**Part 2 of the WIFHW Report - Sri Lanka-WADSWIJETUNGE**

**03 Interfaith Harmony Exchange Visit from South to North in Sri Lanka**

The North-South Exchange Visit organized by the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka took place on 10th, 11th, and 12th February 2021 in Paramankirai, Navakkuli of Jaffna District. Six Inter-Religious leaders representing the Colombo District Inter-Religious Committee and 22 members representing the Galle District Inter-Religious Committee attended the visit.

22 youth representing Hambantota, Moneragala, Kurunegala, Batticaloa, Polonnaruwa, Ratnapura, Nuwara Eliya, Anuradhapura, Vavuniya, Puttalam, and Galle District Inter-Religious Committees also participated. The total number of participants in the tour was 50. Thirty-nine youth representing the Navakkuli Youth Club and 14 members including inter-religious leaders representing the Jaffna District Inter-Religious Committee participated in the programs held in Jaffna. Accordingly, the total number of participants in this program was 103. Youth representing Kegalle, Matara, Badulla, and Kandy districts did not participate in the visit.

Among the religious leaders who represented the Colombo District Inter-Religious Committee were Ven. Pallekande Rathanasara Thero, Ven. Dr. Madampagama Assaji Thero, Dr. Madani Moulavi, and Rev. Anura Perera.

The group arrived at the Sri Naga Vihara in Jaffna at around 7 pm on the 10th and was welcomed by members of Jaffna DIRC including Mr. Senthuraja, the Coordinator of the Jaffna District Inter-Religious Committee. The Chief Incumbent of the Sri Naga Viharaya in Jaffna Ven. Meegahajadure Sirivimala Thero delivered the welcome address and commenced the proceedings.

Mr. Senthuraja, Coordinator, Jaffna District Inter-Religious Committee also spoke. The group then proceeded to "Thulasi Mahal Apartments" for the overnight stay.

On the morning of February 11, 2021, the team arrived at the Nallur Kandasami Kovil and then proceeded to Paramankirai Primary School in the Kilinochchi District to distribute exercise books and school equipment to 160 children of low-income families. The financial value of this is Rs.300,000.00 and it is a donation from the Galle DIRC. The group next visited the ‘Sangupitiya’ bridge where they spent the time sight viewing and posing for group photographs.

The team then came to Navakkuli College for a friendly volleyball tournament. The youth from Jaffna and youth from the South played as mixed teams. We observed that they participated in the competitions very peacefully despite the communication barriers. This occasion was very conducive to making friends. They were seen exchanging telephone numbers with each other.

The group then proceeded to the site prepared for the cultural event. It is located in Navakkuliya area. The objective of this event was about understanding the values of different cultures while experiencing them, and understanding the relationships between these cultures. There was also a preparation of Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim food and entertainment. Singing, dancing, and traditional art were also performed by young people from the North and South. The activity lasted from 5 pm to 10 pm and everyone was entertained by it.

After visiting Jaffna town and “Nagadeepa” (Nainativu Island) on February 12th, the group returned to their hometowns. During the visit, the youth group created a WhatsApp account called “Sanhindiya Sancharaya-Yapanaya” (Reconciliation Visit-Jaffna). The success of the visit was reflected in the comments they sent to the WhatsApp account during and after the visit. At the end of the 11th cultural program, the participants also exchanged views on the success of the program.

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In this visit;

1. Galle District Inter-Religious Committee and the philanthropists of the area have jointly collected nearly Rs. 300,000.00 to

distribute school items and exercise books to the children of 160 low-income families in Jaffna

2. Discussion on Pluralism

3. Trust building games

4. Friendly volleyball match

5. Exploring food culture in Sri Lanka

6. Cultural event “Peduru Sajjaya”

10 members from Jaffna DIRC and 30 members from Navakkuli Youth Club will participate in these activities together with the Southern group.

**Media- Attached News Paper Reports**