

# Chapter 13: Youth Reimagining a Peaceful and Nonviolent 21<sup>st</sup> Century World

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I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought,  
but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones —  
Albert Einstein.

## **Abstract**

Human beings have been present on the planet early for several millennia. Constantly evolving biologically, socially, and economically since coming into existence, one can say that today's society is a result and continuation of the constant changes to human beings, our society and nature. However, if we examine the 21<sup>st</sup> Century particularly and the latter decades of the 20th Century, we can observe the rapid changes to the world. With the cold war ending in 1991 and the September 11 attacks in 2001, some fundamental shifts have been seen in international politics. The rise of Web 2.0 and the coming of Web 3.0 has transformed the information flow around the world along with our society. There has been a fundamental shift in the economic and trade dynamics around the world. 21st Century has also seen a rise in inequalities, the world global pandemic and climate disasters globally. Our social evolution has lagged behind the technological and economic evolution and issues of poverty, human rights abuse, authoritarian regimes, oppression of marginalized communities, and deterioration of the planet have continued.

With the above context, we have also seen a rise in terrorism, crime, their methodologies and mediums as well as the state response to it. Despite the state led conflicts of the 20th Century and setting up of global institutions for cooperation, conflicts between states and people continue to rage and claim lives around the world. In this regard, peace and nonviolence have retained several of their aspects and have also gathered additional relevance, contexts

and applications. We are at a critical juncture as humanity and people to decide which direction to head towards. The problems observed currently might seem like global challenges but these are mere symptoms compared to how worse things can be if we do not take corrective measures as a society today. Peace and Nonviolence should not be seen as mere ends to be achieved any longer but fundamental starting points, axioms and guiding principles on which the world needs to heal, recover and bounce back. For that we need to carefully look within and towards each other with love, a sense of togetherness and pave a path of dignified, safe, healthy and peaceful life for all.

In this intertwined world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there is no scope of solving any major issue by oneself. Harmony and love have to be the objectives with which the world needs to move or we should gear up towards mutually assured destruction.

**Keywords:** Youth, peace, nonviolence, trends, information technology,

## **1 Introduction**

This paper is titled Peace and Nonviolence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century World, with a vision to explore the context of Peace and Nonviolence in our world at present. The premise of the paper is that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has seen rapid changes in the world, in our societies, our relationships, technology, economy, global politics and our very way of life. We will begin with examining the factors and events which have led to those changes and try to understand where we stand today and where we may be headed if we remain on the current trajectory. We will explore the relevance, importance, implications and dynamics of peace and nonviolence in the context of 20th Century new context and try to address the fundamental question posed by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Where do we go from here?”. One of the key themes in the discussion will be on framing a renewed understanding and application of nonviolence with our world today. Finally, we will explore the role of young people in this journey and argue that today’s challenges need today’s solutions and we need to equip young people with the intelligence, required tools, sensitivity and love to decide the way ahead and their handbook for nonviolence in the 21st Century.

If we have to realise Dr. King’s vision of a World House, we shall need more than incremental changes. We will need a radical renewal of values, reimagined social structures and all our relationships, beginning with our inner transformation.

## **2 The 21<sup>st</sup> Century World**

20<sup>th</sup> Century concluded with the one of the most significant events in global history, the conclusion of the cold war which impacted the world in many ways. The very beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century saw the September 11 attacks and the start of the war on terror. In the past two decades of the century, the world has seen major conflicts, invasions, economic crises, revolutions, rise in global warming, inequalities, and most recently the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

At the same time, we have seen the rise of the global economy, the emergence of disruptive technologies, rapid consumerism evidenced by the rise of e-commerce, creation of massive manufacturing hubs in developing countries. Technological advancements have seen the rise of digital media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and WhatsApp which have rapidly transformed the way we communicate with each other personally, and professionally. Digital media has had a disruptive impact on mass communication, news media, and platforms of engagement for political leaders.

Rise of Web3 and Artificial Intelligence (AI) while at its nascent stage has already made its impact felt in the financial world as well as the tech industry jobs. We are yet to get a complete picture of the direction as well as the impact of AI and Web3 on the world at large. All the above has already happened in the first quarter of the century. If there was one crucial framework to measure the performance of humanity and society in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it could be the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, adopted after the unsuccessful campaign of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

As of 2023, the world is lagging majorly on the SDGs, and the Covid 19 pandemic and its various effects, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as the energy crisis, global inflation, disruption in the global supply chain, rising unemployment, have only made life more difficult. At the same time, the global rise in temperatures and its impact on the climate crises can't be emphasized enough.

