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# REPORT OF K.S.RADHAKRISHNA JI'S BIRTH CENTENARY CELEBRATION NATIONAL CONFERENCE AT SEWAGRAM 9-11 NOVEMBER 2024

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## **Venue: Yatri Niwas, Sewagram, Wardha, Maharashtra**

The Birth Centenary Celebration of K.S. Radhakrishna ji (1924-1994) has been an inspiring journey, beginning in 2022 and culminating in a heartfelt National Conference at the historic Sewagram Ashram in November 2024.

## **A Grand Beginning in 2022**

The celebrations were initiated in the third quarter of 2022, bringing together associates and mentees of Radhakrishna ji from across the globe.

These individuals, who were deeply influenced by his Gandhian philosophy and life's work, presented online sessions showcasing their organizational contributions and the impact of his mentorship.

## **Regional Conferences in 2023-24**

During 2023-24, three impactful state-level regional conferences were held in Tirupati, Odisha, and Jodhpur, each highlighting Radhakrishna ji's vision of Nai Talim, Sarvodaya, Satyagraha, Gram Swaraj, and rural reconstruction. These events served as a prelude to the Sewagram National Conference.

## **Curtain Raiser Event at IGNCA**

On 7th October 2024, as a curtain raiser to the National Conference, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) under the Ministry of Culture organized a prestigious 'Lokarpan' ceremony. During this event, the Hindi translation of the book on K.S. Radhakrishna ji, written by his daughter Dr. Shobhana Radhakrishna, was released.

The event was presided over by Shri Ram Bahadur Rai, an eminent journalist, Gandhian, and a close associate of Radhakrishna ji since the 1970s. Other prominent speakers included:

- Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, Indira Gandhi. National Centre for Arts (IGNCA)
- Shri Mathew Cherian, President of Care India
- Shri Laxmi Dass, Vice President of Harijan Sewak Sangh
- Dr. Harish Bhalla, Health specialist and founder of Madhya Pradesh Foundation

This occasion underscored the enduring relevance of Radhakrishna ji's work and philosophy in contemporary India.

## **National Conference at Sewagram (9-11 November 2024)**

The National Conference, held at Yatri Niwas, Sewagram, was a historic gathering, graced by Gandhian leaders, rural development practitioners, sustainability advocates, and admirers of Radhakrishna ji. Set against the iconic backdrop of Sewagram Ashram, where Radhakrishna ji's public life began in 1946, the conference celebrated his five decades of dedicated service to the nation on the Gandhian path.

The event featured thought-provoking sessions, collaborative workshops, and inspiring addresses by national and international figures. Participants revisited his immense contributions to Gandhian organisations like Sewagram Ashram, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Nai Talim Samiti, Sarva Seva Sangh, Gandhian Institute of Studies, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Avarad , Gandhi Peace Centre and all most all the Gandhian Organizations nationally and Internationally across India and abroad, propagating the Gandhian values, deep involvement in Acharya Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan movement, association with Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) for Gramdan, Peace Missions, Bangladesh, Total Revolution and restoring democracy, refugee rehabilitation and education in Punjab and coastal Andhra Pradesh, environmental conservation by setting up the , mentoring and supporting youth leadership and setting up eighty nine Gandhian organisations Gandhian rural reconstruction.

This three-day celebration was a testament to the enduring impact of K.S. Radhakrishna ji's Gandhian legacy and a call to action for the younger generation to carry forward his mission of service and sustainability.

### **Day 1 of the Conference (9th November 2024):**

The inaugural session of the conference began on a soulful and serene note with Gandhiji's favorite bhajans sung by Shri Gajanan bhai Ambulakar, the senior most student of Nai Talim who filled the room with spiritual melodies, followed by a heartfelt rendition by Smt. Angaha Ranade. Smt. Ranade's performance carried a personal touch, as her father-in-law, a devoted student of Radhakrishna ji, had mastered the art of Ambar Charkha spinning and become a respected teacher in the Gandhian tradition.

The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Shobhana Radhakrishna, daughter of Radhakrishna ji and herself a product of Nai Talim education in Sewagram. Her warm words set the tone for a day steeped in nostalgia, inspiration, and camaraderie.

