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The recent flash flood in KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape is a result of climate change. Leaders globally were warned of the advent of cyclones, floods, and droughts. Despite this, local leaders are ill prepared to cope with climate shocks and are still in denial regarding their contributions to the carbon footprint.

The lack of responsiveness to climate shocks is exacerbated by improper spatial planning, inadequate infrastructure maintenance and an absence of urban management.

Over 400 lives were lost. The devastation to public roads and infrastructure as well as private property runs into billions of rand. About 14 000 households are affected in eThekweni alone with about 4000 houses destroyed and just over 8000 houses partially damaged.

South Africa has experienced the worst floods in 60 years. The devastation caused by the floods together with the ongoing war in Europe and Asia has led to inflationary increases. Fuel and food prices have increased. We live in unprecedented times.

In July 2021, eThekweni, and other cities in KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng witnessed looting and trauma with the civil unrest. In this issue we provide an update. Thanks to Pt Bhagirathi Basdhew, a resident of Phoenix, for sharing his views with us.

1 May is Workers' Day. It is celebrated across the world for over 136 years. We share two mantras of the Rig Veda that provides guidance on labour matters such as workers' rights and duties.

In this issue we pay tribute to the workers around the world who fought for 1 May to be International Workers' Day. We also cover the critical issues of child labour and new forms of exploitation. Our feature article shares a view on the Varna System. These articles were produced by our writers collective.

Veda Jyoti Editorial Committee

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ओम् विसर्माणं कृणुहि वितमेषां ये भुञ्जते अपृणन्तो न उक्थैः

Aum visarmāṇaṁ kṛṇuhi vitameṣāṁ ye bhun̄jate apr̄ṇanto na ukthaiḥ. Rig Veda 5.42.9

"May God take away the wealth of those who exploit others, without sharing it with those who really toil to earn!"

When people sell their labour to earn an income, they commit to earning their wages through honest efforts.

Whether one is a landlord renting property to earn an income; or is a worker in a factory, shop, office, household, or working for the state - earning through honest means is the foundation of Dharma.

Those who own the means of production should not exploit workers or renters.

Rig Veda 5.42.9 calls for those who exploit others and do not share their wealth with those in need, to be placed in dark cells.

Today we witness many who have means not sharing their wealth with the needy. They continue to enjoy their riches alone. This is the case with rich nations not sharing

the wealth with poor nations. We see a hoarding of vaccines, food, and other resources.

People who do not perform benevolent deeds that benefit society must be kept far from the sunshine.

Those who prosper in their vocation to benefit for themselves alone are averse to devotion, care, and concern for humanity.

ओम् वेमि त्वा पूषन्नृञ्जसे वेमि स्तोतव आघृणे

Aum vemi tvā pūṣannṛñjase vemi stotava āghṛṇe.

Rig Veda 8.4. 17

“O Lord Almighty, bestow on me the privilege of enjoying the wealth earned by honest, hard labour.”

When leaders, owners of businesses, and workers earn wealth through honest labour, society works for the benefit of all.

Leaders who are greedy and steal money for their own gains do a disservice to society. Businesses that practice corrupt acts and gain profits through actions that exploit and divide, are not competitive and harm the economy. Equally, workers who are dishonest and deceitful also harm the economy.

All who work in respectful, honest, and caring manner deserve to reap the fruit of their labour. All human beings deserve to have eight hours of work, eight hours of rest and eight hours of leisure which should include time devoted to reading and spiritual pursuits.



Message from the president

Namaste Dear Readers

We have just celebrated Earth Day on the 22 April. The universe consists of the five elements, earth, fire, water, air, and ether which are most essential for us to live long and healthy lives. The destruction of the environment due to neglect, selfishness, greed for power, disrespect of nature and all living beings, is what brings about the downfall of humanity.

It is imperative that we humans with the gift of knowledge and a mind to decipher right from wrong ensure that respect and care for the precious commodities bestowed on us by Paramatma is in place. We must ensure that our natural environment is not destroyed. We need to ensure sustainability of our planet for our future generations.

The Prithivi Sukta of the Atharva Veda emphasises that the Earth (Bhumi) is our Benefactress. Man, from the beginning of history has his social and cultural roots grounded in this Earth that he associates with from birth. It arouses feelings of loving, caring, and belonging to one's Motherland – giving rise to patriotic songs and National Anthems.

