

INAUGURAL CEREMONY

“GANDHI AND HIS CRITICS: A Contemporary Discourse”

Aryabhata College, University of Delhi organized a three-day international seminar from 2nd October 2023 to 4th October 2023 titled “**Gandhi and his Critics: A Contemporary Discourse**” to commemorate the auspicious occasion of 154th Gandhi Jayanti. It was organized by the Gandhi Study Circle, Aryabhata College (University of Delhi) in collaboration with the Political Science Department of the college and supported by the Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) under the aegis of Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Aryabhata College. The seminar was divided into technical and plenary sessions over three-days where philosophers and social scientists debated and deliberated on the seminar theme.

The program started at 5 PM with the lamp lighting ceremony along with Gandhi bhajan by the music society of Aryabhata College followed by the welcome of the Chief Guest **Shri Muktesh Pardeshi** [(IFS), secretary (CPV & OIA), Ministry of External Affairs and Special Secretary G20 Secretariat, (Former High Commissioner, New Zealand and former Ambassador of Mexico)] and Chairperson **Prof. Vasuben Trivedi**, [Chairperson, Governing Body, Aryabhata College] and the keynote speaker **Prof. Douglas Allen**, [Department of Philosophy, University of Maine, USA]. The welcome address was made by **Prof. Manoj Sinha**, Principal, Aryabhata College, and **Prof. J.K. Singh**, IQAC Convener. The panel also comprised **Dr. Rajendra Dayal**, Teacher In Charge, of Political Science, at Aryabhata College, and **Dr. Satish K. Jha**, Convener, of Gandhi Study Circle.





The seminar began with opening remarks and an introduction of the theme from Dr. Satish K. Jha, Convener, the Gandhi Study Circle. He welcomed the panel and highlighted the importance of developing a nuanced and informed understanding of Gandhi's engagement with his contemporaries which also included some of his bitter critics. Dr. Jha discussed some of the key debates that Mahatma Gandhi had with Tagore, Subhash Chandra Bose, B.R. Ambedkar, and others. He also noted that while the left parties and its ideologues had generally focused on Gandhi's political ideologies, his social ideas and had criticised his political programs and actions, have now realized that no meaningful engagement with Indian society can happen without understanding Gandhi properly. He specifically mentioned the new social movements in India and the influence of Gandhi on it. The speech concluded with expression of thanks to all of the dignitaries for being a part of this important event.



Prof. J.K. Singh, IQAC Convener expressed how conducting this seminar has been a dream for 4 years. His speech revolved around the theme of Gandhi's idea of a sustainable future. In his concluding speech, he referred to some of the important and inspiring quotes of Gandhi.

Prof. Manoj Sinha, Principal, of Aryabhatta College greeted the house and the panel and expressed his warm gratitude to everyone for attending the seminar. His speech revolved around his experiences with the Gandhi Study Circle. He concluded his speech thus, "*Gandhi is more relevant today as compared to he ever was.*"



Prof. Vasuben Trivedi, Chairperson, of Aryabhata College addressed the house with her warm greetings. Her key ideas revolved around Gandhi's social ideas of improvement.

Shri. Muktesh Pardeshi, Chief Guest, addressed everyone on the panel and expressed his warm regards to them. The main theme of his speech included Gandhi being a face and a prominent idol of the country in the outside world which he has seen in his three decades of diplomatic career. He mentioned how the *satyagraha* and peace policies of Gandhi helped India attain freedom from British rule and how in the year 2007, the 2nd October was declared as the non-violence day. He then concluded his speech exhorting everyone to walk on the path of Gandhi to attain happiness and goodwill.



Prof. Douglas Allen, the keynote speaker, addressed the house by underlining the principles of Gandhi. In the end, he suggested ways to use Gandhian ideas to reform the country for a better future. He said people should know who Gandhi was, and what his principles were/are. We often have difficulties in understanding Gandhi's life. There is vast literature by Gandhi that contains the ideas and perceptions of Gandhi. Gandhi is an icon and it is also important to understand how Gandhi interpreted his life. He concluded by expressing how Gandhi ethically, morally, and spiritually guides us even today through his ideas and writings.



Dr. Rajendra Dayal, Co-convener proposed the vote of thanks and expressed his sincere gratitude to the participants for participating in the conference .later the principal felicitated the chief guest and handed over the souvenir which consisted of a khadi Jhola specially handcrafted by Khadi Gram Udyog fabric.

PLENARY SESSION 1

GANDHI AND NATION- TAGORE, JINNAH, AND SAVARKAR

The session featured several distinguished speakers, including **Dr. Gangeya Mukherjee**, an Associate Professor and independent writer and scholar, **Prof. Ishtiyag Ahmed**, a Professor Emeritus from the Department of Political Science at Stockholm University, and **Dr. Keonard Elst** from the Christian University in Leuven, Belgium. The event was chaired by **Dr. Manindra N Thakur** from CPS SSS JNU, and Antara Chakravarty from South Asian University, Delhi was the discussant for the session. The theme of the session was centered around Gandhi and the nation, and its critiques from Tagore, Jinnah, and Savarkar.

The session began with a felicitation of the esteemed panel, followed by a brief introduction of the session by the Chair, Prof. Manindra N Thakur, who emphasized the need to focus more on the philosophy of Gandhi.



The session began with a presentation by **Dr. Gangeya Mukherjee**, who delved into the debate between Gandhi and Tagore. The paper, entitled ‘Tagore: Gandhi’s Akin Critic’, focused on the significance of Tagore’s criticism of Gandhi’s nationalist policies. Dr. Mukherjee began by noting that Gandhi was a moral activist, while Tagore was a moral philosopher. He went on to explain how Tagore opposed Gandhi’s nationalism due to various reasons. Tagore did not believe that non-violence satyagraha of Gandhi was fully in consonance with ethical humanism. In his opinion Tagore also criticized Gandhi’s methods as being ‘mechanical, cultish, and economically unsound’. To Tagore, Satyagraha seemed similar to Western struggles due to its defiant nature and stubbornness. Tagore was also sceptical about the concept of Swaraj; he believed that Swaraj was a mist that would vanish, and it should not be objective. Furthermore, Tagore was against the Swadeshi movement and the idea of giving up government positions and foreign goods. While many of these criticisms were subtle, Gandhi was able to provide reasons for many of them.

During the presentation, Dr. Gangeya Mukherjee cited Bengali texts by Tagore, which he translated. He demonstrated how Tagore used political metaphors to analyze the ‘world of ideas’. Mukherjee also highlighted Tagore's view that man is receptive to his consciousness of loneliness. The professor argued that the past and present should be studied separately and quoted Richard Evans by saying “The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there.” Moreover, Dr. Mukherjee distinguished between an ethical activist and an ethical philosopher.



Prof. Ishtiyag Ahmed joined the panel through online mode and spoke on ‘**Gandhi and Jinnah on Nation**’. He began by stating that Gandhi and Jinnah cannot be compared as the two philosophers and their relationship were incongruent. He then defined what a nation is, describing it as a group of people sharing common cultural traits and sovereignty, with a nation being constituted by free individuals. Some states derive their legitimacy based on religion, such as Israel and Pakistan. Gandhi, in his opinion, believed that people born in India are Indians, which is a civilizational claim. He also believed that Hinduism could accommodate all other religions, but Jinnah did not support this idea. The Gandhian idea was pluralistic, but his stance was sometimes problematic in the 20th century with claims of equal rights and freedom. For example, he was against inter-caste and inter-religious marriage, but he later changed his views. Gandhi also had extremist nationalist positions which Jinnah did not approve of.