## **3 Concerning Trends**

The world is enduring the highest number of conflicts since the creation of the United Nations. Approximately 2 billion

people live in conflict-affected countries. Refugees were at the highest number on record in 2021 and forced displacement is continuing to grow, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. As of the end of May 2022, some 6.5 million refugees had fled Ukraine alone, mostly women and children (Sustainable Development Goals 2022, Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary General).

Many conflicts have continued over the past century across all continents. Authoritarian regimes have continued to exist and wield power, perpetrating human rights abuse, and atrocities against marginalized communities (The Atlantic 20 May 2021).

### **3.1 Inequalities**

Corruption and its various forms have continued to the economic oppression of people and hinder economic growth in many countries. Greed for resources, rising income, and wealth inequalities have only widened the gap between the rich and the poor.

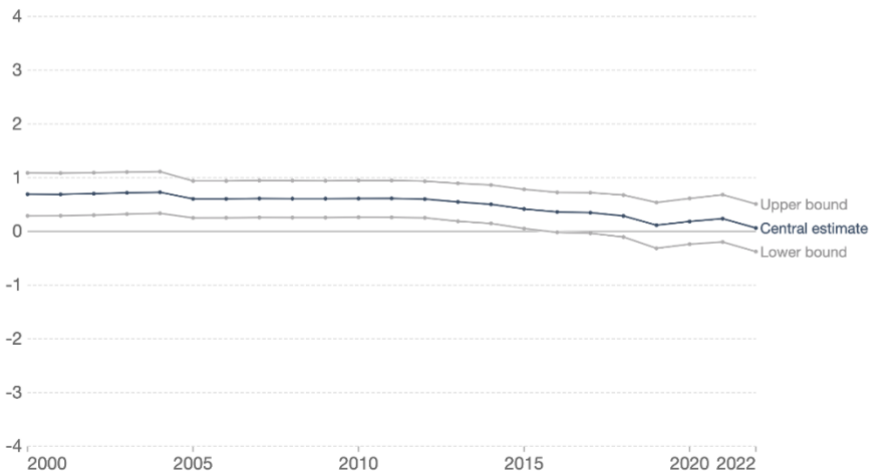
The share of income going to the richest 1 per cent of the global population increased in 46 out of 57 countries and areas with data from 1990 to 2015 (WID – Wealth and Income Database, 05 January 2017).

Access to justice, human rights, and basic necessities is still a dream for many human beings around the world. Separation and divisions based on identities of all kinds have only deepened.

## Equality of civil liberties across social groups, World

Our World  
in Data

Based on the expert assessments and index by V-Dem, weighted by countries' populations. It captures the extent to which social groups — defined by language, ethnicity, religion, race, region, and/or caste — are free from forced labor, have property rights and access to the justice system, and enjoy freedoms of movement. Higher scores mean more equality.



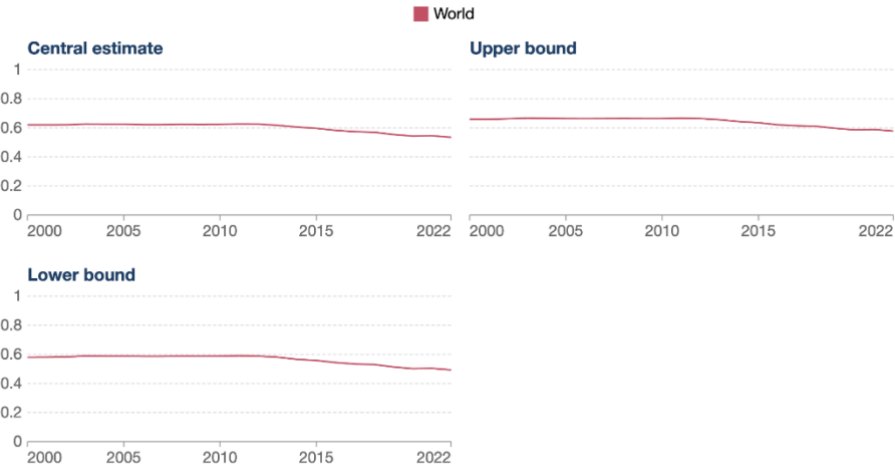
Source: OWID based on V-Dem (v13); Gapminder (v6); HYDE (v3.2); UN (2022)

OurWorldInData.org/human-rights • CC BY

Herre, B. & P. Arriagada 2016. Human Rights. *Our World in Data*. 12 June 2016. <https://ourworldindata.org/human-rights>

Human rights

Based on the expert assessments and index by V-Dem, weighted by countries' populations. It captures the extent to which people are free from government torture, political killings, and forced labor, they have property rights, and enjoy the freedoms of movement, religion, expression, and association. The variables ranges from 0 to 1 (most rights).