On 1 May we join people across the world to celebrate International Workers' Day let us commit to support the call for the universal income grant to households. Let us also be discerning in the articles we buy and support the end of child labour.

In the Atharva Veda we learn that the Earth is the mistress of all that was ours, all that is ours and all that would be ours. The mantra goes on to say that there are six virtues that sustain the Earth. These are truth, righteousness, devotion to a cause, hard labour, determination to overcome obstacles in the path of greatness and sacrifice of selfishness. If all of these are practised, this Earth will always be a beautiful planet to live on.

“The divine forces sleeplessly and ceaselessly protect the Earth that gives to the world all that she has; let the Earth yield us honey and all that is dear to us and then saturate us with grandeur.” Atharva Veda.

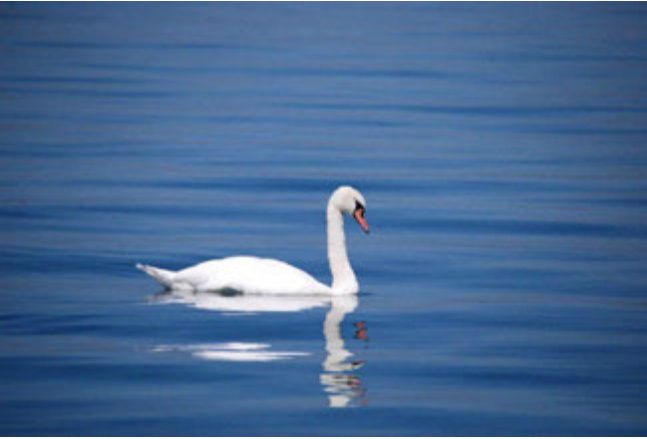
While reading through this issue let us remember those who still do not have water in their homes and those who have lost all their belongings due to the recent spate of flooding causing devastation and loss of lives.

The Varna System

At the beginning of human creation all human beings belonged to one race. There were no class differences among them. Differences emerged as society evolved and is a social construct. The different *varnas* (caste/class) in society were formed according to occupations. Varna was not based on birth but on occupation.

In the Yajur Veda 26.2 all classes of people are noted and are given Divine knowledge equally. A description of the classes being compared to human body is found in Yajur Veda 31.11.

The Bhagavat Purana indicates that in the very beginning of Satya Yuga there was only one varna and that was called "*Hansa*" meaning swan - a symbol of purity.



The Sanskrit word varna is derived from the root "*vri*" – to choose. In this way every person is free to choose a livelihood and occupation suited to his/her nature and aptitude.

Varna is determined by the qualities, deeds and by the nature of a person.

The word varna in the Rig Veda, translates to colour, but the system has nothing to do with the individual's skin colour. It has everything to do with classifying individuals based on their skills, characteristics, and attributes.

Colour in this instance is about the rainbow of life. The full spectrum that makes up light. In society all talents, all characteristics and attributes of different people need to come together to make society work.



The varna system was originally created to give structure to Indian society based on an individual's qualities and not on one's birth right which is what it has developed into.

The great Vedic Rishi Manu – the patron saint of social thinkers, gave us a social order and divided society into four classes known as *Varna Vyavastha*.

The Varna Vyavastha consisted of four classes amongst human beings on the principle of Division of Labour according to the capacities and potentialities of each group based on merit.

People were divided into four broad divisions. The intellectual ones were given the name Braahmanas, the energetic and dominating group was named Kshatriyas, people of commercial tendencies were named Vaishyas and those who took to manual labour were given the name Shudras. This type of classification exists in every country and in every society, though known by different names.

Braahmana – the learned one

Braahmanas are all those individuals who are highly evolved, learned scholars devoted to the pursuit of knowledge. A Braahmana is a strong person of peaceful disposition.

Based on Vedic views he/she is the "head" of the "personified" society.

A Braahmana's duties are defined in the Manusmriti (chapter 2.88) as: "To learn and to teach, to perform religious ceremonies and to exhort others to do so."



Thus, as a priest he/she is to accept alms and to give alms. It is also the duty of the Braahmana to renounce the surplus more than the individual's needs.

The Gita (chapter 18.41-44) says: serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, humility, wisdom, and belief in God, are the qualities of a Braahmana.

They are therefore best placed to determine the vision and values of any society.

Kshatriya – the protectors

A Kshatriya's responsibility is to protect society. He/she is expected to portray considerable strength of body and character.



