

**CIHTS Celebrates the Closing Ceremony of 150th Birth Anniversary of
Mahatma Gandhiji
1-5 October 2020**

The protean and multidimensional philosophy of Gandhian thought is not limited to one era or civilization. It is so rich yet complex, old yet perennial that it always provides a panacea for any situation. Undoubtedly the world is facing an unprecedented tragedy, and it is high-time we could once again turn to Gandhian philosophy and thought to save the larger humanity and find solutions for the 21st century. It is amid these difficult times; Mahatma Gandhi becomes an emblem of wisdom and a source of inspiration for all of us. Understanding the value of Gandhiji's philosophical terrain, on the Closing Ceremony of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhiji, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi organized various programs to pay tribute to the Father of the Nation from 1 to 5 October 2020.

Day One–October 1, 2020

The curtain-raiser of the ceremony was a very impressive and informative one day **Webinar on “Gandhian Philosophy for the 21st Century”**. The webinar was presided over by the IQAC head of the Institute Professor Deoraj Singh and was convened by the Documentation Officer of the Institute- Shri R.K. Mishra. The Keynote Speaker of the event was the renowned Gandhian scholar Professor R. P. Dwivedi, Director, Gandhi Adhyayan Kendra, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi. The special guest for the webinar was a well-known author and policy maker for India, Retired ITS, Shri Amrendra Narayan from Jabalpur.

After offering the *khatak* to the picture of Gandhiji, R.K. Mishra ji welcomed all the guests and delivered the concept note. Professor Dwivedi delivered the keynote speech on “Revisiting Gandhi for the 21st Century” lucidly. He emphasized on the contribution of Gandhiji made towards autonomy in education, self-reliance for *gram panchayats* in India, and commemorated his contribution for Swadeshi Movement. “Gandhiji and his philosophy provide the panacea for all the ailments of 21st Century. It is high time world could turn to Gandhian thought to avoid the impending calamity of third world-war,” he added. Professor Dwivedi opined that the philosophy of basic human values was well established in all major philosophical schools of thought since centuries, Gandhi ji applied these age-old theories of human values for personal as well as for social and political causes and based on the basic human values he established a unique way to protest and express discontent.



His thought-provoking talk was followed by a very pragmatic lecture on the topic by Shri Amrendra Narayanji. He delivered the lecture on “Gandhian Philosophy and Sustainable Development.” He shared his first-hand experience of the viability of Gandhian values and ethics to solve the problems of the world while serving at the UN. He strongly emphasized on the importance of the lessons one can learn from the *Champaran Satyagraha*. “It is of vital importance that the government implements the core ideas of Gandhian thought to develop a futuristic sustainable model of growth for the villages in India”. He summarized that the Gandhian concept of Gram Swaraj was based on the sense of community and dialogue and both these practices are always relevant for conflict resolution at all levels. After both the lectures, the session was kept open for the Q&A session where various inquisitive questions were asked by the participants.



The Chairman of the webinar, Professor Deo raj Singh, delivered the presidential address with a critical acumen. He talked about the need to fill the gap between the Gandhian Philosophy and its implementation. “Gandhiji’s ideas should be absorbed by every Indian meaningfully; every classroom, household should imbibe and cultivate his legacy,”. He very lucidly defined the interrelation between negative and positive thoughts viz. fear, greed, anger, jealousy, fearlessness, containment, tolerance and acceptance of good things around us. He further added that Gandhi ji was trying to strengthen and refine the self-sustainable village communities of the nation based on these positive thoughts. Dr. Jay Prakash Singh delivered the vote of thanks. The webinar was moderated by Dr. Mahesh Sharma.

The webinar was live telecasted on the Facebook page of the institute: <https://www.facebook.com/CentralInstituteofHigherTibetanStudies/videos/931092630633445> On the same day, Institute’s library disseminated the E-catalogue of printed and digital resources on Gandhian Literature available in Shantarakshita Library of the Institute <https://www.cihts.ac.in/admin/upload/documents/Gandhi%20Collection.pdf> and other related materials available on different authentic websites like <https://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/> via different online platforms of the Institute. The students and scholars received the information enthusiastically and further shared it with the broader reading community. The event was well received and appreciated by the Honourable Vice-Chancellor also who added, “Even amid the pandemic, the proper and meaningful use of technology can be for the benefit of the larger reading community. Such events ensure the availability of authentic Gandhian Literature among the students and would certainly kindle their readings habits.”