The keynote address was delivered by Shri Gautam Bhai Bajaj, who reminisced about his cherished memories with Radhakrishna ji and Kamala Behn throughout their lives. His reflections offered a glimpse into the enduring values of the Gandhian family.

A particularly moving address was delivered by Shri Shirshir Bajaj, Chairman of the Kamalnayan Bajaj Foundation, who spoke passionately about his grandfather, Jamnalal Bajaj's contributions to the Gandhian movement, through constructive programs focusing on agriculture, water management,

and rural empowerment in Wardha. He also highlighted the meaningful association between his family and Dr. Shobhana Radhakrishna.

Other distinguished speakers included Dr Gita Dharmapal, from Gandhi Teerth Jalgoan, and the daughter of Dharampal ji who remained a close friend of Radhakrishna ji throughout his life, Shri Ramesh Bhaiyya from the Vinoba Sewa Ashram, Er. Prabhakar Pusodkar, Secretary of Nai Talim Samiti, Shri Ashwini Kumar Midha of SSML, New Delhi, Shri Ashwini Adoke and Shri Sanket Adoke, representing the Sangam Training Program in Sevagram. Each speaker enriched the audience with their insights and experiences, weaving a beautiful tapestry of Gandhian ideals.

Dr Gita Dharampal recited a charming poem on both Radhakrishna ji and Dharampal ji and their lifelong association as the doer and the thinker.

### **K.S. Radhakrishna: A Life's Torchbearer**

By Gita Dharampal (9th November, Birth Centenary Celebration, Dharmadhikari Auditorium, Yatri Niwas, Sevagram, Wardha)

In the heart of Sevagram, where footsteps trace Paths of peace, a young boy's embrace Of Gandhian dreams took root, inspired, By Krishna Sarma, his uncle, fired. At twelve, he found his destined way— To serve in truth, to strive, to stay.

Through waves of struggle, in India's plight, He joined the Quit India call to fight— A youth

imprisoned, yet unbent, In Banaras's cells, his spirit spent. But not subdued, the fire inside Grew fiercer with each rising tide.

With studies complete in '46, He entered Sevagram's humble mix. As Nai Talim's first principal bright, With Asha Devi, he brought new light— Teaching hands, minds, and hearts to see The truth in Gandhian harmony.

And then came Punjab's call of pain, To serve in fields of loss and strain. With Rajkumari's wise hand in sight, He taught of peace, of shared birth-right. In refugee camps, he sowed the seeds Of unity amidst the urgent needs.

With Sarva Seva Sangh's wide embrace, He spread the mission at a steadfast pace. Movements like Bhoodan took their flight, Gramdan's dreams ignited light. As Sarva Seva's binding thread, Across the land, his visions spread.

In sixty-nine, at the Foundation's helm, Radhakrishna shaped a vibrant realm. Here he met my father, Shri Dharampal, A fiery soul with an intellect tall—

Their friendship sparked, two paths aligned, Institution builder and fiery mind.

Side by side, they forged a bond, In ideals shared and visions fond. While one brought dreams to living space, The other challenged, with fierce embrace. Though years apart by half a span, their friendship bore a timeless plan.

In seventy-one, he stood with might, For Bangladesh's liberating fight. With JP's strength, he found his place, In Total Revolution's grace. Through Emergency's shadowed days, He held to nonviolent ways.

In Kashmir, Chambal, Punjab's strife, He worked for harmony, risking life. To Nagaland, Assam, Bhagalpur's calls, He ventured past the fractured walls. Communal peace his steadfast quest, Gandhi's torch held firm to chest.

Founder, leader, builder of hope, with threads of peace, he'd interlope across borders and distant lands, Binding nations with patient hands. The Gandhi World Fellowship shone, A bridge for faiths to walk upon.

Yet in '94, his journey ceased— A life well-lived, yet not released. At seventy-two, his light was dimmed, But legacy forever trimmed. Though he departed, his dreams remain, In countless hearts, they still sustain.