Based on the Vedic view he/she is the "arms" of the "personified" society.

In the Manusmriti, his/her duties are to protect society, govern and administer or rule a country, to live a disciplined life, to give alms, to acquire knowledge and to live a life of devotion.

The Gita also lists bravery, splendour, patience, dexterity to face challenges in war and adversity as the natural qualities of a Kshatriya.

Vaishya – the business owners

They are the productive class. Their duty is to protect animals and the land, create wealth and prosperity. The Vaishya has a strong tendency towards business and monetary affairs.



The Vedic view indicates that the Vaishya is the "stomach" of the "personified" society.

The Manusmriti (chapter 1.90) outlines the following tendencies of a Vaishya: "To engage in business, trade, commerce, agriculture, to rear livestock, to engage in industrial work, to acquire knowledge, to give donations and to live a life of devotion." The Gita outlines similar qualities.

Shudras - the workers

A Shudra has little tendency towards intellectual pursuits but can perform manual and skilled labour.

The Gita and the Manusmriti point out that the Shudra renders service to society by performs manual labour.

The Vedic view presents the Shudra to be the "feet" and "legs" of the "personified" society thus sustaining society.



Does the varna system treat human beings unequally, with the brahmins at the top of the hierarchy and the Sudras at the bottom? This is a common observation about the system which is based on the modern caste system.

When we go through the Vedic literature, we find that there is no type of caste discrimination and no concept of untouchability etc. The very concepts of castes by birth, upper and lower castes, superior and inferior castes, outcastes, untouchables, dalits etc. are not sanctioned by Rigveda, Valmiki Ramayana or by Srimad Bhagavad-Gita.

According to Bhagavad Gita in chapter 17 varna is conferred based on the intrinsic nature of an individual, which is a combination of three gunas (qualities): sattva, rajas, and tamas.

Varna vyavastha (literally, the class system) remains one of the most interesting and debatable topics in the study of Vedic culture.

Rig Veda (10.90.11&12) also preaches that harmony and concord among the four Varnas is essential. In the Rig Veda profession or caste is not by birth and is not hereditary, but rather by training, conduct, and education (karma and efforts).

The Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda describes human society as a person. Rig Veda 10.90.9 says Braahmans are the head, Kshatriyas are its arms, Vaishyas are its stomach and Shudras are its legs and feet. Two factors stand out in this analogy:

Firstly, the whole body is one and all its parts are interlinked. Each part has a duty to perform and helps to nourish other parts. Together the functioning of the body takes place, thus the health and strength of the body is maintained, and its development continues. All the organs have equal status, and none is superior or inferior.

Secondly, every organ has its own function to perform. The good health of the whole body depends on the proper functioning of each of the organs. The organs do not work for their own benefit but for the whole body.

Similarly, the relationship among the four classes that make up society is one of mutual coexistence, supporting each other to make society work. The different varnas through cooperation contribute to the composition of a peaceful, happy, and prosperous society.

Vedic Rishis revealed the fact that human society is like the human body. Just as the human body is healthy and strong only if all four parts of the body are joined together

and function in harmony with each other, similarly a human society will be strong only if all four professions or classes work together and function in harmony with each other.

If Braahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra are separated or in conflict with each other, society is negatively affected and disjointed.

To make a healthy and wealthy society harmony and cooperation among the four varnas is necessary. It becomes clear that equality, perfect unity and complimentary of all the four classes of the people is necessary to make society strong and powerful.



The central point of the Vedas is that all men and women are equal by birth, share the same water and food, worship together with common prayers, common purpose, and common oblations, and are united and friendly towards each other. One becomes a warrior (kshatriya), Braahmana (educated ones) or rishi, not by birth but by education, efforts, and training (karma of this life). No one is superior by birth nor is one inferior by birth.

It is possible for an individual to move from class to another by conduct and character.

Despite a Varna System aimed at creating harmony, social inequality manifests in several ways. The rich and the poor, landowners and landless labourers, capitalists and workers, educated and uneducated, employed and unemployed, men and women, modern and backward. Modern society grapples with social divides such as race, class, and gender.

1 May is International Workers' Day

As society modernised over the centuries the gulf between the various social classes widened. Workers experienced hardships and were exploited. Trade Unions were formed to take up the issues faced by workers. Several protests by workers took place.