Day Two- October 2, 2020

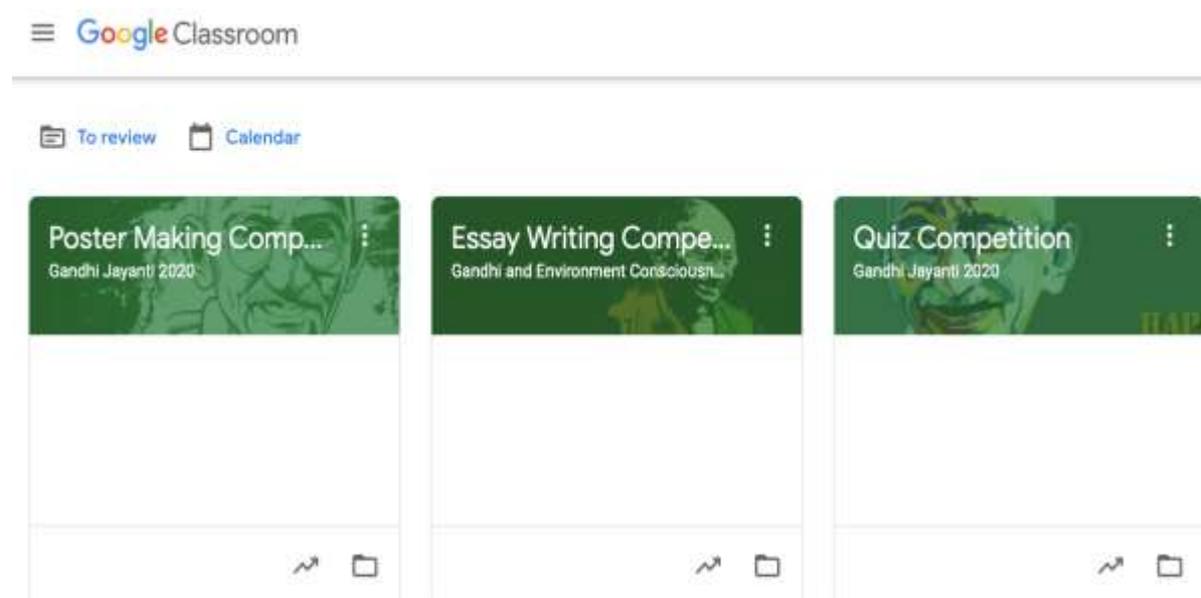
On the 151th birth anniversary of Gandhiji, a **medicinal tree-plantation programme** was organized in the Institute premises under the leadership of Honourable Vice-Chancellor Professor Geshe Ngawang Samten. Various medicinal plants were planted in medicinal garden of the Institute.





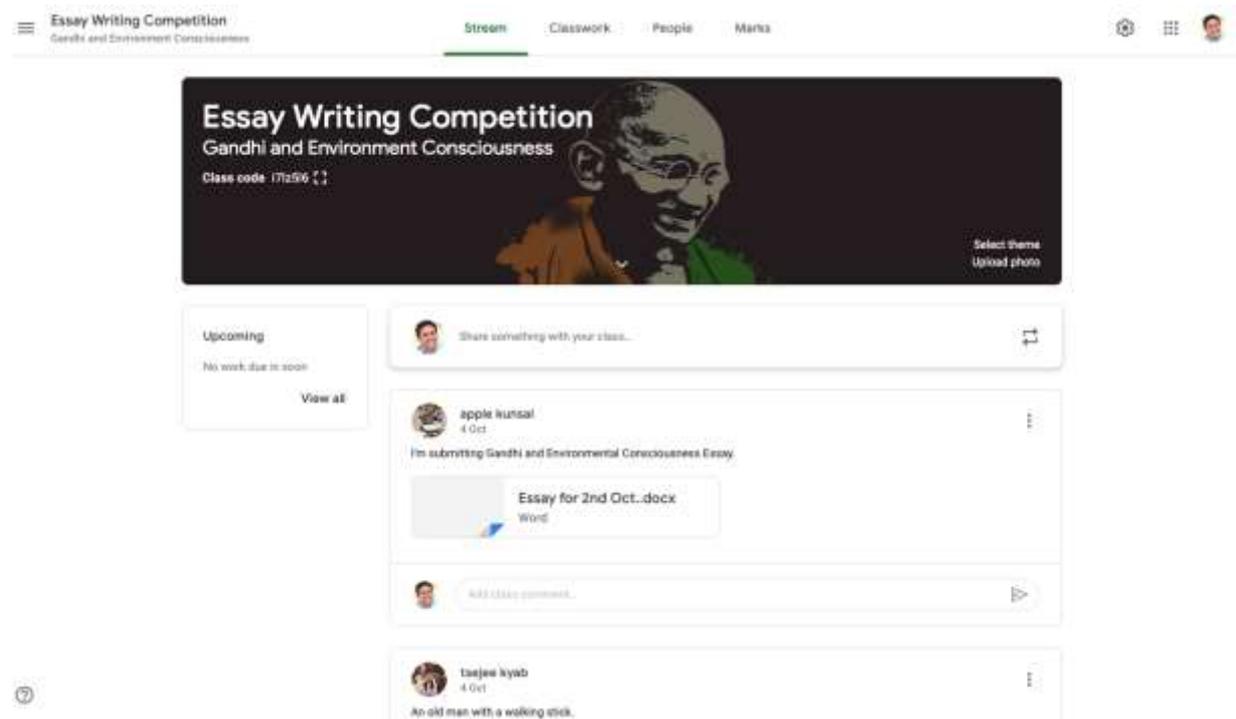
Many senior faculty members and staff-members were also present during the event taking all the precautions prescribed for the pandemic times. While addressing the issue of environment consciousness on the occasion, honourable vice-chancellor aptly said, “We are not merely planting the trees; it is a symbol of planting the ideas of Gandhiji in ourselves for the happiness and benefit of ourself and also for community, which needs proper harbouring. And there can never be a better place than a university campus for this.”

