

GANDHIAN SATYAGRAHA FOR 21ST CENTURY

Session wise report

Inaugural Session

A two day National Seminar organised by Gandhi Study Circle, in collaboration with Department of Political Science of Aryabhatta College under aegis of IQAC. Sponsored by ICSSR opened up its seminar with an Inaugural ceremony on 12th February on the topic Gandhian Satyagraha for 21st Century

The opening session of the seminar was graced by distinguished guests, including **Prof. Dinesh Singh, former Vice Chancellor of DU, serving as the Chief Guest, and Prof. Raghuram Raju, a Philosophy Professor at IIT Tirupati, as the keynote speaker. Prof. Manoj Sinha, the college Principal, along with Dr. Satish Kumar Jha, Convenor of GSC, and Dr. Rajendra Dayal, Head of the Political Science Department,** among others, welcomed the guests as hosts of the seminar.

The event commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp and the performance of devotional songs, 'Vaishnav jan to' and 'Raghupati Raghav raja ram', by the college's music society. Following this, the guests and speakers were honored.

Dr. Satish Kumar Jha, the convenor of the Gandhi Study Circle, introduced the seminar's theme and the topics of various sessions, highlighting the influence of Indian philosophy on Satyagraha and its role in shaping democratic institutions. Prof. Manoj Sinha, the college Principal, then extended a formal welcome to all attendees.

The Chief Guest, Prof. Dinesh Sinha, delivered a welcoming address expressing his profound admiration for Gandhi and his philosophy of Satyagraha, emphasizing its spiritual essence and the importance of education and reputable institutions.

The keynote speaker, Prof. Raghuram Raju, shared insights into Gandhian philosophy and its significance, delving into the complexities of approaching Gandhi and proposing a theory for Satyagraha's application across various aspects of life. He elaborated on the connection between the Bhagavad Gita and Gandhi's discourse on Satyagraha, elucidating how Gandhi derived the concept of non-violent Satyagraha from his interpretation of the Gita.

The inauguration concluded with Dr. Rajendra Dayal, Head of the Political Science Department, expressing gratitude to the chief guest, the keynote speaker, and all attendees for their participation in the event.



SESSION 1: SATYAGRAHA IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The discussion on the historical evolution of Satyagraha took place at noon on February 12, 2024. It kicked off with the introduction and acknowledgment of the three speakers and the Chair. The initial speaker, Prof. Geeta Dharampal, shared insights on Gandhi's formative years in South Africa and the inception of Satyagraha. She highlighted Satyagraha as a blend of non-violence and civil disobedience, underscoring its dynamic nature. Prof. Dharampal underscored Gandhi's aim to empower the marginalized, considering women as ideal Satyagrahis. She also delved into Gandhi's text "Hind Swaraj" and its emphasis on resisting injustice as a right and duty. Moreover, she shed light on the Islamic influence on Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha, advocating for a non-violent Jihad of the inner spirit.

Furthermore, Prof. Dharampal drew a parallel between the two significant events of 09/11 - 2001 and 1906, highlighting Gandhi's first Satyagraha campaign in Johannesburg on the latter date. This comparison offered a fresh perspective on 09/11, suggesting its potential for fostering healing and peace. She emphasized Gandhi's role as an inspiration for liberation movements worldwide against colonialism, racism, and environmental degradation.

Dr. Bhuwan Jha explored the essence of Satyagraha, distinguishing it from physical force and emphasizing its nature as passive resistance. He stressed the importance of quality over quantity, suggesting that Satyagraha requires committed individuals rather than large numbers. Dr. Jha also discussed the concept of "Tapasya" with its elements of self-discipline and non-possession, along with the principles of "Swarajya" and "Swadeshi." He elaborated on Vinobha Bhave's concept of "Sarvodaya," advocating for the upliftment of all, and critiqued utilitarianism in favor of this holistic approach.