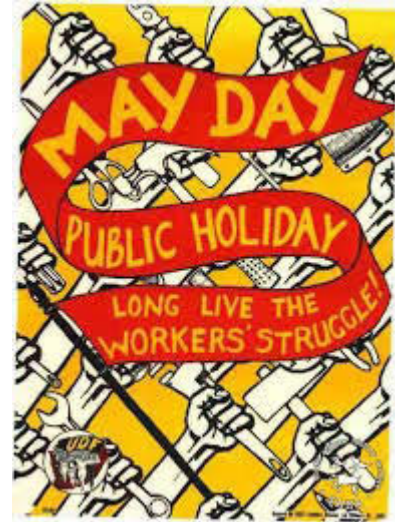
On 7 October 1884, the Federation of Organised Trades and Labour Unions, in the United States of America and Canada had resolved – that a workday should constitute 8 hours as a legal day's labour as of 01 May 1886. When this was not implemented, despite the appeals of workers, the Marxist International Socialist Congress in 1889 adopted a resolution for an international demonstration to demand that the workers should not be made to work for more than 8 hours a day.

Following these events, 1 May became an annual event - International Workers' Day, also known as Labour Day or May Day. It is a celebration of the courage of the working class as they come together to object to poor working conditions.

1 May commemorates the achievements of the labour movement and celebrates the working class. More than 80 countries have declared it a public holiday. This day is celebrated on different days in different countries, but generally falls on the first day of May.

The specific history of International Workers' Day varies from country to country. Trade unions and workers faced varying obstacles in their plight to ensure favourable working conditions and to be recognised as major contributors to the economy.

In South Africa, the fight for improved working conditions and for the recognition of Black Trade Unions intensified during the apartheid era. Success was ultimately achieved through the determination and commitment of the unions and workers to improve the unsatisfactory and unsafe conditions to which workers were exposed in the mines and factories, in the shops and on farms. Thus Workers' Day is a significant public holiday in South Africa.



The first recorded celebration of Workers' Day in South Africa was organised by the Johannesburg District Trades Council in 1895.

The journey towards the recognition of International Workers' Day as a public holiday in South Africa was bolstered by the 100th anniversary of May Day in 1986.

The South African labour federation Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), formed in December 1985, demanded that May Day be recognised as a public holiday, Workers Day, and called for a stay-away on 1 May 1986.

The call was supported by many organisations, significantly the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) and the United Democratic Front (UDF), as well as many traditionally conservative organisations – such as the African Teachers Association, the National African Chamber of Commerce, and the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (SEIFSA), the metal industry employers' organisation.

On 1 May 1986 more than 1,5-million workers observed COSATU's call, joined by thousands of school pupils, students, taxi drivers, hawkers, shopkeepers, domestic workers, self-employed and unemployed people. While the call was less successful in some regions, in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) area, (now Gauteng Province), the heartland of industry, the response was massive. Rallies were held in all the major cities, even though many of these were banned in advance by the state.

South Africa's workers had unilaterally declared the day a public holiday and stayed away from work. Premier Foods became the first large employer to declare 1 May and 16 June as paid holidays. Following this, many other companies followed suit bowing to the inevitable.



Thus, in South Africa, the role of the Trade Union movement in securing worker's rights, democracy, and the vote cannot be over emphasised. Without the strikes and sacrifices of workers freedom would not have been secured.

International Workers' Day serves as a reminder of the important contributions made to all societies by the working class and celebrates the union leaders who were committed to, and inspired others to fight for their right to improved working conditions.

Although the aspiration for good working conditions has not yet been universally realised, as is evident from the many cases of child labour and unfavourable working conditions reported on all over the world, this day does remain a celebration of the strides made over the years.

It reminds us to work tirelessly towards a world in which workers are treated fairly and their significance is acknowledged throughout the year. Moreover, it is a reminder of the arduous efforts of workers who work to support and improve the lives of their families and contribute effectively to the workforce and the economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to highlight the importance of workers in society. The contribution of essential and frontline workers during the height of the pandemic has clearly shown the commitment of workers all over the world to serving their communities and emphasises the continued need for favourable working environments and the fair treatment of workers.



International Workers' Day is a special reminder of the valuable contribution made by the working class. May we continue to acknowledge their contributions on Workers' Day and every other day.



New Forms of Exploitation and Displacement

New forms of exploitation are shaping the modern world. The effect is that the poor is being pushed to the periphery through increased unemployment and deepening inequalities. There are several changes to the world of work emerging. One of them is due to the advances in technology.