Source: OWID based on V-Dem (v13); Gapminder (v6); HYDE (v3.2); UN (2022) OurWorldInData.org/human-rights • CC BY

### **3.2 Climate Change**

Global temperature rise has continued and accelerated over the past decades. This has contributed to natural disasters, erratic weather patterns, floods and droughts, loss of farmers, and tourism income. There has been a rise in desertification of land which will have massive implications on global food security in the future.

As per the United Nations, floods, droughts, storms, and heatwaves are among the more frequent and severe natural disasters that climate change is bringing about. People's lives and livelihoods are severely impacted by these catastrophes, especially those in the most underprivileged and vulnerable populations. Natural ecosystems including forests, coral reefs, and oceans are being impacted by climate change, and this has an effect on the livelihoods of those who depend on these ecosystems (United Nations Climate Change).

Further, drought, land degradation, and desertification are related global processes that affect many different places. They decrease land productivity, exacerbate hunger and poverty, and pose a risk to biodiversity and the provision of ecological services (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought).

### **3.3 Conflicts**

Advancement in technology has resulted in the increased ability of countries and their armed forces to create more destruction. Brown University estimates that 'Direct war violence has killed at least 929,000 people in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and Pakistan. The number of persons who have been sickened or injured as a result of the battles is much larger, as is the number of civilians who have perished indirectly as a result of the loss of infrastructure like hospitals and roads, as well as other war-related issues like environmental degradation. Both thousands of civilian contractors and thousands of American service members have lost their lives in battle. Many people have later passed away from diseases and injuries they contracted in combat zones. Since 2001, more over 387,000 people have died in combat. Also displaced by war are millions of people who are presently residing in conflict zones. At least 38 million people have been forced to flee Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, the Philippines, Libya, and Syria as a result of U.S. post-9/11 warfare. With the exception of World War II, this number exceeds the sum of people displaced by all wars since 1900 (Human Costs, Watson Institute, 2024).

### **3.4 Covid-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic has so far directly or indirectly cost the lives of close to 15 million people. Global health systems have been overwhelmed and many essential health services have been disrupted, posing major threats to progress in fighting other deadly diseases.

Many millions are now living in extreme poverty and suffering from increased hunger compared to pre-pandemic levels. An estimated 147 million children missed more than half of their in-person instruction over the past two years, significantly affecting their learning and well-being. Women have been disproportionately affected by the socio-economic fallout of the pandemic, struggling with lost jobs, increased burdens of unpaid care work, and an intensifying silent epidemic of domestic violence (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 02 August 2022).

## **4 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Age of Information Technology**

All the above challenges have been observed in various forms in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century but one major disruptive trend characterizing and dominating the current century is rapid technological advancement and its increased access to people around the world.

### **4.1 Increased Access**

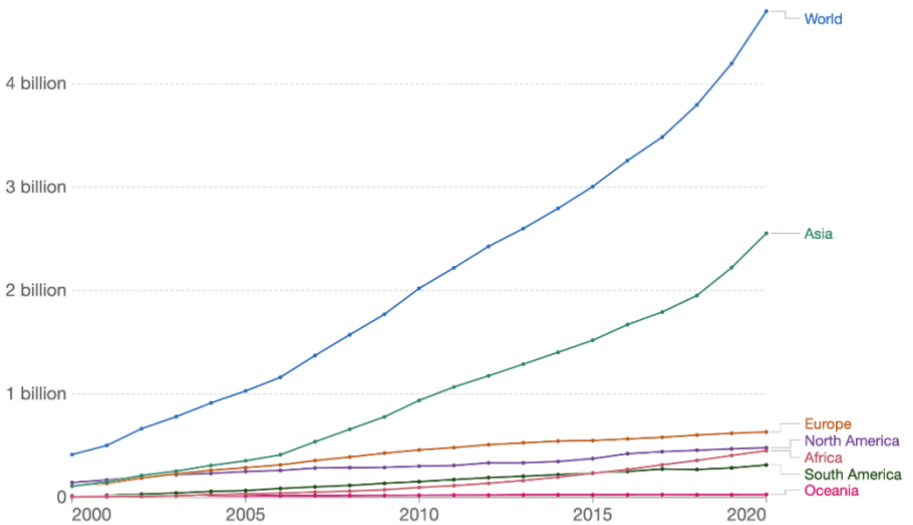
At the beginning of the century, the number of users of the internet was estimated at half a billion. In the past two decades, that number has increased to approximately 4.70 billion (2020). In the year 2000, there were close to 783 million mobile subscriptions, in the past 20 years, that figure has risen to 8.27 billion (Ritchie, Mathieu, Roser & Ortiz-Ospina 2023). This rapid increase in the access and use of telecommunications and the internet has had a massive impact on how we communicate with each other, what kind of communications we can send, how soon and how frequently we can communicate. This has had a tremendous effect on how we express ourselves and eventually how we relate to each other. In other words, technology in this case has truly disrupted and reshaped our society.



