

Concept Note for online Certificate Course on Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophy for Indian Mission at Hungary, Malta, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Sweden, Slovakia, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, and Romania countries conducted by Dr Shobhana Radhakrishna

(As part of the commemoration of 75th Years of India's Independence)

Introduction:

Mahatma Gandhi and his principles have great relevance in today's challenging times when the world is facing some of the most unpredictable times. His ideals and way of life have been unquestionably accepted and practised all over the world. Truth and non-violence are ageless and timeless concepts that have been the foundational values of many quiet and peaceful revolutions of the world and will continue to do so for the times to come.

It is well known that there is a growing interest worldwide in Mahatma Gandhi and his theory and practice of peace, nonviolence, and interfaith harmony. People are trying to understand Gandhian Philosophy to equip themselves. Many of them have expressed their desire to get in-depth knowledge and training in Gandhian thoughts which would expose them not only to the life, philosophy, and method of Gandhi but also to Indian social life and culture.

We should think of Mahatma Gandhi as a noble spirit who continues to be among us and who contributes to the betterment of our world. His philosophy may appear to be simple to everyone but in a real sense practising it in day to day life is difficult. For instance, remaining truthful, tolerant, non-violent, and respecting others in difficult circumstances of life require a great degree of commitment.

Inclusive Growth is necessary for sustainable development. Therefore, the task before us is how we, individually and collectively, can understand and take forward the Gandhian nobility of spirit in today's world. Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and humanism have strength for solving the social, economic, and political problems of the day. It is becoming more and more relevant with time. Gandhiji will continue to be remembered in future for the unparalleled path he has shown to the people all over the world towards the promotion of global peace and a nonviolent society. Gandhian humanism and its practical application are the way forward in a world.

The Government has decided to celebrate 75 years of Indian independence and the idea is to create a vision for India@2047. Apart from social and cultural events scientific achievements and technological advancements will be showcased. It will highlight the contributions of freedom fighters.

As part of the India@75 celebration, it is proposed to introduce an online certificate course on Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophy for the Indian diaspora and international participants in collaboration with Indian Missions facilitated by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).

With resilience and resolve, Mahatma Gandhi carried forward the torch of our great nation's guiding philosophy, which has been the underlying message of the Rig Vedic verse, *Ekam sat, vipraahbahudhaavadanti (Truth is one, but the sages call it by many names)*. This fact serves as a reminder to us that for centuries, India has been a repository of wisdom, anchored in the conviction of *vasudhaivakutumbakam (The whole world is one family)*.

The overall purpose of the online course is to give its participants orientation in the theoretical and practical dimensions of Gandhiji Life and his Philosophy; Gandhiji Legacy; Gandhiji's ideas to comprehend the concept like Swaraj, Swadeshi, Satyagraha, Spirituality and Trusteeship as explained and applied by Mahatma Gandhi in his personal and public life.

Background:

As a part of the worldwide celebration of the 150th Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi since 2018, Dr Radhakrishna has delivered 267 lectures and Gandhi Katha hosted by Indian Missions accredited to 135 countries and facilitated by the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Through the virtual medium, Gandhiji messages have reached wide and far and many HOMs have appreciated the efforts. The Katha format is ingrained in the Indian culture, and it conveys the messages by way of storytelling with narration and music effectively.

Further, on 30th January 2021, Indian Missions accredited to 84 countries hosted the tribute by her to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi on his 73rd Martyr's Day on their social media sites.

Following the interest and awareness generated after the Gandhi Katha and lectures, it is proposed to conduct an online certificate course on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and relevance in collaboration with the Indian Missions. This will be stepping further in enhancing the understanding of the participants to get acquainted with the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and their relevance in the contemporary world. This will also reinforce that while Gandhiji's contribution during the century of his life was great indeed, his contribution in the next century when the world is facing many challenges could be even higher.

The topics of the course will include peace and nonviolence, satyagraha, transformational leadership, Swadeshi and Khadi, environmental credo, spirituality and compassion, nature cure and living in harmony with nature, Gandhian economics, and trusteeship.

Course details:

This online course will be of approximately 6 hours duration spread over four weeks (*on Saturdays*) on a virtual platform of Cisco Webex provided by ICCR. The purposed dates are Saturday, 07 August, 14 August, 21 August & 28 August 2021 at 4:00 PM (GMT+1)/5:00 PM (GMT+2)/7:30PM (GMT+5:30)

The Indian Mission will undertake the publicity and register the participants. The courses will be on a Pro bono basis and will be conducted by Dr Shobhana Radhakrishna and her team. The course will be interactive and participatory. Being a noncredit program, there will be no course end examination.

This online certificate course is aimed at enhancing the understanding of the Indian diaspora and foreign nationals about our spiritual and cultural heritage as well as the tremendous contribution made by Mahatma Gandhi.

After completion of the course, Indian Mission will give the participants a digitally signed certification (*signed by Dr Shobhana Radhakrishna and Ambassadors/High Commissioners of respective countries*) and will be given to the participants through digital transmission or distributed in an event.

Broad topics to be covered in four courses:

- Gandhian Philosophy of Truth, Non-violence, Sarvodaya, Satyagraha and Swaraj
- Transformational Leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhian Economics of Trusteeship
- Mahatma Gandhi's Spirituality, Wellness, Nature cure and Environmental credo
- Mahatma Gandhi's Ashrams, Khadi, Charkha, Swadeshi and Minimalistic living

The suggestions from the Indian Missions will also invite diaspora led Social Organizations, ICCs and Hindi Chairs of ICCR.

It is proposed that the certificate course will cover eight Indian Missions in June and July 2021. Each Mission may register 15-20 participants, so that per course a total number of participants may be in the range of 100 to 140.

Seventy-three years after Mahatma Gandhi passed on his relevance still matters. His pioneering vision of a non-violent society, sustainable world, religious pluralism, women empowerment, the emancipation of the marginalized, mainstreaming the poor, deprived and vulnerable and above all unity of humankind is needed now even more than ever before. Mahatma Gandhi took a holistic view of human life and wanted all aspects of life - social, economic, and political- to be dovetailed for the creation of a just society.

In a way, Gandhian humanism and its practical application is the way forward in a world that echoes various challenges of the present time. In the celebration of India@75, Mahatma Gandhi acquires a greater significance than ever before. At this crucial juncture, a fresh look at Mahatma Gandhi's ideas and work become indispensable. It is anticipated that the participants will try to contextualize Mahatma Gandhi's teachings by assimilating Gandhian values, vista and vision in their life and mission. The certificate course will create awareness about the life and thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi along with its usefulness in today's world.

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