Since 1980, the global economy has undergone a dramatic transformation, with the globalization of the labour force, the rise of automation, and the growth of Big Finance, Big Pharma, and Big Tech. The social democratic consensus has given way to a new phase of capitalism that is leaving workers further behind and reshaping the class structure.

The precariat, a mass class defined by unstable labour arrangements, lack of identity, and erosion of rights, is emerging as today's "dangerous class." (Guy Standing, 2018). The precariat refers to the social class formed by people with no job security, or no prospect of regular employment, distinct from the lumpenproletariat¹.

The poor and unemployed have become the precariat which is the first class in history to be losing acquired rights – cultural, civil, social, economic, and political. The precariat globally faces deepening *poverty traps*, as governments have moved to means-testing, conditional social assistance, and workfare.

The 20th century job creator - the factory - is no longer a job magnet for semi-skilled workers in large numbers. Technological advancement in artificial intelligence, robotics, and intelligent management systems are the new dominating forces in the manufacturing process in the 21st century. Technology is replacing low-skilled labour as the central force in production.

According to the McKinsey Global Institute, by 2030, between 3 to 14% of the global workforce will need to look for new occupations. This is as digitalisation, automation, and advances in artificial intelligence shake up the world of work (MGI 2017, 1). The kinds of skills

required to work will change. This will have considerable implications for career paths.

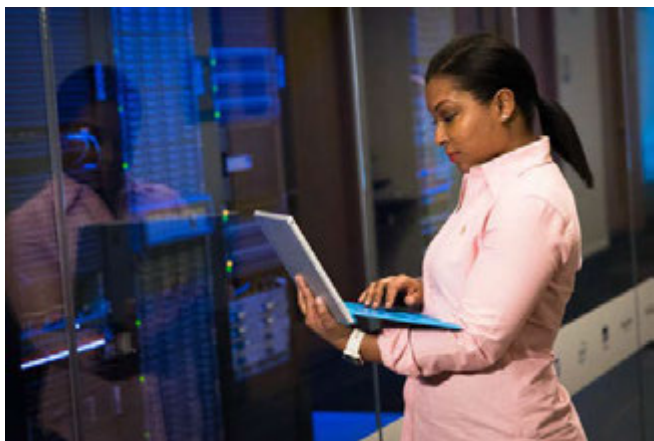
Broadband infrastructure together with nano and internet technology has enabled services to be conducted from anywhere at any time. This has led to job displacement, repositioning of jobs into advanced skills and has brought about an increase in warehousing and distribution industries to support e-commerce such as freight and logistics. While this poses a challenge for the current workforce, it also presents an opportunity for the next generation of workers to be skilled in new areas that the digital economy requires.

Global unemployment is projected to stand at 207 million in 2022, surpassing its 2019 level by some 21 million. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is projecting that total hours worked globally in 2022 will remain almost 2 per cent below their pre-pandemic level. Overall, key labour market indicators in all regions - Africa, the Americas, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia - have yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. The pandemic is structurally altering labour markets in such ways that a return to pre-crisis baselines may well be insufficient to make up for the damage caused by the pandemic.



¹ According to Karl Marx in The Communist Manifesto, lumpenproletariat is the lowest stratum of the industrial working class, including also, such undesirables as tramps and criminals.

Migrant workers – some of whom are undocumented, such as those found in South Africa – often enjoy fewer employee rights and face less favourable terms and conditions of employment, which raises questions of fairness and equality. Such inequality undermines the development opportunities of these workers as businesses around the world are confronted with a shortage of skilled labour. (ILO and IOE 2019).



At the same time, gender inequality remains a persistent challenge. It is estimated that 865 million women worldwide have the potential to contribute to the global economy and national development (ILO and IOE 2019, 34). There is growing evidence of a real expansion in female employment. This trend may primarily be observed in developing countries, where women’s participation in education is on the rise and progress is being made on gender equality. Yet, gender disparities “remain among the most persistent forms of inequality across all countries”, as pointed out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2019, 147).

South Africa has had relative levels of macro-economic stability and the increased expenditure on social services served to lift households out of deep poverty especially in areas where economic activity is not robust. However, structural poverty with high and increasing unemployment rates, a low skills base, and an inability by the majority population to access the economy has led to a widening gap in incomes and inequalities.