## Number of people using the Internet

Number of people who used the Internet<sup>1</sup> in the last three months.

Our World  
in Data



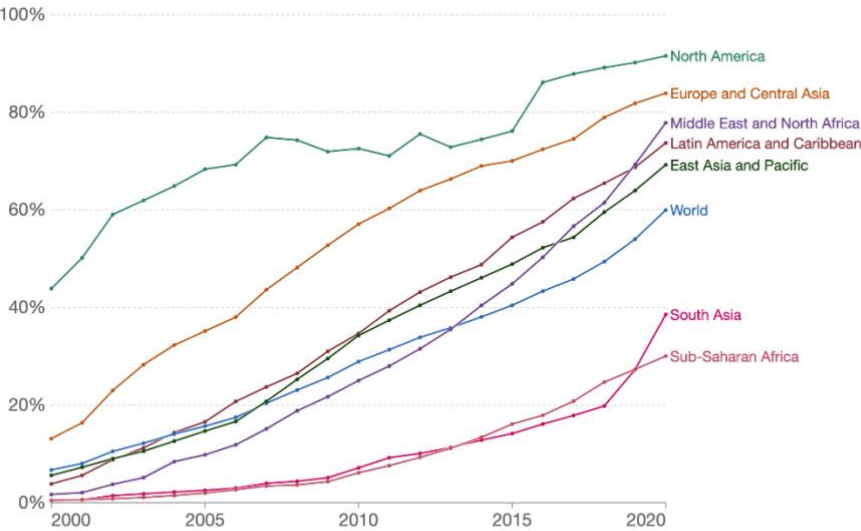
Source: OWID based on International Telecommunication Union (via World Bank) and UN (2022)

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**1. Internet user:** An internet user is defined by the International Telecommunication Union as anyone who has accessed the internet from any location in the last three months. This can be from any type of device, including a computer, mobile phone, personal digital assistant, games machine, digital TV, and other technological devices.

# Share of the population using the Internet

Share of the population who used the Internet<sup>1</sup> in the last three months.



Source: International Telecommunication Union (via World Bank)

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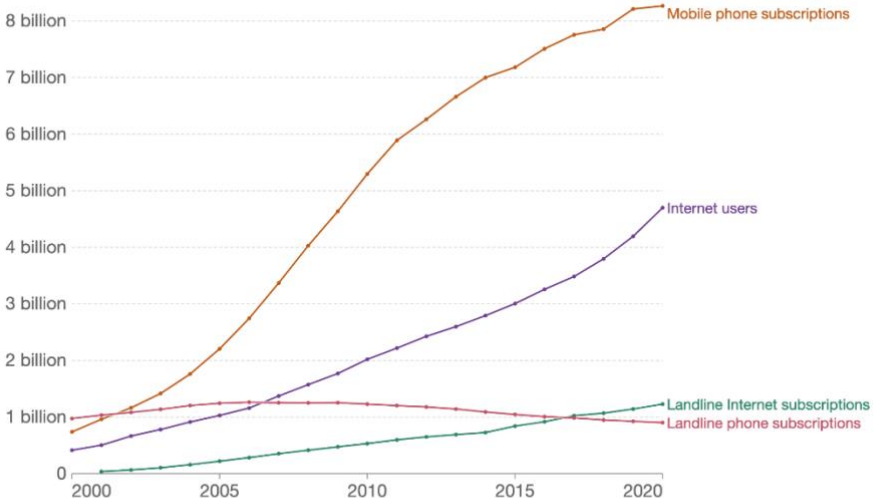
1. **Internet user:** An internet user is defined by the International Telecommunication Union as anyone who has accessed the internet from any location in the last three months. This can be from any type of device, including a computer, mobile phone, personal digital assistant, games machine, digital TV, and other technological devices.