Prof. Ishtiyag Ahmed then talked about the road to partition. He opined that the Partition was not foreseeable at the advent of the 20th century, and the idea of a separate state for Muslims came very late. Muslims were brought to the forefront by the Act of 1909. Ten years later, the famous Khilafat Movement began, which included Muslims and also the issue of rights over

their holy lands, Mecca, Medina, and Baghdad. The Lucknow Pact, signed between Congress and the Muslim League, further reiterated equality. Jinnah's career began in the liberal tradition, and he was initially critical of the partition of Bengal. The demand for partition arose after the 1937 elections when the Muslim League lost massively, and Congress won even in the Muslim-reserved constituencies. Jinnah then abandoned the idea that India is one nation, and the demand for a separate nation began. During the years 1938-39, Gandhi made several promises to protect Muslims, Muslim laws, and to make Hindustani the national language (with two scripts- Devnagari and Persian-Urdu). However, the Lahore resolution was finally passed, demanding partition. Gandhi then proposed a plebiscite for partition, but Jinnah did not agree. In 1944, Lord Wavell also let Gandhi meet Jinnah, and several discussions were held, but to no avail.

Prof. Ishtiyak Ahmed reiterated that Gandhi tried to find commonality between different religions, while Jinnah emphasized the differences. The Chair concluded by commenting on how they were both Kathiawadis, and Gandhi and Jinnah used similar points to argue against each other.

The final presentation was given by Dr. Koenraad Elst, and his paper was titled, '**Gandhi, The Hindu Nationalists and Savarkar**'. He started by discussing Swami Shraddhananda, the founder of Arya Samaj and one of the founders of the pro-Hindu organization, Hindu Mahasabha. After its foundation, several changes occurred.

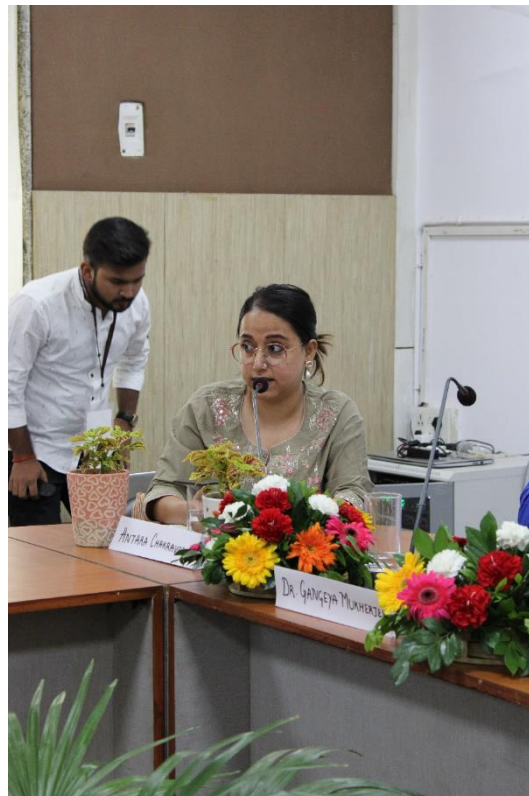
Vinayak Damodar Savarkar wrote Hindutva in 1923, which states that 'India belongs to those for whom India is both fatherland and holy land,' with the aim of making India a 'Hindu' nation. Savarkar tried to forge an alliance between Hinduism and nationalism. He also mentioned that the supporters of Hindutva or Hindu nationalist movement were very critical of Gandhi and had deep-rooted disagreement with him.



Koenraad further argued that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was founded in 1925 by Dr. Hedgewar, based on the Hindutva theory. One point noted by Dr. Koenraad is that the RSS didn't have much knowledge about religion. They tried to fight against Islam but didn't undertake a thorough study of religion. Gandhi once visited an RSS camp and was happy to

see that it was against caste discrimination. However, one of the points of disagreement between Gandhi and the RSS was based on Gandhi's idea of non-violence to liberate the Country.

Another point made by Dr. Elst is that Gandhi did not contribute to the partition. He also quoted Ram Swarup, who wrote that the mistakes Gandhi made were common to Hinduism. Dr. Elst further stated that the RSS was not responsible for Gandhi's assassination. According to Prof. Keonard, Gandhi's death led to the secularization of the RSS as they were blamed for Bapu's murder which was not true. He also talked about a movie in which Gandhi answered all the questions of Godse.





At the end of the event, Antara Chakravarty, the discussant, provided a summary of the presentations related to Tagore, Jinnah, and Savarkar. The session concluded with a question-and-answer round, in which the paper presenters answered all the questions with utmost clarity. The event was attended by 56 participants.



Overall, it was a very interactive session. The House was very enthusiastic. The speakers did justice to the topic and they gave their knowledgeable remarks on Gandhi and his critics and the political principles in debate. Their presentations were very innovative and they wanted everyone to learn from the life of Gandhi and encouraged them on Gandhi's ideas and interpretations.

Technical Session 1 "Gandhi and Religion"



Technical **session 1** which took place on October 3rd, 2023, revolved around the topic "**Gandhi and Religion**". The seminar was conducted in the seminar hall, from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. The program began with a welcome address by Dr. Varsha Singh, who introduced the panel. The dignitaries included speakers **Dr. Shankar Sharan** (IIAS Shimla), **Dr. Samer Moiz Rizvi** (JMI Delhi), and **Dr. Rami N Desai** (Anthropologist, Theologian, and Author associated with the India Foundation). The program was chaired by **Prof. Rakesh Pandey** historian (CSDS Delhi) and had **Dr. Rajendra Dayal** (Political Science department, Aryabhata College) as the discussant. The seminar focused on Gandhi's views on Christian missionaries, his relationship with the RSS, and his motivations for participating in the Khilafat movement.

Prof. Pandey opened the seminar with an introduction and welcome remarks. He expressed his gratitude for being invited to chair the event as well as warmly welcomed the audience. He noted that the topic of "Gandhi and Religion" is difficult to define, even though it is one of the most talked-about aspects of Gandhi's life and legacy. In his view, the complexity of the topic arises from the fact that it brings together two very complex and multifaceted subjects. The seminar was attended by notable scholars like Koenraad Elst, Gangeye Mukherjee, as well as interested faculty and students from the college.



Prof. Rakesh Pandey gave the opening remarks

Gandhi and Christian Missionaries:

Dr. Rami N Desai noted that Gandhi drew inspiration from Christianity, but held reservations about the methods employed by missionaries. While Gandhi saw parallels between Christian doctrine and the Bhagavad Gita, he rejected the notion that Christianity was the foremost religion. Furthermore, he disapproved of the enticements that missionaries used to attract potential converts. Dr. Desai suggests that Gandhi was a complex figure, and to truly comprehend him, we must acknowledge and even celebrate these apparent contradictions.



Dr. Rami N Desai presented her paper

Gandhi and the RSS: Through online presentation Dr. Shankar Sharan presented an argument about the early relationship between Gandhi and the RSS. According to him, the relationship was initially marred by mutual disdain. However, he pointed out that the situation has since undergone a complete turnaround. Where RSS leaders once referred to Gandhi as a Muslim League agent, they are now seen as being at the forefront of Gandhian principles.



