

Title of the Paper:

**Theology of Economics in the Context of Inequalities:
A Grassroots Perspective from Migrant Domestic Workers in Mumbai**

Abstract

In a globalized world of inequalities, there is a need for a sound theology of economics that is inclusive and participatory. This paper in the first part begins by examining briefly the general landscape of inequality in today's world. Wealth inequality around the world was never as extreme as it is today. For instance, in the USA it is estimated that the richest 1% own 40% of the wealth. At a global level, there is a big gap between the very rich and the poor. The collective income/wealth of the top 300 earners in the world is equivalent to the combined wealth of the 3 billion citizens at the bottom of the ladder. The inequality is colossal and is ever widening. Economic inequality is only one aspect of the concerns, as we live in an unequal world on many other fronts.

As the dictum goes, 'it is better to light a candle than to curse all of the darkness', the paper in the second part while concretely spelling out an unequal and 'dehumanizing' setting of migrant domestic workers in Mumbai (India), analytically identifies the emerging issues that are, central to human development and 'justice' from secular perspective, and integral to Church's mission from faith perspective. Third part of the article brings in the angle of development economics to suggest ways to minimize the extent of inequality and to instil in 'target group' a growing sense of equality, thereby mainstreaming the marginalized to a position of dignity and empowerment. Economic growth is essential but it must be equitable.

The fourth part highlights some theological perspectives on the challenges of development economics, real life situations of mainstreaming and subaltern theologizing in the context of globalization and of increasing global inequalities. Equality and non-discrimination are fundamental principles which underlie the United Nations Charter and International human rights instruments. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "*all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and*

conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” Christian Scripture tells us that God created humans in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them (Gen 1:27). From God’s perspective there should be equality and dignity in every aspect of human living. So restoring the image of God in every human person and working for the integral welfare of creation in collaboration with the people of goodwill, faith-based NGOs, UN’s Millennium Development Goals and local government policies, is the prophetic call today as Christian ministers. In conclusion the paper attempts to articulate some mission methods for forging ahead in the contemporary mission frontiers -the peripheries of the society- and to proclaim the Gospel to the modern ‘ends of the world’ (Mt 28:19-20).