Now daughters Shobhana and Gita bear Their fathers' visions, love, and care. Carrying forward what men once planned, Inspiring future's hopeful stand. Their fathers' friendship, pure and strong, Echoes in their lives, lifelong.

In Sevagram, we gather near, to honour Radhakrishna's year. A centenary's joyous span, Celebrating this noble man. Two years of homage, now complete, In unity, our hearts do beat.

Their stories blend, their spirits soar, Inspiring generations more. K.S. Radhakrishna lives anew, in every act of what is true. A life of service, peace, and grace, Forever shines in time and space.

In a delightful moment of reflection, Dr. Sharad Ranade, an eminent ophthalmologist from Nagpur and a fellow student of Nai Talim, joined Dr. Shobhana Radhakrishna in a mock interview. Together, they shared endearing anecdotes of their days at the Nai Talim School in Sewagram Ashram, leaving the audience smiling and inspired.

Adding a creative touch to the conference, participants received handmade white conference bags, each left blank for personal expression. Guided by the theme of the event, they used fabric paints to adorn their bags with vibrant designs. This collaborative activity fostered creativity, camaraderie, and a sense of shared purpose. The day culminated in an exhibition of these beautifully painted bags, symbolizing unity through art.

As the sun set, the participants gathered for the serene Sarva Dharma Prarthana at the Prarthana Bhoomi in front of the Bapu Kuti at Sewagram Ashram. The peaceful ambiance and the collective prayers underlined the timeless message of harmony and inclusivity, marking a perfect conclusion to a memorable first day.

With hearts full of inspiration and a renewed commitment to Gandhian values, the participants eagerly looked forward to the days ahead.

## Day 2 of the Conference (10th November 2024):

The second day of the conference began with all participants gathering at Bapu Kuti for the Ashram Prarthana, setting a serene and reflective tone for the day.

Dr. Radhakrishna then led a comprehensive Heritage Walk through Sewagram Ashram, offering participants an immersive experience of its historical and spiritual significance. The walk included visits to:

- Parchure Shastri Kuti
- Mahadev Niwas
- Kishor Niwas
- Rustom Bhawan
- Gauri Bhawan
- Baba and Ma's Abode
- Kala Bhawan
- Devi Prasad's Abode
- Anand Niketan
- Nai Talim Samiti
- Shanti Bhawan
- Omkari
- Kabir Bhawan
- Uttar Buniyadi Parisar

The walk concluded at the abode of Radhakrishnan ji and Kamala Behn, providing participants with a heartfelt connection to the legacy of Sewagram.

The first session of the day featured insightful talks by eminent speakers, including Shri Uday Shankar Singh, Roshanlal ji, Parmeshwar Barik, Narayan Bhai, and others.

Their discussions enriched the participants' understanding of Gandhian principles and their relevance today.

In the afternoon, the group visited Wardha, beginning at **Gitai Mandir** and **Mahilashram**, followed by a stop at **Goraspak Bhandar**. The highlight of the afternoon was an engaging interaction with Shri Gautam Bajaj Bhai at the **Brahma Vidya Mandir** in Paunar Ashram.

Participants paid their respects at Saint Vinoba Bhave's Samadhi before visiting the **Bharat-Ram Mandir** to explore the fascinating sculptures unearthed during excavations at the site.

The day concluded with a visit to the **Nature Cure Institute**, operated by the Gandhi Mission and headed by Shri Narayan Bhai. This stop underscored Gandhian values of health and self-reliance.

The second day left participants emotionally enriched, with a deep sense of peace, serenity, and meditative reflection. It was a day that strengthened their connection to Gandhian thought and the enduring legacy of Sewagram Ashram.

### **Day 3 of the Conference (11th November 2024):**

The third day of the conference began with a heartfelt and nostalgic visit by Dr. Shobhana Radhakrishna to the Sewagram Juni Basti (Shegaon) retracing the footsteps of her childhood at the Nai Talim School, where both she and her brother Chandrahas had studied. The school evoked fond memories of Gandhian education. Now this school runs under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Ms. Meena Kashyap and Shri Ashwini Kumar Midha accompanied her. They also visited the historic location of Adya Adi Kuti and the Panchayat Bhawan, immersing themselves in the vibrant legacy of Sewagram. There was a group soulful singing Kakad Arati and they followed them to the temple in the village.