Prof. Anil Dutta delved into the distinction between Gandhi's Satyagraha and Gandhian Satyagraha, emphasizing the importance of non-violence, faith, and purity of intent in the latter. He highlighted Gandhi's active involvement in 31 Satyagrahas throughout his life and underscored the importance of understanding Gandhi's ideals to comprehend his actions. Prof. Dutta portrayed Gandhi as a visionary who challenged conventional norms, advocating for morality and historical relevance. He lamented Gandhi's misinterpretation during his lifetime and urged students to think critically about Satyagraha in the contemporary context.

The session concluded with the Chair summarizing the historical trajectory of Satyagraha, followed by a question-answer session addressing various aspects, from its origins to its relevance in modern times.





Session 2- SATYAGRAHA & ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY: CHALLENGES & POSSIBILITIES

Chair: Professor Ujjwal Kumar Singh, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi

Speakers: Dr. Rahul Verma, Fellow, Centre for Policy Research, Delhi

Dr. Sajjan Kumar, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Fellow at Teen Murti Memorial and Museum Library, Delhi

Prof. Sanjeev HM, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi

"Gandhian Satyagraha for the 21st century," spanning from February 12 to February 13, 2024, the Gandhi Study Circle of Aryabhata College, University of Delhi, in collaboration with the Department of Political Science under the auspices of IQAC and supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, hosted Session 2 in the Seminar Room of Aryabhata College. The session was dedicated to the pertinent theme "Satyagraha and Electoral Democracy: Challenges and Possibilities."

The session commenced around 2:30 PM with the acknowledgment of the chair and the speakers. The Chair initiated proceedings by laying the groundwork, emphasizing that Gandhian philosophies are often misunderstood as 'utopian' and aimed to facilitate discussions on Mahatma Gandhi's enduring legacy. The objective was to explore the intersectionality of Gandhian discourse and its relevance in contemporary times.

The first speaker, Dr. Rahul Verma, focused on the interconnectedness and complementary nature of protests and electoral democracy. He argued that protests, despite occasional authoritarian tendencies, play a vital role in enriching and deepening electoral democracy. Dr. Verma differentiated between protests and elections, suggesting that protests contribute positively to democracy's evolution. He highlighted the symbiotic relationship between protests, electoral democracy, and subsequent protest movements, concluding that any form of mobilization entails potential costs and benefits at both individual and organizational levels.

Following Dr. Verma, Dr. Sajjan Kumar discussed the amalgamation of idealism and pragmatism within Gandhian philosophy. He highlighted Satyagraha as a blend of idealism and pragmatism, underscoring its inherent humility. Dr. Kumar explored the paradoxical nature of protests and political preferences, illustrating how democratic electoral preferences reflect collective choices. He emphasized the need for Satyagraha to adapt pragmatically to maintain relevance in contemporary electoral democracy.

Lastly, Prof. Sanjeev HM delved into Gandhi's political philosophy and theory, asserting Gandhi's underrated status as a political theorist. He analyzed Gandhi's work "Hind Swaraj" and its rational, scientific underpinnings, presenting Satyagraha as transcending mere protest. Prof. Sanjeev elucidated the main principles of Gandhian philosophy—suffering, resistance, and agency—within the framework of 'Ramarajya,' showcasing their role in structuring political communities. He concluded by asserting that suffering is not weakness but a manifestation of strength, and Satyagraha is not a tool of the weak; it requires the endurance of suffering to embody Satyagraha.

The session stimulated lively engagement from scholars and students, with questions ranging from the complementary nature of protest and electoral

democracy to the criteria for categorizing protests as Satyagraha. These multidimensional inquiries encouraged further discourse on the intricate dynamics between protest movements and electoral processes.

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Day 1- 12/02/24
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

