in need.

COVA is a vibrant grassroots movement focusing on female education, is actively tackling poverty and inequality in rural areas, particularly affecting vulnerable girls and women.

COVA has made significant progress in education, food security, poverty alleviation, health, environment, gender equality, rural development, communal harmony, and sustainable development through various programs and initiatives.

COVA, a key partner in India's socio-economic and cultural development, has been instrumental in fostering positive change and improving people's lives.



COVA has made significant progress in education, food security, poverty alleviation, health, environment, gender equality, rural development, communal harmony, and sustainable development through various programs and initiatives.

— Prof. Rattan Lal Hangloo

S. JEEVAN KUMAR

HRF, Coordination Committee member

A. P&Telangana States.

The organization, working at a grassroots level, effectively identified community issues and sensitive areas, frequently organizing group meetings and seminars in both offices and localities.

COVA promoted peace and harmony through Inter Faith meetings, where representatives from various religions discussed their views and interacted with the audience. Five years ago, COVA initiated human rights education for schools, allowing me to speak on Fundamental Rights and the Universal Human Rights Declaration with young students.

COVA organized Election Watch Committees to observe voting processes during Assembly and Parliament elections, collaborating with Revenue, Municipal administration, and Police through permissions and permits.

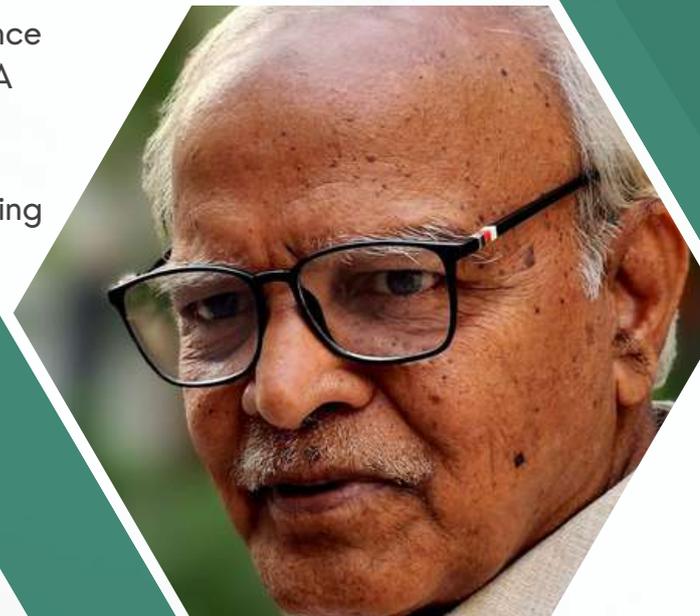
COVA formed PUCAR- Peoples' Union for Civic Action and Rights, a rights group advocating for people's rights, including ration cards and public distribution systems. They also addressed police harassment and illegal arrests, and advocated for a people's manifesto.

As a social thinker and rights activist, I was able to understand various issues of the people, and that experience added to my consciousness. This great journey with COVA made me work out the strategies to address the issue.

COVA is the only non-governmental organization addressing people's issues in Hyderabad's old city, providing appropriate interventions for relief.

"COVA promoted peace and harmony through Inter Faith meetings, where representatives from various religions discussed their views and interacted with the audience."

— S. Jeevan Kumar



ACHIN VANAİK

Retired Professor , University of Delhi.

Cova has always felt a deep responsibility to support progressive activities of all kinds that promote equality, peace, democratic rights and above all else justice.

I am a member of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace which has enjoyed support from Cova over all these years.

I wish therefore to extend my greetings on this 30th anniversary and to wish it well as it continues its journey to shape a better India and the world in the years to come.

Achin Vanaik
Retired Professor
University of Delhi.

Cova has always felt a deep responsibility to support progressive activities of all kinds that promote equality, peace, democratic rights and above all else justice.

— Achin Vanaik



PAUL DIVAKAR NAMALA

Advocate for the rights of Communities Discriminated by Work and Descent

Cova effectively promotes peacebuilding, particularly during religious celebrations, by implementing preventive measures, awareness-building, and interventions that cross-cut religion, fostering harmony and understanding.

Secondly, I have gained valuable business and entrepreneurial skills through the work of civil society, which has been a primary focus of their education.

The team, led by Mazher Bhai, has completed three decades of work and has several more to implement across the country, wishing them success and courage in this challenging time.



“Cova effectively promotes peacebuilding, particularly during religious celebrations, by implementing preventive measures, awareness-building, and interventions that cross-cut religion, fostering harmony and understanding.”

— Paul Divakar Namala

DR. VITHAL RAJAN

*Former Chair, Governing Body,
COVA and Writer*

In 1990, riots in Hyderabad, initiated by politicians, led to civil society forming COVA, involving all communities for communal harmony and welfare. This united Hindus and Muslims, preventing dissent through political manipulation.

Communal harmony in India, a natural state of social life between Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and other religious communities, is a political action that can lead to divisions, fear, and violence.

COVA, a social harmonious transformation initiative, has significantly impacted Indian society, benefiting communities across the country, not just in Hyderabad. The booklet 'Saviours of the City', free concerts, garden tea party, and the tearful embrace of late Basheer Uddin Babu Khan remain fresh in memory.

I very much pray that COVA will be widely adopted in the country and its neighboring regions, thereby establishing the South Asian Century.



“Communal harmony in India, a natural state of social life between Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and other religious communities, is a political action that can lead to divisions, fear, and violence.”

AMIR ULLAH KHAN

Professor/Teaching

COVA, a non-profit organization in India, has been working for the most vulnerable for three decades despite facing challenges and difficult partners.

The organization has combated increasing insecurity, hate crimes, government oppression, and civil society apathy by cultivating a like-minded community for social harmony and interfaith dialogue, despite being compelled to seek basic education and inadequate health facilities.



“The organization has combated increasing insecurity, hate crimes, government oppression, and civil society apathy by cultivating a like-minded community for social harmony and interfaith dialogue.”

— Amir Ullah Khan

P.V. RAJAGOPAL

Ekta Parishad

COVA is a valuable organization with significant contributions to communal harmony. Mazhar bhai and his team have engaged with the Hyderabad community and nationally, promoting interfaith and intra-faith coexistence and mutual respect. Their efforts have been appreciated for their level of work, the depth

Your comprehensive analysis of a subject, coupled with your active involvement in Manipur, ensures the presence of COVA in conflict situations.

COVA emphasized that conflict is like a storm, and one must be prepared to avoid, mitigate, and resolve it effectively. Their life goal is to find effective conflict resolution methods across different countries.

All praises to COVA and Mazhar Bhai for their contributions to conflict resolution, empowering women, and engaging young people in the school system, highlighting their efforts in Pakistan, Kashmir, Hyderabad, and promoting good citizenship.

A great country relies on its people, and COVA's efforts are remarkable, promoting good human behaviour and national and global well-being, which are part of our Jai Jagat campaign as well.



You are not solely dedicated to COVA, but also actively participate in networking and supporting other organizations, a unique skill not many possess. Support for Ekta Parishad in Janardesh and Jai Jagat march from Delhi to Geneva, along with your support for Peace Builders Forum India, will help bring peace workers and peace builders together at the national level.

Celebrate your 30th year of achievements, as your work and progress are admired for engaging with society, empowering people, networking with organizations, and providing growth opportunities. Your participatory process is appreciated by friends who have witnessed COVA's growth.

I express my gratitude to Mazhar Bhai and his team for their significant contributions to India and globally, highlighting the importance of their leadership and the strength of their team in driving their organization forward for 30 years.

So, let me take this opportunity to wish you all the best. Jai Jagat. Thank you very much.

“COVA emphasized that conflict is like a storm, and one must be prepared to avoid, mitigate, and resolve it effectively. Their life goal is to find effective conflict resolution methods across different countries.”

— P.V. Rajagopal



Reflections

On The Partnership and Contributions
To Recreate the Journey of

COVA @ 30
Peace Network

**Part 2- Violence to Peace-
The Challenges - The Way**

SA HUDA, IPS

Former Director General of Police and Member, COVA

Good morning, namaskar, adab.

Completing 30 years is a big, big milestone for COVA. I congratulate Dr. Mazhar Hussain and his team at COVA for achieving this milestone.

The first time I heard of COVA was through a senior colleague of mine, Dr. Alamdar Moosby, who was the principal chief conservator of forest, and he mentioned about Dr. Mazhar Hussain, saying that he is the thought leader to watch, and you should meet him and interact with him, and that's how I had got in touch with Dr. Mazhar Hussain.

I had, however, already witnessed the job they were doing during the communal disturbances in the old city, particularly the extremely successful human chain that the women in the Charminar area were using. I was now informed by Dr. Mazhar Hussain that it was also covered by major foreign newspapers as the Washington Post and Le Monde, among others. In the old city, they earned their spurs by promoting peace, harmony, and amity among the populace. We're fortunate to have complete peace in that region right now.



After leaving government, I joined COVA, which has expanded into refugee protection, welfare, school programs, socially relevant projects, competitions, and third-generation philanthropy, focusing on Rohingyas in the old city.

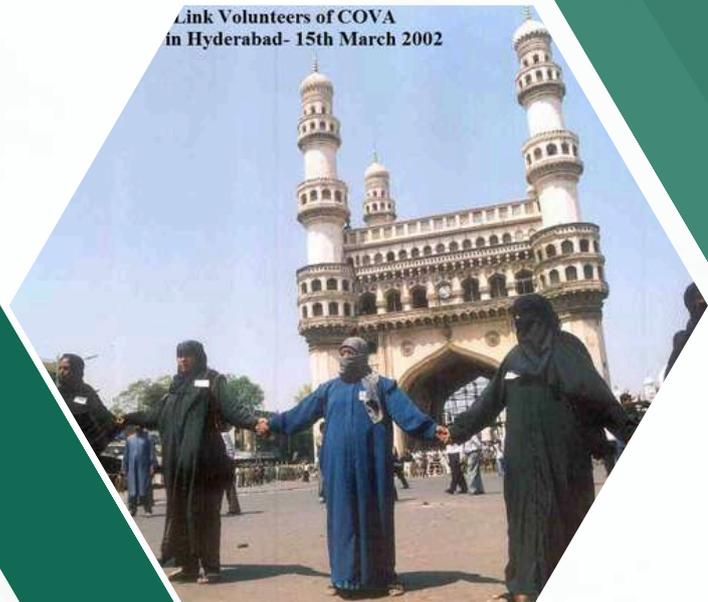
So, they have been very, very active in the old city area. Apart from the old city and Hyderabad, Dr. Mazhar Hussain has visited Kashmir for social harmony and cohesion work, providing valuable suggestions to the Indian government and banking sector.

My best wishes are with the team and COVA. Let them continue their outstanding work for another fifty years. Additionally, allow them to live for a hundred years. I hope they have the finest possible life. Thank you.

“Already witnessed the job they were doing during the communal disturbances in the old city, particularly the extremely successful human chain that the women in the Charminar area were using. I was now informed by Dr. Mazhar Hussain that it was also covered by major foreign newspapers as the Washington Post and Le Monde, among others.”

— SA Huda, IPS

Link Volunteers of COVA
in Hyderabad- 15th March 2002



BRO. FRANCIS M .M

Former Board Member, COVA and Social Activist

I Congratulate COVA (Confederation of Voluntary Association) under the leadership Of Mr. Mazher Hussain for the wonderful Contribution to society and people in Different part of the world for the last 30 years.

St .Marks Boys Town was privileged to collaborate with COVA as partners for the development of the old city of Hyderabad.

Boys Town started in the old city in 1955 was actively involved in the development, communal harmony, health care, literacy programme, sports, games and various activities was privileged to partner with COVA.

We were strengthened to be more effective in our Mission. We were able to empower the people of old city for education, skill training for employment and self-employment of the people of the old city. Initially we started in collaboration with the local community leaders of education of girls' and boys' partnership with COVA helped us to be able to reach out to more places and people.

Summer camps were organized in dress making, mehndi Training, Beautician Course, sports and games helped many individuals and families. Education of girls was a great achievement. Polio affected children were helped get operated to lead a better life.

Our students were actively involved in adult literacy programme. I thank Mr . Mazher Hussain and COVA for their Collaboration with Boys Town.



K. SAJAYA

Former Board Member, COVA and Social Activist

I'm Sajaya, a social activist, independent journalist. In 1990, communal riots in Hyderabad led to a collective effort by civil society members to provide relief, lasting nearly three and a half months.

After 350 deaths in riots, relief efforts were halted, prompting dialogue with local organizations, youth, religious, and women's groups to prevent further riots and promote prevention.

Over three and a half years, 80 organizations, including youth and women, engaged in dialogue on communal harmony, preventing riots in localities, and community development. This led to the formation of the Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA) in 1995.

"Relief efforts were halted, prompting dialogue with local organizations, youth, religious, and women's groups to prevent further riots and promote prevention."

—K. Sajaya



NOOR JAHAN SIDDIQUI

Coordinator, Women's Empowerment, COVA

My name is Noorjahan. I joined COVA in 1994 as A Coordinator

My work was on women empowerment, Women's health, Education, Family counselling, adolescent girls' education, child marriages, That's why we formed a self-help group. We had 2000 link volunteers

We worked among 40000 families and 200000 population the area

We give awareness sessions in these areas
We used to train them once every six months
They weren't even allowed to step out of their houses

We made them capable
We trained them on Communal Harmony
So that they could be aware of their localities and how to prevent communal riots
We made them responsible, and they performed well without any hesitation
After that

While working in the old city, I started work in the districts

COVA used to work in 9 Districts
We started conducting awareness programs on women's empowerment, women's education, and women's awareness that women should participate in every election.