Dr. Shankar Sharan presenting his paper

Gandhi and the Khilafat Movement: Dr. Samer Moiz Rizvi spoke on the **Khilafat movement**, defining it and noting Gandhi's role as a mass mobilizer. Prof. Rizvi raised the question of who used whom: did Gandhi use the Khilafat movement to reach out to Muslim masses, or did groups like the Tana Bhagats use the movement and Gandhi to meet their demands? He argued that the Khilafat movement provided space for a budding women's agency, never seen before. Rizvi's remarks on the Khilafat movement are significant because they challenge the traditional view of the movement as being primarily a Muslim movement. He argues that the movement was also a space for other marginalized groups and that it had a broader appeal than is often thought.



Prof. Samer Moiz Rizvi presented his paper

Chair Prof. Rakesh Pandey thanked the presenters for their insightful papers on significant themes. He cautioned that while it is important to learn from the past, we should also be careful not to dwell on it or oversimplify the complex issues. He then invited the discussant, Dr. Rajendra Dayal, to comment on the salient points of each paper. The seminar came to an end with the question-answer session. In closing, the seminar presented a comprehensive overview of “**Gandhi and Religion**”. The findings of the seminar suggest that Gandhi was a paradox, as suggested by all three speakers. This has important implications for the understanding that the masses have of Gandhi.

TECHNICAL SESSION 1A **THEME: GANDHI AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

The second day of the seminar incorporated technical session 1A which was centered on the theme “Gandhi and new social movements”. The seminar started at 10 AM in the conference hall of the college.



The session began with **Dr. Shivani Raheja** welcoming the esteemed dignitaries and introducing the chairperson of the session, **Professor Sushila Ramaswamy** of the Political Science Department, Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi. She was felicitated by Vanshika, a fellow member of the Gandhi study circle as a token of gratitude.

Dr. Shivani further introduced the discussant of the session, **Mr. Harish Dhawan** of the Department of Economics, Aryabhatta College who was felicitated by Komal, a member of the Gandhi study circle as a token of respect. Lastly, the speakers of the session, **Dr. Dhananjay**

Rai, Center of Gandhian Studies, Central University Gujarat, and Dr. **Priya Sharma**, research scholar, CPS, SSS, Jawaharlal Nehru University were felicitated by Sakshi, members of the Gandhi study circle as a token of appreciation.



Felicitaton ceremony

In his discussion, Dr. Dhananjay Rai focused on the topic of "**Gandhi and Swaraj**". He emphasized that the most crucial topic to understand Gandhi's ideas in the contemporary world is the "making of swaraj". Dr. Rai mentioned three points that are necessary to understand the making of swaraj, which are the narration of the human condition, satyagraha, and apotheosis of the human community. Among these three, Dr. Rai considered satyagraha as the most important. He provided a detailed analysis of the six phases of satyagraha that took place in South Africa and became a model carried out in India. Dr. Rai commented that Gandhi introduced the concept of interdependence through satyagraha. The next sub-topic was centered around the debate on Rajniti and Lokniti, proposed by Vinoba Bhave. Dr. Rai briefly shared Vinoba Bhave's ideas of self-discipline, self-control, and decision-making. Dr. Rai concluded his speech by stating the outcomes of the contemporary world if satyagraha had not taken place. He mentioned that there would have been no political action in the country, the civil society would have been clogged, and there would have been a negligible impact of pressure groups.

During the session, **Dr. Priya Sharma** joined online and discussed "**tracing the idea of political in Gandhian social movements**". She began by giving the audience an overview of her topic, which included three major points that were elaborated upon. Firstly, she reflected on how Gandhi's ideas were being pitched, which resulted in a radical and substantive shift. Secondly, she discussed how this shift has limited the horizon of the contemporary world. Lastly, she emphasized the need for a fresh lens to see Ekta Parishad as a guiding light to understand Gandhi's idea of politics. Dr. Sharma also stated that Gandhi's idea of politics was centered on three ideologies: self, truth, and ahimsa. She emphasized how Gandhi wanted embedded politics with moral and ethical values that were expansive and reachable to the masses. She also mentioned that many social movements were working under Gandhi's idea of politics, but Ekta Parishad had rightly adopted and understood Mahatma's politics. Dr. Sharma concluded her speech by stating the need for more determined activists and new social leaders to understand Gandhi's ideas righteously.

During his speech, **Mr. Harish Dhawan** expressed his interest in social movements and how it gradually became his passion. He emphasized that Gandhi's ideas have been a common thread in all social movements of the past and highlighted how the Chipko movement was inspired by Gandhi's satyagraha. Mr. Dhawan also stressed the significance of ethics in politics and how ethical issues have a deep political impact. He concluded by emphasizing the continued relevance of Gandhi's ideas in all social movements.

After the speakers had finished, the chairperson opened the floor for questions from the audience. **Prof. Lajwanti Chatani** posed a question about the plurality of the making of swaraj and whether there was a non-political and non-violent approach to it. Dr. Dhananjay Rai and Dr. Priya Sharma answered the questions attentively. Dr. Rai explained that books have focused more on the singularity of Swaraj and therefore its relevance was more based on singularity than plurality. Dr. Priya Sharma clarified that she used the term to project the concept more clearly.

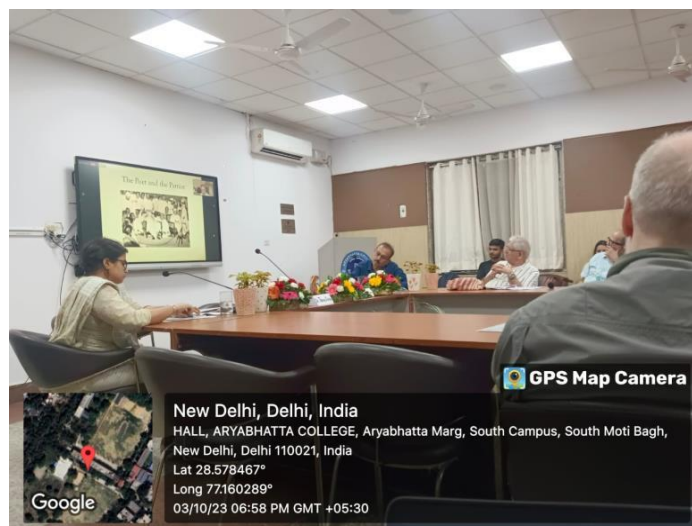
Prof. Anuradha Veeravalli, attending the session shared her thoughts on the speeches of the speakers instead of asking questions. She expressed the view that truth was absent in all social movements and emphasized the need for institutional change in the system. Following the question-and-answer round, **Professor Sushila Ramaswami**, the Chair, shared her views on the theme. She highlighted that Gandhi was a political activist and emphasized the importance of understanding his ideas in the context of colonial times to make them relevant in the modern world. She described him as a phenomenon who seamlessly combined the political and social aspects to communicate his message to the masses. She also advised that the term 'satyagraha' should be used with utmost care and not casually like a layman.



PLENARY SESSION 2 “GANDHI ON VIOLENCE AND WAR”

This report focuses on **Plenary Session 2** organized on the **3rd of October** in the **Seminar Room** of Aryabhata College. The theme for this session was “**Gandhi on Violence and War**”.

The session started at 4:30 p.m. with the welcome address of all the guests and speakers. The theme of the session was highlighted with great emphasis on Gandhi’s views and his stance on violence and war. This session focused on providing a platform to discuss and explore the enduring legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. It also provided the opportunity to delve into the intersectionality of Gandhian discourse and engage with its contemporary relevance. For this session, the distinguished panel of speakers and guests was present and were felicitated with hand hand-stitched bag, which symbolizes the Gandhian idea of khadi. Around 15 scholars and 20 people as an audience were present during the session.



