

INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR

GANDHI AND HIS RELEVANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF RESOLVING TODAY'S BURNING ISSUES



September 23, 2023, Saturday 6:00-7:30 PM

Organized by: Techno-Gandhian Centre, India & Gandhi Peace Foundation, Nepal

REPORT

In view of International Day of Peace (21-09-2023) and Gandhi Jayanti (02-10-2023), an International Webinar “GANDHI AND HIS RELEVANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF RESOLVING TODAY'S BURNING ISSUES” was held on September 23, 2023, Saturday 6:00-7:30 PM.

Dr. Lal Bahadur Rana, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Nepal and Dr. Balamurali Balaji, Techno-Gandhian Centre, India welcomed the guest speakers exhibiting cheerfulness and importance in taking part in this webinar held through Google Meet.

The esteemed key speakers presented their speeches with more emphasis on the relevance of the Gandhian Model of living, creating a sustainable world through a new world order based on Gandhi's preaching. Mahatma Gandhi's principles of truth, nonviolence, peace and humanity were widely discussed during the webinar. The significance of following his ideology, boundless, timeless relevance in today's conflicting, uncertain world and how his philosophy could serve as a benchmark for reckoning during difficult times in today's problems – were well narrated by the speakers by highlighting today's real-time issues and historical facts in a correlated manner.

Among the key speakers, Father Japheth Tibui, Research Scholar in Philosophy and Theology from Cameroon stressed the need for preaching forgiveness to today's younger generations who are being exposed to lots of violence and vengeance attitude towards all ills of the society. He spoke about how peace is required both inside (mental peace) and outside (to live physical peace). Mahatma Gandhi said, "*The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.*" Father Japeth emphasized the same, saying that today's students shall not resort into violent response to any problem, but forgive and go in order to live a peaceful life.

Dr. Christian Bartolf, Author, Curator, President of Gandhi Information Centre (Research and Education), Germany, while presenting his speech, talked about seven historical occasions (between 1919-1945) where Gandhi pressed the need for the World Federation of governments

to attain both freedom and goodwill relations amongst the countries. To end colonial control and power, a better alternative could have been a World Federation of countries in question. He also pointed out that India, instead opted for prioritization of freedom at first, then for better relationships. Mahatma Gandhi was the central figure in that freedom struggle who had put forth his nonviolent methods and actions before the imperialist forces.

Dr. David Slesinger, a pioneer in Gandhian Activism for more than 40 years heading the Gandhian Resistance Movement in the U.S.A. made a vibrant speech on how Gandhi pleaded guilty on all his occasions of arrests, served the prison term not submitting himself to the outrageous powers. He also spoke about Satyagraha as a vital instrument for today's conflicts. He said, "*American nonviolent leadership is not that strong to end the ongoing crises of the world, as they continue to surrender to the capitalist leaders to make things worse.*"

Dr Shobha Shinde, KBC North Maharashtra University, in her speech narrated the principles of Gandhi that need to be taken care of in the proposed 2030 Agenda for Transformative Change. She says, "*Poverty is the worst form of violence, and it is the cause, effect and result of all forms of violence*". Quoting Gandhi's "Hind Swaraj", a model for a sustainable living needs to be created to maintain the better ecosystem.

Prof. Surineni Indira from Pondicherry University expressed concerns over growing violence, warring mind-set of nations, communal clashes and ethnic-economic-religious conflicts in today's world. The Russia-Ukraine war has affected not just the warring nations, but the entire world. Political conditions are also deteriorating to low-standards of vengeance, defamation and unethicalness.

Dr. Amitabh Sukhla, Gandhian Economist and Author in his speech questioned "... *if capitalists make policies in government what the poor would expect from government?*" He surged his voice on how the whole world is against the poor people, capitalizing profits for companies who have no control over production, profits and power". It is pathetic that governments join with such forces creating conflicting societies, disparity amongst the population and widening the gaps between the poor and the rich.

In his conclusive note, Dr. Balamurali Balaji, Techno-Gandhian Centre thanked the speakers for presenting precisely within the speculated time allotted for the webinar, the significance, relevance and conscience of Mahatma Gandhi and his principles. He spoke on four aspects viz. *socio-economic stability, democratic values, proper understanding of international relations, peace and harmony among religions* that need to be preserved through Gandhian means to contain the growing threats and challenges. He also pointed out the main vision for the Techno-Gandhian Centre which is to consistently strive to urge the world governments to create sustainable ways for peaceful living amid constantly changing conditions in the world.

The webinar concluded with participants and speakers exchanging greetings and thank you notes. As a consequence of the webinar, the Techno-Gandhian Centre is planning to bring an e-booklet consisting of speeches and future plans and activities that disseminate the Gandhian values across the world. As you all know, the Techno-Gandhian Centre is committed to globalizing Gandhian values for the purpose of creating an amicable atmosphere for the nations to work together, build relations better and exchange cultural, moral values.

~~~~~ Jai Hind! Jai Jagat! ~~~~