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National Seminar

Contextualizing Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophy in the 21st Century: Democracy, Justice, Equality and Non-Violence

(March 29-30, 2019)



Organised by

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University,
Lucknow – 226012

Contextualizing Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophy in the 21st Century: Democracy, Justice, Equality and Non-Violence

After independence a group of Indian leaders were in favor of adopting the democratic model and practices of western societies. The other group advocated for institutions which were in consonance with Indian traditional culture as they thought India had an entirely different social order not suited for parliamentary institutions and ideologies of the west. The arguments of the traditionalists were ignored in the Constituent Assembly though they were supported by Gandhi from outside. It became apparent that, in the whole process of transformation, certain elements of traditionalists were incorporated to provide an Indian frame to the new parliamentary democratic structure of the west. Gandhi continues to attract the attention of social activists, social workers and political leaders. Gandhi lived in the most difficult times such as the apartheid regime in South Africa, Indian freedom struggle and partition. He was also an author and his writings contain a wide range of views on different issues. He led a simple life and was committed to moral and political values of truth and non-violence. There is no doubt that a rich corpus of scholarly work on Gandhi exists but there is still a need to debate upon the different interpretations of Gandhian discourse so that a contextual understanding of Gandhian philosophy may emerge. It is in this background that the present national seminar is proposed by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow in order to understand the different facets of Gandhi.

The real challenge in a democratic process is to ensure that the process of governance does not get subverted, appropriated or controlled by the economic and political elites who control the institutions of government or powerful market forces. In order to ensure true democracy, the elections are held periodically after an interval of time. The coming general election 2019 is going to be an important episode in the history of Indian politics. This is historical in the sense that along with the general elections, we are also celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi. Gandhi is acceptable to all the political parties in India or, in other words, we can say that he is no more a political heritage of any one political party. In the parliamentary form of democracy, which India adopted after independence, government and opposition mimic each other to a considerable extent. People expect an alternation of the same persons, or groups of persons, between government and opposition in course of time. Those who are in opposition now can expect to be in the government when their turn comes and vice versa. It is a failure of political imagination for the same group to expect to remain either in opposition or in the government all the time and to act on that presumption (Beteille 2012).

The emergence of the political party as an institution has played a crucial part in shaping the relationship between government and opposition as a distinctive feature of democratic political systems. It is through the party system that the alternation between the two became established as a regular, expected and acceptable part of our democracy. The party system gave opposition a focus and at the same time moderated its excesses (ibid). The question is how the different political parties utilize the Gandhian frame in their political campaign: whether Gandhi is still relevant to the political class and may act as a catalyst in the election process or the political parties do not require Gandhi in their political campaign.

STRUCTURE OF THE SEMINAR

Sub themes of the Technical Sessions

T1: Gandhi: Philosophy and Ideology

T1.1 Liberalism- Capitalism and Democratic Socialism (Debates in the West)

T1.2 Marx and Gandhi

T1.3 Gandhi's Philosophy: Indian, Asian and World Contexts

T1.4 Equality: Absolute and Possible

T1.5 Bases of Inequality: Caste, Class, Colour, Gender, Power and Domination

T1.6 Justice

T1.7 Democracy: Freedom, Justice and Equality as envisaged by Gandhi

T2: ISSUES OF CULTURE

T2.1 Gandhi's Theory and Methods

T2.2 Bases of Indian Unity

T2.3 Gandhi and Indian Society and Culture

T2.4 Gandhi and the Cultural Perspective

T2.5 Gandhi: Place of English and Indian Languages

T3: GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF PRAXIS

T3.1 Bases of Conflict: Class, Caste, Colonial Domination and Struggle for Freedom, Conflicts between the Rich and the Poor Nations

T3.2 Non-Violence, Conflict and Civil Disobedience

T3.3 Satyagraha: Gandhi

T4: CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY AND RELEVANCE OF GANDHI

T4.1 Heavy Technologies vs. Small Machines based Technologies

T4.2 Market Economy vs. Social Ownership

T4.3 Economics after Marx

T5: CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES

T5.1 Gandhi and Marginalized Groups

T5.2 Reservation and Gandhi

T5.3 Empowerment and Capacity Building among Marginalized Groups

T6: GANDHI AND INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

T6.1 Gandhi and his Contemporaries

T6.2 Gandhi and his Disciples

T6.3 Gandhi's Constructive Programme

T7: OPEN PANEL DISCUSSION

T7.1 Gandhi's Impact on Social, Political and Cultural Life of India (Appraisal by and Memoirs of Political Leaders from the different Political Parties)

T7.2 Gandhi and Uttar Pradesh

T7.3 Gandhi and Lucknow

The present seminar also proposes to bring the viewpoints of academicians, politicians, the civil society and general people in dialogue with one another. Against this backdrop, two special sessions are proposed to be conducted on "THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF NATIONAL POLITICS: STOCKTAKING AND EVALUATION OF GENERAL ELECTION-2019. The Sessions will focus on the issues, prospects and challenges before the Indian society, polity and economy in the coming national elections of 2019. The seminar will also engage the relevance of Gandhian teachings in the coming general elections.