In this session, **Prof. Ashok Acharya** was the Chair. He is a professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, and a Global Justice Fellow, at Yale University. He received his PhD from Toronto. He is also Co-Editor of Political Theory and Introduction and Editor of *Citizenship in Globalizing World*. He has published various articles on multiculturalism, social justice, and affirmative action. His area of research interests includes comparative and contemporary political theory, ethics and politics, and themes surrounding global and social justice.

Dr. Tarang Kapoor, assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy at Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi was the Discussant whose research interests include meta-ethics, issues in applied ethics and bi-ethics, ethical theory, feminism, exploration of themes and methodology of early and later writing themes philosophical council and philosophy in practice.



The first speaker in this session was Prof. Raj Mohan Gandhi, a research professor at the College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research paper, titled "Gandhi's Theories and Strategies," focused on the theories presented by Gandhi in his writings. Prof. Gandhi in his online presentation discussed three of Gandhi's theories - non-violence and resistance to oppression, the Indian Nation, and individual importance. He also highlighted Nehru's agreement and disagreement with these theories, as well as Gandhi's idea of freedom of the press. The paper also delved into the discourse and disagreement between Gandhi and Ambedkar on caste criticism, and the clash between Tilak and Gandhi on religious tolerance, the Hindu-Muslim alliance and Gandhi being labeled as 'racist'.

Following his paper presentation, the floor was opened for questions, which turned out to be very interactive and engaging. The other speakers questioned the distinction between

individual identity and the Varna system, Gandhi and Ambedkar's idea of aspiration of soul, Gandhi's acceptance of partition, and his efforts towards Hindu-Muslim unity. Prof. Rajamohan Gandhi answered all the questions with facts and logical reasoning. Dr. Douglas Allen, who had joined the seminar online, highlighted the misuse of Gandhi's name in the contemporary world. After the question-answer round, Prof. Ashok Acharaya thanked Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi and invited the next speaker, Prof. Sugata Bose.



Prof. Sugata Bose's field of specialization is Modern South Asian and Indian Ocean History, and he obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge. He is currently the Gardener Chair of Oceanic History Affairs at Harvard University. His presentation titled "The Ethics of Armed Struggle for Liberation: Mahatma Gandhi and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose," examined the ideologies of two prominent leaders of the Indian national freedom struggle - Netaji and Gandhi Ji. In his online presentation, Prof. Bose shed light on a new dimension of Netaji and Gandhi's relationship, highlighting not only their disagreements but also the sense of sympathy, mutual trust, and acknowledgment between them. The discussions during the session were multidimensional, and various questions were raised, encouraging a discussion on Gandhi's face off with Bose in 1939, his multiple identities, the distinction between violence and nonviolence, and Gandhi's view on Savarkar's idea of armed struggle, etc.

The session ended with a Vote of Thanks by Dr. Ashok Acharya.

TECHNICAL SESSION 2

“GANDHI AND HIS son Harilal ”

This technical session on the topic ‘**Gandhi and his son Harilal**’ was chaired by **Professor Savita Singh**, professor of Gender Studies at IGNOU, and discussant **Dr. Shridha Shah** from the Department of Philosophy at Hindu College, University of Delhi.

The session commenced with the chairperson’s discussion about the critics of Gandhi; she described the relationship between Gandhi and his son Harilal and Gandhi’s view on family. She discussed a quotation from the paper of **Aparna Basu** about the death of Kasturbha Gandhi.



The first speaker of the session was philosopher **Prof. Sundar Sarukai**. He connected with us online, and spoke on the topic titled ‘Family and The Individual: Gandhi and Einstein as Fathers’. He talked about his play "Two Fathers" based on the relationship between Gandhi and Harilal and Einstein and his daughter and described how Einstein had a terrible relationship with his daughter. He emphasized the importance of being a father or a son, and discussed the play he wrote based on Gandhi and Einstein. In this play, the conflict between father and son is not addressed directly but is mediated through characters. He concluded his speech by asking what moral obligations give us the freedom to intervene in other people’s lives. Gandhi is driven by his complications and his recognition of what it means to be a father. The discussant then spoke about the philosophical issue of social and public notions. She asked if there was any personal life for a public speaker, and the speaker answered by discussing people who are autonomous individuals and are great public speakers. He narrated how the conflict between Gandhi and his son did not completely stand out in the conflicts of fatherhood and son. The next question revolved around how Einstein’s work was different, which did not include his family. The answer was how both fathers had to face complications and conflicts. The next interjection was made about Gandhi being a father at a very young age, which is not a fit age to be a father.



The next speaker was **Dr. Chetana Jagriti**, a Research Scholar from the Department of Philosophy at university of Delhi. Her theme of discussion was Gandhi and his understanding of truth, wherein she covered the difference in understanding of truth between Harilal and Gandhi. She presented two instances of Gandhi to have a better understanding of the topic. For Gandhi, truth is a fundamental notion, and his understanding of truth about his son was discussed. His son became a part of the support system for the English education system, which Gandhi strongly opposed. He believed in the education provided in the ashram, as it aided in character building, which helped in forming the base for Swaraj. Some of the questions revolved around whether it is just a moral notion or not, and what sort of moral form this relationship between conscience and truth has. Another idea that came up for discussion was that Harilal needed more sympathetic attention than Gandhi because he was home-tutored and had to face problems from children outside who were properly schooled. It was also mentioned that Gandhi used to walk his children on foot to his office where he used to tutor them.

Professor Douglas Allen joined through online mode to discuss the holistic approach of Gandhi. The discussion revolved around how the conflict between Gandhi and his son Harilal could be discussed without bringing in the notion of truth. The discussion also touched upon Harilal in his last days, and how he remembered his father as Bapu.



This successful session was concluded on the point that Gandhi had his faults but that he was a man of relevance despite being this he was not a good father. One thing that the chairperson admired about Gandhi was that he never had bhakts but only critics. The discussions, presentations, and interactions not only helped enrich our understanding but also helped foster collaborations among the participants.

MUSICAL CONCERT

On the evening of the second day of the International Seminar on **Gandhi and his Critics: A Contemporary Discourse**, Virtuoso, the music society of the college, had the honor of being invited to greet the esteemed guests and perform memorable pieces, enriching the event with the power of music.

The event not only commemorated the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi but also showcased the college's commitment to promoting cultural richness. The guests were greeted with melodious tunes that captured the essence of Gandhian philosophy.

From the Indian Division under the guidance and preparation of **Dr. Sushmita Jha**, the students performed '*Mohe Rang Do Laal*;', '*Abhi Mujhme Kahin*' and '*Aaj Ibaadat*', all semi-classical standards with soulful backing from the Tabla and Harmonium. The performers included Mr. Namit Gupta, Mr. Yash Sharma, Ms. Punya, Shrishti, Mr. Ambarish, Mr. Anant, Mr. Rupesh, Ms. Srishti, Ms. Shrishti, Ms. Astha, Ms. Aditi, Ms. Kezal, Ms. Yashna

From the Western Division; *Imagine* and *Let It Be* by John Lennon and The Beatles performed together as a Band, renditions that echoed the values of non-violence, unity, and love for humanity. The performers included Mr. Vastal Loomba, Mr. Tanish Kaushik, Mr. Shantanu Roy, Mr. Anugrah Priyanshu Beck and Mr. Aryaman

The applause and smiles on the faces of the audience were a testament to the impact of music in conveying profound messages.

