



तेजपुर विश्वविद्यालय / TEZPUR UNIVERSITY

(केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय / A Central University)

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Mahatma Gandhi: Reflections from Beyond the Past and into the Future

Organised by

Tezpur University & Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland UK & Indian Community Centre, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK on 31 August 2020.

To commemorate two year long 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Tezpur University organised a webinar in collaboration with the Queens University Belfast, and the Indian Community Centre Belfast at Northern Ireland, UK. The webinar was titled as "Mahatma Gandhi: Reflections from Beyond the Past and into the Future". A brief report on the webinar is given below:

Honourable Vice Chancellor of Tezpur University, Prof. Vinod. K. Jain welcomed everyone with his welcome address. Prof. Jain gave a glimpse of the early life of Mahatma Gandhi and the events that went into the making of the Mahatma. He highlighted the values that Mahatma Gandhi represented and the relevance of the same in the contemporary times.

The chief guest of the webinar, Lord Diljit Rana, MBE gave the inaugural address. He recounted the events that led to India's freedom and the important role Gandhiji played to realise India's independence. He pointed out the manner in which Gandhiji always encouraged peaceful dialogue to solve conflicts. He shared how important Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence is, during international negotiations.

The webinar had four key note speakers from Tezpur University, India, Ulster University and the Queens University, Belfast. The first keynote address was given by Prof. Tom G Fraser, who is an Emeritus Professor of History at Ulster University, Northern Ireland. He gave a revelatory lecture on the key incidents that transpired in the eve of partition. His talk was titled "Gandhi and the Partition of India". He shared his discovery of the correspondence

between Mohd. Iqbal and Mohd. Ali Jinnah regarding the two nation theory. Gandhi had different views on the two nation theory solely based on his essential principle of non-violence. He strongly believed in religious harmony and would never coerce the Muslims.

This lecture was followed by the second keynote address by Prof. Chandan K Sharma, a professor of Sociology. He gave a detailed explanation of the popular text by Mahatma Gandhi, 'Hind Swaraj' through his talk "Hind Swaraj and its Contemporary Relevance". He provided a deeper analysis of the text and revealed Gandhi's ideas about modernity and what he meant by "Swaraj".

The third key note speaker Prof. Debarshi Prasad Nath is a Professor at the Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University. The title of his talk was "Reading Gandhi Today". He made a detailed reading of the ideas and thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi and presented the relevance of the same in contemporary times. He pointed out Gandhi's contribution in addressing issues concerning environment and social justice. The ideas, thoughts, values, strategies that Gandhi had forwarded during the colonial times holds a strong relevance in the world today.

Th fourth key note speaker was Dr. M. Satish Kumar, associated with the School of Natural and Built Environment, Queen's University Belfast. Dr. Kumar, in his talk titled, "The Seeding of Swarajya: Reflections in time", spoke about the inception of the philosophy of "Swarajya" in Gandhi's life. He revealed the influence of Bal Gangadhar Tilak's political idea of 'Swarajya', which had influenced the perspective of 'hind swaraj' by Gandhiji.

The speakers addressed several questions asked by the participants. A couple of questions rallied around the relevance of the doctrine of non-violence itself, in contemporary times.

Dr. Satyavir Singhal, Chairperson, India Community Centre, Belfast gave the vote of thanks. The webinar ended with a commitment to revisit and deliberate on Gandhian thoughts, ideas and principles.