## 4.2 Advancement in Technology: Rise of Digital Media

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has also seen the rise of Digital Media platforms such as Facebook (2004), Twitter (2006), Tiktok (2016), Youtube (2005), and Instagram (2008). As of September 2022, Facebook has nearly 3 Billion monthly active users. Youtube has over 2 Billion monthly active users and Instagram & Tiktok over 1 Billion active monthly users respectively (Adobe Express 2023). India and China are the only two of over two hundred countries with over 1 billion people living in their boundaries. The community of digital media extends beyond borders and transcends age groups and several social groupings which we have traditionally used to classify people.

In 2023, the total market capitalization of Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, Google, and Meta is over 7 Trillion US Dollars (Yahoo Finance). To put this figure into global perspective, the only two countries whose GDP exceeds this value are USA and China (GDP Ranked by Country, World Population Review 2023). 2009 also saw the starting of another disruptive and crucial phenomenon of cryptocurrency.

### Adoption of communication technologies, World



Source: International Telecommunication Union (via World Bank)

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Note: Landline Internet subscriptions are defined as a fixed access to the public Internet with a download speed of at least 256 kbit/s. Internet users are people who have accessed the Internet from any location in the last three months.

The above developments and disruptions have had a profound impact on the 21st Century from a social, economic, financial, political, and psychological perspective and have made this century extremely unique compared to the 20th Century and the ones preceding it. These present new challenges, opportunities, and frontiers for the understanding and application of nonviolence and its principles, leading to a peaceful world.

## **5 Where is the World Heading?**

With the continuing trend of conflicts, climate crises, increased desertification, an increasing global aging population, it can be easily seen that the future of our world is full of challenges. Technological developments can only help us resolve issues to an extent and that too when we intend to use technology for the benefit of the world. Total climate finance globally in 2020 has reached at 632 Billion US Dollars (Climate Policy Initiative). In the same year, the annual global military expenditure is at 3 Trillion US Dollars (Macias & Rattner 2020). We can clearly understand that the prioritisation of resources of the world has been more towards creating capacity to perpetrate large scale violence against each other, rather than coming together and combating Climate Change which will affect the whole world regardless of national borders.

### **5.1 Nonviolence and Peace in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century World**

Many scholars, religions, philosophers, societies, organisations have defined peace in their respective times as a concept, as an end or an objective, as a goal. United Nations Charter written in the aftermath of World War II and drafted by the founding members of the United Nations, ratified by over 190 nations around the world today, features the word, ‘peace’ around 48 times in it. One of the notable mentions of the word, ‘peace’ in the United Nations Charter (FULL TEXT) is in the Preamble. The preamble recognises the maintenance of international peace as well as living together in peace as its key objectives. While there maybe a broader consensus on the meaning and understanding of peace, it is not the case with nonviolence. Even though both the ideas of peace and nonviolence have existed in our society since centuries through religious doctrines, nonviolence only came to forefront globally in the 20th Century due to the Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders and their movements for freedom, human rights and equality.

In all these cases, nonviolence has been used as a tool of resistance, political negotiation in a very specific context. Since the context of nonviolence has been in the form of a response, its manifestation becomes solely dependent on the practitioners and the perpetrators and their setting. Even if we examine the breakthrough work of Gene Sharp and his nonviolent tactics, we can see that they are based on his observation of oppression by the dominant class (state or non-state) and the possible nonviolent response by the resisters to achieve the necessary political ends. Seen from another perspective, it can be argued that in all the above situations from the 20th Century, the oppressors and perpetrators of violence have defined the political context or the ecosystem within which nonviolent action, response and ideology have existed.

## **5.2 Religion and Nonviolence**

It is also important to note that while the 20th Century nonviolence we mentioned is rooted in specific political context, both Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. were influenced towards nonviolence through their spiritual and religious background. Whether it is the Ahimsa teachings in Jainism or lessons of nonviolence and love from the Gospels, religion and spirituality played a key role in creating a strong value system and character which enabled these leaders to continue to lead the path of nonviolence even in the face of the most adverse circumstances.

Religions have given the world frameworks for living in peace and harmony. Jainism, Quakers Philosophy in Christianity, Buddhism have also given us inspiration to be nonviolent. At the same time, we have seen that religion has been used as a key identity for discrimination, division, violence and conflicts. While many religions and religious texts have prescribed nonviolence and peace as the ideals of an individual's life, when it comes to the larger multicultural society, religions have not been able to unite people. We have not only seen the divisions and separation between people from different religious identities but when it comes to people from the same religion, various sects, belief systems, rituals, interpretations have emerged. Religion has also been misused by many to strengthen their political interests, to radicalize the minds of the population, often continuing and perpetuating the cycle of violence in case of long standing conflicts.

