

COVA

Peace Network

Hyderabad, India

VISION

**Social Harmony, Equality & Global Peace
Through Responsible Citizenship**

COVA PEACE NETWORK

- ✘ **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 Vangaurds
- ✘ **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, misconceptoons, 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



COVA Peace Network
Prevention of Violence 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

1. **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



<https://youtu.be/j6lcbmlxJ9s?si=rDmESDKiKVNSXRg6>

Initiatives for Structural Transformations

- ✖ **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 3 Recommendations from a Study for BRICS Summit of 2016 to transform Job Seekers into Job Creators

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

PROMOTING PEACE IN SOUTH ASIA



A screenshot of the Hangout South Asia website. The header features the logo and a navigation menu with links: Home, Previous Hangouts, Mass Action Events, Calendar, Partners, Forum, Feedback, Donate, and Contact Us. Below the header, a central banner displays a cityscape image with a right arrow, and text indicating that details of upcoming hangouts will be scrolling here. To the left of the banner are two blue buttons labeled 'CONCEPT' and 'PROCESS'. To the right are two green buttons labeled 'THEMES' and 'QUESTIONS / COMMENTS'. Below the banner is a row of flags representing various South Asian countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. The footer section includes a 'Sponsors' area with logos for Oriflame, Lufthansa, and others, and a copyright notice for 2014 Hangout South Asia.

COFI Networks Program
enables participants to gain mastery over 8 social media platforms to secure cyber space for peace/

COVA trained participants from 9 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

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

- ✘ 1. Speak against misuse of their religions during their congregations
- ✘ 2. 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 last year 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

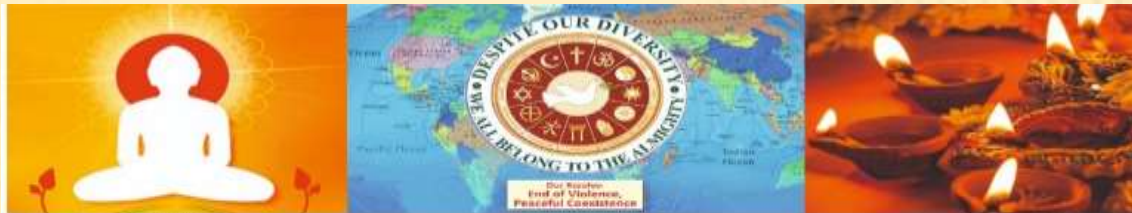
Encouraging people to invite neighbouring families of other communities for their festivals

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 with Milad Un Nabi in September 2023 and all 12 festivals of 6 religions are covered so far in Hyderabad and other cities of India.

Recent example is of Parsi Nowruz on 15th August and programs across communities are being encouraged for Rakhi on 19th August 2024

MULTI FAITH CELEBRATIONS



PEOPLE CAN USE RELIGIONS TO UNITE
Multi Faith Celebrations
of All Festivals
Every Time! Everywhere!!.



Opportunity for those Celebrating
Diwali- 12th November 2023
Mahavir Nirvana- 13th November 2023
Gurta Gaddi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji- 15 Nov 2023
to also invite their Neighbours
For a Magical Experience of Unity

Dialogue to Discover Our Common Values

Let us invite our neighbours from
different Religions and Communities
With their families on our festivals to share
Our Understanding of The Almighty!

PARTNERS

All India Secular Forum- Arya Samaj- Bharatiya Sarva Dharma Sansad -EKTA Parishad- Jamiat Sadhbhavana Trust- Khudai Khadmatgar- Society for Communal Harmony- World Humanist Forum- **Andhra Pradesh** : SEEDS; **Assam**: ANT- **Bihar** : Pragati Gram Vikas Samiti; **Goa** Goans for Global Peace **Jammu & Kashmir** : Kashmir Concern Foundation- **Karnataka** : Fireflies- **Madhya Pradesh**: Samarthan- **Maharashtra**: Centre for Study of Society and Secularism - **Manipur** : Healthy Environment Foundation; **Orissa** : Civil Society Forum for Human Rights; **Tamil Nadu**: SIPA Fair Trade - **New Delhi**: Global Peace Forum- Temple of Understanding- **Telangana**: COVA Peace Network- Montfort Social Institute- Peace Initiatives Foundation- Sikh Heritage Foundation; **Uttar Pradesh**: Ayodhya: Sarva Dharma Sadhbhavana **Trust-Varanasi**: Centre for Communal Harmony and Peace-Vishwa Jyoti Communications- **West Bengal**: Greater Kolkata Welfare Society. **More Partners listed on Website**



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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

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

WWW.COVANETWORK.ORG

THANK YOU
