



Probhodha Trust

प्रबोध ट्रस्ट

(Date of Incorporation 27-2- 21)

BRIEF REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

2020 – 2021

Introduction

The Probhodha Trust (प्रबोध ट्रस्ट) was established as a result of discussions and deliberations among a group of noted social workers, professionals and educationists who were deeply interested in promoting Gandhian thought and action for a quite long time. Though the founding members of the trust were actively engaged in promoting principles and practices of Mahatma Gandhi and social action, they felt the need for an organizational framework to undertake activities in a more organised and systematic manner. It resulted in penning down the specific objectives and mission of the organization and its formal registration as a public charitable institution. It was formally registered with the Office of Sub Registrar, Maradu, Ernakulam on February 27 2021. The Motto of the Trust is “to work for creating a society upholding the principles and practices of Mahatma Gandhi and promoting study and research on Gandhian

Thought and undertake publications.” The trust aims at establishing a Centre for Gandhian Studies and Research, a publications division and other charitable works to realize the aims and objectives of the trust.

The following is a brief account of activities undertaken by the trust more than a month since its inception.

1. Picture Exhibition of Mahatma Gandhi

With the objective of introducing the life of Mahatma Gandhi among the youngsters, Dr. M. H. Ramesh Kumar, the trustee and the Vice President of the trust, was engaged in the collection of photos depicting important events of the life of Gandhi. On March 1, 2021, a photo exhibition of Mahatma Gandhi was organized at Government L. P. School, Kayamkulam, Alleppey district of Kerala. About 250 photos were exhibited and it was organized by Coaching Centre for Minority Youth. Large number of students, youth, women and people from different walks of life visited the school to see the exhibition. The news about the exhibition appeared in the print and electronic media. The Board of Trustees of the Probhodha Trust congratulated Dr. M. H. Ramesh Kumar, Assistant professor of Maharajas College for the successful organization of the exhibition and his efforts in spreading the message of Gandhi through photo exhibition.

2. National Webinar on 'Environment History & Man

The Dept of History, St Peters College Kollenchery, Ernakulam in association with College's IQAC and Probhodha Trust, Kochi organized a National Webinar on Environment History & Man. Dr. Hema KR, Head, Department of History gave a brief introduction about the webinar series and welcomed the dignitaries. Dr. Shaju Varghese, Principal of the College, delivered the Presidential Address. Dr. Siby K. Joseph, Dean of Studies and Research, Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha, Maharashtra & Research and Academic Director of the Trust delivered the keynote address. In his address, he traced the origin of environmental history in the global and Indian context. He pointed out that in the Indian context the environment history has a strong Gandhian tenor with emphasis on nonviolence. He gave a brief survey of major efforts to protect environment at the international level starting with the formation of Club of Rome in 1968 to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Gandhi was deeply concerned about the damages done by modern civilization to the environment which he portrayed in his seminal work Hind

Swaraj or Indian Home Rule written in 1909. Gandhian environmental ethics stems from his philosophy of life and his worldview. He outlined the principles of Gandhian art of living and environmental ethics. Gandhi's philosophy of life calls for an alternative development paradigm which is symbiotic with nature and eco-system. He concluded with a call for restructuring of existing socio-economic and political order which was essentially violent and barbarously exploited the environment and mother earth for centuries. It was followed by a lively interaction with the students. The lecture provided a synoptic view of Gandhian perspective on Environment and it was well appreciated by the participants. The webinar concluded with a vote of thanks from Ms. Babitha Roy. The total number of participants was sixty five.

3. Webinar on Gandhi's Political Ideology

The Dept of History, St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam in association with Probhodha Trust organized a Webinar on 29th of March.2021. The theme of the Webinar was "Gandhi's Political ideology - Socialist Anarchism. The key resource person of the programme was Dr. K. P. Shankaran, Retired Associate Professor of St. Stephens College, Delhi University and a noted writer. Ms.Jacquiline Deepika M.X, Assistant professor of the College, welcomed the participants and introduced the resource person. In his address, Prof. Shankaran succinctly explained the significance of Gandhi's political ideology and his claim as an Anarchist. Gandhi called himself as an enlightened Anarchist because his idea of Swaraj was an idea of a non-hierarchical stateless society. Apart from this anarchist aspect, "swaraj" also embodied the idea of a socialist society. But for the violent revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat that characterised Communist society, Gandhi's Swaraj was in many ways similar to the society envisaged by Marx. In fact Gandhi described himself as a "non-violent communist". Gandhi conceived what he called the "constructive programme " to achieve his socialist society of his dreams. Gandhi believed that even a partial realisation of Swaraj would do real good to the people of India. Ms. Rosemol Xavier, Assistant professor of the College expressed the deep sense of gratitude on behalf of the organizers. The lecture was so absorbing and students and faculty members and others raised a lot of queries on the theme of presentation. The webinar was attended by about seventy participants. Ms. Anagha Mary, PG student of the college was the master of the ceremony.

4. Other Programmes

a. Meeting of the Board of Trustees

The first meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Probhodha Trust, Kochi after its formal registration was held on March 2, 2021 at the registered office of the trust at Ponnurunni East, Kochi, and Kerala at 4.30 pm. It elected the Office bearers of the trust and approved the Plan of work and Budget for the current year and the next financial year 21-22.

b. Study Visit

On the 5 of March Shri Naveen Kumar D. D., Trustee and Secretary along with the Auditor Shri D. K. Govindarajan visited Biramika Agro farm at Elavoor, Moozhikkulam, Eranakulam District, to understand about the natural farming and their different products . On the same day, they also visited Gandhi Smarak Grama Seva Kendram, at Nandiyattukunnam, North Paravur, Eranakulam District and its work especially in the field of Khadi. As expression of solidarity with these organizations they purchased some of their products.

c. Paper Presentation

In the month of March Dr. Siby K. Joseph contributed two papers for the discussion group of Gandhian Studies Research Centre, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Gandhi Bhavan, Kochi, Kerala. The first one was presented on March 5, 2021 and its theme was Message of Chauri Chaura. The second one on the theme viz. Gandhi's Trusteeship: An Alternative to Capitalist and Socialist Systems was presented on March 26, 2021. The presentations created fresh and nuanced discussions on the themes.

Research and Publications

The trust has chalked out its comprehensive plan of research of Gandhian themes and academic committee has been engaged in research and publication work.

On a request from Poornodaya Book Trust, Kochi, Kerala Dr. Siby K. Joseph prepared a brief article viz. Message of Chauri Chaura is nonviolence and not violence. It appeared in March issue of Poornodaya magazine.

Another research article on the same theme viz. “Message of Chauri Chaura: Violence or Nonviolence ?” appeared in *Mainstream*, VOL LIX No 12, New Delhi, March 6, 2021, ISSN (Mainstream Online) : 2582-7316 / RNI No. : 7064/62 [RSS 2.0](http://mainstreamweekly.net/article10548.html)
<http://mainstreamweekly.net/article10548.html>

Website

It is gratifying to note that the trust has launched a website soon after the formal registration of the trust and has been effective in spreading the activities of the trust through social media.

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