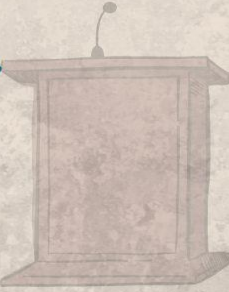
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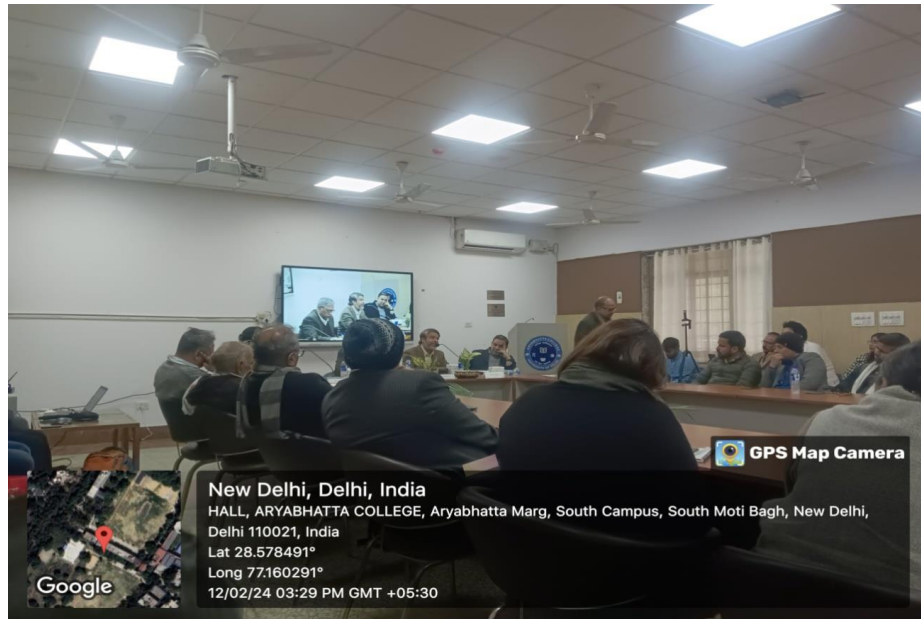
CHAIR: PROF. UJJWAL KUMAR SINGH
PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

Dr. Rahul Verma
Fellow,
Centre for Policy Research (CPR),
Delhi

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REPORT ON SESSION 3

THEME- "SATYAGRAHA AND CULTURAL RESISTENCE"

Aryabhatta College, part of the University of Delhi, collaborated with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and received support from the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) to host a two-day national seminar on "Gandhian Satyagraha for the 21st Century" on February 12th and 13th, 2024. Several sessions were held under this theme, with this report focusing on Session 3 conducted on February 12th in the Seminar Room of Aryabhatta College, centered on "Satyagraha and Cultural Resistance."

Commencing at 4:15 pm, the session began with a warm welcome to all guests and speakers, emphasizing the session's theme and the contemporary relevance of Satyagraha. It aimed to provide a platform for discussing the current implications of Satyagraha and delving into its core values. Approximately 15 speakers and 30 attendees participated in the session.

Professor Manindra Nath Thakur, an associate professor at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, served as the Chair. Dr. Thakur, having completed his PhD at Delhi University and with nearly two decades of teaching experience, was recognized for innovative research at the Developing Countries Research Centre, University of Delhi.

The distinguished panel included Dr. Thakur as the chair, along with Dr. Neerja Singh, Dr. Dhananjay Rai, and Dr. Varada Sambhus as speakers. The session commenced with the felicitation of the panel, followed by Dr. Thakur's insightful remarks on the essence of Satyagraha and Gandhi's perspective.

The first speaker, Prof. Neerja Singh, an associate professor at Satyawati College, University of Delhi, presented a research paper on the relationship between Gandhi, Nehru, and Patel. She highlighted the motivational role of Satyagraha in transforming ordinary individuals into martyrs, providing a unique perspective on the Gandhi-Patel relationship.

After Prof. Singh's presentation, a lively question-answer session ensued, with queries exploring the portrayal of the Gandhi-Patel relationship and potential resolutions. Dr. Thakur thanked Prof. Singh and introduced the next speaker, Dr. Dhananjay Rai.

Dr. Dhananjay Rai, from the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, discussed Gandhi's intervention in Satyagraha, framing it as an epistemological intervention. He addressed questions concerning the duality of state appropriation of Gandhi's iconography and emphasized the role of the market in propagating Gandhi's image.

The session concluded with Dr. Varda Sambhus, Deputy Director of ICSSR, presenting on the recent Maratha Kranti Morcha as a reflection of contemporary Satyagraha. Questions raised

revolved around the application of Satyagraha principles when the state is unwilling to negotiate.