After that, I got a chance to move out to other states like Jammu Kashmir, Saharanpur, Calcutta, Bangalore.

I learned many things from the conferences that I attended through COVA

I got the opportunity to learn and got my own Identity.

I feel I upgraded my standards to a higher level
I became a social worker to a social activist through COVA

Today, I run and manage my own is all through COVA

That's my journey to Hyderabad, Districts, National, and International levels

I learned many things and developed myself, and it's all about COVA

"We started conducting awareness programs on women's empowerment, women's education, and women's awareness that women should participate in every election."

—Noor Jahan Siddiqui



RENU KESWANI

Link Volunteer, COVA and Social Activist

My name is Renu. In 1994, I was a link Volunteer of COVA. I never went out before joining COVA.

When I got connected, I went out, got knowledge from COVA on how to deal with and connect women. For this, I used to take women to Basthi dawa khana and solve their health issues.

After this, I encouraged women that they can do a lot of services outside their homes, and they can learn a lot.

In 2002, there were riots in Gujarat. It also affected Hyderabad.

At that time, women from different religions made a human chain together in front of the Mecca Masjid and gave a message of brotherhood. After that, it became peaceful. The small basthi dawa Khana, transformed into a Big dawa Khana

Today, women have become independent, and everyone wants to work. After connecting with Cova, I got Knowledge. It was good

“Women from different religions made a human chain together in front of the Mecca Masjid and gave a message of brotherhood.”

—Renukeswani



K. VENKATESHWARLU

Former Resident Editor, The Hindu

Congratulations to Dr. Mazhar Hussain and COVA for completing 30 glorious years of their relentless work for peace and harmony in society.

In 1990, Hyderabad experienced the worst communal riots in history, resulting in over 200 deaths, leaving fear, suspicion, and hatred palpable, and raising questions about whether peace and harmony would ever return.

Political parties were exacerbating the issue by polarizing and dividing people along communal lines.

At that time, a committed organization was urgently needed to unite two conflicting communities.

COVA, born amidst a challenging situation, aimed to effectively promote peace and harmony by forming basti-level Hindu-Muslim peace committees.

COVA, a voluntary organization, faced challenges in the old city during troubled times due to animosity, political interference, and general attitudes, despite its initial big step. COVA, despite facing political threats, remained steadfast in its focus on peace, harmony, and education for the poor, transforming people's perspectives on various issues.

I saw COVA grow from strength to strength, from just a Hyderabad-specific NGO to spreading its activities to several states across India and the neighboring countries.



I would not hesitate to say here that COVA is a true example of think globally and act locally when it comes to the promotion of peace and harmony in society.

COVA's diverse activities, including its innovative approach to interfaith festivals, have garnered significant media coverage, showcasing its diverse activities.

I wish COVA all success and many years of promoting peace and harmony in society.

“COVA, despite facing political threats, remained steadfast in its focus on peace, harmony, and education for the poor, transforming people's perspectives on various issues.”

— Venkateshwarlu



Reflections

On The Partnership and Contributions
To Recreate the Journey of

COVA @ 30
Peace Network

**Part 3- Peace Initiatives: Through
Faith, Culture and Cyber Space**

BRO. VARGHESE THECKENATH

President, COVA

COVA significantly contributes to the creation of peace among various religions and social and cultural communities in Hyderabad.

COVA was born amid communal tensions that began in 1991 and continued throughout its existence. It emerged as an organization that fostered peace and understanding among communities, thereby shaping its role in promoting peace and harmony.

COVA, through religious leaders, facilitated the download of an app by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, enabling people to access services and facilities.

The Archbishop of Hyderabad issued a special circular to all Sunday-rented parishes, urging them to download a special app created by the GHMC.

Jama'at-e-Islami's campaign, facilitated by COVA and religious leaders, saw a five-lakh% increase in downloads within four to five months, with 500,000 new downloads made.

There were occasions in the city where peace could have been disturbed. The 2023 Ganesh festival, Ganesh procession, and Milad-un-Nabi came on the same day. And that could have disrupted peace in the city, potentially causing dangerous situations in both communities.

The Hindu and Muslim communities in Hyderabad hold massive processions during the Ganesh festival and Miladun Nabi, respectively.



COVA negotiated with religious leaders, the police department, and political parties to defer timings and days for both processions, ensuring peaceful celebrations.

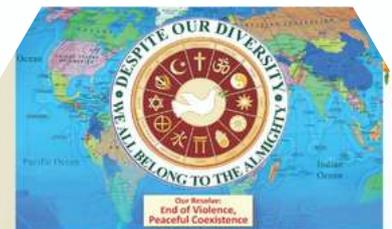
So, this is a typical example of COVA's intervention that made a huge difference in building peace.

COVA organizes Sambandh, a cultural event where students from colleges and schools focus on peace building, harmony, and understanding through monuments and plays, involving hundreds of children and youth.

This is something that COVA has been able to facilitate not just in Hyderabad, but in so many different cities across India.

“COVA negotiated with religious leaders, the police department, and political parties to defer timings and days for both processions, ensuring peaceful celebrations.”

— Bro. Varghese Theckenath



**Multi Faith Festivities for all Religions :
Every Time! Every Where!!**

Greetings for

**Ugadi - Eid Ul Fitr - Ram Navami -
Mahaveer Jayanti - Baisakhi - East**

Let's Celebrate Together in Hyde

day, 5th April 2025 at Gandhi Gyan M

DR. CH RANGARAJAN

Head Priest, Chilkur Balaji Temple

We are very happy to learn about the excellent initiative being taken by COVA Peace Network, asking every person belonging to all the religions to celebrate every festival belonging to that particular religion by involving community people from all the religions together which will make everybody come together, their families will have to interact with each other and it should be a festival of humanity.

Today it is not being celebrated like that. This initiative has a foundation in this country which is sahajarma samabhava.

Every religion has to be treated with affection and same kind of a festival atmosphere.

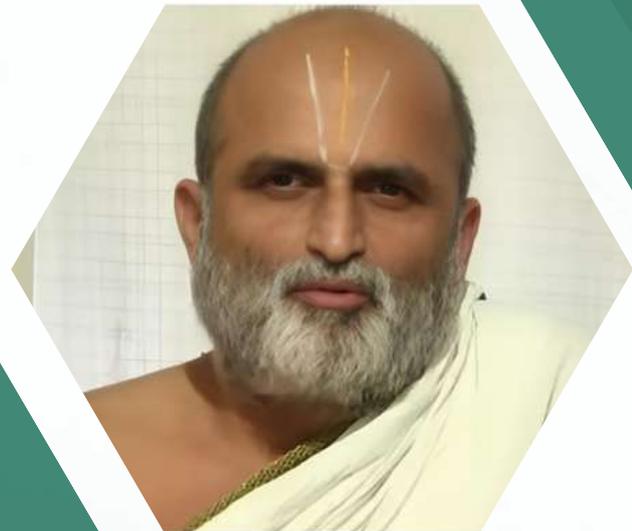
All these utsavam should be celebrated involving in exchange of their opinion. The reason for the festival should be learnt because every festival has been started with a purpose.

That purpose today has to be exchanged between all the community members so that it becomes a festival of unity, festival of celebration of all the entire humanity.

Sarvejana Sukhino Bhavantu Samastha
Sanmangalani Satyam.

“Asking every person belonging to all the religions to celebrate every festival belonging to that particular religion by involving community people from all the religions together”

—Dr. CH Rangarajan



SAJJAN SINGH

Director, Lagaan

Hello,

As an associate of COVA, I have been actively involved in various interfaith programs and am committed to continuing to do so in the future. Peace was discussed in Kishan Bagh, where a terrorist attack occurred in 2003 and another in 2014, but the efforts have been successful in stopping these attacks.

We have been supporting each other through festivals, welcoming each other, attending functions and programs, meeting and discussing interfaith, and inviting each other to our homes for easy understanding and conversation.

A three-hour program for students addressed poverty, budgeting, and senior citizens, demonstrating the right approach to work. The program emphasized the need for student grooming.

I advocate for peace in the future, urging the next generation to learn to maintain peace in all fields.



“We have been supporting each other through festivals, welcoming each other, attending functions and programs, meeting and discussing interfaith, and inviting each other to our homes for easy understanding and conversation.”

—Sajjan Singh

ASHUTOSH GOWARIKAR

Director, Lagaan

Ashutosh Gowarikar discusses the multi-faith celebration, to celebrate the spirit of unity and communal harmony that is being organized by the COVA Peace Network, a national network of over 700 organizations promoting peace, communal harmony, and social justice.

It is wonderful to see the power of collective efforts in bringing communities together. And this year, Diwali, Bandi Chhor Diwas, and Mahavir Narvan fall on almost the same festive days, one after the other.

I would like to encourage you to take this chance to connect with your neighbors from various religions and communities, along with their families. And I want to congratulate COVA, Mazhar Bhai and Rahim Bhai for their religious initiative and unity.

"It is wonderful to see the power of collective efforts in bringing communities together."

—Ashutosh Gowarikar



ACHARYA RAGHAVENDRA DAS

Convener, Sarva Dharm Samvad

Namostu Ramaya Salakshamanaaya Dibbe
Chaitasya Janakaatmajaaya Namostu Rudrendra
Yamaanilibho Namostu Chandarka
Marudganabhya Om Shanti Shanti Shanti ,

Among of all of you,

Acharya Raghavendra Das Convener, Satya
Dharm Shambhal.

COVA Foundation has celebrated its third
decade of promoting social and cultural
governance, supporting interfaith and multi-faith
values globally, benefiting intellectuals.

I commend Mazhar Hussain Sahab for his
insightful discussions on India and Bharatiyata,
and for his consistent pursuit of COVA in the
same direction.

Good wishes to him in Odisha.
Give him blessings and blessings. Jai Shri Ram.

***“COVA Foundation has celebrated its third decade of
promoting social and cultural governance, supporting
interfaith and multi-faith values globally, benefiting
intellectuals.”***

—Acharya Raghavendra Das



MOHAMMAD TURAB

The COVA-Interfaith Forum aims to foster social harmony at the grassroots through various programs and activities, partnering with grassroots people.

The goal is to promote social transformation, harmony, and self-sufficiency through self-sustaining activities, education, and political awareness among individuals.

“The COVA-Interfaith Forum aims to foster social harmony at the grassroots through various programs and activities, partnering with grassroots people.”

— Mohammadi Turab



K S GOPAL

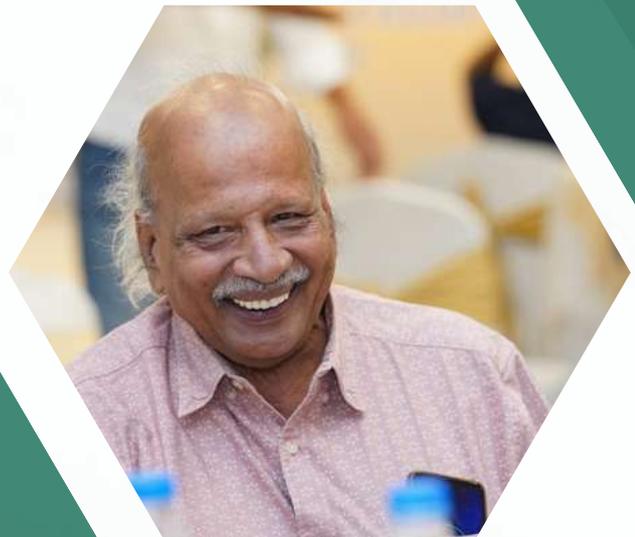
Centre for Environment Concerns

COVA is actively participating in multi-religion and interfaith discussions across various states and regions, focusing on volunteerism rather than solely on projects.

Guess, a Muslim community leader, has demonstrated significant social change and improved human resources management skills over the years, demonstrating merit for promotion.

“COVA is actively participating in multi-religion and interfaith discussions across various states and regions, focusing on volunteerism rather than solely on projects.”

— K S Gopal



SOBHA PERINDEVI

Social activist/ writer

President Telangana stree seva ssmstha

COVA taught me to participate in inter-religious programs, inspiring me to work more for elders and engage in inter-generational bonding programs with pleasure.

During my time in Cova, I developed a love for people from various religions and castes, admiring their dedication to societal change through their tireless work and inter-religious programs. Cova's bravery in combating corruption, pollution, anti-social elements, and promoting caste freedom is commendable.

"Cova's bravery in combating corruption, pollution, anti-social elements, and promoting caste freedom is commendable."

— Sobha Perindevi



PROF M CHANNA BASAVAI AH

Academic / Osmania University

The study involved volunteer participation in peace-making efforts in the old city during the early 1990s communal riots, involving multi-Faith and inter-Faith dialogues and grassroots works.

The COVA activities demonstrated their commitment to working with ordinary people from all religions to transform their worldviews.

"The COVA activities demonstrated their commitment to working with ordinary people from all religions to transform their worldviews."

— Prof M Channa Basavaiah



JALEEL HUSSAN SABIR

MD, Soundroom & Member, COVA

In 1997, my association with COVA occurred during their planning of the Festival of the Subcontinent, a joint celebration of India and Pakistan's independence.