Venue: Student Activity Room

Time: 7:30 – 8: 00 PM



PLENARY SESSION 3

GANDHI, INTER-COMMUNITY RELATIONS, AND THE IDENTITY QUESTION

This plenary focused on Plenary Session 3 organized on the 4th of October in the Seminar Room of Aryabhatta College. The theme for this session was **“Gandhi, Inter-Community Relations and The Identity Question”**.



The session's chairperson was **Prof. Gurpreet Mahajan** (Retd.) Professor, Center of Political Science (JNU) with **Dr. Harish Wankhede**, Associate Professor, Center for Political Science (JNU) as Discussant.

The first speaker was **Prof. Gopal Guru** (Retd.), CPS, SSS, Jawaharlal Nehru University whose topic for discussion was **‘Ambedkar's Gandhi: A Step Forward’**. He started by giving a brief account of the two eminent personalities and the kind of image they have in the eyes of today's scholars. Further, he reflected on the functions of critics, the kind of critics both Gandhi ji and Dr. Ambedkar had followed by his reflections on their speeches and writings. He highlighted how the two were each other's opponents, maybe in the political and ideological scenario but still on the same line on many common issues of the time. Many major historic events such as the Poona pact (1932) and the Round Table conference (1931), their consequences, as well as both the leader's views and role in them were also part of his

discussions. The major highlights also included Ambedkar's reactions to the Indian National Congress.



The second speaker of the event was **Dr. Anuradha Shah Veeravalli**, formerly with the Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi. Her paper was titled '**Hindu-Muslim Unity Versus Identity: Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan**'. She began with an introduction of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, his relations with Gandhi, his views on religion, and his arguments along with his approach towards the issue. She highlighted the leader's belief in Gandhi ji's idea of Ahimsa (non-violence). The discussions included popular opinions of leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, and Mohammad Ali Jinnah towards partition, Hindu-Muslim unity, and thoughts of Mr. Khan and Gandhi too.



The third speaker was Dr. Rinku Lamba, an Associate Professor from the Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy at the National Law School in Bangalore. The topic she elaborated upon was Religion In/And the Making of the Indian Modern: Gandhi and His Interlocutors. She explained Gandhi's views on modernity along with the thoughts and arguments of influential leaders such as Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on the same. She talked about the understanding of Western scholars on the concept of modernity in both general and Indian contexts. In the second section of her research paper, she focused on Gandhi's thoughts on philosophy and religion. It included his thoughts on how religion is important in politics in a diverse country like India, his idea of Dharma, and how he was impressed by Rabindranath Tagore's thought on religion as a symbol of love and unity. In conclusion of her paper, she highlighted how Tagore's and Gandhi's views were different on politics and the way forward.

The fourth and final discussion in the session was by Prof. Lajwanti Chatani, a Professor from the Department of Political Science at Maharaja Sayajirao University in Baroda. Her topic of discussion was '**Uncovering Gandhi's Post-Gendered Perspective of the Political**'. She spoke on 'feminism' from a Gandhian point of view, and explained how Gandhi should not be confused with a saint, that he was human and made some errors in both his personal and public-professional life. Further, she spoke of his contribution to women's empowerment at that time, with the biggest example being his encouragement of women's participation in the Indian National movement. She also explained how Gandhi used examples from Hindu holy texts such as Ramayana and Mahabharata, by quoting examples of both Goddess Sita and Queen Draupadi to highlight the strength and importance of women in society.



Prof. Chatani also took into account the letters of Gandhi and his experiments, both on personal and public levels. She encouraged listeners to 'DO GANDHI' rather than being Gandhi. After she concluded her paper, **Dr. Harish Wankhede** (Discussant) highlighted some important queries regarding what all the esteemed speakers spoke about in their speeches. A small round of discussion was triggered between the members about their views and thoughts. Most of the questions were regarding Gandhi's approach to his idea of ahimsa, partition, and the well-known Gandhi-Ambedkar debate. They presented all the suitable arguments and answers in defense of their papers while also answering the general doubts of the audience.

At the end, the Chair gave her concluding remarks. With this conclusive round, the event came to its fruitful end at 1:30 PM.

Technical session 3

GANDHI'S MANY INTERLOCUTORS

Aryabhatta College of Delhi University organized a three-day international seminar on “Gandhi and his critics; a contemporary discourse”. The seminar started from 2nd October -4th October. Mahatma Gandhi (Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi) was the preeminent leader of Indian nationalism in British-ruled India. Employing nonviolent civil disobedience, Gandhi led India to independence and inspired the movement for civil rights and movement across the world. Technical session 3 which took place on the 4th of October dealt with the topic of Gandhi’s many interlocutors. This seminar was conducted in the seminar hall, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The seminar began with the welcoming of the guests and introduction of the panel to the audience. The dignitaries including **speakers Prof. B Mangalam** (department of English Aryabhatta college), Dr. **Ananya Vajpeyi** (CSD and Ashoka University), and **Dr Alok Tandon** (philosopher, independent thinker, and former fellow of ICSSR) who joined the seminar online and also **Dr. Christian Bartolf** (political and educational scientist Berlin, Germany) joined the seminar online. The seminar was **chaired by Prof. Gangeya Mukherji** and had **discussant Dr. Chandrachur Singh** (political science department of Hindu college). **The seminar centred on Gandhi’s various ideas of Non-cooperation, modernism, and Westernism and his interaction with Jawaharlal Nehru, Vir Savarkar, and Tagore.**



Chair: Dr. Gangeya Mukherji greeting all the panelists

Dr. Gangeya Mukherji, who was chairing the session, invited **Prof B Mangalam** to speak . She began with a warm good morning and her topic of presentation was ‘**THE CULTURE OF DEBATE, DISSENT, AND DIALOGUE: GANDHI AND AMBEDKAR**’. She talked about the popular perception of Gandhi and Ambedkar in the last 7 decades before independence, and about the difference in ideas and practices, and the methodology of struggles during the anti-colonial resistance that have been posited mutually exclusive and contrary. She also talked about whether Gandhi was an idealist or a manipulator. Ideal in the sense of his deep connection to non-violence, truth, and self-sacrifice, and manipulator in the sense that he used his charisma and popularity to advance his agenda. The rise of the Dalit movement, which was a remarkable pan-India movement, gave impetus to Gandhi and Ambedkar engagement. Poona pact was one of the phases of their engagement in which Gandhi and Ambedkar show classic class and the representation of ideas. The debate between them contributed to the understanding of community, inter - community relations. She concluded her topic by saying that both played a great role in history, and also mentioned the charkha's substitution for the Ashok chakra.



Prof. B Mangalam presenting her paper

The discussant, **Dr. Chandrachur Singh**, added his views and said that Ambedkar's personality as a Dalit figure was civil, non-judgmental, and critical towards his ideas, whereas Gandhi was rooted in his social, cultural, and religious order, and said dualism is the essence of democracy. Some questions were also raised by the audience, such as how Gandhi wanted to reform religion. In response to this question, Prof. B Manglam said that Gandhi believed it was a blot on Hinduism and was against untouchability.

The session also had presentation by Ananya Vajpeyi , Bartolf and Alok tandon. Vajpeyi touched upon gandhi- Nehru relationship and their complementarity , while Bartolf dwelt on Gandhi- Tagore convergences and divergences. Alok tandon highlighted Civic Nationalism of Gandhi and how it was different from the ethnic nationalism of Savarkar.

Some questions were also raised from the audience like how Gandhi wanted to reform within the religion and answer to this question prof. B Manglam said Gandhi says its blot on Hindu system whereas Ambedkar said that it's a blot on bodies of Dalit (harijan).