In summary, there are several important spiritual and personal lessons to be learnt from religions when it comes to peace and nonviolence, however it

remains a slippery slope as the world has seen several instances of conflicts and violence on the basis of religion.

It must be noted that religion itself is not the problem but at the same time, it has not been successful as the guiding framework for a peaceful and inclusive society.

### **5.3 Nonviolence in a Violent World**

In the above discussion we have seen that the experiences and application of nonviolence in the 20th Century have primarily been seen in the context of political movements for freedom, rights and equality. This has also shaped the thinking and understanding of nonviolence itself as we know it today. This form of nonviolence is addressing a violent world with nonviolent actions. While this approach has been useful and effective in achieving certain intended objectives within the movements, we have observed that in many cases, in retrospect, the actions were only addressing the peripheral symptoms and manifestations of much deeper problems.

Freedom has not resulted in justice. Justice has not resulted in equality and one oppressive force is replaced by another oppressive force. This is because the nonviolence was addressing the oppressive forces and the oppression of the particular context but not the violent world and its foundational structures which had led to the oppression in the first place. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speaks to this challenge in the context of America and the Vietnam War in 1967. King had called for a radical revolution of values, in which, “we must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society”. He further went on to say that,

The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit, and if we ignore this sobering reality, we will find ourselves organizing clergy and laymen concern committees for the next generation. They will be concerned about Guatemala and Peru; they will be concerned about Thailand and Cambodia; they will be concerned about Mozambique and South Africa. We will be marching for these and a dozen other names and attending rallies without end, unless there is a significant and profound change in American life and policy (King 1967).

## **5.4 A Violent World**

Our world and its institutions are built on fundamentally violent principles of power, greed, competition, fear and separation. Our world is shaped by us as human beings and just like we have shaped our world in its external manifestation, we have also become conditioned with similar internalised values which we have passed on from generations with only the relevant changes in semantics and aesthetics.

An example is that we live in a world with limited resources and a growing population and being ‘rich’ with accumulated wealth still remains the biggest ambition of most human beings. What this means is that, a positive value like ‘success’ becomes tied to this materialistic idea of being ‘rich’ and creates an unequal world where there are ‘rich’ and ‘poor’. Similarly, our understanding of the word, ‘developed’ countries is mostly understood from the wealth that the country possesses measured in total GDP or GDP per capita. The aim for countries is to increase this GDP every year despite the fact that the source of that wealth could be through unfair trade practices, exploitation of other ‘developing’ countries, their past colonial plunders, increased use of fossil fuels, increased deforestation, irresponsible fiscal, monetary policies. The word ‘developed’ doesn’t take into account how much violence that country is perpetrating on its own people, or outside their borders. It disregards the parameters like human rights, equality and freedom for all citizens and residents in the country. In a world which cares more about hoarding resources and power, than ensuring human rights, justice and equality; oppression, violence and division are the only natural consequence.

In such a context nonviolent movements and actions maybe able to address certain specific situations but they fall short of influencing the superstructure or systems which lead to these issues. Even a change in legislation or guarantee of rights under the constitution or international conventions can’t alleviate people from poverty or create equality in the society because the underlying dominant value of the society is individualistic possession, accumulation of resources, followed by actions and efforts to further the status quo.

In a violent and unequal world, most of our motivation, actions and thoughts are often guided by the ideas of self-preservation without much consideration given to other people or the planet. In such a situation, competition and not collaboration is the primary mode of operation. This in turn creates a vicious cycle of distrust, insecurity and fear which only isolates us

further. Our understanding of the self and self-interest both becomes extremely narrow and we lose sight of the bigger picture. The bigger picture here is our community, society, country and the world. We create an objective demarcation between ‘our’ interests and that of the ‘others’. This is on top of the divisions we have already seen in the society as per our social identities. A world like that is mostly focus on materialistic progress where the social progress is vulnerable to not only stagnation but also regression. Scientific progress in a society like this only increases the divisions, exploitation and insecurity. This phenomenon is clearly visible in the 21st Century. With the rise in digital media and now Artificial Intelligence, there are growing concerns on the potential negative impact of AI on humanity. In March 2023, several leading scholars, researchers and innovators issued an open letter to pause giant AI experiments.

The letter states,

Advanced AI could represent a profound change in the history of life on Earth, and should be planned for and managed with commensurate care and resources. Unfortunately, this level of planning and management is not happening, even though recent months have seen AI labs locked in an out-of-control race to develop and deploy ever more powerful digital minds that no one – not even their creators – can understand, predict, or reliably control.