I visited with my cousin Maria, working with COVA, to help organize concerts for the Festival of the Subcontinent, featuring artists from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

Artists like Malika Pokhrajji, Reshmaji, Naushad Saab, Ahmad Hussain, Muhammad Hussain, and veteran actor Ajit Saab performed at Quli Qutub Shah Stadium, despite heavy rain and muddy conditions. The Stadium was packed with a 25,000-plus audience.

The tent guy provided red carpets from his Godown, covering the mud with them. During the concert, no one knew what was beneath the carpets.

I was amazed by Reshmaji's singing abilities and requested her to sing a few lines without music or a mic. The experience was truly mesmerizing and a hair-raising one for me.

During the concert, it was revealed that Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan had passed away. The concert paused with a two-minute silence, during which I performed a rendition of Nusratji, which people still ask for today.

COVA has been instrumental in promoting communal harmony, education for deprived children, and self-reliance among women for 30 years, thanks to Mr. Mazhar Hussain. I salute you for your dedication and wish you all the very best and a very happy 30th anniversary. Thank you.



RUSHDIA MEHREEN

***Faculty at Vanier College, Montreal; Dawson College, Montreal;
Concordia University, Montreal (Quebec, Canada)***

Celebrated 40 years of independence after Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's death, a day of Indo-Pak unity and a cultural event, bringing people together in a remarkable way.

I come from an economically underprivileged household, learned the importance of respecting those struggling, and have since been involved in various collectives, including South Asian Diaspora Action Collective, Solidarity across Borders, and Palestine Justice for Palestine.

In the 1990s, COVA provided exemplary community work, empowering women economically and otherwise, and fostering growth and confidence. Mazher Bhai, a great leader, allowed people to achieve their potential, bringing out the best in others.

I maintain contact with COVA and have contributed to recent initiatives on social media. I would be passionate about contributing to its vision and mission.

I express my gratitude for the initiative and wish to access the final memorial, connect with previous contributors, and learn about COVA's history.



***"COVA provided exemplary community work,
empowering women economically and otherwise,
and fostering growth and confidence."***

— Rushdia Mehreen

SHEEMA KERMANI

Tehrik e Niswan, Pakistan

Aadab, salaam, namaste.

I'm Sheema Kirmani of Tehreek-e-Nizam, based in Karachi, Pakistan. First of all, I'd like to congratulate Mazhar Bhai and the whole organisation, COVA, on their 30th anniversary.

In my opinion, COVA is a wonderful organization that is doing fantastic work both locally and throughout India. Tehreek-e-Nizam and I have been friends with Mazhar Bhai and COVA for at least ten years. To celebrate our friendship, we took an incredible tour of India when COVA invited us to perform in Hyderabad, India. The event was called Pak-India Cultural Connect, and the project was called Union of Hearts. Through this endeavour, the group of ten or twelve of us performers, dancers, and members of Tehreek-e-Nizam travelled from Karachi to Lahore and all the way to Hyderabad, where we gave performances in a variety of locations. Additionally, we engaged in conversations and exchanges with young people, students at Osmania University, and others.

We had a performance in Delhi as well. These performances included both dance acts and plays. We performed, of course, on our shared culture, our shared history, Aamir Khosrow, Sarojini Naidu, Tagore, and Ahmed Faraz, and we did a play called Kafer, which was based on a short story by Ismat Chughtai. This play was presented at JNU Delhi as well, where there was an amazing audience of at least 3000 students, and it was a memorable



performance because everything in that play resonated with the students at JNU, because it is a story of a young Muslim girl and a young Hindu boy wanting to get married at the time of partition.

The dancers were also appreciated, and I just feel that this collaboration was such a wonderful happening, and I hope that we can continue this kind of effort because when the people of Pakistan and India get together through art, culture, shared experiences, and stories, we truly connect with each other and win over hearts.

I wish COVA the best and hope to visit there again soon.

“I just feel that this collaboration was such a wonderful happening, and I hope that we can continue this kind of effort because when the people of Pakistan and India get together through art, culture, shared experiences, and stories, we truly connect with each other and win over hearts.”

— Sheema Kermani



NABEEL KAMRAN ADENI

IT Professional, Canada

What happens when hate moves from the streets to our screens?

And how do we respond to fake news, online radicalization, and the quiet spread of division? That's the question COVA asked nearly a decade ago, as digital spaces across South Asia began fueling polarization and communal tension.

With the goal to safeguard cyberspace for peace, COVA launched COFI and CHECKIT programs.

The first COFI tech camp held in Hyderabad in 2016 brought together 33 changemakers from seven countries, trained by almost a dozen expert facilitators on using social media, Facebook, YouTube, and podcasts to counter hate, verify news, and build peace digitally.

These tech camps became a movement uniting grassroots leaders, youth, journalists, and faith leaders across South Asia to reclaim digital spaces for dialogue.

For many, it was the first time they realized they could shape online narratives, not just scroll past them and consume them.

I had the privilege of leading the first COFI tech camp South Asia, helping raise funds, vet trainers and facilitators, and bring this whole vision to life. This experience reshaped how I see the web, not just as a neutral ground, but as a space that must be safeguarded.



It deepened my own understanding of how social fractures, how they play out online, and taught me that real change starts when local voices are equipped with the right tools.

I'm grateful to COVA and the tech camp team for letting me be part of building peace, one post, one voice, and one byte at a time.

Thank you.

"These tech camps became a movement uniting grassroots leaders, youth, journalists, and faith leaders across South Asia to reclaim digital spaces for dialogue."

— Nabeel Kamran Adeni



Reflections

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Part 4: Schools: Compassionate Citizenship Program

B. JANARDHAN, IAS

Former Commissioner, GHMC

Article 51A-G of the Indian Constitution mandates compassion for all living creatures, promoting love and kindness for all living beings.

Compassion should be shown to family members, neighbours, and people of all castes, religions, languages, and countries.

Sympathy for everyone, including fellow citizens. This is essential. COVA has given careful consideration to this matter.

It should be taken forward.. It must be injected into each learner.

“Compassion should be shown towards family members, neighbours, caste, religion, language, and country.”

— B. Janardhan, IAS



MOHD ABDUL KALEEM

Programs Coordinator, COVA

Greetings from COVA, I am Mohammed Abdul Kaleem and I was involved with the development of the Compassionate Citizenship Program.

Indifference to child labour, poverty, ill treatment of elders, degradation of environment, communal violence and all other social issues and problems seem to be because of one reason: Absence of Compassion for Others

Current Education System seems to be designed to produce efficient professionals and not sensitive human beings. COVA has evolved a curriculum titled Compassionate Citizenship Program that takes students beyond classrooms and text books for direct experiential learning of social issues to make them sensitive and responsible citizens and equip them to undertake micro level social transformations and community improvement.

In 2023 the School Education Department of the Government of Telangana agreed to undertake a Pilot of the Program in 4 districts of the State.

Enthused with the results and the impact, the Department has entered into an MOU with COVA to extend this program to 3000 schools.

“Over 50 important social issues were covered during the past 20 years and the curriculum for Compassionate Citizenship Program was evolved with able guidance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Roda Mestry College and many eminent academics and activists.”

— Mohd Abdul Kaleem



DR MOHAMMED SAJID ALI

School/ college leader

COVA emphasizes the importance of social awareness, community rights, public grievances, girl child rights, women's rights, environmental issues, water, brotherhood, tolerance, diversity celebration, and relations with Indian neighbors.

School serves as the hub of the community, requiring responsibility to provide students with a work-life balance and practical exposure beyond books.

“COVA emphasizes the importance of social awareness, community rights, public grievances, girl child rights, women's rights, environmental issues, water, brotherhood, tolerance, diversity celebration, and relations with Indian neighbors.”

— Dr Mohammed Sajid Ali



SANA SIDDIQ

Student, TMREIS Khairatabad Girls-1

I am Sana Siddiq and I am studying in 7th grade and I am in TMREIS Khairatabad Girls 1.

Now I want to share something with you

In Compassionate Citizen Program. I learnt many things and I need to share with you.

Parents faced many problems to educate their children. I asked my mother what the problems are you facing to educate me. She told many problems are there I can't express.

My mumma is tailor. My mumma will get up at 6 o'clock and till night she will not get up from the machine.

I realized that my mumma is facing many problems for me and I have to fulfill my mumma's dream.

I have to keep my mumma very happy.

Thank you.

"Parents faced many problems to educate their children, I realized that my mumma is facing many problems for me and I have to fulfill my mumma's dream."

— Sana Siddiq



BIRADHAR GUNJAN

Student, Sharadha Vidyalaya High School, Hyderabad

This year, my topic was Child labour. We had a lecture on child labour.

One day, a 12-year-old boy was cutting a wire. We first interacted with him.

Why are you working?

Why aren't you going to school?

We asked him a Question and understood His problems. He had financial Problems. We suggested that he join a government School or our School. He could get a Scholarship if he studies. He worked for a week.

We noticed and followed him. I asked him Why isn't he interested in Education. He said he will join the Government school next academic year.

What was your Classmates' experience?

Everyone enjoyed. It was a Cova project

Is your family Happy with this Change?

Yes, they felt proud of my achievement, and their behaviour changed.



"We suggested that he join a government School or our School. He could get a Scholarship if he studies."

— Biradhar Gunjan

AGAM MEHTA

Student, Birla Open Minds School

Hello everyone,
My name is Agam Mehta, and I'm from Birla Open Minds International School.

I'm here today to share my experience with the Compassionate Citizenship Programme that was offered to me by COVA.

The programme provided a unique introduction to social sciences, featuring top Hyderabad researchers discussing their importance, impact, and applicability in the modern world. The introduction emphasizes the importance of a scientific temper in social sciences, as it can transform mundane tools like questionnaires into engaging and useful research tools.

I was excited about interviewing villagers in the field, but disappointed by the need to prepare a questionnaire beforehand.

I realized the importance of having a time-effective tool for more constructive responses.

During the internship, we discussed rising prices and challenges to rural life. The chosen topic was challenges to rural life, which resonated with my knowledge of a village outside my school.

The villagers face five major problems: lack of water, power outages, expensive transportation, limited cabs and autos, and inadequate sewage facilities.

The internship provided valuable learning experiences, which were applied to my initiative to establish a computer center in a government school.



The initiative, founded by me and my classmates, is currently in the process of conducting transaction work and gathering information on the school's computer-related goals.

We've started classes and aim to install 20 computers in the Kolar government school. We appreciate the opportunity from COVA and pray for your support.

“The introduction emphasizes the importance of a scientific temper in social sciences, as it can transform mundane tools like questionnaires into engaging and useful research tools.”

— Agam Mehta



THOMAS CHAKKALACKALA

Mentor and Executive Secretary

Young students can contribute to change by promoting water conservation, caring for the elderly, educating marginalized individuals, and providing employment opportunities.

The goal is to promote peace and harmony among different faiths, while also providing quality education to the poor and vulnerable.

"The goal is to promote peace and harmony among different faiths, while also providing quality education to the poor and vulnerable."

— *Thomas Chakkalackala*



MEGHANA NARSIMHA

Entrepreneur

As a resource person, I educated students on social issues, empowering them with knowledge, skills, and awareness, aligning with COVA's mission of community development.

COVA promotes unity and empowers youth, leading to social change. Their project display day was enjoyable, but judging the best project was challenging.

The importance of lifelong learning and the significance of empowering individuals at the grassroots for sustainable and meaningful transformation.

"COVA promotes unity and empowers youth, leading to social change."

— Meghana Narsimha



MOHAMMED SHAFI

Educationist

Cova's intervention helped bridge children's exposure beyond family and personal horizons, enabling them to dream big in communities where schools are located, and overcoming a lack of resources.

Since 1999, I have been actively supporting and collaborating with our school to help underprivileged students achieve literacy and transform their lives through education.

"Cova's intervention helped bridge children's exposure beyond family and personal horizons, enabling them to dream big in communities where schools are located, and overcoming a lack of resources."

— Mohammed Shafi



AZEEZA BEGUM

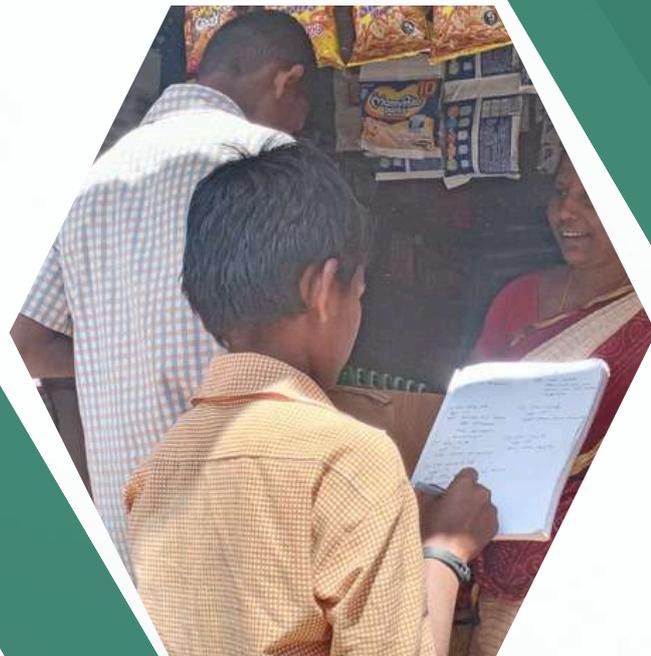
Standard High school

COVA (Confederation of Voluntary Associations)
To COVA Organization,

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the entire team at COVA for their continuous support and encouragement. Your organization's efforts in involving our school in various projects and surveys have provided our students with valuable knowledge and exposure beyond the classroom.

