

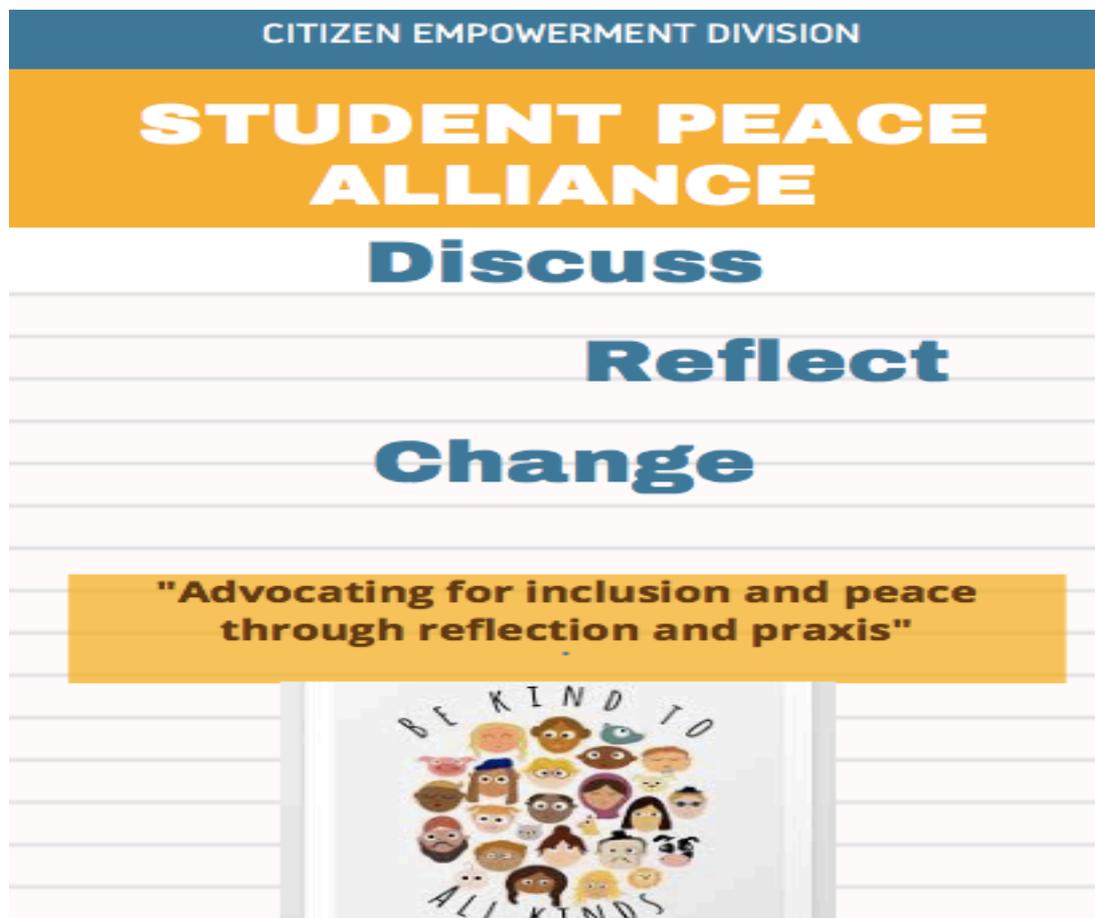
## **STUDENT PEACE ALLIANCE**

The Student Peace Alliance group of the Citizen Empowerment Division of St. Mary's School comprises students between the ages of 13-17 years. The series of Peace Circle dialogues are focused on creating channels of meaningful discussion with various people: to listen to their hopes and fears; learn from their experiences; and empower students to discuss and debate critical issues that concern their future. The first chapter of Student Peace Alliance commenced on Sep 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 on the occasion of International Day of Peace.



**Chapter 1 :- Intergenerational dialogue on Reimagining Peace : A space for Dialogue- Youth rage, Education crisis, and prospects for Peace for the younger generation in Kashmir.**

In face of the tremendous challenges that the young people have faced in Kashmir, there have been numerous stories of young people being agents of peace. **The discussion unraveled the narratives of young people, their perspectives on the real story of Kashmir, and their visions for how youth can be more effectively engaged as peace builders for a better tomorrow. The interactive dialogue was an attempt to understand the saga of Kashmir by focusing on the perspectives of the people who live over there. To develop and discuss the need to initiate discussions and revive the sense of ‘hope’ about prospects for peace in Kashmir and for students to understand the grievances and difficulties faced by their counterparts in Kashmir.** Mr.Imad Ul Riyaz, social development practitioner from Kashmir was the speaker for the session.



