

Call for Papers (Special Issue)

Reconciliation and Peace Building after 30 Years of Genocide in Rwanda

April 7, 2024, marks the 30th commemoration of the Genocide in Rwanda, which cost the country 10,00,000 lives, wiping out 70 percent of the Tutsi population. Ethnic violence broke out after an aircraft carrying the then Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundi's President Cyprien Ntaryamira was shot down by a missile near Kigali, the Capital of Rwanda. Within hours of the plane crash, militants from the Hutu ethnic majority unleashed brutal and frenzied killings of Tutsis, moderate Hutus, and Twa. The 100 days of slaughter saw neighbors turning on neighbors and friends turning on friends. Rape, sexual torture, mutilation, and enslavement were used as weapons to attack, terrorize and murder thousands of Tutsis. It has been estimated that more than 250,000 women were raped during the genocide. While the Genocide destroyed the social, moral, and ethnic fabric of the Rwandan society as a whole, it is important to note that the Rwandans rose like a phoenix from the ashes by adopting "locally engineered policy innovations" known popularly as "home-grown solutions" (HGS).

The Genocide of 1994 and its aftermath completely changed the political economy in Rwanda. Forgiveness, peace building, and good governance initiatives were key elements of HGS. No other country in the world has effectively made use of the power of HGS than The peacebuilding initiatives undertaken through the *Urugwiro Village* (President's Office), formed between 1998 and 1999 to discuss ways to strengthen national unity, democracy, decentralization, justice, economy, and security, is a notable initiative in this regard. These were termed as broad-based consultations to chart Rwanda's future course. Participants in these meetings included people from all walks of life, including religious leaders, political leaders of pre-independence and post-independence political parties, civil society groups, the academic community, youth and women, and the politicians from the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). The consensus outcomes that emerged from consultative meetings in *Urugwiro Village* were incorporated into the Constitutional making process that eventually led to the creation of the 2003 post-transition Constitution in Rwanda.

The post-genocide Rwandan government has come up with several HGS built on the values and systems of Rwandan culture, Most notable among them are *Gacaca* (Community Courts), *Abunzi* (Community Mediators) *Ubudehe* (Traditional Rwandan Practice and Cultural Value of Working Together to Collectively Solve Problems), *Girnika* (One Cow Per Family), *Umuganada* (Community Work), *Imihigo* (Performance Contracts), Vision 2020 *Umurenge*, Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI), *Tubarerere Mu Muryango* (Let us Raise Children in Families), *Itorero* (Civic Education), *Ingando* (Solidarity Camp), *Umushyikirano* (National Dialogue Council) and *Umwiherero* (National Leadership Retreat).

The HGS plays an important role not only in ensuring peacebuilding but also in achieving sustainable development. HGS has been in vogue even before the onset of the pandemic.

Between 1990 and 2017, Rwanda's Human Development Index (HDI) doubled from 0.250 to 0.524; in 2021, it stood at 0.534. GNI per capita changed about 19.51 per cent between 1995 and 2021. Rwanda is also a global leader in health care in the East African region in alternative care reforms. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (reflects deprivations in areas of health, education, and standard of living) in Rwanda declined from 0.461 in 2005 to 0.231. in 2021. In the case of the Gender Development Index, the 2021 female HDI value for Rwanda is 0.521 in contrast to 0.574 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.954. The de-ethnicization (*Ndi Umumyarwanda*) could empower a generation of youngsters who can openly say, "I am Rwandan, not Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa." The women have actively participated in all areas of Rwanda's peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery process. Currently, 49 of 80 seats in Rwanda's parliament are occupied by women, the highest proportion in the world. Women also hold half of the Supreme Court seats. While the Democracy Index has classified Rwanda as an "authoritarian regime" over the years, the country has become a laboratory for local governments.

On the eve of the 30th anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda, it is proposed to bring out a special issue of *Gandhi Marg* on peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts in enhancing participatory and accountable governance, reducing vulnerability, fostering social cohesion, and nurturing inclusive human development rooted in resilience in Rwanda. This special issue titled "Peacebuilding and Reconciliation after 30 Years of Genocide in Rwanda" is a tribute to the victims of the genocide and acknowledges the contributions made by the survivors and thought leaders to ensure sustainable peace and development in a critical light.

Guest Editors

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Important Dates

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