By participating in these initiatives, our students have gained practical insights, developed critical thinking, and learned the importance of social responsibility. We truly appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with COVA and look forward to many more such meaningful engagements in the future.

Thank you once again for being a part of our students' learning journey and for helping us nurture informed and responsible citizens of tomorrow.
With warm regards
Standard High school



JUDE JOSEPH INNES

St. Stephens School

Dear Comrade,

It gives us great pleasure to note that Cova would be celebrating its 30th year and also extended its activities beyond the boundaries of India.

With regards to our participation, we are glad to inform you that our school had won many prizes in the activities conducted by your esteemed organisation. We must say that however, we were under the impression that cova had stopped its activities and we would be happy to contribute in your programmes.

We hope that you would intimate us about your programmes being conducted. Once again we congratulate you on your successful journey.



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Part 5: Financial Inclusion

SANTANU MUKHERJI

Former Managing Director, State Bank of Hyderabad

In 2014, I became MD of the State Bank of Hyderabad in Hyderabad, where I discussed various bank activities, board roles, and related issues with Dr. Mazar Hussain of COVA.

The Indian government introduced the Differential Rate of Interest Scheme between 2013-15, offering loans at a low interest rate of 4% to support economically weaker individuals.

The issue escalated to a significant concern when beneficiaries failed to show interest or repayment intent, prompting the staff to ensure repayment.

After extensive discussions, COVA identified genuine beneficiaries through due diligence, ensuring compliance and a mutually beneficial arrangement for both banks and beneficiaries.

COVA visited households and conducted a thorough analysis of potential businesses, concluding that if the loans were good, the program was effective. Our branch managers in Hyderabad and Warangal provided loans worth over 2 crores to thousands of people, with a 95% repayment rate.

The Government of India introduced an enhanced scheme called Mudra, which was later merged with DRI, making Mudra more significant. COVA consistently provides suggestions for improving loan programs and has significantly worked on loan delivery. They also gave suggestions at the G-20, and COVA was instrumental in Mudra's case.

“Out of 12 suggestions given by COVA, 9 were incorporated by the GoI in the Mudra scheme.”

— Santanu Mukherji



KOTESH DEBBATTA

Program Officer Financial Inclusion

Good morning all. My name is Kotes. I am from Warangal.

And I am also part of COVA for more than 3 years. After completing my MBA, I started my career in COVA as a Program Officer in PUCAR Department. PUCAR Department is nothing but People's Union for Civic Action and Rights.

My work is to identify the small street vendors around the Charminar area and apply loan on behalf of them in Syndicate Bank and SBH Bank. First of all, I used to identify the street vendors like vegetable vendors, fruit vendors, flower vendors and I used to make them as a group of 6 members. And I used to go to bank and ask the bank manager or the field officer to come and verify the businesses.

Then after that, one day a bank manager or field verification officer used to come with me and verify the businesses. And release the DRI, Differential Rate of Interest Loans at the rate of 25 paisa per month. For this DRI, the documentation is very simple, one address proof, one ID proof and the business proof is enough. Like that loans have been released to the street vendors. More than 800 loans have been released through COVA.

And the repayment is also very nice. Thank you, Mazher Sir, and thank you COVA for giving me the opportunity to work with COVA. Thank you.

"More than 800 loans have been released through COVA."

— Kotes Debbatta



VANAJA

Women Entrepreneur

My name is Vannaja. I have opened a small shop here in Gowlipura. I am doing some stitching for my clothes.

I am trying to get some material for that. Afterthat, I told my neighbor, I told her to go to Charnar branch. She went there and met Lalitha madam.

She came and showed me the shop. She gave me Rs.15,000. She gave me some material. After that, she gave me Rs.1,00,000 for the second loan.

She gave me the certificate bank. She gave it to me in 2015. It is still under construction.

She gave me Rs.1,00,000. After the sanction, I got some material. I have a machine. I am developing the shop.

I need money. I will give it to you.

"I need material, my neighbor referred me to COVA, and I went to the Charminar branch and met Lalitha Madam."

— *Vanaja*



MOHD ABDUL JALEEL

COVA conducted competitive learning, demonstrating their commitment to providing quality education and exceptional support to refugees.

They consistently provide support and assistance to all students, and they actively seek feedback on their academic performance.

“COVA conducted competitive learning, demonstrating their commitment to providing quality education and exceptional support to refugees.”

— MOHD ABDUL JALEEL

GHOUSE MOHAMMED KHAN

We are pleased to provide feedback on the COVA organization's efforts in enhancing and promoting students' skills through their events and programs.

“COVA enhances and encourages the students' skills by their events and programmes.”

—Ghouse Mohammed khan

Reflections

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**Part 6: Youth TRAC: For Perspective
and Attitudinal Transformations**

Department of Culture

Praful Bidwai - B M Kutty - Swami Agnivesh Memorial

SAMBANDH 2024 REPORT

The 22nd Annual Inter-School and Inter-Collegiate Competitions for Telangana, Commemorating Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6, 2024

**Transforming Social Perspectives
in 90 seconds through
REELS, SHORTS, AND VIDEOS!**

**58 Videos!
34 Schools
and Colleges**

Themes and Focus for Videos:

Communal Violence | Drug Abuse | Child Labour | Education | Corruption
Environment | Gender Justice | Care of Elders | Unemployment | Mobile Addiction
Poverty | Differently-abled | Responsible Citizenship | Transgender Issues

Languages: Telugu, Hindi/Urdu and English



To view selected videos, visit <https://shorturl.at/Wbd4c>

Organised by

COVA
Peace Network

Sponsor



Department of Culture

Co-Sponsors

ELICO



In collaboration with



MOHAMMED AFZAL

Advocate & Activist

In the past, both communities had sensitive areas for games and sports, with young children gathering at one place to play. The communities used to celebrate their victories with complete sportsman spirit.

The second activity was spoken English. Along with the coaching classes of the academic SSC, there were also spoken English classes. They were also conducted where both the communities exist and in the sensitive areas.

They used to work together during the course. In this way, by taking practical steps, the people were able to establish peace in the old city.

“In the past, both communities had sensitive areas for games and sports, academic courses and spoken English.”

Mohammed Afzal



JHANSI RANGU

Member Youth Trac and Academician

Greetings everyone.
It's a real pleasure to be a part of this celebration.

COVA has completed 30 years, a significant milestone that reflects the significant impact it has had over the years.

COVA has shaped my journey, involving me in various programs, particularly their annual Sambandh event, during my college days at St. Anne's Hyderabad.

I attended the Youth Peace Conference in Chandigarh and gained valuable experience through COVA's parliament in 2011. They studied the Lokpal Bill, debated it, and even drafted their version under Dr. Mazhar Sir's guidance.

I was chosen as Prime Minister in a mock parliament and presented our ideas to actual MPs, ministers, and legal experts in Delhi, experiencing a surreal experience.

The experience was unforgettable, instilling confidence to pursue higher studies in Delhi and shaping my academic journey today.

So, thank you, COVA, for providing a platform, mentorship, and belief in young people, stating that they will always be grateful.

"The experience was unforgettable, instilling confidence to pursue higher studies in Delhi and shaping my academic journey today."

— Jhansi Rangu



VIJAY SHREE

Youth Trac, St. Anns Degree

My name is Vijayashree, and I'm an alumnus of St. Anne's Degree College, Mehdipatnam. Since 2018, I have been a member of COVA and express my gratitude to Mazhar Sir for his invaluable assistance in enhancing my skills and talents.

As a quiz master for the summer program and panel member with Ahmednagar Corporator on sustainable development goals, discussing organizing and initiating programs for underprivileged individuals.

The COVA organization provided a valuable experience, fostering confidence and self-esteem through discussions and interactions with many people.

“Organization provided a valuable experience, fostering confidence and self-esteem through discussions and interactions with many people.”

— Vijay Shree



UJWALA

Coordinator, Child Line Project

Hi, I'm Ujwala. I'm the coordinator of Childline Project 1098. I worked in Cova.

So, we used to work for the children, runaway children, missing children, professionally sex workers and drug addict cases and all that. So, during my work, we met with a drug addict case like Eraser Whitener.

So, when we saw children are laying on the roads, when I approached the children, children were very badly addicted to that drug addict.

Then immediately I have gone to the shopkeepers, shop owners of that community.

Then we asked them to stop selling that. Then immediately they did not respond properly to us because they said that that is their job.

Then immediately I went to city civil court. I told all the things what has happened in the field. Then I have given application to the city civil court judge.

They helped us to approach high court. Then immediately I have given application to the high court also. It was very tremendously what has happened, you know.

They have given orders to the owners of the shop not to give Eraser Whitener to the Children of below 18 years. So, it was very good achievement for us.

The High Court given orders to the owners of the shop not to give Eraser Whitener to the Children of below 18 years. So, it was very good achievement for us.

— Ujwala



BIZZAT BENERJEE

Academician and Social Activist

Team Cova has been instrumental in promoting harmony, interfaith dialogue, and youth-focused initiatives, providing guidance and compassion to those in need.

The initiative promotes community gatherings, festivals, and the sharing of experiences among individuals through various excellent initiatives.

I congratulate Team Cova and Mazhar Hussain for their unwavering passion, dedication, and perseverance throughout the years.

May they continue with their good work. All the best.

“The initiative promotes community gatherings, festivals, and sharing of experiences among individuals through various excellent initiatives.”

— Bizzat Benerjee



OSMAN PATHAN

Koshish Theatre Group

Hello, Namaste, Assalamualaikum

My name is Osman pathan

When I joined Koshish group, my first play was "Sabse Sasta Ghosht."

As play started people started pelting stones on us and someone said "You are creating tensions between Hindus and Muslims," we said we are here, just watch the whole Play after that you take action. When our play ended the one who threw stone came and apologized us and said you are doing a good work for communal harmony.

Koshish theatre group Started in 1998. There was free training on Saturday and Sunday for kids. 30-35, kids used to come for training.

We conducted Street plays and Stage plays with them. We did 2000 Street plays and more than 400 Stage plays

We participated in State, National and International Level competitions in Punjab Calcutta, Orissa, and Kerala, where we won the best Prizes. All our plays were on social Issues Like TB se jung, Child labour, Communal Harmony.

We used to present serious plays on social issues through comedy to the audience. The public used to comprehend and feel. There was a play called "Jung Chahiye Ya Aman". This play was recorded by ETV Urdu and broadcasted in 54 countries.



Some artists of Koshish Group are now working in movies, TV Serials, and YouTube.

When I joined Koshish Group I was 18 years old and working in a pan shop. My family did not approve this saying it's a waste of time.

One day my younger brother saw me doing a play and informed parents that I am doing a good job of social awareness in society.

My parents never stopped me after that. I passed 10th class from COVA.

Today I perform in Schools, Colleges and NGO's.

I also give coaching for young artists. This became possible because of COVA and Koshish Theatre group.

Thank you.

"We used to present serious plays on social issues through comedy to the audience. The public used to comprehend and feel."

— Osman Pathan



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Part 7: State and District Networks

KHAN GULRAIZ

Program Officer, Kashmir Earthquake Project

My name is Khan Gulrez. I am the director of Rehman Handicraft Producers Company.

I recount my experiences in Kashmir in 2005 and 2006, during which a dangerous earthquake devastated Uri and Tangdar, causing significant damage and destruction to construction houses. The situation was unprecedented, making it a hot and dangerous place.

Life's meaning and prospects remain uncertain, but the government and the Confederation of Voluntary Associations[COVA], led by Mazhar Hussain, have been actively involved in rehabilitation efforts.

Upon his arrival, he visited every village to gather people, as they were unfamiliar with the concept of an NGO, and the earthquake was the first of its kind in the region.

Mr. Mazhar emphasized the importance of unity and support in rehabilitating individuals. He initiated village-level committees in Tangdar and Uri, consisting of 15 people, and volunteers were added, and their lists were made. They also opened an office in these areas to facilitate a better life and progress. The committees provided a sense of direction and support, with a convener, co-convener, and volunteer providing vital support in the village's neighborhood.

The man immediately provided relief with polythene, tarpaulins, shelters, and other necessities. SSM College Srinagar brought over 100 engineers, provided free food, accommodation, and vehicles, and organized a team to repair damaged houses in every village.



Engineers in Uri and Tangdar successfully implemented retrofitting techniques to repair 200 houses built by COVA, ensuring strong, forward-moving homes.

COVA provided crucial training in Hyderabad, teaching organization management, reaching people, organizing sports tournaments, and implementing livelihood programs.

Today, I am the director of Rehman Handicraft Producers Company, with 6,000 artisan girls, who provide free Afghan training to Sozni and Cravel. We are training them and supporting them from here. All these donations were made by Mazhar Hussain from COVA. Because of him, our life is not just our life.

We have helped 6,000 people secure livelihoods and move forward, settling our lives and reaching a point we never expected. We thank COVA for their untiring efforts and dedication.

“6,000 people secure livelihoods and move forward, settling our lives and reaching a point we never expected.”