The program concluded at 5:45 PM with a Vote of Thanks delivered by Dr. Manindra Nath Thakur.





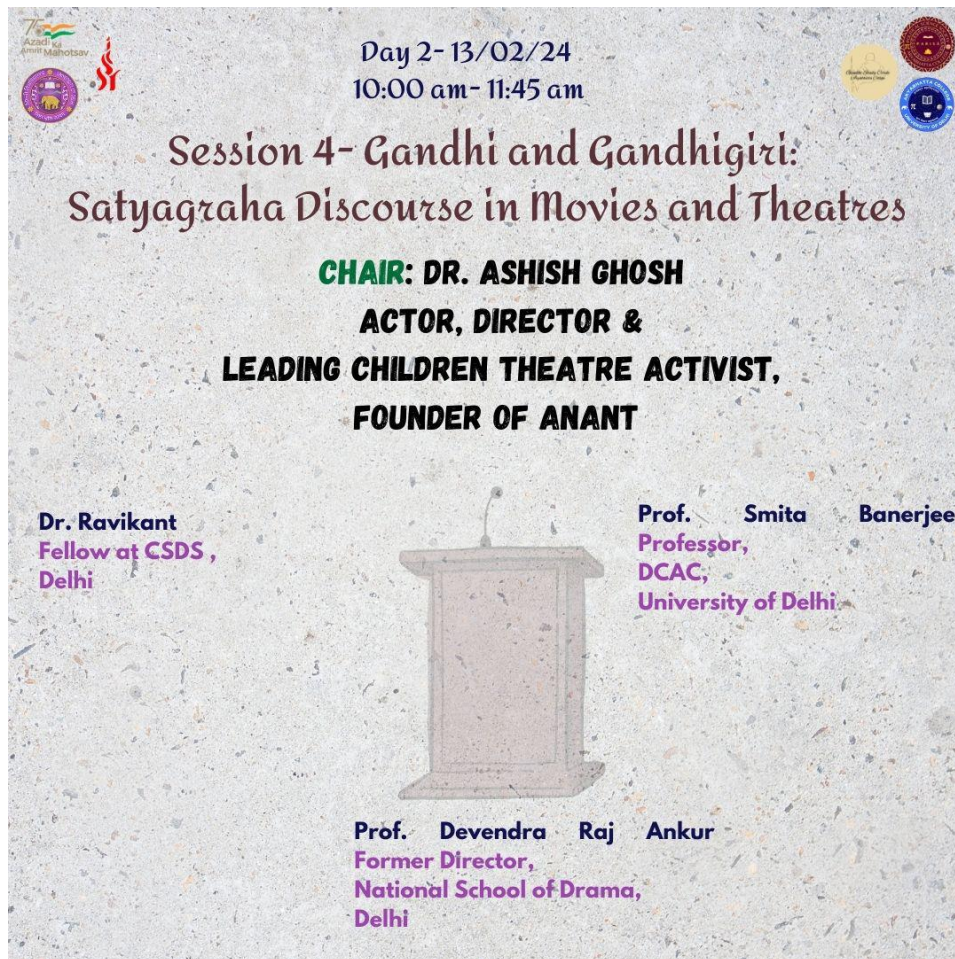
Session 4- GANDHI AND GANDHIGIRI: SATYAGRAHA DISCOURSE IN MOVIES AND THEATERS

Chair: Dr. Ashish Ghosh, Actor, Director and Leading Children's Theater Activist, and Founder of Anant.

Speakers: Prof. Devendra Raj Ankur, Former Director of the National School of Drama, Delhi

Prof. Smita Banerjee, a Professor, DCAC, University of Delhi

Dr. Ravikant, Fellow at CSDS, Delhi



The session exploring the discourse of Satyagraha in films and theaters took place at 10 AM on February 13, 2024, in the Seminar Room of Aryabhatta College. The second day of the seminar commenced with the introduction and acknowledgment of the three speakers and the Chair of this session.

Dr. Ashish Ghosh presided over the session and initiated discussions on the evolution of theater and the portrayal of Mahatma Gandhi in various films and plays. Reflecting on Ramakrishna's interpretation of truth and Gandhi's belief in truth being synonymous with God, Dr. Ghosh set the stage for the session.