Later in the day, an online **quiz on Gandhi and his Philosophy** was conducted via google classroom. More than 65 students of the Institute participated in the 30 minutes online quiz enthusiastically from the different parts of the country. The MCQs were design to promote the Gandhian Philosophy and its pragmatic value among the students.



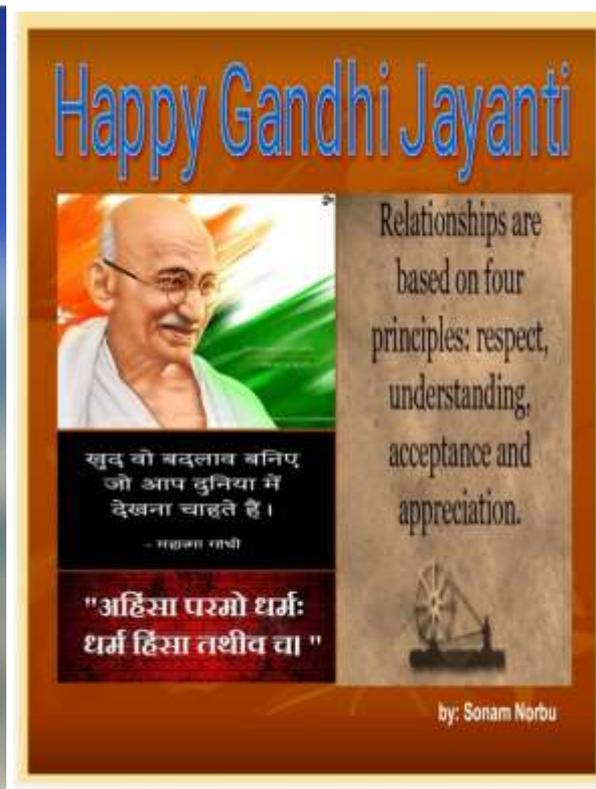
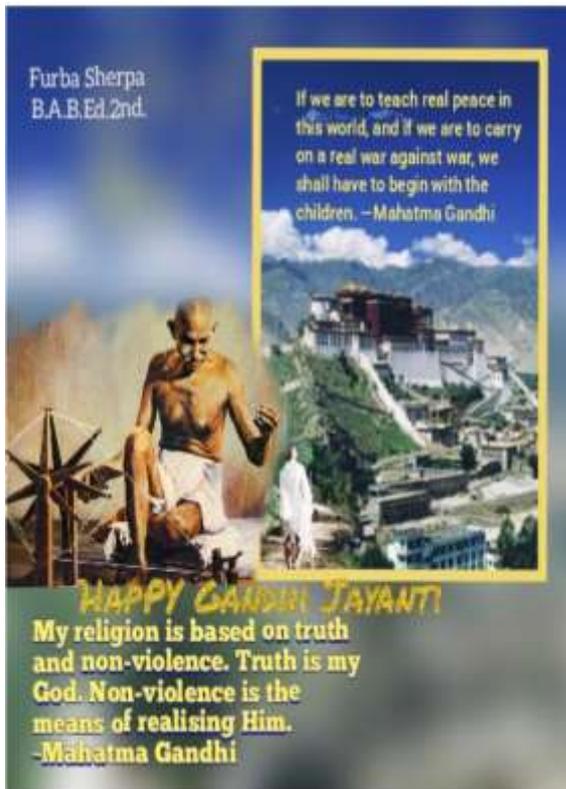
Day Three- October 3, 2020