— Khan Gulraiz



CHANDRAK BHAVSAR

NCPDP, Gujarat

Hello friends, myself Chandra Gosar, I am a consulting infrastructure engineer from Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Let me take the opportunity to congratulate COVA Peace Network on completing their journey of nearly 30 years in providing service to society this month 20th July 2025. At this point, I am happy to share my part of the journey with COVA after the Kashmir earthquake, which was on October 8, 2005. The earthquake in Kashmir claimed many lives and completely destroyed numerous homes, although many of them were still intact with only minor cracks and repairable damage.

Immediately after that, COVA volunteers have started their activity under the leadership of a visionary and very generous person, Mr. Mazar Hussain, for the affected villages and people of those areas. The first thing that springs to mind when I think of it is the terrible weather, the difficult terrain, and the equally challenging political climate, where every fortnightly or any other random day, there was a call for bandh, which would make the program or the entire process a little bit lengthy, but COVA volunteers performed admirably. The result was spectacular.

In nearly two years of working in the region, 5483 houses were salvaged and thereby reducing the financial losses of Rs. 822 crores.



So, it was decided not to demolish those houses completely but to treat them with earthquake-resistant features and make them earthquake-safe houses again. It was a big challenge, and to overcome that, 185 engineers have been trained for retrofitting technology measures for existing houses and for the brand new construction of houses. Also, to help support construction, nearly 2000 masons and master masons have been trained to make the houses of the beneficiaries of the earthquake safe.

With 5 years of experience, I provided training for house retrofitting during the 2001 Kutch Gujarat earthquake, which can be applied to COVA's program in Uri and Taghda.

Mr. Mazhar Hussain designed tasks from material salvage to artisan engineer training, construction material distribution, and staff facilities.

Working with COVA is not just an experience of retrofitting or constructing a newer house in the other state of India, but it was a great learning for me how the people of Kashmir think, welcome generously and supporting all of us.

I've been in contact with colleagues from COVA Peace Network, sharing ideas and working together to improve lives. Thank you, Mr. Mazhar Hussain, for the opportunity and celebration of 30 years.

Thanks again. Thank you very much.

“Working with COVA is not just an experience of retrofitting or constructing a newer house in the other state of India, but it was a great learning for me how the people of Kashmir think, welcome generously, and support all of us.”

— Chandrak Bhavsar



IFTIKHAR GILANI

Journalist, Southasia & Middleast

I first came in contact with the Confederation of Voluntary Associations — COVA — back in 2005, during the devastating Kashmir earthquake.

But it was in 2014, when Srinagar was submerged under unprecedented floods, that I truly witnessed the spirit and strength of this organisation.

At that critical moment, when the city was drowning and people were desperate for rescue, one name stood out — Mazhar Hussain.

He was the first to respond to our SOS calls.

Not only did he arrange boats for rescue operations, but he also managed the impossible — getting those boats airlifted into Srinagar. I still remember how other airlines refused to carry such heavy boats.

It was Mazhar who convinced Indigo Airlines — of Nusli Wadia — to step in. And they did, without hesitation. I can still recall the late Shujaat Bukhari using those very boats to rescue people from different corners of the city.

That feat alone speaks volumes.

But that's just one part of the story.

I also remember 2010 — a dark chapter when Kashmir was gripped by intense street agitations. Over 110 lives were lost, and hundreds were injured.



It was Mazhar Hussain again who stepped forward. He mobilized voices, raised awareness, and initiated a campaign that eventually led to an all-party delegation visiting Kashmir, reaching out directly to the people and leadership.

And the results were immediate; peace returned to Kashmir. But it is also a fact that promises held out by the all-party delegation to Kashmiri leaders were not realised to the extent of bringing permanent peace. But these long-term issues were beyond the control of COVA.

COVA has always been there, not just in moments of crisis, but also in shaping futures.

I've seen how they helped many Kashmiri students find their way into universities in Hyderabad — guiding them, supporting them, standing by them like a family would.

To me, COVA is not just an organization. It has been a lifeline.

A bridge between compassion and action.

And Mazhar Hussain — the force behind it — is someone who continues to inspire us all.

“To me, COVA is not just an organization. It has been a lifeline. A bridge between compassion and action.”

— Iftikhar Gilani



ABDUL RASHID HANJURA

Advocate/social activist

Islamic Relief and Research trust Kashmir india/VAN Kashmir

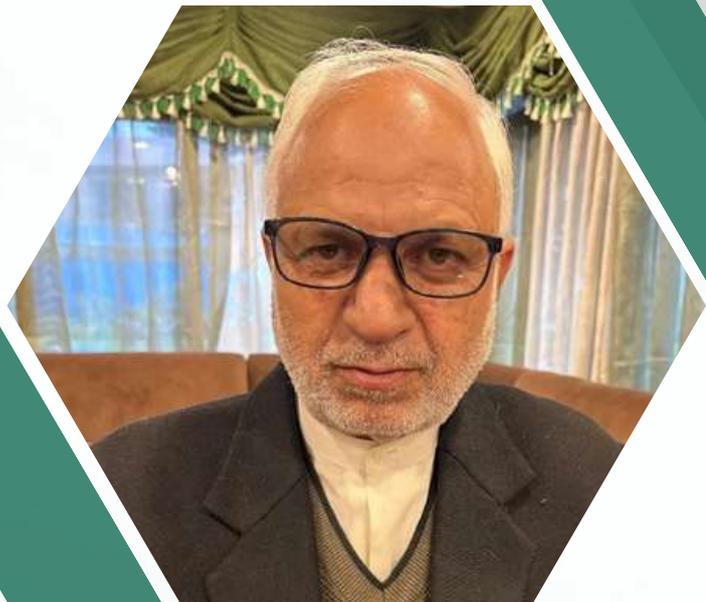
In 2000, I collaborated with the COVA network in Kashmir for knowledge acquisition, and in 2003, we established a local network of voluntary organizations in Kashmir with COVA support.

In 2005, after an earthquake in Kashmir, a network of local organizations and activists was established, collaborating with Cova for house construction and retrofitting.

I have learnt many things from the COVA network for having peace on Earth.

"In 2005, after an earthquake in Kashmir, a network of local organizations and activists was established, collaborating with Cova for house construction and retrofitting."

— *Abdul Rashid Hanjura*



AGNES RANI PAUL

Humanitarian and Development Professional

COVA, led by Mazher Hussain, intervened in post-2002 Gujarat by transcending geographical boundaries to provide humanitarian aid in times of crisis. He promptly contacted key stakeholders, including St. Xavier's Social Service Society, co-chairing the Citizens' Initiative, to address the urgent situation in Ahmedabad.

Mazher Hussain identified a gap in collaboration between Muslim organizations and other NGOs, despite their shared mission of aiding riot-affected communities through consultations with grassroots groups and NGOs.

Mazher's COVA efforts fostered trust and unity among organizations, fostering confidence between Muslim-led groups and civil society, despite deep-seated animosity, ensuring successful relief and rehabilitation efforts.

COVA's significant contribution was in integrating organizations like Gujarat Sarvajanik Welfare Trust and Islamic Relief Committee into the Citizens' Initiative coalition, transforming isolated efforts into a coordinated movement for healing.

COVA's intervention in crisis highlighted solidarity as the first step towards justice, promoting immediate relief and long-term collaboration, demonstrating its commitment to communal harmony and collective resilience.

COVA's Gujarat intervention demonstrated the effectiveness of coordinated coalitions, breaking barriers between Muslim organizations and mainstream NGOs, for equitable relief and long-term trust.

Trust is crucial for humanitarian aid, as demonstrated by COVA's role in fostering dialogue between stakeholders, and is as critical as material aid in conflict zones globally.



COVA's strategy emphasizes local leadership and amplified impact by empowering NGOs and volunteers, rather than imposing external solutions, highlighting the sustainable change that emerges from affected communities' recovery efforts.

Hyderabad-based COVA's swift response in Gujarat demonstrates that geographical boundaries don't hinder compassion, highlighting the importance of acting beyond borders in civil society work.

COVA's work in post-2002 Gujarat showcases its unique identity as a facilitator of ecosystems, demonstrating lasting change through the co-creation of solutions rather than prescriptive aid. COVA's radical intervention in polarized contexts involved investing in relational capital, mediating between distrustful groups, and redefining development as a journey of mutual accountability.

COVA's model of facilitation, which involves amplifying local leaders while stepping back, challenges traditional NGO hierarchies and redefines leadership.

COVA, Hyderabad-based NGOs in Gujarat, effectively navigated unfamiliar terrains by leveraging their neutrality and resisting the savior complex, demonstrating the power of boundary mapping. COVA transitioned from crisis response to systemic foresight, institutionalizing platforms like the Citizens' Initiative for dialogue and promoting a continuum of change.

COVA's legacy teaches that transformations are nurtured through patient, principled intermediation, and that even fractured societies can heal when transaction is replaced with transformation.

“Trust is crucial for humanitarian aid, as demonstrated by COVA's role in fostering dialogue between stakeholders, and is as critical as material aid in conflict zones globally.”

— Agnes Rani Paul



BINOY ACHARYA

Development Management

Following the 2002 Gujarat riots, the Gujarat Harmony Project, supported by CARE India, was formed to build mutual trust and respect among communities. The advisory board included Prof. T.K.Oommen and Mr. Balaji Singh.

Mr. Balaji Singh, representing CARE India, is collaborating with all communities to establish mutual trust and respect, gaining confidence from the District Collector of Ahmedabad.

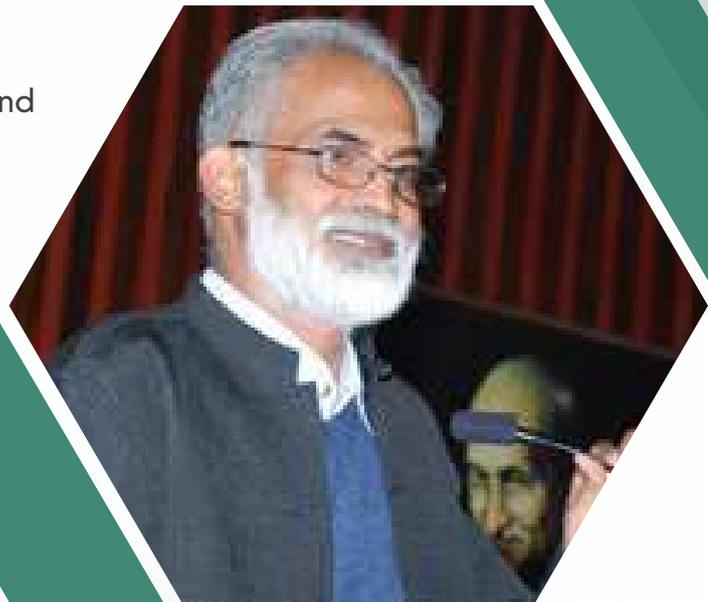
Regularly visiting Hindu and Muslim relief camps, a coordination meeting was held at St. Xavier's Social Service Society, where Muslim friends prayed, fostering brotherhood and community.

Relief work involving Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi, and non-practicing groups discussed strengthening syncretic traditions, with COVA, especially Mazhar Bhai, directly influencing peace and compassion.

In one sentence, the importance of inter-community engagement in festivals of any faith, promoting peace and loving coexistence.

"The importance of inter-community engagement in festivals of any faith, promoting peace and loving coexistence"

— Binoy Acharya



RAHUL BHADORIA

Trainee, Jan Vikas and COVA Training 2002, Gujarat

Namaskar,

My name is Rahul Bhadoria.

I am from Ahmedabad city, Gujarat. In 2002, during my second year of college in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, I witnessed communal riots that negatively impacted many people in my area. That was my first encounter with communal riots.

In 2003, as I neared graduation, communal riots in Gujarat and Ahmedabad city led to numerous organizations working to respond to these incidents.

The Confederation of Voluntary Associations [COVA] and the Ahmedabad Jan Vikas organization developed a youth training program for youth to combat future communal riots.

The youth development training program, organized by COVA and Janvikas, was held in Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Gujarat, offering three-day discussions on various topics. We were able to learn about the current situation in the classroom for three days.

Most interestingly, if we wanted to see these things in the field, we were also taken to the field. There were about 20 youth who were given this training.

I currently work as a project manager in Care India, in the Jambusar block of Bharuch district, showcasing my skills in the development sector.



The COVA training has been instrumental in successfully implementing a project with a mixed Hindu and Muslim population in our project area for seven years.

The three-month learning experience was instrumental in my development, and I am grateful to COVA and Janvikas for providing such an invaluable training.

Thank you very much

Gujarat witnessed communal riots that negatively impacted many people in most areas. That was people's first encounter with communal riots."

— Rahul Bhadoria

HASNAIN IMAM

Member, Executive Committee, Massdev and Educationist

The initiative aims to foster communal harmony through grassroots development activities, build social capacity, and connect local groups for better resource sharing and development results.

The concept of communal harmony, which involves building shared development activities that benefit all communities at the grassroots level, is a revolutionary approach. COVA demonstrates that effective philanthropic activities can be significantly improved through the combination of dedication and expertise.



"The concept of communal harmony, which involves building shared development activities that benefit all communities at the grassroots level, is a revolutionary approach."