Paper Submission Details : Papers on the aforesaid themes are invited from interested scholars and professionals. Abstracts (300 words) should reflect a judicious blend of theoretical rigour and compelling empirical evidence and must clearly mention the theme, methodology and emphasis and should be sent electronically to gandhirmlnu@gmail.com. A hard copy of the same should be sent to the Seminar Organizing Secretary. The last date for submission of Abstract is 15th March, 2019.

Presentation : Selected papers will be presented in different technical sessions followed by discussion.

Publication : Accepted papers would be published in form of Seminar Proceedings to be released along with Souvenir at the time of Seminar. The Department is in touch with some leading publishing houses for the publication of some selected papers of the seminar in the form of a book.

Registration Fee : Registration fee is Rs.500/- per head. Registration fee would cover Seminar Kit, meals and photocopies of circulated papers/CD of papers presented in the seminar. The organisers will make efforts to provide modest accommodation to outstation participants subject to availability of the same in University guest house/ hostels of the University. Lucknow city has a number of good hotels with the tariff starting from Rs. 500 for a Non AC single room and upwards. Participants willing to stay in hotels and pay for the same may contact the Organising Committee for bookings at least 15 days in advance.

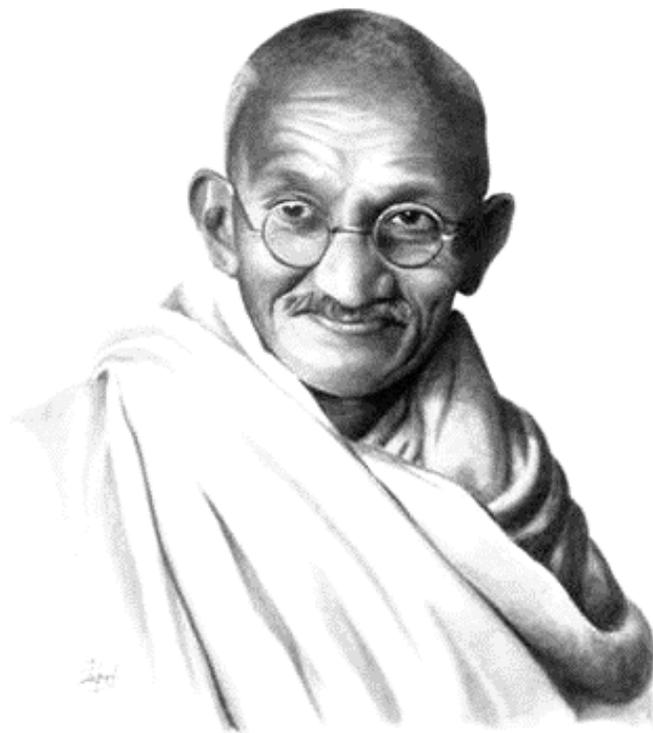
Lucknow : Lucknow is the capital city of Uttar Pradesh and it has always been a multicultural city. Beautiful gardens, poetry, music, and fine cuisine patronized by the Persian-loving Shia Nawabs of the city are well known amongst Indians and students of South Asian culture and history. Lucknow is popularly known as the City of Nawabs.

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia National Law University : Dr. Ram manohar Lohia National Law University, was established by an Act of Govt. of Uttar Pradesh in 2005, U.P. Act No.28 of 2005 and came into being on 4th of January 2006 to meet up the new challenges in legal field and to strengthen the vision that was given by the establishment of first National Law School of the country. Located in the South-West part of the Lucknow City, the University has 40 acres of sprawling campus in LDA's Kanpur Road Scheme. The Campus is a complete township having accommodation facilities for 1500 students and over 100 number of teaching and non-teaching staff members. Distance from Amausi airport is 3.0 kilometres and from Lucknow railway station the distance is nearly 7 kilometres.

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Structure of the Seminar

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- T1.7 Democracy: Freedom, Justice and Equality as envisaged by Gandhi

T2: Issues of Culture

- T2.1 Gandhi's Theory and Methods
- T2.2 Bases of Indian Unity
- T2.3 Gandhi and Indian Society and Culture
- T2.4 Gandhi and the Cultural Perspective
- T2.5 Gandhi: Place of English and Indian Languages

T3: Gandhi's Concept of Praxis

- T3.1 Bases of Conflict: Class, Caste, Colonial Domination and Struggle for Freedom, Conflicts between the Rich and the Poor Nations
- T3.2 Non-Violence, Conflict and Civil Disobedience

T3.3 Satyagraha: Gandhi

T4: Challenges of the 21st Century and Relevance of Gandhi

T4.1 Heavy Technologies vs. Small Machines based Technologies

T4.2 Market Economy vs. Social Ownership

T4.3 Economics after Marx

T5: Contemporary Social Issues

T5.1 Gandhi and Marginalized Groups

T5.2 Reservation and Gandhi

T5.3 Empowerment and Capacity Building among Marginalized Groups

T6: Gandhi and Indian Freedom Movement

T6.1 Gandhi and his Contemporaries

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