Since 1994, the state has spent heavily to improve infrastructure and social services for poor communities. However, deep disparities remain. The challenges include the following:

Basic education

Basic education still does not equip school leavers with the skills required in a modern economy, which requires core competencies in English as well as at least one other

language; computer use; creativity, design skills and problem solving; the ability to use digitised machinery and tools; and sufficient maths for basic economic transactions. Access to quality education is still determined by where you live and by household income.

Lower-income households

Lower-income households still lack productive assets. Moreover, where small businesses do emerge, they face a hostile environment. Many do not have access to the infrastructure needed to engage in the economy, affordable, and reliable electricity, broadband, water, sanitation, and transport. The main financial, wholesale and marketing institutions are not geared to supporting small and micro enterprises, especially when they are new and innovative.



Workplaces

Workplaces are still characterised by highly hierarchical management and poor communication, which in turn fuels conflict. Both the private and public sector retain the work organisation set up under apartheid, which deskilled the majority while relying on a formally qualified minority. That in turn underpins unusual unequal pay scales by international standards. High pay for skilled people is also sustained by inequalities in education and restrictions on skilled immigration.

To overcome the new challenges we face, all sectors of society: business, labour, faith, civil society, academia, and government need to work together.

The well-known Samgyana Sukta of the Rigveda describes the fundamental strands of socialist ideology and principles of unity.

“Go together, talk together, let your minds apprehend alike: in like manner as the ancient gods concurring accepted their portion of the sacrifice.” Rig Veda 10.191.2

Child Labour: The Worst Form of Exploitation

Global supply chains have created tremendous prosperity for our society, lifting millions out of poverty by providing livelihoods. However, violations such as child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking have persisted as supply networks continued to become more complex.

According to International Labour Organisation (ILO) there are about 160 million children who remain in child labour and twenty-five million adults who toil under conditions of forced labour. Eleven percent of the world’s child population are in bonded labour depriving them of their right to go to school without interference from work.

Children in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety and moral development made up more than half of all child labourers, numbering eighty-five million in absolute terms. The largest absolute number of child labourers is in the Asia and the Pacific region, but Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region with the highest incidence of child labour with more than one in five children in child labour.

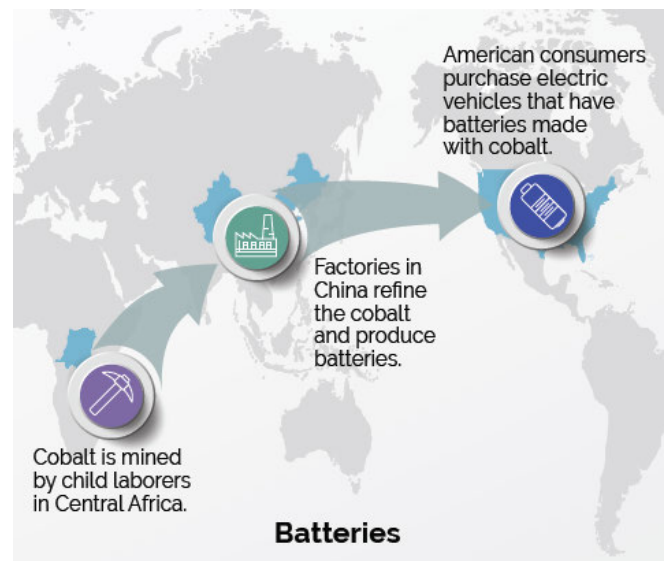
155 goods from seventy-seven countries use child labour and forced labour in the world today. Six new goods - gloves, rubber gloves, hair products, pome and stone fruits, sandstone, and tomato products, emerged in the latest listings. The Ethiopian *khat* – a flowering plant native to the Horn of Africa used as a stimulant and fish harvested by Taiwan’s distant-water fishing fleet are two new finds linked to child labour practices.²



Many businesses at all stages of the supply chain, including major global brands, acknowledge these abuses. Businesses can play a critical role in improving

² “2020 List of Goods produced by Child Labour or Forced Labour” Dept of Labour, United States of America. Kind acknowledgments for the infographics in this article.

working conditions for workers around the world – and many companies have recognised the economic benefit of doing so.



Many global companies have engendered a race to the bottom. They push companies to find ever-cheaper sources of labour. Cheap labour is freely available in many of the developing countries where textile and garment production, farming and other economic activity in the production value chain takes place. Many of these child labourers work to satisfy the demand of consumers in Europe, the US, and beyond.