— Hasnain Imam

ACHARYA DEBEN BACHASPATIMAYUM

National Coordinator

Tyagarchana Shanti Mission

Greater India Movement (GIM)

I first saw communal harmony works of COVA in the Hindu - Muslim communities in the city of Hyderabad sometime during the years 2000-2003

It was during field exposure program of the Culture of Peace Program of Henry Martin Institute (HMI), Hyderabad where a few of us from Manipur attended workshops on conflict transformation program

I saw how the field staffs of COVA and HMI worked hand-in-hand in complementing the quality of communal harmony projects after the old city of Hyderabad has seen enough communal tensions and violence

Over the last two decades Hyderabad city hasn't hit the headlines in the national media because COVA continues work and Hindu Muslim communities continue to reap the fruits of communal harmony they planted together and handing over to the next generations

Hyderabad city should be added as another pilgrimage site for culture of peace and inter-religious communal harmony in India and for inspiration of the global peace

COVA, has emerged as an institution for communal harmony born out of common peoples belonging to different religions and backgrounds struggling for peace and harmony in life and society through wars and violence for the preceding decades



COVA has grown outside the hyderabad city to inspire and support individuals and groups suffering from such communal violence

COVA reached out to Manipur when the people in the state suffered from an unprecedented ethnic violence which also had religious motivations and undercurrents

COVA extended tremendous support to the nascent initiative of Interfaith Forum Manipur (IFM) by dedicating a webpage in its official website and help amplifying the IFM initiative for peace in Manipur at national level

The friendship between COVA and IFM continues to grow

My prayers for continued blessings upon COVA and it's founder-director Mazher Hussain

“COVA, has emerged as an institution for communal harmony born out of common peoples belonging to different religions and backgrounds struggling for peace and harmony in life and society through wars and violence for the preceding decades”

— Acharya Deben Bachaspatimayum



RAMA JYOTHI

Former President COVA, Former President ONWA

COVA is a distinctive civil society organization that promotes communal harmony, peace, and community growth through project-based initiatives in district networks.

COVA has identified and strengthened small organizations in various districts, improving their capacities in organization development, legal aspects, and record keeping, while also promoting transparency and practice.

I congratulate COVA for completing 30 successful years of its journey and extend my best wishes in reaching out to many more in the coming years.

“COVA is a distinctive civil society organization that promotes communal harmony, peace, and community growth through project-based initiatives in district networks.”

—Rama Jyothi



M.A. NASEER SIDDIQUI

Coordinator District Networks

Today, I am here to express my views on my journey in COVA. I would like to give a brief overview of district and state networks in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

We identified 25-40 NGOs in our networks and conducted three-month programs for perspective and capacity building

The program aimed to unite diverse communities, enhance capacity in proposal preparation, report writing, and account management, and connect with donor agencies for resource mobilization.

The experience that I gained in COVA helped me to focus on self-improvement and skill-building, which led to my professional and personal growth.

Cova helped me to view obstacles as opportunities for growth and learning. Thank you.

“The program aimed to unite diverse communities, enhance capacity in proposal preparation, report writing, and account management, and connect with donor agencies for resource mobilization.”

—Naseer Uddin Siddiqui



M.A RAHUFF

Member, COVA Executive Committee & Former Coordinator, ONWA, Warangal

M.A. Rauff has worked on various COVA projects, including RTI campaigns, throughout his career with COVA.

RTI campaigns and awareness meetings were conducted in Andhra Pradesh districts to raise awareness about the RTI Act and election manifestos of major political parties for the 2009 and 2014 elections.

Sensitization on HIV AIDS through religious leaders. The program aims to raise HIV AIDS awareness through faith-based religious leaders in Hyderabad, Warangal, Nizamabad, and Guntur.

In 2005, I joined COVA as district coordinator and am currently serving as an executive committee member in 2025.

“The program aims to raise HIV AIDS awareness through faith-based religious leaders.”

—M.A Rahuff



NAZAR BASHA

Former Member COVA, EC & Ex Coordinator, Kadapa District Networks

Hi everyone, Assalamu Alaikum, Namaste, I am Nazar Basha from Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh. It was a great privilege for me to work with COVA for eight years, from 2000 to 2008, as a district coordinator for the Kadapa district. I proudly express my satisfaction and achievements in various activities.

In 2008, COVA initiated Zakat Charitable Trust and Aman Charitable Foundation in Kadapa, providing financial assistance to over 10,000 students and 30 business owners. They organized career guidance, self-employment programs, and scientific awareness programs with the support of NCSTC New Delhi.

Working with COVA has significantly improved my skills as a trainer and resource person, leading to a significant change in my attitude and secularism, and I am grateful.

Thank you, one and all. Thank you very much.

“They organized career guidance, self-employment programs, and scientific awareness programs with the support of NCSTC New Delhi.”

— Nazar Basha



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Part 8 : Strengthening Democracy

SRINIVAS REDDY SRIPATHI

Director- Society For Rural Development

COVA contributed to society through Election Watch, Safe Hyderabad Shandaar Hyderabad, Basic Entitlement Campaign, peace initiatives, Ward and Area Committee campaign, deepening commitment to civic engagement, and grassroots democracy.

During the Basic Entitlement Campaign, we assisted communities in resolving essential service issues, demonstrating the power of collective effort to bring significant change.

COVA collaborated with different NGO's to enhance participation, governance, and rights access in diverse communities, emphasizing the significance of collective action and rights-based development.

COVA is committed to social change, empowering communities, and fostering inclusive participation. It acts as a catalyst and bridge for diverse stakeholders to address complex social issues.

“COVA is committed to social change, empowering communities, and fostering inclusive participation. It acts as a catalyst and bridge for diverse stakeholders to address complex social issues.”

— Srinivas Reddy Sripathi



SYED RIYAZ UDDIN

CTO, Spotverge

COVA emphasized the importance of small contributions and awareness in addressing issues, as demonstrated by GHMC's awareness campaigns for sanitation and development in individual areas.

The COVA has had a significant positive impact on my ability to tackle various problems by examining them from various angles.

The COVA has had a significant positive impact on my ability to tackle various problems by examining them from various angles.

— Syed Riyaz Uddin



Reflections

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Part 9: Trainings - Research and Advocacy

SHAIK ABDUL SAMAD

Former Coordinator, Training Division-Social Activist

Hello everybody, I am S.A. Samad, an ex-employee of COVA, who worked as training coordinator during 2005 and 2006, and also in the second phase, I worked in UNHCR refugee project.

Working at COVA provided an enriching experience, as we conducted numerous capacity-building and perspective-building training programs for grassroots organizations and network partners across nine Andhra Pradesh districts.

The PAP trainings focused on communal harmony, exposing biases and prejudices, and promoting actions to promote harmony. This experience was beneficial for organizations and the individual.

After receiving this training, I completely altered my attitude and behaviour. We also provided training to the National Police Academy for IPS training officers for six years in a row, as well as to 750 partner organizations, totalling 4000 trainings. I prepared by doing a lot of historical study to highlight the facts and create tests that would encourage this harmony within the community.



The training on LCD systems and laptops helped me become tech-savvy and gain knowledge in this area.

So, this was a very good experience having worked in COVA, and I had exposure to various other states, including Kashmir, where we imparted trainings in 2006 to the Kashmiri organizations where COVA was working post-Earthquake time. So, I enjoyed having worked in COVA.

Working at COVA provided exposure to various states, including Kashmir, where trainings were imparted in 2006. The experience was enjoyable and beneficial post-earthquake. So, thank you very much.

“The PAP trainings focused on communal harmony, exposing biases and prejudices, and promoting actions to promote harmony.”

— Shaik Abdul Samad



DR. MOHAMMED IRFAN BASHA

Former Research Associate, COVA

I'm Dr. Irfan.

I worked in COVA as a research officer way back in 2004, and it's a privilege for me to be a part of COVA, an organisation that has become a trailblazer in promoting peace, social justice, and inclusion for the past 30 years.

COVA's peace network, a significant legacy, has been dedicated to evidence-based advocacy and research-based work for over three decades.

COVA has conducted over 25 significant research projects, collaborating with renowned partners like Oxfam, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, Vani, CBGA, and the Royal Tropical Institute Netherlands.

COVA's studies address critical issues such as local governments, basic services, national economic policies, and international financial systems, aiming to understand and respond to marginalized communities' realities.

The highlights include groundbreaking studies on COVID-19, financial inclusion in G20 countries, Muslim analysis, the union budget, and innovative concepts like growth, equity, peace, sustainability, and EPS audit.

COVA has significantly influenced policy, public discourse, and amplified the voices of marginalized groups, influencing micro-enterprises, BRICS economies, and poor tax payments.



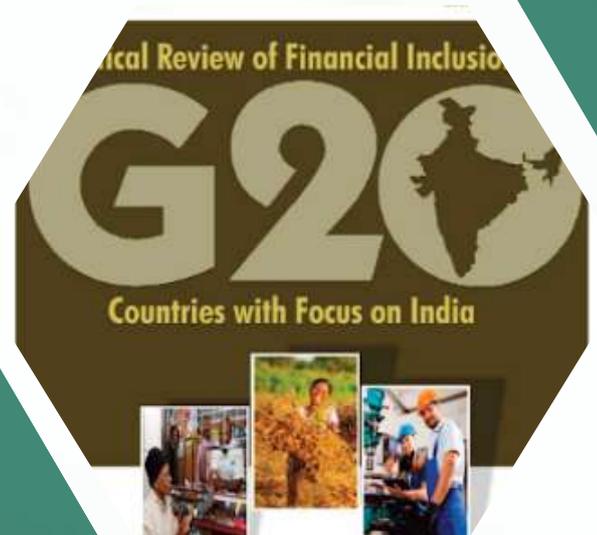
The study explored the interplay of religion, history, and peace through initiatives like Thousand Years of Conflict and Peace in the Deccan, promoting coexistence, equity, and dignity.

I express my pride in being a part of COVA's legacy and celebrate its 30th anniversary, emphasizing its belief in the potential for justice and transformation.

Thank you and congratulations to the entire COVA family.

“COVA has significantly influenced policy, public discourse, and amplified the voices of marginalized groups, influencing micro-enterprises, BRICS economies, and poor tax payments.”

— Dr. Mohammed Irfan Basha



SHAKIR ALI

Former Program Officer, Childrens Department

Greetings from COVA, I am Shakir Ali and I worked as a Programme Officer of Cova for the Children's Department. I was coordinating the campaign by COVA and partner organisations for the implementation of the provision of RTE Act for 25% free admissions in private schools to children belonging to economically weaker sections under the provisions of the Right of Children's to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2009 under Section 121C.

In spite of this Act of the Parliament of India and the judgement by a five-member bench of the Honourable Supreme Court of India on 6th May 2014, the Act was not being implemented by the Government of Telangana and also by private schools in the state.

After many efforts with the political system and the bureaucracy from 2010 to 2015, COVA and partner organisations managed to get an order from the Director of School Education, Government of Telangana to the Joint Regional Director of Education for Hyderabad and Warangal on 17th March 2015 to implement model rules in the state for 25% free admissions in private schools as per the provisions of the RTE Act from the academic year 2015-16.

However, the joy was very short-lived as within a week, the Government of Telangana issued fresh orders suspending the directive of the Director of School Education and it was clear that free admissions will not be available to poor students.



Immediately, COVA and partner organisations filed a writ petitions in the High Court of Hyderabad and the Honourable Court admitted the writ seeking directions for effective implementation of the Act on 1st April 2015.

It is over 10 years and despite many directions from the High Court, the Government of Telangana has still not started implementation of the Act as per statute. COVA will continue to pursue this case till the poor students get justice.

Thank you.

“RTE Act for 25% free admissions in private schools to children belonging to economically weaker sections under the provisions of the Right of Children's to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2009 under Section 121C.”

— Shakir Ali



B. V. SUBBA RAO

International Expert: Water, Climate and Urban Flooding

Hyderabad experienced heavy rains, short-duration rains, and urban flooding in 2000, a problem that affected major cities across the country.

The COVA, a group of voluntary agencies, is working to address issues involving all individuals, regardless of caste, creed, or religion, primarily through philanthropic approaches.

In 2000, a documentary and a video documentary were prepared to raise awareness and sensitize citizens, the system, and governance, making significant progress went a long way.

Again in 2020, collaboration with the Central University Communications Department led to a second video intervention addressing urban flooding issues and identifying gaps in preparedness and mitigation.

The video provides valuable suggestions and advice for the governance system to prepare the city and citizens for rain preparedness.

Civil society organizations have contributed to initiatives since 2000, involving government efforts to make Hyderabad flood-free. Today, the government is committed to achieving this goal.

“The COVA, a group of voluntary agencies, is working to address issues involving all individuals, regardless of caste, creed, or religion, primarily through philanthropic approaches.”

— B. V. Subba Rao



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Part 10: Peace Through Development and Work with Refugees

USHA RANI

Member, Development and Peace Group

MY NAME IS USHA RANI I live old Kurmaguda , lam
beautician

The cova peace Network Online services are Available
Voter id card Aadhaar card Pan card Marriage card
Health golden card E sharam card Available Some
government card Need to
it Is open on Sunday It is convenient For women
We hold multi Festival here
We from dpg Group We meet month On the 8th The cova
peace Network takes the Necessary decision

The cricket kit Is given to the The first and Second prizes
are Given
to the Of the

We Learn spoken English Here We are very Happy to
here

We hold health Here Gynaecologists dentists,dietitians
Come here Tell us
The cova network Is very helpful For us, thank you



*“Frequent medical camps are held in the locality where
Gynaecologists, Dentists, and Dieticians are invited to
address health issues.”*

— Usha Rani

B. SWATHI

Student, Spoken English Course

I am Swati, a field officer in COVA.
I took this basic spoken English course for three months. It was very useful for me, I am more confident now in speaking and communicating with others.

