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A Free Open Access Peer-Reviewed Interdisciplinary Journal
of the University of Mumbai

Gandhi Then and Now: Communities and Peace Activisms [Volume II]

Gandhi Then and Now: Autobiographies, Lived Experiences and Dialogues. October 2020. Gandhi Then and Now: Influences and Engagements. November 2020.

This special issue is in collaboration with the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Center,
Department of Applied Psychology and Counselling Center, University of Mumbai

Special Issue Editor: Satishchandra Kumar

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On the occasion of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's 129th birth anniversary on 14th April 2020, the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Mumbai has launched a free open access online journal, Sambhāṣaṇ. This interdisciplinary journal hopes to bring diverse disciplines in dialogue with each other through critical reflections on contemporary themes.

Sambhāṣaṇ or conversation as an art of dialogue has been crucial to the development of both Indian and Western thought. Dialogos in Greek literally means “through word”, where one establishes relationships on the basis of conversations to initiate processes of thinking, listening and speaking with others. Thinkers such as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, David Bohm, Hans Georg Gadamer, Anthony Appiah and Martha Nussbaum have projected shared dialogue as a way of understanding the relationship between the individual and society. While Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Pandita Ramabai, Jürgen Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, Patricia Hill Collins and Judith Butler, to name a few, have started out anew through ruptures in conversations. The inevitability of conversation in academic life emerges from its centrality to human development and ecology. Conversations are not restricted to any single territory, but are enacted between global and the local topographies. This online bi-lingual journal aims at continuing and renewing plural conversations across cultures that have sustained and invigorated academic activities.

In this spirit, Sambhāṣaṇ an interdisciplinary monthly online journal endeavours to:

- be an open platform, where scholars can freely enter into a discussion to speak, be heard and listen. In this spirit, this journal aims at generating open conversations between diverse disciplines in social sciences, humanities and law.
- preserve and cultivate pluralism as a normative ideal. Hence, it attempts to articulate a plurality of points of view for any theme, wherein there is both a need to listen and to speak, while engaging with another's perspective.
- act as a springboard for briefly expressing points of view on a relevant subject with originality, evidence, argument, experience, imagination and the power of texts. It hopes that these points of view can be shaped towards full-fledged research papers and projects in the future.

Framework

- This journal is open to contributions from established academics, young teachers, research students and writers from diverse institutional and geographical locations.
- Papers can be empirical, analytical or hermeneutic following the scholarly culture of critique and creativity, while adhering to academic norms.
- Commentaries and reviews can also be submitted.
- Submissions will be peer-reviewed anonymously.
- Some of the issues will publish invited papers and reviews, though there will be a call for papers for most issues.
- There would be an occasional thematic focus.

Guidelines for Submission

- Original, scholarly, creative and critical papers with adequate references.
- All references to the author should be removed from the submission to enable the anonymous review process.
- There can be a limit of approximately 3500-4000 words (for papers) and 1500-2000 words (for commentaries) and 1000-1200 words (for reviews).
- Essays should follow the Times New Roman font in size 12 with double space.
- All contributions should follow the author-date referencing system detailed in chapter 15 of The Chicago Manual of Style (17th Edition). The style guidelines in this journal can be consulted for quick reference.
- Authors should submit a statement that their contribution is original without any plagiarism. They can also, in addition, submit a plagiarism check certificate.
- The publication of research papers, commentaries and book reviews is subject to timely positive feedback from anonymous referees.

Publisher

***Office of the Dean of Humanities, University of Mumbai,
Ambedkar Bhavan, Kalina Campus, Vidyanagari,
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This journal accepts original essays that critically address contemporary issues related to social sciences, humanities and law from an interdisciplinary perspective.

“In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared... In other words there must be social endosmosis.”

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Editorial Note

This is the second volume of *Sambhāṣaṇ* dedicated to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's 151st birth anniversary. In the spirit of volume 1, October 2020 this volume too is a collaboration with the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Center, University Department of Applied Psychology & Counseling Center, University of Mumbai on the theme "Gandhi: Then & Now". This issue engages with Gandhian praxis as activism committed to non-violent resistance, with the constructive agenda of forming heterogeneous communities.