Chocolate companies found to be using child labour in the cocoa farms include Nestle, Hershey’s, Mars, ADM (Archer Daniels Midland Company), Cadbury, Kraft, Fowler’s Chocolate, Crunch, Kit-Kat, and Aero.



Fashion brands that use child labour include H&M, Forever 21, GAP, Nike, Zara, Urban Outfitters, Aldo, Primark, Adidas, Walmart, Uniqio, Victoria's Secret, Aeropostale, and La Senza. Other famous brands that have admitted to using child labour are Apple, Disney, Philip Morris, and Toys R.³

Child labour is a particular issue for fashion because much of the supply chain requires low-skilled labour and some tasks are even better suited to children than adults. In cotton picking employers prefer to hire children for their small fingers which do not damage the crop. In garment factories children perform diverse and often arduous tasks such as dyeing, sewing buttons, cutting and trimming threads, folding, moving, and packing garments. In small workshops and home sites, children are put to work on intricate tasks such as embroidery, sequinning, and smocking (making pleats).

Children work at all stages of the supply chain in the fashion industry: from the production of cotton seeds in Benin, harvesting in Uzbekistan, yarn spinning in India, right through to the different phases of putting garments together in factories across Bangladesh.

Children are seen as obedient workers who slip under the radar, making them easy to manage. There is no supervision or social control mechanisms. There are no trade unions that can help them to bargain for better working conditions. These are very low-skilled workers without a voice, so they are easy targets.

³ Wisestep: Krishna Reddy: Top 28 Companies That Use Child Labour Still!

Tackling child labour is further complicated by the fact it is just a symptom of larger problems. Where there is extreme poverty, there will be children willing to work cheaply and susceptible to being tricked into dangerous or poorly paid work.

If parents have no education they will end up in low-paid work; their children will be forced to work, they will miss their education, and they too will end up in low-paid work as adults.

Employers get away with it because the fashion supply chain is hugely complex, and it is hard for companies to control every stage of production. That makes it possible to employ children without big brands and consumers ever finding out.

We all need to act to bring an end to the practice of exploiting children. Depriving children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity is harming the future and making the world a less desirable place.

"If we are to create peace in our world, we must begin with our children." Mahatma Gandhi



The July 2021 Unrest

The tragic violence and looting that engulfed KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng between 8 to 17 July 2021 would remain etched in the minds of most people for many years to come. According to the report of the Expert Panel the economy suffered a loss of R50 billion. 354 people died while thousands were seriously injured.

Arya Samaj is a reform movement guided by ten principles, one of them being principle 9 that: "No one should be content with promoting his good only. On the contrary, he should look for his good in promoting the good of all." We are also guided by the many lessons contained in the Vedas, one of them being just governance.

In this respect, the South African constitution and democratic values provide a framework for all to live in South Africa without fear and in comfort. The events of July 2021 indicate a lack of respect for life and property, denotes a dark and destructive tendency and a decline in human and democratic values. The lack of police and security presence to bring about law and order and stop the senseless lawlessness should not be repeated in future.

It is believed that former president, Jacob Zuma's rejection of the State Capture Commission's decision to have him arrested was a major factor in the build-up to the violence and looting. In the run-up to his arrest his supporters used social media to encourage people to make the country ungovernable, to physically prevent his detention and to remove the current president from office.



Photo sourced from Daily Maverick

On the night of Jacob Zuma's arrest, trucks were torched and looted on the national road between Durban and

Johannesburg, the N3. This led to its closure once more. Previous closures on the N3 protested foreign truck drivers. This was unresolved despite the disruption and harm to the economy.

A day later the violence spread to shopping centres and malls in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, where planned looting on a large scale occurred. It was clear that criminal elements were involved. The absence of the South African Police Service (SAPS) to anticipate and respond adequately to criminality and violence for over a week was a cause for great concern.



Photo sourced from eNCA

Many persons from civil society, businesses and the security industry expressed their profound frustrations at the lack of the government's duty to protect its citizens. The claims of budget constraints resulting in SAPS not having sufficient equipment like rubber bullets and tear gas canisters is unacceptable.

Businesses believed that the response by the state, to these well-planned attacks targeted at destruction to a large scale on retail centres and warehouses, has been inadequate. The state had demonstrated vulnerability and indecisiveness. It is strongly believed that there was a major intelligence failure, in that, the National Security Council did not receive any clear direct information about the impending violence, resulting in the July unrest, where railway lines were stripped of metal, banks were robbed of cash and ATMs were carried away.

