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Article For Reading – Sufferers, awarded: On the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize

Seventy-nine years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki were subject to **unprecedented devastation** following the U.S.'s act of dropping atomic bombs on these cities, Nihon Hidankyo, the organisation that worked for the welfare of the survivors — called the hibakusha — and steadfastly sought to build **consensus** on the need for the abolition of nuclear weapons, has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2024. Today, there are barely more than a lakh survivors of the bombings, with the average age of the hibakusha more than 86 years. An estimated 1.5 lakh people died due to the bombings, and many more later due to the after-effects of the exposure to radioactivity. The horrors of the atomic bombings and the inaction by the post-war government, largely due to U.S. censorship of news of the suffering of the hibakusha, crystallised in the formation of the Hidankyo which lobbied and agitated for medical and welfare benefits to the hibakusha and took a **steadfast** position against atomic weapons. This is emphasised in their slogan, “no more hibakusha”. Besides their activism in Japan, the Hidankyo also went on tours to several countries, including India, to share their suffering and **sensitise** the world to the horrors of the use of atomic weapons.

The Nobel Committee must be commended for recognising the Hidankyo, whose activism as some scholars **aver**, helped shift the political discourse in Japan towards greater democracy and justice and sensitise the public to the doctrine of pacifism, which was incorporated into Japan's Constitution after its defeat in the Second World War.

Yet, despite the activism of anti-war organisations and social movements — in these the selflessness of the Hidankyo and the fact that they were the direct sufferers of the use of atomic weapons stand out — nuclear states continue to deploy weapons in their **arsenal** and use them for **sabre-rattling**. A case in point is Russia's recent and unambiguous statement that it will not hesitate to use its nuclear weapons to retaliate against a conventional attack and its use of this threat to **brazenly** prolong its invasion of Ukraine. There is also the fact that countries such as Israel have **surreptitiously** acquired nuclear weapons, leading to a nuclear arms race in volatile regions such as West Asia. Existing mechanisms for nuclear non-proliferation also seem to be **vitiated** by geopolitics even as the nuclear powers have shown little appetite for serious disarmament. Against such a sad reality, the recognition for the Hidankyo, whose hibakusha members are in the evening of their lives, should at least remind the world yet again about the horrors of atomic bomb attacks and stir a debate on meaningful nuclear **disarmament**.

Summary –

Nihon Hidankyo, an organization advocating for the welfare of Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb survivors (hibakusha), was awarded the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize, nearly 79 years after the bombings. With only about 100,000 survivors remaining, the average age is over 86, and an estimated 150,000 people died from the bombings and their after-effects. Hidankyo has fought for medical and welfare benefits and promoted anti-nuclear activism, coining the slogan "no more hibakusha." Despite their efforts, nuclear states continue to threaten the use of atomic weapons, exemplified by Russia's stance on Ukraine and Israel's clandestine nuclear capabilities. The Nobel recognition serves as a reminder of the atrocities of atomic warfare and highlights the need for meaningful nuclear disarmament.

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Vocabulary –

1. Unprecedented (अभूतपूर्व)

Meaning: Never done or known before.

Synonyms: Unparalleled, exceptional, unique

Antonyms: Common, ordinary, familiar

Example: The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were an unprecedented display of destructive power.

2. Devastation(Noun) (विनाश)

Meaning: Great destruction or damage.

Synonyms: Destruction, ruin, havoc

Antonyms: Restoration, repair, creation

Example: The devastation caused by the nuclear bombs left the cities in ruins for decades.

3. Surreptitiously (Adj) (गुप्त रूप से)

Meaning: Done in a secret or stealthy way.

Synonyms: Secretly, covertly, stealthily

Antonyms: Openly, overtly, publicly

Example: Israel is believed to have surreptitiously developed its nuclear arsenal over the years.

4. Vitiated (Verb) (दूषित करना)

Meaning: Spoiled or impaired the quality or efficiency of something.

Synonyms: Corrupted, tainted, marred

Example: The peace process was vitiated by the constant geopolitical conflicts in the region.

5. Brazenly(Adv) (निर्लज्जता से)

Meaning: In a bold and shameless way.

Synonyms: Shamelessly, audaciously

Antonyms: Humbly, modestly, cautiously

Example: The government brazenly continued its military campaign despite international condemnation.

6. Consensus (noun) (सहमति)

Meaning= general agreement among a group of people

Synonym: Accord, concurrence

Antonym: Disagreement, discord

Example: After hours of discussion, the committee reached a consensus on the proposal.

7. Aver (verb) प्रतिज्ञान करना

Meaning - to state or assert to be the case .

Synonym: Affirm, declare

Antonym: Deny, refute

Example: She averred that she had seen the suspect leave the scene.

8. Arsenal (noun) शस्त्रागार

Meaning - a collection of weapons and military equipment

Synonym: Armory, weaponry

Antonym: Disarmament

Example - The country's large arsenal was a point of contention in international relations.

9. Sabre-rattling (noun) = युद्ध की धमकी

Meaning - the display or threat of military force.

Synonym: Threatening, posturing

Antonym: Peace making, diplomacy

Example: The leaders engaged in sabre-rattling to deter their adversaries.

10. Steadfast (Adj) दृढ़, अडिग, अटल

Meaning→ Someone or something that is firm, unwavering, or loyal in nature.

Synonyms –Resolute, Dedicated, Faithful

Antonyms- Unreliable, fickle, wavering, Capricious, Irresolute.

Example – She remained steadfast in her commitment to helping the Community.

11. Sensitise (verb) जागरूक करना

Meaning Aware → The action of someone more or responsive to something.

Synonyms - Alert, Acclimate, Educate

Antonyms- Numb, Overlook, Desensitise

12. Disarmament (Noun) निरस्त्रीकरण

Meaning B. The process or act of → reducing or eliminating weapons or military forces.

Synonyms- Demilitarization, Pacification

Antonyms- Armament, Militarization.

Eng. International treaties on disarmament aim to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons across the globe.



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