We learnt so many new things in this course. We learn reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills in this course. The teacher taught us with a lot of patience and put in all his efforts to make us speak fluently.

I sincerely thank COVA for organising such a wonderful course.

Thank you very much

We learnt so many new things in this course. We learn reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills in this course. The teacher taught us with a lot of patience and put in all his efforts to make us speak fluently.

— B. Swathi



SHANKAR NAYAK

Member, Development and Peace Group

Namaste,

My name is Shankar Nayak, I am Ravindra Nayak Nagar Committee member

We have the Last number of Years Cova is a Multi faith festival We have our Women's day culture Program and our Sewalal jayanti culture Program especially in A multi faith Festival They are different Religions together and As well as A number of Different castes come Together for as Gathering Culture program

Along with that They are people For a good Awareness They have lunch Together and discuss About how to Organize a festival Of different religions along With that

theyAre aadhar camp Online services Along with that They are organizing Sports activites for The youth along with That They are organizing Good doctor lawyers And police departments They are discussing Come out from This situation along With that they Are organizing program For women regularly

Not only in Our community they Are working for Jangammet Baji nagar Falaknuma Ravindra nayak Nagar They are doing Social activites everywhere Along with they Are working with Us we got To learn how To organize programs We got to Learn how to Get along with So thank you For given this Beautiful opportunity thank You cova

"COVA's multi-faith festival features various cultural programs, including Women's Day and Sewalal Jayanti, bringing together different religions and castes for a cultural event."

— Shanker Naik



SHILPA JAIN

Former, Program Officer, Refugee Resource Center

Hello everyone,

I, Shilpa Jain, a registration officer, was privileged to work for COVA's project UNHCR, the United Nations High Commission of Refugees.

COVA initiated the UNHCR project in 2010, assisting 8000 refugees from 8 countries with UNHCR cards, the only official document enabling their stay in India.

COVA lobbied with Telangana's education department to admit refugee children without Aadhaar cards, resulting in hundreds of children receiving education annually.

COVA offers ration assistance to over 140 destitute families, including the elderly, single mothers, widows, and physically challenged individuals, and also provides medical camps for treatment.



Over 300 families were supported in their livelihoods, enabling them to become vegetable and fruit vendors, tailors, and provide rickshaws for garbage collection. The experience with the COVA and UNHCR project transformed my understanding of refugees' pain and the value of adaptability, compassion, and resilience, making it a deeply enjoyable experience.

The COVA team is a family-like environment with a cooperative atmosphere, bringing happiness and satisfaction to me.

I express my deepest gratitude to all the COVA staff.

Thank you very much.

“COVA lobbied with Telangana's education department to admit refugee children without Aadhaar cards, resulting in hundreds of children receiving education annually.”

— Shilpa Jain



NOORJAHAN

A Refugee

My name is Noorjahan a Rohingya from Burma. I have been living in Hyderabad for 5-6 years now.

My health is very bad. I am suffering from kidney failure and asthma. I went to hospital; Doctor's advised me to go for dialysis.

I am worried about my children's future. They want to study. I went to COVA and spoke about my children. They helped me and got my children admitted in a school.

My children are able to study because of COVA's help.

I pray for them.

"My health is very bad. I am suffering from kidney failure and asthma. I went to hospital; Doctor's advised me to go for dialysis."

— Noorjahan



MOHAMMAD IDREES

Bakery Owner

My name is Mohammad Idrees, a Burmese citizen, I arrived in Hyderabad in 2012.

After moving from Burma, I began working full-time in Hyderabad, I worked very hard causing my hands to become tired. I received a small endowment from COVA.

I started a bakery here with the endowment. Alhamdulillah, the bakery got established soon. Now I am able to look after my family well.

Now, I am educating four children in a primary school. I am very thankful to COVA.

I can't thank them enough. Alhamdulillah, their timely help saved my family.

"I started a bakery here with the endowment which is running very well."

— Mohammed Idrees



MOHAMMAD SALEEM

Refugee

Thanks to COVA, my community and I have received immense benefits. The benefits include refugees receiving ration support for the past 12years.

Another thing is that over the past 8 years, COVA has provided education to around 20 children, and some have even completed their 12th grade. If COVA hadn't supported us, I don't know how we would have managed. As a refugee, I'm extremely grateful for the support COVA has provided, and I'm truly thankful.

"Thanks to COVA, my community and I have received immense benefits. The benefits include refugees receiving ration support for the past 12years."

— Mohammad Saleem



BUSHRA AND ASMATARA

Refugee Students

I am Bushra, a Rohingya refugee, passed my 10th examination with a 7.2 grade, while my sister, Asma Dara Begum, achieved a 7.8 grade.

My father and mother, a vegetable vendor and homemaker, live in Shaheen Nagar, studying in private schools with 16 other Rohingya refugees. We are grateful for the support of COVAs and donors for the past decade, enabling us to continue our education.

After achieving success in the SSC examination, our dream of becoming a doctor aligns with those of our parents, who have experienced significant life challenges.

I request COVAs and donors to assist 60 students in completing our education, achieving a good career, and overcoming our refugee status.

Thank you



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Part 11: In Solidarity

APARNA GHOSE ADHIKARI

**Treasurer - COVA & Sr Counsellor and Wellness Coach
Wipro -SOH**

I worked for the Makro Foundation, and we began collaborating on psychosocial rehabilitation for refugees. I founded my organization, CHILDLINE, in 2000, when COVA was a support organization in Hyderabad for children in need of care and safety. I observed the youth track.

Participated in school and youth sessions focusing on mental health awareness and resilience-building, collaborating with YWCA and COVA, fostering a learning journey for youth and community.

During my COVA journey, I witnessed the energy of Bal Adalats and Children's Parliaments, where children confidently voiced concerns and showcased youth creativity and critical thinking. The event hosted with Shabana Azmi was an inspiring moment, highlighting the community's empowerment and collective action, bringing visibility to the cause.

COVA provided a deeper understanding of the violence cycle, emphasizing dialogue, empathy, and empowerment to break it through youth engagement, refugee support, and grassroots initiatives.

COVA fosters critical thinking, empathy, and integrity in future generations through non-violence, dialogue, and civic responsibility, fostering a committed generation committed to social transformation.

COVA is a distinctive organization that tackles the root causes of conflict and inequality, demonstrating a strong commitment to peacebuilding, inclusion, and justice, particularly through its work with vulnerable communities.

COVA's grassroots, value-based approach promotes strong community ownership and lasting social change, with its emphasis on peace education and inclusive engagement making it a distinctive force for transformation.

"COVA fosters critical thinking, empathy, and integrity in future generations through non-violence, dialogue, and civic responsibility, fostering a committed generation committed to social transformation."

— **Aparna Ghose Adhikari**



MOINUDDIN ALI KHAN

Member, Executive Committee, COVA & Director Strategy Consulting, Advipract Consulting

It has been one of the most enriching journeys of my life to have been associated with COVA Network (www.covanetwork.org) since 2007, contributing as a volunteer and offering my expertise in IT and Management services. This long-standing association has not only allowed me to engage in meaningful service but has also been soul-filling, leading to deep moments of self-actualisation and personal transformation.

COVA Network's unique ability to function with a lean yet extraordinarily dedicated team is truly commendable. At the heart of it all is Dr. Mazher Hussain, the Executive Director, whose unwavering passion and commitment to COVA's vision and mission have been nothing short of inspirational. His sincerity and drive have been so contagious that I often found myself equally passionate—sometimes even obsessively invested—in the success and impact of the programs I was involved in.

I take special pride in having been closely involved in the Compassionate Citizenship Program in its early stages. This initiative aimed at nurturing empathy, civic responsibility, and social harmony among young minds is one I believe holds the potential to quietly yet powerfully transform societal mindsets over time.



Beyond individual programs, COVA's work in areas like Third Generation Philanthropy and Peace Building has created systemic and indirect transformations across communities. These efforts have subtly shifted attitudes, built bridges across divides, and laid down frameworks for more inclusive, cooperative social environments.

To be part of such profound work—work that transcends mere service and touches the deeper chords of human dignity and collective upliftment—has been an honor. I remain ever grateful for the opportunity to walk alongside COVA Network in its noble journey.

A profound wish from the heart to COVA Network for the progress and achievement of its Vision and Mission.

I take special pride in having been closely involved in the Compassionate Citizenship Program in its early stages.

This initiative aimed at nurturing empathy, civic responsibility, and social harmony among young minds is one I believe holds the potential to quietly yet powerfully transform societal mindsets over time.

— Moinuddin Ali Khan



BASAVARAJA PATIL

The Organizational head of the country participated in COVA programs, involving all communities, including the downtrodden and oppressed, and demonstrated exceptional horizontal speed in a geo-political situation.

“In COVA programs, all walks of life, downtrodden, neglected communities, and oppressed peoples participate.”

— Basavaraja Patil

VITHAL RAO ARYA

Member Executive Committee, COVA and President, Pratinidhi Sabha

Contributed to campaigns against child labor, education, and youth meetings, advocating for peace, communal harmony, and the elimination of child labor

The event included meetings with Swami Agnivesh, chairperson of the UN's Contemporary Forms of Slavery, and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Kailash Satyarthi.

COVA is actively involving youth in activities to promote violence prevention and communal harmony, encouraging them to become facilitators and leaders for change.

“COVA is actively involving youth in activities to promote violence prevention and communal harmony, encouraging them to become facilitators and leaders for change.”

— Vithal Rao Arya

RAM PUNIYANI

The organization promotes peace through meetings and programs. The grassroots approach involves understanding social problems, identifying relevant interventions, and implementing serious interventions for positive social outcomes, which can be highly impactful.

“Well-knit organization with socially relevant programs”

— Ram Puniyani



FAROOQ HUSSAIN

Engineer / Member, TGPSC

In a diversified country like India, COVA plays a crucial role in bringing together all religions in India, promoting the country's progress.

Continuous programs can lead to significant social change and transformations in the lives of common people and society as a whole.

Would like to contribute more to COVA programs due to their professional approach and exceptional results.

"In a diversified country like India, COVA plays a crucial role in bringing together all religions in India, promoting the country's progress."

— *Farooq Hussain*



RAO VBJ CHELIKANI

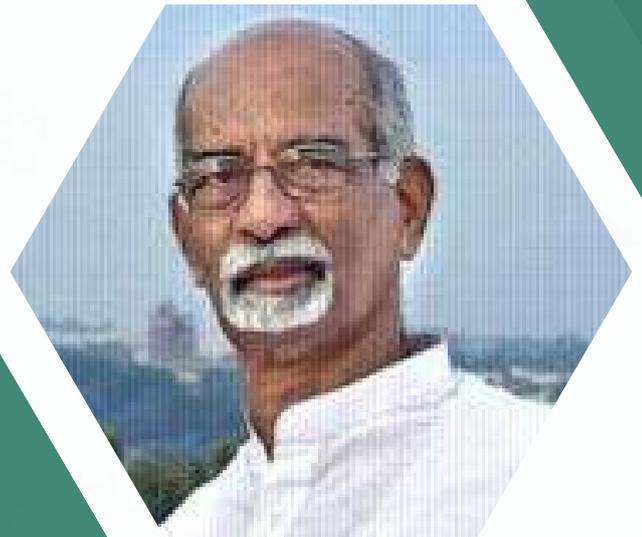
Election Watch, Senior Citizen Associations & Resident Welfare Associations. Coordinator of the activities of these organizations.

COVA, despite limited financial resources, has demonstrated wisdom, selflessness, and commitment in promoting peace and harmony in critical areas, demonstrating the importance of their approach.

The organization has always been guided by wise, selfless, and committed leaders.

“COVA has demonstrated wisdom, selflessness, and commitment in promoting peace and harmony in critical areas.”

— Rao VBJ Chelikani



DR MOHAMMED AKHTER ALI

Asst prof & JD, Directorate of admission Osmania University

I learned early and meticulous planning for any program from COVA.

The project successfully promoted communal peace in Hyderabad Old City through the coordination and conduct of peace meetings.

I pray for God's assistance in helping COVA grow in multiple ways and for UNO to acknowledge their services.

"The project successfully promoted communal peace in Hyderabad Old City through the coordination and conduct of peace meetings."

— *Dr Mohammed Akhter Ali*



EHTESHAM AHMAD KHAN

Professor / Maulana Azad National Urdu University

COVA's tireless efforts in addressing social challenges and uplifting underserved communities have brought significant change, driven by compassion and commitment.

COVA's work, spanning grassroots initiatives and sustainable development programs, exemplifies the transformative power of collective action and community empowerment, demonstrating its unwavering dedication and urging continued support.

"COVA's tireless efforts in addressing social challenges and uplifting underserved communities have brought significant change, driven by compassion and commitment."

— Ehtesham Ahmad Khan



SYED JAFFER HUSSAIN QUADRI

Educationist and Gen Z Mentor

Congratulations to COVA on completing 30 years of selfless service and unwavering commitment to the upliftment of the downtrodden, fostering communal harmony, peace building, and women empowerment.

Congratulations on reaching this incredible milestone.

COVA's efforts in promoting multi-faith celebrations, respect for all religions, social awareness, and compassionate citizenship have created a lasting impact on countless lives.