Following this introduction, Prof. Devendra Raj Ankur shared insights on the posthumous neglect of Gandhi in society and the arts. He discussed the resurgence of interest in Gandhi through numerous plays across the country, highlighting how these artistic expressions depicted Gandhi's values and principles. Prof. Ankur referenced renowned plays such as "Hatya ka ek akar," showcasing the creative portrayal of Gandhi's ideology without explicit mention. He cited several films like "Gandhi," "Bapu- My Father," and "Lage Raho Munnabhai" as examples of Gandhi's enduring influence on filmmakers and playwrights, while expressing a desire for more nuanced explorations of Gandhi's bravery and experiments in contemporary theater and literature.

Dr. Ghosh then provided a summary of the session and invited Prof. Smita Banerjee to share her perspectives. Prof. Banerjee presented an analysis of famous films and works centered on Gandhi, starting from the 1960s when non-Indians sought to depict him on screen. She highlighted the challenges and controversies surrounding these productions, noting the mythical aura created around Gandhi due to historical inaccuracies in popular films. Prof. Banerjee discussed the significance of films like "Gandhi" and "Lage Raho Munnabhai" in shaping public memory and consumer culture. She also explored how certain films addressed national trauma and societal schisms, aiming to humanize Gandhi in the eyes of contemporary audiences.

Next, Dr. Ravikant delved into Gandhi's relationship with cinema, highlighting the irony of Gandhi's aversion to cinema despite being one of the most photographed and filmed individuals of his time. He analyzed films from the pre-independence era, showcasing how Gandhi's ideals influenced storytelling and character development, even in the absence of direct portrayals. Dr. Ravikant emphasized themes like the transformation of villains, the depiction of village life, and the use of nationalist symbols in cinema to convey Gandhian principles.

The session concluded with an engaging Q&A session addressing topics such as Gandhi's opposition to cinema, the relevance of Satyagraha today, and the perpetuation of myths surrounding Gandhi. Speakers clarified Gandhi's concerns regarding communication he couldn't control, criticized the commercialization of cinema, and discussed the perception of Gandhi's actions in contemporary times.





REPORT ON SESSION 5

THEME- "SATYAGRAHA AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS"

Aryabhata College, affiliated with the University of Delhi, hosted a two-day national seminar titled "Gandhian Satyagraha for the 21st Century" in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), on February 12th and 13th, 2024. The seminar featured multiple sessions focused on this theme. This report centers on Session 3, held on February 13th in the Seminar Room of Aryabhata College, which explored "Satyagraha and New Social Movements."

Commencing at 12 noon, the session commenced with welcoming all guests and speakers. It aimed to delve into how the Gandhian concept of Satyagraha influenced post-independence social movements in India, raising pertinent questions about its contemporary relevance. Approximately 13 speakers and 25 attendees participated in this session.

Professor Ajay Gudavarthy chaired the session, an associate professor at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, with expertise in political theory, contemporary movements, civil society and democracy, post-colonial theory, and populism. The distinguished panel included Dr. Gudavarthy as chair and Dr. Mithilesh Jha, Dr. Hilal Ahmed, and Dr. Anand Kumar as speakers. The session commenced with the felicitation of the panel by the organizing committee members.

The first speaker, Prof. Anand Kumar, a retired sociology professor from Jawaharlal Nehru University and former member of the Aam Adami Party, outlined the distinctions between old and new social movements, drawing parallels between the latter and Satyagraha. He discussed the central principles of Gandhian philosophy and their implications for contemporary social movements, urging reflection on the state's treatment of such movements and their connection to younger generations.

Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Jha, a political science professor at the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, focused on the role of swaraj in mobilizing support for Satyagraha and its relevance in daily life. Delving into Gandhi's concept of religion, he prompted contemplation on swaraj's multifaceted meanings and its significance for both social movements and individual existence.

Dr. Hilal Ahmed, associated with the Lokniti program of the CSDS, examined the application of Gandhian values in identifying and addressing contemporary issues. He emphasized the three key characteristics of Satyagraha and advocated for contextualizing Gandhi's methods in present-day scenarios. Professor Gudavarthy emphasized the practicality of Gandhian ideals and urged critical engagement with Gandhi's interpretation of Satyagraha.