Another characteristic of such a world is that every person wishes to assert their rights and entitlements but hardly think about their corresponding responsibilities.

When we truly understand how a person enjoys their rights or freedom, we see that the role of state is primarily in the domains of legislating the rights and providing remedies in case of breach of the rights. However to enjoy the freedom or rights, the onus falls more on how the society is organised and engages with each other. In a tolerant, responsible and accepting society, many rights don’t need any enforcement efforts from the state because the society facilitates the welfare of each individual. A violent world creates a lose-lose situation where the society first creates its own problems, then fails to resolve it due to lack of collective thinking or decision making and eventually give more agency to the state to resolve solutions. This stronger state with more agency is vulnerable to corruption, authoritarianism, oppression and clinging to power. 21st Century has seen a rise in authoritarianism. At the same time, since the inability of the society to problem-solve on its own is the key reason for



increased power of the state, it leaves no incentive for the state to actually resolve any problem or address the fundamental issues because the same will weaken its own position.

## **6 Reimagining a Nonviolent World**

For the above reasons, it would be difficult to believe that nonviolence of the 20th Century can lead to fundamental changes in society today and for a better future. It is a widely believed and promoted idea that small and incremental changes are the most sustainable but in a century where crises (health, financial, security, political) is the norm, a radical shift from the status quo can only lead to tangible impact in the lives of the people.

Therefore it is important to reimagine a society based on the values of nonviolence, love, collaboration, human rights which is working for the benefit of all the people and the planet. Before discussing what this society should look like and how can we get there, it is important to acknowledge that it is impossible for a single person to imagine how our nonviolent world could look like. We live in a world of 8 billion dreams. This reimagining endeavour certainly needs many more hearts and minds. The first important question in this direction is identifying ‘who can imagine this nonviolent world?’

### **6.1 Who?**

We don't inherit the earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children.

The generation which has played the least role in shaping the present violent world and stands to be the most affected by the 21st Century and the future is youth. As per UNICEF, there are 1.3 billion adolescents in the world today, constituting 16 per cent of the world's population (UNICEF Adolescent Statistics 2023). Young people have always had a profound impact on the world. Mahatma Gandhi was 24 years old when he was evicted from the train at Pietermaritzburg and had decided to fight for justice. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was 26 years, Claudette Colvin only 15 years old during the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955. Nelson Mandela was 26 years old when he helped form

the ANC Youth League in 1944. Malala Yousafzai was merely 16 years old when she made her first powerful speech at the United Nations in 2013.

In the future, today's young generation is going to be the innovators, decision makers, problem solvers and drivers of the society, the economy and the world. Those born in the 21st Century have grown up in a world of technological revolution and are already at the forefront of innovation today. It is critical that young people from all parts of the world become the leading thinkers on what a nonviolent world would look like.

## **6.2 How?**

We have identified youth as the key to reimagining a nonviolent world. The next question to address is how we can engage young people in this vital mission. The framework for this engagement includes the following.

### **6.2.1 Creation of the Community of Young People**

To reimagine a nonviolent world, it is important to establish a global community of young people from various domains; activists, thinkers, leaders, scholars, artists, working professionals, students. The diversity of the group will enable wider thinking on the relevance of nonviolent principles beyond the traditional domains. Evolving technology has also created new avenues where there is no prior case for nonviolent approaches such as living in the world of AI and automation. New forms of digital media, arts have emerged where youth are more engaged and active today. Similarly, it is important to think about what the future of politics, financial markets, industry, civil society will look like and how can nonviolent principles be applied to them.

### **6.2.2 Setting the Common Context, Motivation and Building Capacity**

With a group of young people interested in a positive future of the world, it will be critical to build a common context and understanding of nonviolence and mutually developing a new context for a nonviolent world and their vision for the 21st Century. While this context building takes place, it is equally crucial to cultivate belief and agency with the youth regarding the possibility of this new world and their role and leadership potential in this mission. Building capacity

of youth for thought leadership, creativity, dialogue and articulation skills, collaborative mindset will also be essential for the envisioning exercise to become a collective experience and for developing a stronger community.

### **6.2.3 Aspects to Think About**

The envisioning of a nonviolent world with young people needs to cover several areas in order to develop a clear and wider vision and application of nonviolence in the 21st Century.

