

## **Dialogue and debate promotion programme**

*The Dialogue and Debate Promotion Programme of the GISD is a programme that seeks to open effective platforms for dialogue, debate and exchange of views among citizens. The GISD is convinced that the quest for consensus-building within society, which is an important ingredient of democracy hinges on the ability of citizens to exchange views among themselves. It hinges on the ability of citizens to dialogue and debate national issues. Dialogue brings to the fore, various perspectives of different people on one issue, and this is a building block for gradually creating understanding among different people on various issues. Dialogue ensures that the various viewpoints, insights and perspectives held by various people are brought to fore. These build the much-avowed consensus among various members of society. In the long-term, this defuses tension and reduces conflicts.*

Our theory of democracy is that it can be consolidated when citizens are granted an opportunity and freedom to express their views on various national issues. The right of citizens to enjoy their freedoms is a precursor to consolidation of democracy. The programme therefore promotes the creation of various platforms and forums that allow citizens to express their views, debate and exchange views on national issues. Our conviction is that when debate and dialogue as well as exchange of views are at the centre of society, this has a positive multiplier effect on promoting tolerance to dissent and acknowledgement of diversity of thought and difference of opinions as natural phenomenon among citizens. Prevalence of dialogue and debate platforms builds civil education in the long-term and creates an informed society.

The GISD therefore creates a variety of platforms and forums for dialogue, debate and exchange of information and ideas among citizens. These are in the form of radio, television, newspaper as well as use of social media platforms (Facebook, twitter and WhatsApp platforms). Therefore, the GISD collaborates with mainstream media and creates social media platform to open the space for dialogue, debate and exchange of ideas and information among citizens.