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) was deployed to assist SAPS who seemed to be overwhelmed by the surging crowds of looters. Initially 2,500 members were deployed but the number was later increased to 25,000 which resulted in calming the aggressive and violent situation. The organisers or the real instigators of the violence and looting remain faceless even though

there was a mastermind behind the orchestrated unrest with strong suspicions pointing to the cracks within the ruling party.

The inability of the state to protect lives and property have left many feeling uncertain and vulnerable. No one has yet been held accountable. Many feel that this could happen again.

The Expert Panel Report recommends that cabinet must take overall responsibility for the events leading to and during the July unrest. It calls on cabinet to drive a national response plan that demonstrates its own willingness to be held accountable, to hold the public office bearers who failed in their responsibilities to account, and to give regular feedback on what is happening to ensure those who planned and instigated the unrest are brought to book.

The KwaZulu-Natal leg of the South African Human Rights Commission's investigative hearing into the July unrest began on 17 November 2021 and concluded on 6 December 2021. In Phoenix, a total of 36 people were arrested for the reported 36 deaths. One of those arrested died in October 2021 whilst in detention, while others were released on bail. These cases are pending in the Verulam Magistrate's Court.

The Phoenix Ubuntu Forum is calling for the details of the investigations. Two submissions have been made to the South African Human Rights Commission.

The Phoenix Ubuntu Forum during an interview with Newsbreak on Radio Lotus has said "the Phoenix massacre ... was coined on social media ... to take the focus away from the killings and lootings ... the President must act firmly ... there are names submitted. They need to be identified, they need to be arrested as they contributed to the chaos and destruction of our country."

The commission looked at the causes of the unrest as well as the impact it had on human rights. Amongst those who testified were families of the people who died.

"Citizens must live in unity, harmony, and accord, be organised and co-operative. Like our ancient forebears performed their duties righteously, so should we not falter in performing our duties." (Rig Veda 10.191.2)

Sanskrit words explained

सेवा

sevā

Seva means "**service**"

Referring to the selfless efforts for the welfare of all.

A more recent interpretation of the word is "**dedication to others**".

It is about offering one's time, energy, knowledge, experience, physical labour, money, teaching, or any kind of aid or service without expectation, acknowledgment, or reward in return.

Sevā is one of the cornerstones of Karma Yoga (the yoga of selfless service) and Bhakti Yoga (The yoga of devotion) wherein selfless giving is a spiritual practice.

Sevā is an expression of non-attachment in action especially when we extend our hands in acts of compassion.

A sevak is one who performs sevā.

I slept and dreamt

That life was joy.

I awoke and saw that

Life was service.

I acted and behold,

Service was joy.

Rabindranath Tagore

Announcements

You are invited to send articles to the editorial committee for publication. Please email your submissions to admin@aryasamajsa.org

Acceptance conditions:

1. All submissions must be in word for the attention of the editorial committee.
2. All Sanskrit words must be in Italics
3. Photographs submitted must be in high resolution
4. All references must be cited
5. The limits for articles will be as follows
 - 5.1. Short articles & messages 300 words
 - 5.2. Current issues and social justice 900 words
 - 5.3. Feature articles up to 3000 words
 - 5.4. Secondary articles up to 1500 words
6. The acceptance of articles will be considered based on the following criteria:
 - 6.1. Vedic teachings
 - 6.2. Principles of the Arya Samaj
 - 6.3. Social justice and social action
 - 6.4. Relevance to current issues

To contribute to projects of the Arya Samaj contact admin@aryasamajsa.org
Please send your comments and suggestions to admin@aryasamajsa.org

Rig Veda 9.63.5

कृण्वन्तो विश्वामार्यम् "Krinvanto Vishwam Aryam" Make the World Noble

Yajur Veda 36.18

मित्रस्याहम् चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूताननि समीक्षे mitrasyāhama chakṣuṣā sarvāṇi bhūtānani samīkṣe May we all live in friendly cooperation and mutual trust

मित्रस्याहम् चक्षुषा समीक्षामहे "mitrasyaaham chakshushaa samikshaamahe" May we look at all with an Equal and Friendly Eye

Veda Jyoti Founding Editors were Pt Nardev Vedalankar (1913-1994) and the late Manohar Somera



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