As already mentioned above, the diverse youth from various domains need to think about the relevance and application of principles of nonviolence in governance, business, media, sports, arts, technology among other spaces. This thinking must include tangible recommendations about the values and principles of nonviolence and how they will manifest in these domains as well as the important institutions which facilitate, sustain and regulate them. This also needs to include the rights and responsibilities of each living being, flora and fauna. These systems at their core need to address our relationship with the planet as human beings and with our communities and each other.

## **7 Movement from the *Status Quo***

The final question to consider in this framework is how to realise this vision from the status quo. Identifying the potential allies, collaborators in this transformation journey, the prospective challenges to be faced and how to overcome them. The above question must also include addressing the hard challenges of climate crisis, depletion of our planet and key issues of the near future and how those will be addressed. The above framework can enable youth to come together and systematically discuss and envision what a nonviolent world of the 21st Century can look like. Without a concrete plan of action to create a departure from the status quo, the envisioned future will be a mere fiction and the community of youth must be motivated to develop action steps and milestones critical for the movement to succeed.

A few other aspects of this framework which may be external to it, yet extremely important are related to expansion of this network and including more diverse youth in the process, supporting and facilitating this network in achieving it's vision, creating solidarity between other similar efforts with the network and finally ensuring that the internal values and principles of the

network itself resonates with the nonviolent world it is envisioning for the future.

## **8 The Role of Inner Transformation**

We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the outer world are to be found in the world of our body. If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. This is the divine mystery supreme. A wonderful thing it is and the source of our happiness. We need not wait to see what others do (Mahatma Gandhi).

Very often when embarking on a journey to create social change, our primary focus is to change the outside world, or the society, its institutions and the people who make the society. We hardly focus on the inner transformation of the changemakers or those are shaping the society as an important part of the process of social change. While speaking about inner transformation it often a tendency to start thinking about religious or spiritual practices. As important those are in the journey of inner transformation, many times it becomes easy to fall into the rituals, symbols and peripheral actions of the process rather than truly knowing ourselves, realising our humanity and reshaping our motivation, understanding for the benefit of the people around us as well as the world at large.

Eventually our inner transformation needs to expand our idea of self beyond local identity markers towards being a human being living in harmony with other human beings and living forms on our planet. This will help us see the sameness in all of us as we begin to appreciate our uniquenesses. This inner transformation will also help us cultivate the true love for each other beyond the peripheral emotional affection and to truly practice the biblical lesson, ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you’ - Matthew 7:12<sup>1</sup>. Spoken in another manner, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ - Matthew 22: 37-39<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Matthew 7:12, New International Version.*

<sup>2</sup> *Matthew 22: 37-39, New International Version.*

Our inner transformation will help us broaden the understanding of our self and our 'neighbour' i.e, the whole humanity with whom we share our world.

Our hope for creative living in this world house that we have inherited lies in our ability to reestablish the moral ends of our lives in personal character and social justice. Without this spiritual and moral reawakening we shall destroy ourselves in the misuse of our own instruments (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 1967b).

In the 21st Century, our world has become more closer through technology, economic interdependence, global institutions but nations and people are getting farther away from each other with rising divisions and distrust. With common global challenges such as the climate crises, rising desertification, natural disasters, we must realise that the only way forward is together and the 'revolution of values' must take place within ourselves as it takes places in the society. Only then can a true movement away from today's violent world can take place. Our inner transformation will be the key to building our motivation, moral courage, resilience, patience, love, forgiveness and compassion which will ultimately decide how far along we are able to sustain the movement and inspire others to join us.

## **9 Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is important to pay tribute to the thinkers, activists and leaders of the 20th Century who wholeheartedly dedicate themselves to the cause of welfare, freedom and equality of people around them and the world through nonviolent means. Their work, thinking and way of life has set a precedent and pathway to take inspiration from in our present as well as the future.

We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there "is" such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 1967b).

Nonviolence of the 20th Century was also a response to the political context in which it was used wherein a lot of focus went towards addressing the symptoms

rather than the system.

21st Century has seen certain similarities but also unique, escalating challenges and context. Nonviolence of the 20th Century while having it's application in the 21st Century needs rethinking towards targeting the very foundations and the systems which have thus far sustained this violent world. In order to do that, we need to reimagine a society and a world which is fundamentally nonviolent or built on the values of love, togetherness, tolerance. Young people are the key to re-imagining this world and it is critical to bring together diverse youth from different domains and parts of the world to dream and envision this new world and it's values, institutions, relationships and the pathway to change.

In this journey of change, our inner transformation is absolutely critical as much as changes in the society. We need a 'revolution of values' in ourselves as well as our society if we have to realise the vision of the world house conceived by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and choose community over chaos.

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