Dr. Ananya Vajpei gave a talk on the topic "Gandhi and Nehru: Different Modernism". She began by pointing out that both Gandhi and Nehru held a deep respect for tradition and modernity. Gandhi leaned more towards tradition while Nehru was more inclined towards Western modernism and progressiveness. The main focus of her talk was on the maternal aspect of both their thoughts. Nehru was seen as the architect of post-colonial India and a great admirer of Ashoka. Gandhi, on the other hand, was considered more modern than the moderns as he embraced modernity while rejecting violence and militarism to save the environment and humanity. His vision was influenced by the Geeta, and although he lived a simple life in a village, he had a forward-thinking approach.



Prof. Ananya vajpei is presenting her paper

During the discussion, Dr. Gangeya Mukherji added that there was a noticeable difference between Nehru and Gandhi's socialist traditions. Dr. Chandrachur Singh, the discussant, classified both leaders as representing the core of Indian national identity. He further attached the labels of tradition and modernism to Gandhi and Nehru, respectively.

Dr. Christian Bartolf presented on the topic "**Gandhi and Tagore: Nonviolent, Non-Cooperation - A Critical Dialogue**". He began by highlighting the significance of both these figures in Indian history, as they were dedicated to the cause of independence, albeit with different approaches. The central theme of his presentation was to provide the background for these two personalities. Gandhi believed in nonviolence and non-cooperation, while Tagore was more doubtful of these methods. Dr. Bartolf also touched upon nationalism, citing Tagore's writing on the subject, where he claimed that India lacked a real sense of nationalism and that it could only gain independence through education that taught that the country is greater than the ideals of humanity. Dr. Bartolf concluded his presentation by discussing the Gandhi-Tagore controversy. When Gandhi went for satyagraha, Tagore gave a remarkable address, referring to Gandhi as the emancipated soul and immortal for the whole world. Tagore also spoke about the true meaning of sacrifice. An interesting thought of Tagore was the Mantram of Indian peace and good unity, not the distracted West. During the discussion, Dr. Chandrachur Singh remarked on Tagore's understanding of immoralism and humanism.

Dr. Alok Tandon presented on the topic "**The Idea of India: Debating Gandhi's Civic Nationalism vs. Savarkar's Ethnic Nationalism**". He joined the session online and his central theme revolved around the differences between Gandhi and Savarkar's understanding of religion, society, and culture. For Savarkar, religion was for political purposes, whereas for Gandhi, it encompassed truth, moksha, and non-violence. Gandhi was a great admirer of the Geeta. Regarding society, Gandhi believed in universal ethical religion and fought against injustice and orthodox practices. He proclaimed himself as a Sanatana Hindu. On the other hand, Savarkar made a clear distinction between Hindu and Hindutva, which served as the basis for a Hindu nation. According to Savarkar, every person who lives within the boundaries of the river Indus is a Hindu. The two also had contrasting views on violence. Savarkar glorified violence by militarizing the Hindu nation, while Gandhi rejected violence and was in favor of

not creating a military. Regarding culture, Gandhi believed that "**we are Indian first and Hindu, Muslim, Sikh are after.**" During the discussion, Dr. Chandrachur Singh added his thoughts on Savarkar's ideas. Some questions were raised during the session, such as who is Hindu and the question of race and purification. In response to these questions, **Dr. Alok Tandon** explained that the question of race is for countries that do not have a wide range of religions. However, India has a multi-rationalistic approach, and the cultural unification of India is based on various cultural races that have come to India over time.

TECHNICAL SESSION

3A: GANDHI AND GITA

3B: GANDHI AND HIS LEFT- SOCIALIST CRITIQUE

The event was thought-provoking as it brought in a diverse line-up of speakers who delved into various fascinating themes related to Gandhi.



Technical session 3A commenced at 10 a.m. as the anchor introduced the esteemed panelists, setting the stage for an engaging and informative discussion. Following that, the anchor warmly welcomed all the students and faculty members and highlighted the theme of the seminar- **Gandhi and Gita**.



The technical session 3A at the seminar focused on the fascinating connection between **Gandhi and Gita**. We had two remarkable speakers among us, **Shri Swami Shyamananda**, who is a monk, ex-assistant professor at Delhi College of Arts and Commerce, University of Delhi, and the former director of the World Bank, and **Dr. Gianluigi Segalerba** from the Institute of Philosophical Studies, University of Columbia, Austria. First, Shri Swami Shyamananda shared his views on the search for authenticity in an uncertain world. He mentioned that the lack of alignment between our inner and outer lives leads us to search for authenticity. He emphasized the meaning of the word ‘authenticity’ and highlighted the importance of finding our true selves and living in alignment with our values. His focus on authenticity and Gandhi’s search for authenticity provided the audience with valuable insights into leading a meaningful life. Then, Dr. Gianluigi Segalerba gave us a critical perspective on Gandhi and Gita, which challenged traditional interpretations. He provided fascinating insights into the relationship between Gandhi’s philosophy and the teachings of Gita. The session was informative and educative, encouraging the audience to question and analyze Gandhi’s ideas in a new light. After both the speakers had presented their views on their respective themes, the chair for the session, **Dr. Maninder N Thakur**, commended them for their expertise and praised the session’s wealth of knowledge. The discussant, **Dr. Jigyasa Sogarwal** from the Department of Political Science, Hindu College, University of Delhi, then posed a few questions to which they responded eloquently.



The technical session 3B delved into **Gandhi and his left socialist critiques**, featuring two speakers, **Dr. Sudha Jha Pathak**, an assistant professor at Bennett University, and **Ms. Rinkal Tyagi**, a research scholar. First, Dr. Sudha Jha Pathak presented her research themed 'Gandhi and Nehru – Undercurrents of Synergy and Divergence', highlighting the contrasting ideas and perspectives that they held. Then, Ms. Rinkal Tyagi further explored the different discourses surrounding Gandhi and Nehru, offering different perspectives on their ideologies. The chair for the session, **Prof. Manindra Thakur**, CPS SSS JNU, emphasized the profound bond shared by Gandhi and Nehru despite their different perspectives. Moreover, the multi-dimensional approach provided a well-rounded understanding of their complex relationship and the diverse interpretations of their philosophies. After both the speakers had shared their perspectives on their respective themes, the discussant for the session, **Dr. Ankit Singh**, asked them a few intriguing questions to further explore their ideas.



Both sessions were truly informative, and students and faculty members actively engaged with the panellists by asking insightful questions during the sessions, creating a dynamic and interactive atmosphere. The discussions provided valuable insights into Gandhi's philosophy and its relevance in today's world. With this, the anchor concluded the event by expressing his sincere gratitude and delivering a vote of thanks to the panellists, students, and faculty members. Moreover, both sessions were very interactive and informative, unfolding smoothly and creating an atmosphere of enthusiasm and anticipation.

PLENARY SESSION 4

“GANDHI, MODERNITY AND DEVELOPMENT- NEHRU, THE LIBERALS AND LEFT CRITIQUES”



The event started at 4:30 p.m. with the felicitation of the dignitaries by the members of the Gandhi Study Circle. The panel was chaired by **Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty (Retd.)** [Professor of political science, University of Delhi & Distinguished Faculty, Center for Social Development, Delhi], the Speakers were **Prof. Aditya Mukherjee (Retd.)** [Department of History, CHS, JNU], **Prof. Sudhir Chandra (Retd.)** [Department of history, CSS, Surat], **Dr Ajay Gudavarthy**, [Associate Professor Centre for Political Studies/SSS/JNU] and **Prof. P. Bilimoria**, [Philosopher and Faculty at O.P. Jindal University, Visiting Professor, University of California, Berkeley (USA)] and the Discussant **Dr Rityusha Mani Tiwari** [Shaheed Bhagat Singh College, University of Delhi].

Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty, the chairperson addressed the house by talking about how different prominent figures had their critics like Plato and his critics, and Gandhi and his critics establishing relationships among different thoughts.



Professor Aditya Mukherjee, spoke on "Gandhi and his left critics", highlighting the ongoing demonization of Gandhi in contemporary discourse. According to him, the demonization of Gandhi has touched new low as it is stated that Gandhi represented imperialism, while Bose

and Nehru were the leftist faces of imperialism. Although there were tactical shifts, the leftists still maintained their position. Although Gandhi cannot be considered a Marxist, even Lenin referred to him as a revolutionary." Gandhi believed that dharma, which is ethics and morality, and Ram Rajya as a moral, humane, and egalitarian society were essential. This is why he went on a hunger strike in 1947 demanding that every Muslim who had been displaced from their homes be returned.



Professor Sudhir Chandra, dwelt on in his presentation as to how we have misunderstood Gandhi for our selfish and narrow purposes. According to him, we cannot publicly disown Gandhi because he is a great moral asset. Gandhi's unique approach to non-violence was a struggle like never seen before. However, he was only able to celebrate one birthday in independent India, living for only 169 days in his beloved country. Although Godse physically liquidated Gandhi, he had already died in many ways before he was liquidated on 30th January 1948. In an emotionally charged presentation Chandra quoted a speech that Gandhi gave on his 79th birthday, in which Gandhi expressed unhappiness about why he was still on this earth and asked God to take him to death if he had no work here. Chandra argued that we have been explicitly betraying Gandhi for many years. We have only supported him when we needed him. He suggested that we forget ideologies and see Gandhi for what he truly was. If we fail to do so, then there is something radically wrong with us.



During his talk on "**Has Gandhi Trumped Left and Ambedkar?**", **Dr. Ajay Gudavarthy** discussed the various scholastic approaches to castes and religions. He explored the reasons behind the increasing popularity of Hindu consolidation and referred to Bilgrami's paper on Gandhi. According to Bilgrami, Gandhi's idea of caste is diverse and caste division is not based on any logical reasoning. Gandhi did not support caste hierarchy, but rather, he believed that caste is an embodiment of rights and that it is heterogeneous. On the other hand, B.R. Ambedkar failed to see this aspect of Gandhi's ideology. Gandhi's aim was to make society more cultural and moral. He did not want to fight the hierarchy through monetization, instead, he believed that the hierarchy needed to be fought within the culture. He aimed to break the hierarchy by preserving culture and not allowing modernity to destroy it. The speaker concluded by raising the question of whether the Gandhian method is potent enough to resist modernity.



Philosopher Professor P. Bilimoria was the next speaker, and his talk was centred on "Gandhi and Other Liberals." He highlighted the papers of A.O Hume and Gopala Krishna Gokhale and elaborated on how Bal Gangadhar Tilak aimed for Poorna Swaraj. Annie Besant was well-connected with the liberals, and she edited "Young India" for some time. The liberals often discussed topics such as who rules whom or the dominion status. The liberalism of Gokhale can be seen in his literature, and V.S. Sri Niwas Shastri wrote his biography. Shashtri did not support the ideas of Gandhi or Ambedkar and continued to be moderate like his guru Gokhale. The speaker also talked about the "LAL BAL PAL" movement and the Rowlatt Act, which led to the beginning of nationwide strikes by Gandhi. The speaker concluded by stating that all the liberals were responsible for shaping Gandhi's ideology, just as he has been responsible for them. He also described Shastri's speech, in which he disagreed with Gandhi's ideas.



The discussant, **Dr. Rityusha Mani Tiwari** started the discussion by asking questions to the speakers based on their respective papers . She then discussed and elaborated on these while raising some critical questions on the papers of the speakers. After that, there was a question-answer session. The chair then concluded the event by speaking about the mass movement, unification, freedom struggle, and the multi-class movement.



Technical Session 4

"GANDHI AND THE FEMINIST CRITIQUE"

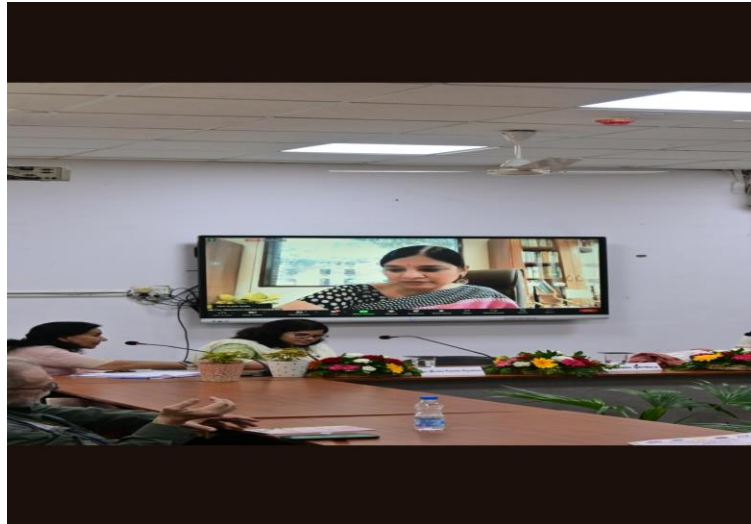
This session took place on the **4th of October, 2023** from **3:30 pm to 5:00 pm** as a technical session.

Gandhi in recent years has been accused of being a hoax celibate unlike his claims, this session revolved around busting these myths and propaganda against him while also exploring his beliefs, ideology, and the idea of women and several nuances attached to this.



CHAIR: Prof. Bijyalakshmi Nanda

The session was chaired by **Prof. Bijyalakshmi Nanda, Principal, Miranda House, University of Delhi**. She discussed the undeniable role of Gandhi in moving women from being **an object of reform** to an **agent of change** during the pre-independence Era. She also talked about the Gandhian construct of masculine and feminine which was visible in the **Non-violent** and **empathic** approach to freedom movement by Gandhi. She, in the end, also touched upon the topic of **reflective autonomy** and the critique of Gandhi through the eyes of several scholars like **Bhikhu Parekh, Biputi Patel, and Ashish Nandy**.



SPEAKER 1 - Prof.Suman Khanna Aggarwal

The first speaker for the seminar was **Prof. Suman Khanna Aggarwal**, an Associate Professor of Philosophy (Retd.), at DU and currently associated with **Shanti Sahyog for Non-Violence, Delhi** as the **Director**. Her topic of discussion revolved around **Gandhi's relations with Kasturba Gandhi, Manu Gandhi, and The Feminist Critique**. She opened the discussion by addressing the claims of social media which was directed by the hate towards Gandhi which she explored through his relations with six prominent women in his life which include the likes of Kasturba and Manu Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, etc. She went on to discuss the very **feminine side of Gandhi** and the "**Sakhi Bhav**" he had with women while briefly touching on the Gandhian idea of **celibacy and moksha**.