Through career counselling, skill development programs, empowerment initiatives, and dedicated support to refugees, COVA continues to inspire and nurture a more inclusive, compassionate, and empowered society.

It's great to be associated with this organisation

Wishing the entire team continued success in all their noble endeavors in the years ahead.

"COVA's efforts in promoting multi-faith celebrations, respect for all religions, social awareness, and compassionate citizenship have created a lasting impact on countless lives."

—Syed Jaffer Hussain Quadri



MOHAMMED SHOUKAT HAYAT

Retd Professor

*Head Urdu former Dean Faculty of Arts Director CIQA Dr BR Ambedkar
open university Hyderabad*

COVA significantly enhances healthcare education and social empowerment in marginalized communities and displaced families through educational and charity programs, impacting their lives.

COVA has partnered with Dr.B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, to offer certificate programs in Food and Nutrition at its Hyderabad training centers.

COVA requires government and philanthropic support to ensure optimal service delivery to marginalized communities and displaced families.



“COVA significantly enhances healthcare education and social empowerment in marginalized communities and displaced families through educational and charity programs, significantly impacting their lives.”

— Mohammed Shoukat Hayat

AASHA RAMESH

Gender & Development Professional

With COVA, there are lots of common issues, especially as my association with Mazher Hussain, including community awareness, building constitutional rights awareness among students. The focus on peacebuilding and communal harmony has been a shared concern among all parties.

COVA has demonstrated significant success in networking and alliance-building, highlighting the need for its in-faith dialogues to be replicated in all its endeavors.

COVA has transformed a community, empowering Muslim women to voice their concerns and learn skills to improve their economic status, breaking down barriers and addressing societal issues.

COVA has effectively utilized the youth's energy for productive purposes, preventing them from engaging in anti-social activities and creating programs for their gainful employment.

I feel great pride to be associated with COVA, stating that their involvement in this organization has been transformative.

“COVA has effectively utilized the youth's energy for productive purposes, preventing them from engaging in anti-social activities and creating programs for their gainful employment.”

— Aasha Ramesh



MOHD ABDUL MOID

Research. Presently associated with Anveshi

The COVA study revealed that Hyderabad, once considered an impossible place, can be successfully transformed into a thriving city.

The learning of organizational methods at COVA significantly improved my ability to improve other organizations and to respect the needs of old city residents. I think COVA has created a new group of activists and also mentored them through first-hand experiences and inputs. These activists, in turn, made other NGOs work successfully in Hyd.

“The learning of organizational methods at COVA significantly improved my ability to improve other organizations and to respect the needs of old city residents.”

— Mohd Abdul Moid



VIJENDRA RAGHUVAMSH R

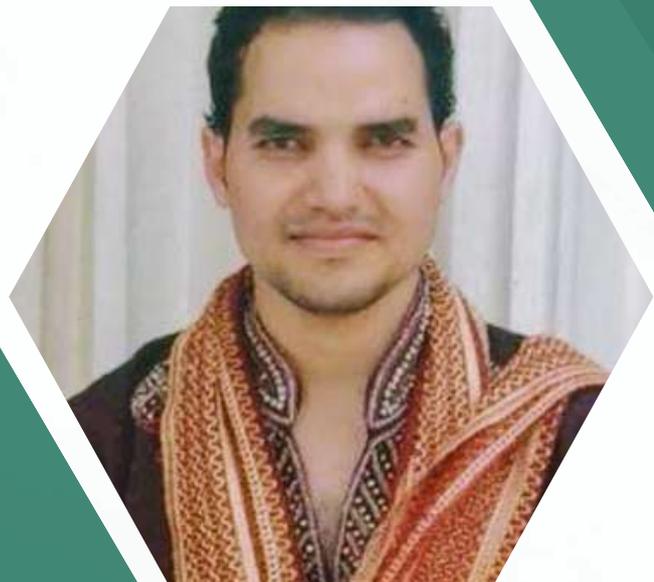
Former Program Officer, COVA

Promotion of peace in society is the need of the hour. COVA is the right place to achieve peace and harmony in society.

COVA has significantly impacted my personal and community well-being, enhancing my personality development and allowing me to interact with C-level executives, and I am eager to contribute to its success.

“COVA has significantly impacted my personal and community well-being, enhancing my personality development and allowing me to interact with C-level executives, and I am eager to contribute to its success.”

— Vijendra Raghuvamsh R



MD ABDUL NISAR

Former Program Officer, COVA

COVA Organization provided ration kits to teachers during and after lockdown, demonstrating their humanitarian efforts and assistance to needy individuals.

"This organization's humanitarian activity is extremely beneficial to those in need."

— *Md Abdul Nisar*

DR VYOMAKESISRI T.

Resource Person, Spoken English Course

COVA significantly influenced self-reinvention, changing perspective on teaching English to non-English speakers and making one more holistically humane.

"Made me humane in a holistic way"

— *Dr Vyomakesisri T.*



SANTOSH KUMAR EPPERKAR

Teaching and awareness programs can significantly improve communication and confidence, leading to a happier and more fulfilling life.

“Teaching and awareness programs can significantly improve communication and confidence”

— Santosh Kumar Epperkar

AARYA DAPHALE

The organization has had a significant impact on me through its multi-faith activities and the idea of conducting games within its communities.

“COVA specializes in Multi-faith, documentation, check it program Performing street plays and creating awareness.”

— Aarya Daphale

TASHI CHOEDUP

I am excited about the prospect of increased engagement and collaboration through their association with interfaith programs.



MOHAMMED ANWAR PASHA

Former Finance Officer, COVA

Namaskar, adab, good morning, satsriyakaal to all of you.

From 2006-2011, I worked at COVA, observing its efforts at the grassroots level, particularly for women, children, youth, and other marginalized sections.

COVA's programs, including refugee assistance, sambandh, interfaith harmony, and earthquake-affected Kashmir house construction, foster communal harmony, and I have also visited Kashmir for budget regulation and audit.

With the support of the COVA management team and my department team, we have significantly enhanced accounting systems for fund utilization in line with approved budgets from various fund donors.

During the audit, Quad 8 Chartered Accountant Mr. Kondaswamy commended COVA's accounting systems and procedures, suggesting them as a model for other NGOs.

After leaving COVA, I've remained in touch and appreciate the leadership of the executive committee for 30 years, fostering communal harmony in India.

“COVA's programs, including refugee assistance, Sambandh, interfaith harmony, and earthquake-affected Kashmir house construction, foster communal harmony.”

—Mohammed Anwar Pasha



DR VEDABHYAS KUNDU

Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti

It is a matter of great joy to learn that COVA is celebrating 30 years of phenomenal service to promotion of social harmony and empowering the marginalized.

My association with COVA started when I used to work with Voluntary Action Network of India. We organized large number of programs and workshops in Hyderabad.

Then while working with the United Nations Volunteers, we organized a major program with COVA to promote volunteerism during the International Year of Volunteering in 2002.

While working with Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, the Samiti initiated a Kasturba Gandhi Centre in association with COVA to promote empowerment of marginalized women in Hyderabad.

We have been involved in several initiatives in peacebuilding and nonviolence. For instance, Dr Hussain was there to receive an International Volunteers Award which the children and youth media literacy platform, The Peace Gong - a Partner of COVA- received in the UNICEF headquarters in New York.

We have also been involved in promotion of human values in several states of the country.

“Then while working with the United Nations Volunteers, we organized a major program with COVA to promote volunteerism during the International Year of Volunteering in 2002.”

—Dr Vedabhyas Kundu



RAMA MELKOTE

Academician and Activist

Hearty congratulations to COVA on its completion of forty years of untiring efforts to promote a healthy, secular civil society, communal harmony, to protect civil and political rights of minority communities, to defend and promote women's rights of all communities, to promote and protect right to education of children, more specifically of marginalised communities.

My association with COVA dates back to its inception, continued actively till a few years back.

Visiting schools for children, talking to them and participating in COVA's efforts to inculcate rational thinking through cultural activities, debates, quiz programs etc. Cova conducted several seminars on issues, political. and historical, also issues of economic development. These were useful as they were not only educational but also useful in promoting critical thinking among the youth.

In the current times, COVA has taken on the work of promoting Communal Harmony, a dire need in a world that is increasingly conflict and violence ridden.

By organising interfaith meetings, organising talks by experts and religious leaders, celebrating festivals of all religions, all communities celebrating all religions, striving to promote a sense of togetherness and eradicate the 'I and other', 'we and them', feelings which counter communal harmony, COVA is paving a peaceful path towards a just society.

"I wish COVA all the best in its efforts to promote its objectives and do hope that it will abide by ideals of Secularism, Democracy and Justice for all."

—Rama Melkote



MEDISHETTY SREEVIDYA

Our students actively participated in a 60-90 second video on child labor, making the experience memorable and involving.

"Taking part is good, but being involved in the part is great"

— Medishetty Sreevidya

MOHAMMED ABDUL ALEEM

I express my gratitude to God for their success and praise the best organization for providing informative lectures for students.

"Very informative lectures for students"

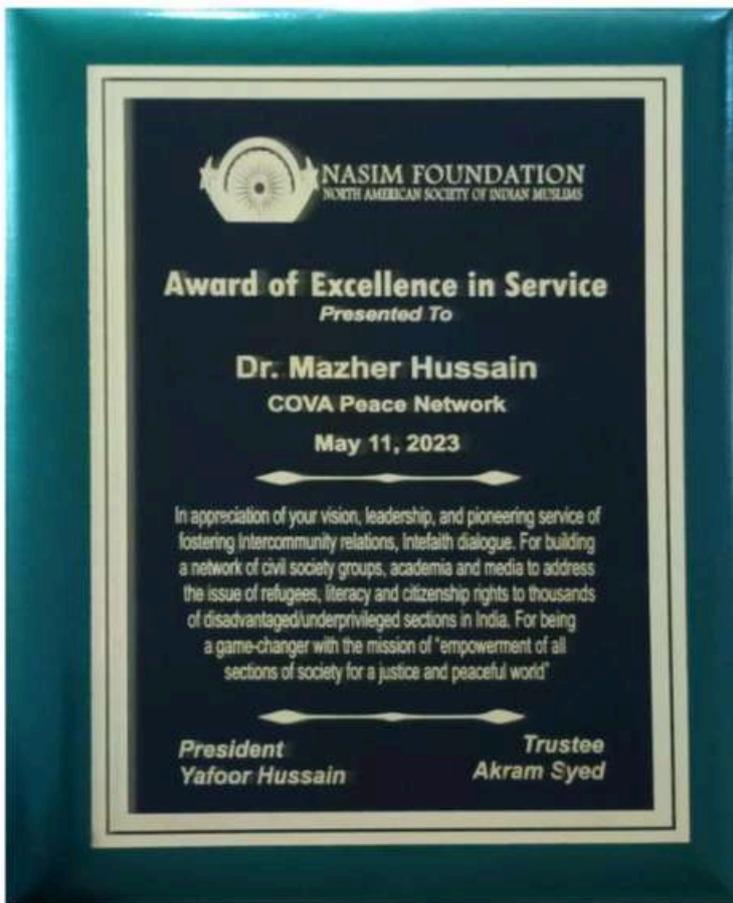
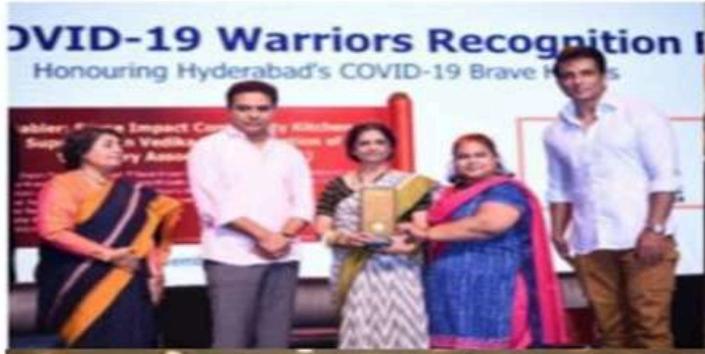
— Mohammed Abdul Aleem

AHMED IDREES SHAREEF

During lockdown, ration kits were distributed to teachers, addresses hidden issues faced by girls.

"COVA exemplify in compassionate issues"

— Ahmed Idrees Shareef



MAJA KOENE INTERNATIONAL PEACE AWARD 2023

Conferred on 12th March 2024

CESCI India and CESC Association, Switzerland

Dr. Mazher Hussain
(Hyderabad, Telegana)

Dr. Mazher Hussain is the founder of the COVA Peace Network – a Confederation of Voluntary Associations that is working on issues of communal harmony and community empowerment in India and peace in South Asia. Over the past three decades, Mazher has developed conflict resolution tools that preempts violence, while at the same time, COVA has invested in community development as a long-term strategy of reducing poverty. Mazher has made a significant contribution to the banking sector in terms of lending practices to ensure fairness to small borrowers.

Mazher Hussain has promoted multi-faith interactions; and he has been at the forefront of building good-will and solidarity across South Asia as well as globally.

In recognition of **Dr. Mazher Hussain's** stellar contributions, CESC (Centre for Experiencing Socio-Cultural Interaction) is happy to confer the **Maja Koene International Peace Award for the year 2024**.

We wish him all the best.

S C Behar
S C Behar
President, CESC
India

Dr. Margrit Hugentobler
Dr. Margrit Hugentobler,
President CESC
Switzerland

