

Message from Deepak Tripathi for Human Dignity Workshop, December 2021

Fellow Scholars and Practitioners attending this Work Shop:

We meet today at a critical time in human history. Our planet faces three major crises – conflict, climate change and poverty. Crises on a number of fronts. We read, hear and watch in the news about conflict in several parts of our planet.

We know the cost of conflict is high. People die or get hurt. Women, children, the elderly and minorities are most vulnerable. Food, health and education – the essentials for human existence – are scarce.

In agrarian societies, farmers cannot grow crops. People cannot find jobs. In worst cases, there is famine, disease, grief and despair, which again strike the most vulnerable. It is catastrophic for many.

War, climate change, and poverty are the most devastating tragedies to fall on us. Unless we all play our part, these tragedies are bound to result in far worse consequences. Concerted efforts on all fronts is essential. We have to work together.

This is why I am suggesting today a set of actions that we can all take in our wonderful international community of scholars and practitioners interested in Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies. The name I have thought of is “Manifesto of Dignity.”

1. Respect the dignity of all humans, even when disagreeing
2. Listen carefully to others’ views before reacting in haste
3. Give everyone space
4. Respect the environment and avoid excessive consumption
5. Choose lifestyle that avoids excessive consumption

Respecting the dignity of others avoids disruption in human relationships. It helps interaction and cooperation, for it is through cooperation that we can maximise achievements towards common goals.

Listening to people’s views avoids the risk of overpowering other views from which we may learn and add to our own understanding.

Giving everyone space has the benefit of allowing all of us to think freely and independently. It enhances our thinking potential.

Respecting the environment and avoiding excessive consumption is about protecting our surroundings that sustain our existence on this planet. Some of the oldest civilizations have long worshipped the five essentials of life – the Sun, the Earth, air, water, fire. But many of us who have become used to modern life of luxury have forgotten the vital part these five elements of life play to ensure our existence. We do not have to go back and live in caves again. But we should think about what our luxuries cost. The recent Climate Summit in the United Kingdom may not have done enough. But it certainly has reminded us what we must do, and that our effort must continue.

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