SPEAKER 2: DR.(HC) Reela Hota

The session was further taken forward by a very prolific personality, **Dr. Reela Hota**, an Odissi Danseuse, **founder** and currently a **director** at the **International Arts Festival Symposium**. Her theme of the discussion revolved around the **Expansion of the Mind through Brahmacharya and Gandhi's vow: A yogic perspective**. She started the presentation by explaining the idea of **Internal and External Worlds** and went on to talk about the **concept and evolution of the mind**. She later took us through **four stages of human life**, Brahmacharya being one of them. Towards the later end of her discussion, she explained the attempt Gandhi to search for pure love through Brahmacharya which also resulted in his

devotion to God by practising **Bhakti Yoga** as he sought **self-purification** through Brahmacharya.



SPEAKER 3: Deepalee Rout & Swगतिका Dash

The last but not least part of the session was conducted by **Deepalee Rout**, a lecturer of Philosophy, at Kandarpur College, Cuttack, Odisha, who also spoke on behalf of **Swगतिका Dash**. Her topic revolved around **Unraveling Gendered Perspectives: Women's Status and Identity in the Philosophies of Gandhi and Ambedkar**. She shed light upon the improvement of women's status as a part of **Gandhi's Constructive Programme** while highlighting the conservative approach of Gandhi as part of a patriarchal society and his views of judging women through their **chastity and purity**. She also drew a contrast between the **ideology and approach of Gandhi and Ambedkar**, who talked about the intertwined conditions of caste, class, and gender hierarchy in India. She concluded her speech by addressing both their philosophies as '**having a diverging view to a converging end**'.



DISCUSSANT: DRr.Varda Sambhus

The session couldn't have been conducted in an organized matter if not for the expert discussant, **Dr Vards Sambhus**, Assistant Professor, Maharashtra NLU, currently serving as

Deputy Director Research at ICSSR who highlighted the contribution of the above speakers with her convincing commentary which helped in maintaining the flow of the seminar. At last, the floor was opened to the audience for comments and questions. The questions revolved around the **very open life** of Gandhi, his apparent vow of celibacy, the role and effects of Partition in shaping his political beliefs, Sarvodaya and Sakhi Bhav which he embraced throughout his life. The panel put forward their views, opinions, and perspectives about the questions and comments very efficiently.



The panel put forth their enriching perspectives which stretched throughout the spectrum of political ideologies but in the end, they all came to a common consensus that **"GANDHI IS EVERYONE'S GANDHI AND IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO JUDGE AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN THROUGH ORDINARY MEANS"**.

TECHNICAL SESSION 4 A

“SWARAJ AND SELF RESPECT”

The session was chaired by **Prof. Lajwanti Chatani** who commenced the session by introducing the topic of discussion which was “**SWARAJ AND SELF-RESPECT**” and the discussant was **Prof. B. Manglam** department of English, Aryabhata College, University of Delhi.



The first speaker was **Prof. Rakesh Kumar**, Department of Political Science, Himachal Pradesh University Summer-Hill Shimla, who joined us online mode, and presented on the topic **Gandhi, Ambedkar, and The Contesting Conceptions about Village: A Comparison**. In his paper, he proposed that Ambedkar challenged Gandhi’s ideal notion of development. Gandhi’s vision of the village system was based on the idea of Sarvodaya, he focused on the basic ways of transforming the actual village and he also talked about how Gandhi used actual villages in India as an alternative to the western villages. He concluded his presentation with the thought that Gandhi’s model of development is ideal for sustainability whereas the Western one is not. He mentioned that Ambedkar believed that the villages are part of the caste system that exists in India and is connected with the roots of India. Ambedkar supports the concept of modernity as the village system is deeply interconnected with the caste system, and he also supports the idea of industrialization. The idea of development by Gandhi is somewhat slow as compared to Ambedkar’s but there is a loss of cultural identity within the model proposed by the Ambedkar.

The next speaker who addressed the house was **Prof. Nilima Nagrale**, Research Associate at Ambedkar International centre, Delhi(DIAC), and her subject was **Gandhi and Ambedkar: A Comparative Frame of Thoughts and Ideas**. Her presentation revolved around the differences between Gandhi and Ambedkar and how they are always evoked. Gandhi wanted to abolish untouchability and wanted development while carrying the roots of the Indian village system. Ambedkar did not believe Gandhi to be a Mahatma. According to Ambedkar, Gandhi was fostering the growing divide between Hindus and other communities. He characterized Gandhi as cunning. She discussed what Gandhi felt toward Ambedkar and his hatred for ideas. In contrast to her previous observation, she further added that Gandhi said he had the highest regard for Ambedkar and his ideology. She concluded that Gandhi and Ambedkar were at odds and even at times and it's a multi-faceted conviction.



The session was then carried on by the discussant; she discussed how Gandhi was promoting the spirituality of the Indian civilization and how Ambedkar was more realistic. The difference was about Ambedkar's view on the sovereignty of the caste system. The discussions were seen from the oppositional point of view. The questions were about the fundamental difference between the two and how in the future, if ever there is any chance for both of them to accommodate at one point.

The next presentation was by **Dr. Ayush Bhardwaj**, Assistant Professor, Pt. Udai Jain College, Jawahar Vidyapeeth, Mohan Lal Sukhadiya University, Udaipur, Rajasthan. The theme of his presentation was **"Two Roads to Swaraj: Gandhi and Tagore"**; he discussed about Gandhi and his understanding of Swaraj and how it's not just a mere set of governance rules. He collectively talked about Tagore and Gandhi's take on Swaraj, and how Tagore was sceptical of the national movement, his conception of freedom was the liberty of an individual within the realm of mind. The speaker mentioned the essay by Tagore, 'The Cult of Charkha' which offered a critique on the Gandhian ethic of "Charkha-Spinning". He concluded that Tagore endorsed the idea of development without the caste system and that Gandhi and Tagore had different understandings of the idea of Swaraj. The idea of Swaraj is not confined to just a geographical entity and nation. Tagore entertained the idea of a "state within a state" along with parallel government machinery, hence considered as an act of preservation. Gandhi's idea was to reduce Indians to a state of dependency. The participants actively engaged in discussion, questions were mainly about Gandhi boycotting western clothes and burning and why Tagore

was against this idea as he was against conformity and collectivity. Tagore had interacted with the poor and they could only afford foreign clothes and not the ones promoted by Gandhi. And how there were clashes of individuality between Tagore and Gandhi which was answered with the point of coercion between the two.



The session came to an end around 4 p.m. when the chairperson gave a vote of thanks to the renowned speakers the discussant and all the enthusiastic participants who became part of this insightful session. It wrapped up with the felicitation to the panellist with the intricately stitched **Khadi gram cloth bag**.

All in all, the three-day international seminar proved to be a great opportunity for deliberations, reflections, and interrogations on one of the greatest icons of modern India. The range and breadth of the ideas, questions, and responses proved to be very enriching and intellectually stimulating leaving the participants with much to chew upon after the seminar.



During the last day of the seminar, Dr.. Satish K Jha and Prof. Manoj Sinha delivered the valedictory vote of thanks. They expressed special gratitude to Indian council of philosophical research (ICPR) it's Member Secretary Prof Sachidanand Mishra and its entire research and administrative unit for financiallly supporting the international seminar and extending their continuous support and encouragement. They also expressed their gratitude towards all the dignitaries and attendees for their presence and support all through. They also extended their appreciation to the participants and the core team of Gandhi Study circle and the members of the seminar organizing committee for making the seminar a success. The sessions were highly engaging and provided new insights and ideas and views about Gandhi and his critics which would go a long way in generating an informed and well nuanced debate on the theme. The presenters tried to keep the sessions very enthusiastic with each of them presenting imaginative, Creative and innovative papers. Finally the three days engaging and thought provoking seminar came to an end.

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