Gandhi's autobiography, speeches and writings are not simply theoretical speculations or utopian ideals. They are rather rooted in praxis, which transforms both the individual and society by nurturing solidarities. Gandhi immersed himself in practising his experiments and counsels at the personal level. Non-violent resistance is explicit in his *satyagraha*, which is also a mode of

building communities that anchor the individual. The individual and the community have a reciprocal relationship where they develop through each other. It is in this sense that Gandhi has spurred activist cultures, cooperative societies, indigenous educational frameworks, village communities and non-corporate economies, to name a few. As Ramchandra Guha notes, Gandhi continued to inspire activist cultures in post-independent India, “For example, the Chipko Movement of the 1970s, ... was a non-violent protest against deforestation and its leaders called themselves Gandhians” (Kaushik 2018). However, one cannot claim with Guha that Gandhi was village-centric (Kaushik 2018). Gandhi travelled to remote villages in India to learn about cooperative living, which he believed was embodied in villages. The village for Gandhi is a symbol of peaceful coexistence and interdependence. It is from this point of view that in 1936 Gandhi claimed India “to be found not in its few cities but its 7,00,000 villages” (Joshi, 11). He urged city dwellers to leave their exploitative life-style that used resources of the villages, without contributing to them meaningfully. Thus, the problem for Gandhi is the “town-dweller” (Joshi, 11) who “... has generally exploited the villager” (Joshi, 11). Gandhi believed that village life – in the ideal sense – could be a guide for forming communities of interdependence. Progress can be made if the basics of cooperation are followed. Gandhi’s ideal village was both self-sufficient and interdependent. His discussion with Shrikrishnadas reveals a stoic cosmopolitan perspective on the symbiotic relationship between the village and the domains outside it. “Our outlook must be that we would serve the village first, then the neighbourhood, then the district and thereafter the province” (Joshi, 6).

The writings in this volume “Gandhi Then and Now: Communities and Peace Activisms (Volume II)” reveal the innovative ways in which Gandhian activists continue to develop his thought. They reveal how since Gandhi himself practised what he preached, those who adopt his vision have a bigger responsibility in integrating

the worlds of theory and practice. They have a responsibility to Gandhi, to themselves and to their communities. Moreover, this responsibility is also one of critically evaluating Gandhi. On this note, Saurabh Chaturvedi, Niharika Ravi, Sheetal Ravi and Ravi Narayanan focus on the complex terrain of village life as a vibrant work in progress that is related to the worlds around it. The essays by Anita Patil-Deshmukh, Fauziya Patel, Faraz Khan and Sandhya Mehta bring out the manner in which Gandhian thought has influenced the formation of communities, some of which are creative, as well as, civil society institutions such as the Mani Bhavan. The essay by Aparna Phadke reveals that peace for Gandhi is not simply the absence of violence, but a proactive condition of creating the spaces for interactive living. She argues that by embodying the interconnectedness of life and living beings, peace integrates the individual and community along the lines of sarvodaya. In sum, she argues for a broader interpretation of Gandhi's notion of village republics than that of isolationism or solipsism. The essays by Virendra Kumar, Akhouri Baibhav Prasad and Suchita Krishnaprasad show that Gandhi's contemporary relevance has "straddled" (Parel, 19) not just "two centuries" (Parel, 19) as Anthony Parel notes, but three. They bring out the specific ways in which Gandhi speaks to the present context of violence and pandemics in ways that can heal. Even in the 21st century, Gandhi's relationship to those who reference him in his endeavours to bridge theory and practice – and who are thereby his contemporaries – continues to be marked by what Parel has termed as dialogue, critique and indifference. These essays reveal that for Gandhi civil society and cultures of resistance are crucial to democracies. For Gandhian praxis draws upon the power of civil society, as the space of the individual and the community.

Sambhāṣaṇ remains grateful to Prof. Suhas Pednekar, Vice Chancellor and Prof. Ravindra Kulkarni, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for their enduring encouragement. We thank our authors for readily contributing to this volume with their illuminating work despite

the shortage of time. Our peer reviewers as always have worked against tight deadlines and advised us. We are obliged to them. We are obliged to our Advisory Committee Members and Board of Consulting Editors for their suggestions. We welcome Ms. Arushi Sharma to our team of Assistant Editors who we thank for their inputs. Our *Dank* to Ms. Prajakti Pai for the layout and design. We are grateful to Dr. Srivaramangai and Mr. Sanket Sawant, who continue to remain bulwarks of support.

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Dedicated to ***Gandhians***
working at the grassroots
for **diversity, dialogue,**
inclusiveness, tolerance
and ***peace.***

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