The third day of the ceremony kept the students busy throughout the day as they had to participate in an online **essay writing competition on “Gandhi and Environment Consciousness”** in both Hindi and English separately. More than 20 entries were submitted by the students tackling the issues of Modern Environment Global Crisis, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Pollution, Self-Reliance, Deforestation and Plantation to name a few.



Day Four- October 4, 2020

The fourth day literally gave wings to the imagination of the students as they were putting colourful crayons on the canvas. More than 18 students submitted various types of posters for the **Poster Making Competition**. Some of the tech-savvy students even experimented with digital posters also.



The students touched upon various themes like religious & communal harmony, integrity, peace, sovereign nationalism, autonomy of the villages, self-reliance, vocational education, sustainable development, khadi, *atmnirbhar bharat*, *ahimsa*, truth etc in beautiful colours and innovative designs in the posters.

Day Five- October 5, 2020

Finally, after four days of spectacular extravaganza where students exhibited their talent in various fields, the online **felicitation and prize distribution ceremony** was conducted on the fifth day via google meet. It not only gave an opportunity to the winners to get acknowledged but also to spread a wave of happiness and reward in the time of pandemic. The honourable Vice-Chancellor of the institute Professor Geshe Ngawang Samten, despite his busy schedule, presided over the event to motivate the students. The chairman of the Gandhi Jayanti Committee Shri R. K. Mishra welcomed everybody and declared the names of the winners in different categories. He also presented a detailed report of all the events. All the winners joined from different parts of the country. All of them received the prizes one by one with a sense of happiness and contentment. As the honourable Vice-Chancellor conferred his blessings upon the winners, each one of them expressed their gratitude towards the Institute.



The honourable Vice-Chancellor congratulated all the winners and motivated them to participate more and often in such events. He added a creative edge to Gandhian thought by emphasizing on self-discipline, curbing of anger and *indriya-nigrah*. He explained the concept of ahimsa in very simple words for the students exploring the political, cultural and psychological aspect of it. “Gandhiji’s philosophy is so vital to the understanding of the self that the notion of co-existence in the world today cannot be conceived without it,” he added.

Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor also illustrated that the protean and versatile concept of AHIMSA has different meanings to different people while it also has a deep-rooted relation with our cognitive faculty. Clearing various misinterpretations and doubts around the term, he explained that some people interpret it as 'not to hurt someone physically or verbally' while others take ahimsa in the sense of 'not to carry weapon.' Tracing a rich legacy on the dichotomy of violence and non-violence, he explored it on the lines of great Nalanda Tradition.

“Violence is an expression of anger and hatred which has its roots in attachment, greed and desire; if someone is capable to win over these cardinal sins, the non-violent behaviour is sure to ensue”, he explained very succinctly. In the context of the present crisis in the International Relations, he further expressed that the war is the grossest manifestation of anger and violence is a cyclic process and due to ignorance of its root causes we indulge in it. He referred to various Eastern philosophical schools especially Nalanda tradition which has a very detailed and minute discussion of it.

He added that, Gandhiji applied this concept of Ahimsa not only for his personal wellbeing as it was practiced by spiritual seekers since ages, but also for social and political causes at all levels. In real sense it was his greatest contribution to the humanity. It is the only way for harmony and happiness on the planet earth. He summarized that the contemporary scientists, educators and scholars across the world are very seriously working on age old concepts of compassion, amity and non-violence through modern ways and in near future we will certainly harvest the positive results of these scientific researches in every domain of human activity. Hon'ble Vice Chancellor blessed and congratulated the winners and other participants as well as the members of the organising committee.



Many faculty members also had joined the ceremony. In the end, Dr. Jay Prakash Singh delivered the formal vote of thanks. The event was moderated by Dr. Mahesh Sharma.

The program was live telecasted on the Facebook page of the institute: <https://www.facebook.com/CentralInstituteofHigherTibetanStudies/videos/251273516307221>