



UTKAL UNIVERSITY
Vani Vihar
Bhubaneswar, Odisha



National Seminar on
'Idea of Swaraj and Contemporary Challenges'

Organised by

RUSA CoE, Centre for the Study of Language, Literature & Culture
on
16th September, 2022



Concept Note

Transforming the destiny of India through moral regeneration was the vision of the Father of our nation. Today's society is a complex whole representing a number of expectations, demands, eccentricities and obsessions. The developments accentuated from outside by science and civilization has not resulted in any inner unity of mind. Such conditions are not conducive to democracy, much less to Gandhian regeneration of India. Unless there is a thorough reorganization of the entire socio-economic structure followed by a complete refashioning of the political leadership, little can be hoped of India being put on the right track. Being a moral individualist, Gandhi's value of morality in the society and in the polity reconciles the goal of spiritual development of the individual with his obligation towards social and political life.

The twentieth century was a century of widespread democratic upsurge. The first half witnessing the overthrow of colonialism in Asia and Africa. India's freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi which used nonviolence and satyagraha as a technique of struggle, has won global acclaim for the pioneering role it played in sharpening and hastening the process of dismantling the classical forms of colonialism and imperialism. The next two decades witnessed massive post colonial transformations in the newly independent colonies. There has been a deeply entrenched presumption that the state has always been an effective mediator in ameliorating the conditions of the weaker and poorer sections of people, for the purpose of ensuring social justice and equality also ensuring liberty and dignity of the people at large.

However, the last few decades of independence were largely periods of disillusionment and demystification. It becomes clear that expectations of the positive and interventionist role of the state and the presumed alliance between the state and the masses have been completely

belied. As pointed out by Rajni Kothari; 'Today the state is seen to have betrayed the masses, as having become the prisoner of the dominant classes and their transnational patrons and as having increasingly turned anti-people...The state in the third world, despite some valiant efforts by dedicated leaders in a few countries, has degenerated into a technocratic machine serving a narrow power group that is kept in power by hordes of security men at the top and a regime of repression and terror at the bottom kept going by millions of hardworking people who must go on producing goods and services for the system, for if they did not, everything would collapse'.

The situation evoked sharp response from the victims. Today they are being organised and mobilised under the aegis of what are known as New Social Movements / Action Groups / People Movements and these movements are engaging the oppressors in violent and nonviolent struggles. These are movements of dalits, tribals, women, displaced people, environmental movements, movements for regional autonomy movements against globalization etc.

As we celebrate *Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsava* to commemorate 75 glorious years of India's Independence from colonial rule, a deeper understanding of what Mahatma Gandhi meant by Swaraj and the challenges that the very idea of swaraj confronts today becomes quite significant. Although the word swaraj means self- rule, Gandhi gave it the content of an integral revolution that encompasses all spheres of life. He held that at the individual level swaraj is vitally connected with the capacity for dispassionate self-assessment, ceaseless self-purification and growing swadeshi or self-reliance while politically, swaraj is self-government and not good government and implied an effort to be independent of excessive government control, whether foreign or national. In brief, swaraj implied sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. Further, economically, poorna swaraj means full economic freedom for the needy and vulnerable sections of the society. However, how much has been achieved and how much remains, towards the larger realization of the idea of swaraj in today's twenty first century necessitates wide-scale discussions and deliberations. The proposed seminar is a small attempt in this direction.

Possible Sub –Themes

Papers are invited from academics, researchers, policy makers, members of the civil society and young research scholars revolving around but not restricted to the following sub-themes:

1. Federalism and the idea of Swaraj
2. Sustainable Economic Development and Swaraj
3. Religious diversities and Swaraj
4. Language and the Knowledge economy
5. Environment and Sustainability via the idea of Swaraj
6. Media Ethics and Freedom of Press
7. Food Security and Contemporary challenges
8. Gandhi and Women Empowerment

Dates to remember:

Last date for Submission of abstract :13th September, 2022
Last date for Submission of Full Papers :16th September, 2022

Abstracts of the papers (Max. 500 words) and full papers (Max. 6000 words) in Word or PDF format in Times New Roman, 12 font size and 1.5 line spacing, on any of the sub themes as mentioned above are invited to be submitted on or before the last dates to ssprabhupolsc@gmail.com .

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