## **Session Report**

### **Tanvi Dahiya (8 C)**

On September 27th, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, Student Peace Alliance had its first session on issues in Kashmir. We got a chance to interact with Mr. Imad, a humanitarian worker from Kashmir, who told us a lot about its current situation. Despite being an online session, it was highly interactive, since we were able to ask questions and put in our own inputs. The session started when Mr. Imad asked us to express our views on Kashmir. He proceeded to tell us about what happened when lockdown was declared in Kashmir last year. Many were shocked to know that some Kashmiri students were not able to contact their families for six months.

Mr. Imad stated that Kashmiris also feel alienated and suffer from emotional trauma due to unresolved violence. Their pent-up frustration is gradually turning into hatred, which is clearly evident when the youth rebel against the military forces. Keeping the current situation in mind, a student asked about the condition of COVID-19 in Kashmir. We were informed that half of the people did not report cases or get tested because they didn't trust the government. I had asked about the condition of education in the UT, and was appalled to know that students did not have access to proper education and usually had to finish mountains of syllabus in a matter of months due to repeated lockdowns. I consider education a birthright, and to think that so many children are missing out on quality education is unacceptable and deeply troubling.

### **Anirban Ghosh (11 B)**

Mr.Imad shared how the media is very important in the integration of Kashmir to India, and how the usage of terms like “terrorists” to address Kashmiri rebels is not the correct way to go about it, and how even these little things make Kashmiris feel alienated. This misinterpretation of Kashmiris in the media and lack of communication due to the lockdown leads to a case much like Plato’s Cave. Where people in Kashmir feel like other Indians also don’t support them, which is not the case. Even if someone tells them that there are indeed people who support their struggle, they refuse to believe it because of the distrust that has already been established by the media and the forced lockdown. He left us with the message that the struggle of Kashmir is as much our struggle as it is theirs. He remarked that he was glad to see students be so well informed about the situation, and how fighting for Kashmir is very important, as it is our responsibility to ensure that people show their solidarity and stand up when wrong decisions are being made. Stating Martin Niemöller’s “First they came” telling us how important it is to maintain support for every cultural group, as that is where the strength of our country lies in.

### **Suhani Sarin (7 A)**

“It was very engrossing to know about Kashmir and the state of our nation. I hope that we get more sessions like this so that we can interact with different people and hear their opinions. I would also like the next session to be about the current concern in our nation- farmers bill.”

## **Chapter 2 :- Unlearning Gender : Towards a new perspective**

The second chapter “Unlearning Gender: Towards a new perspective” was conducted on 28th of November, 2020. The pandemic has seen families locked into their homes for the longest time. The work from home scenario which rose out of the Covid-19 pandemic seemed like a boon from heaven. But while men worked out of homes, women were required to work from home while also working at home. With the whole family being confined to the house, in most households the woman’s socially designated role as unpaid housekeeper and caregiver meant that she carried the burden of having all family members to look after 24x7x365 days. The session aimed to help students understand why such disparities exist and what we as students and adults can do to ensure that future generations witness an equal and gender less society. **The session was facilitated by Ms. Kamla Bhasin, well known feminist and social activist.** During the session the following questions were posed by some of the students:

- ❖ “One of my personal experiences was when I was bullied for being a “girl drummer.” How can we change this mindset towards other girls?” – Suhani Sarin (7 A)
- ❖ “I have seen some women heavily criticised for their choice of clothes and lifestyle. These snide remarks are often passed by many women. Do you think that the issues related to toxic femininity should also be addressed?” - Pranjli Singh (7 A)
- ❖ “Why are practices like Kanya dan and dowry still prevalent today, despite the fact that both treat women as an object instead of a human?” - Diya Phogaat (7)
- ❖ ‘Love Jihad’ was once a concept limited to right wing activists. Now the conspiracy theory is on the legislative agenda in states. Does this also in a way reflects the deep-rooted

patriarchal thinking that women are not capable of making informed decisions and are gullible in making important life choices? – Ali Hussain (8 B)

# STUDENT PEACE ALLIANCE GROUP



OF  
**ST. MARY'S SCHOOL,**  
SAFDARJUNG ENCLAVE  
INVITES YOU

FOR A DIALOGUE

.....  
**UNLEARNING GENDER:  
TOWARDS A NEW PERSPECTIVE**



IN CONVERSATION WITH

**Ms. Kamla Bhasin**

Feminist Activist &  
Social Scientist

**29th NOVEMBER || 3:00PM - 5:00PM**