The session concluded around 1:30 PM with a Vote of Thanks delivered by Dr. Ajay Gudavarthy.



REPORT ON SESSION 6

THEME: REIMAGINING SATYAGRAHA IN 21ST CENTURY

The second day of the national seminar on "Gandhian Satyagraha in the 21st Century," held from February 12th to February 13th, 2024, saw Session 6 titled "Reimagining Satyagraha in the 21st Century." Organized by the Gandhi Study Circle of Aryabhata College, University of Delhi, in collaboration with the Department of Political Science under the auspices of IQAC and supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), this session took place in the Seminar Room of the college. Chaired by Dr. Gurpreet Mahajan, an esteemed professor at the Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, the session featured discussions by distinguished speakers: Professor Oinam Bhagat, Professor Bhikhu Parekh, Professor Avijit Pathak, and Professor Anuradha Veeravalli.

The session commenced around 2:40 PM with Professor Gurpreet Mahajan offering commendations and felicitations to the speakers and panelists. She illuminated the session's theme by highlighting contemporary issues such as pervasive violence, diminishing protest efficacy, and consumerist culture dominance, questioning whether Gandhian values have been truly realized. Professor Mahajan underscored Gandhi's paradigmatic legacy, positioning him as a pioneer in condemning racism, resisting colonialism, and rejecting political violence. Drawing from Gandhi's principles of nonviolent resistance, she proposed that Satyagraha could offer practical solutions to modern social challenges.

The first speaker, Professor Bhikhu Parekh, a prominent political theorist in Britain and member of the House of Lords, emphasized the relativity of truth and the limitations of nonviolence for long-oppressed individuals. He elucidated Gandhi's concept of defensive violence through examples like boycotts, emphasizing suffering and resistance as integral to Satyagraha. Prof. Parekh emphasized the constructive and unifying aspects of Satyagraha, concluding optimistically that ideas endure beyond mortal lives.

Professor Oinam Bhagat, a renowned professor at the School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, explored the relationship between Satyagraha and dialogue ('Samvad'). He questioned whether dialogue within the framework of Satyagraha is feasible, analyzing Gandhi's meditative and individualistic approach. Prof. Bhagat highlighted the interconnectedness of intention, pursuit, action, and goal in Satyagraha, underscoring its holistic nature and moral essence.

Professor Avijit Pathak, a retired professor at the School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, delved into Gandhi's ideas as embodied in texts like 'Hind Swaraj.' He pondered the applicability of Gandhian philosophy in contemporary contexts marked by religious militancy, consumerism, and hyper-nationalism. Despite challenges, Prof. Pathak expressed optimism about Gandhi's enduring influence, asserting that his ideas transcend temporal and spatial boundaries.

Dr. Anuradha Veeravalli, a distinguished professor at the Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi, emphasized Gandhi's relevance in deliberative democracy, highlighting the importance of nonviolence for human existence. She underscored Gandhi's vision of 'Ramrajya' and 'Ramnaam' in ensuring people's representation in governance, stressing the need for Satyagrahis to be trained. Dr. Veeravalli discussed the intersectionality and paradoxical

nature of Gandhian principles.

The session saw active engagement from scholars and students, with questions ranging from the feasibility of Satyagraha in addressing contemporary issues to Gandhi's leadership style. Professor Gurpreet Mahajan summarized the session, emphasizing the multidimensional nature of moral authority inherent in Satyagraha. She advocated for a reimagining of Satyagraha in the 21st century, considering the current lack of total commitment, and concluded by urging a deeper understanding of engagement with Satyagraha.

The session concluded around 5:35 PM, fostering collaboration and enriching understanding among participants. By revisiting Gandhi's legacy and reimagining Satyagraha's relevance in the modern era, the session aimed to inspire renewed commitment to ethical governance, social justice, and peacebuilding. Gandhi's timeless wisdom continues to guide towards a more just, equitable, and harmonious world amidst the complexities of contemporary times.