A warm and affectionate welcome awaited them at the home of Shri Nathu Chauhan, a former student of Radhakrishna Guruji, and his wife, Smt Radhika Chauhan (who had taught alongside Kamala Behn in the Nai Talim Balwadi), greeted them with open hearts and insisted on serving breakfast.

They also met with Shri Sudhakar Patil, Shri Dilip Shinde and Shri Dilip (Babloo) Chauhan, son of Ramakrishna Chauhan Guruji joined in recalling cherished memories of Radhakrishna Guruji and Kamala Bhabhi.

The community's reverence for their legacy was evident, and they earnestly requested Dr. Shobhana to initiate a program in Sewagram in honor of her parents. Their commitment and support filled the atmosphere with hope and determination. This brief yet impactful two-hour interaction inspired many community members to participate in the third day's session, where they shared their admiration and respect for Radhakrishna Guruji and Kamala Bhabhi.

### **Valedictory Session:**

The Valedictory session began on a melodious and unifying note as the audience sang Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's iconic song 'Ekla Cholo Re' together, setting an uplifting tone. The session was gracefully conducted by Shri S.C. Barmma and Shri Ashwini Kumar Midha.

The distinguished speakers included Shri Vijay Tambe, Secretary of Sewagram Ashram Pratishthan, Shri Parameshwar Barik of the Rural Development Foundation, Balasore, Odisha. Joining them were Shri Roshanlal of GRAVIS, Shri Dileep Shinde of Sewagram Jooni Basti, and descendants of Radhakrishna Guruji's students and Smt. Meena Sagar of Sewagram Jooni Basti.

Other esteemed guests included Shri Prashant Sathianathan, lawyer and former student of the Nai Talim School, and the son of Sathianathan Guruji and Shantisheela Behen—both centenarians who were cherished colleagues of Radhakrishna ji. In the same session, Ms. Indira Mukherjee, a famous storyteller captivated the audience with a beautifully narrated folk tale, while her mother Smt. Sandhya Mukherjee spoke with warmth and affection about their close association with Kamala Behen and Radhakrishna ji.

The session also welcomed short interactions with from Shri Namdev Dhole, Shri Sachin Hude (descendants of Radhakrishna ji's students), Shri Salil Dave, Smt. Franzisca Kratz, special guests from

Bhopal. Ms Franzisca, a German National shared her experience of being a Reiki Master and how to overcome haste, anger and depression.

Shri Ramesh Kumar, Gandhian Forum, Shri Ravi Chopra, DISHA, and Ms. Meena Kaushik, from the Radhakrishna Foundation. Each speaker brought their unique perspective and heartfelt memories, enriching the day's proceedings.

### **Moving Forward:**

The day concluded on a decisive and forward-looking note. It was unanimously agreed to reactivate the Vikas Vahini program, a cherished initiative of Radhakrishna ji, and to launch a community-based program in Sewagram as the next step. This resolution symbolized a renewed commitment to carrying forward the Gandhian ideals championed by Radhakrishna Guruji and Kamala Bhabi.

The conference was not just a conclusion but a beginning, marked by reflections, resolutions, and the collective spirit of keeping a legacy alive.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Annual conference in honor of Radhakrishna ji
2. Commemorative stamp on Radhakrishna ji by Postal Department, Gol
3. Publication of book on Radhakrishna ji for young mind by National Book Trust, Gol
4. Initiate constructive programs in Sewagram, Wardha

### **Conclusion:**

The Birth Centenary Celebration of K.S. Radhakrishna ji has been a deeply moving journey, uniting hearts and minds to honor a life devoted to Gandhian ideals. As the celebrations culminated in the Sewagram Conference, they left an indelible mark on all who participated, reminding us of the timeless relevance of simplicity, service, and self-reliance in building a better world.

### **Attachments:**

- Photo Feature
- Newspaper Coverage

Dr Shobhana Radhakrishna  
25/12/2024