

ALL INDIA GANDHIAN CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS CONFERENCE

अखिल भारत गांधीवादी रचनात्मक कार्यकर्ता सम्मेलन 2017



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अखिल भारत गांधीवादी रचनात्मक कार्यकर्ता सम्मेलन 2017

Inaugurated by: **Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu**
Hon'ble Vice President of India

Valedictory by: **Shri Ram Nath Kovind**
Hon'ble President of India

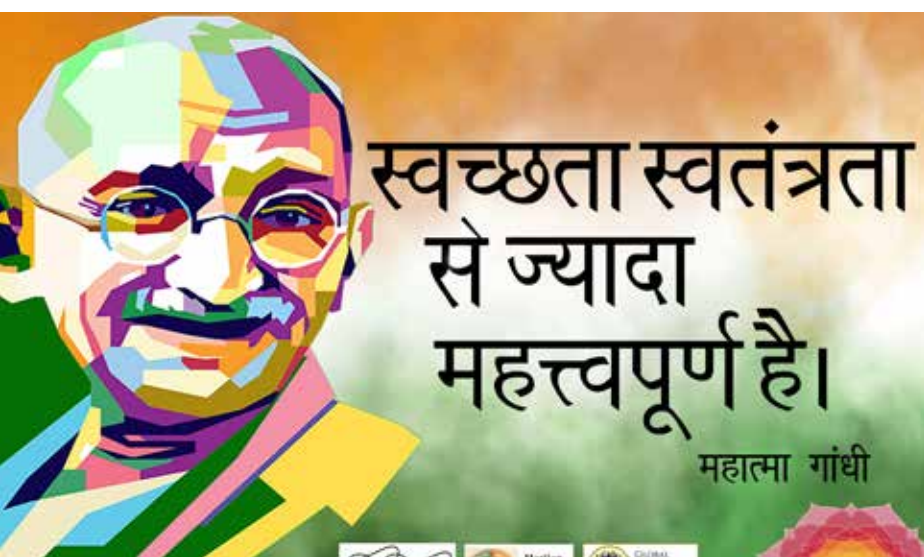
From 25-26th November, 2017
at the Gandhi Ashram, Kingsway Camp, Delhi-110009

27th November, 2017
at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, Delhi



In association with:
Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA)
Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh)

Organized by: **Harijan Sevak Sangh**
(Founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1932)



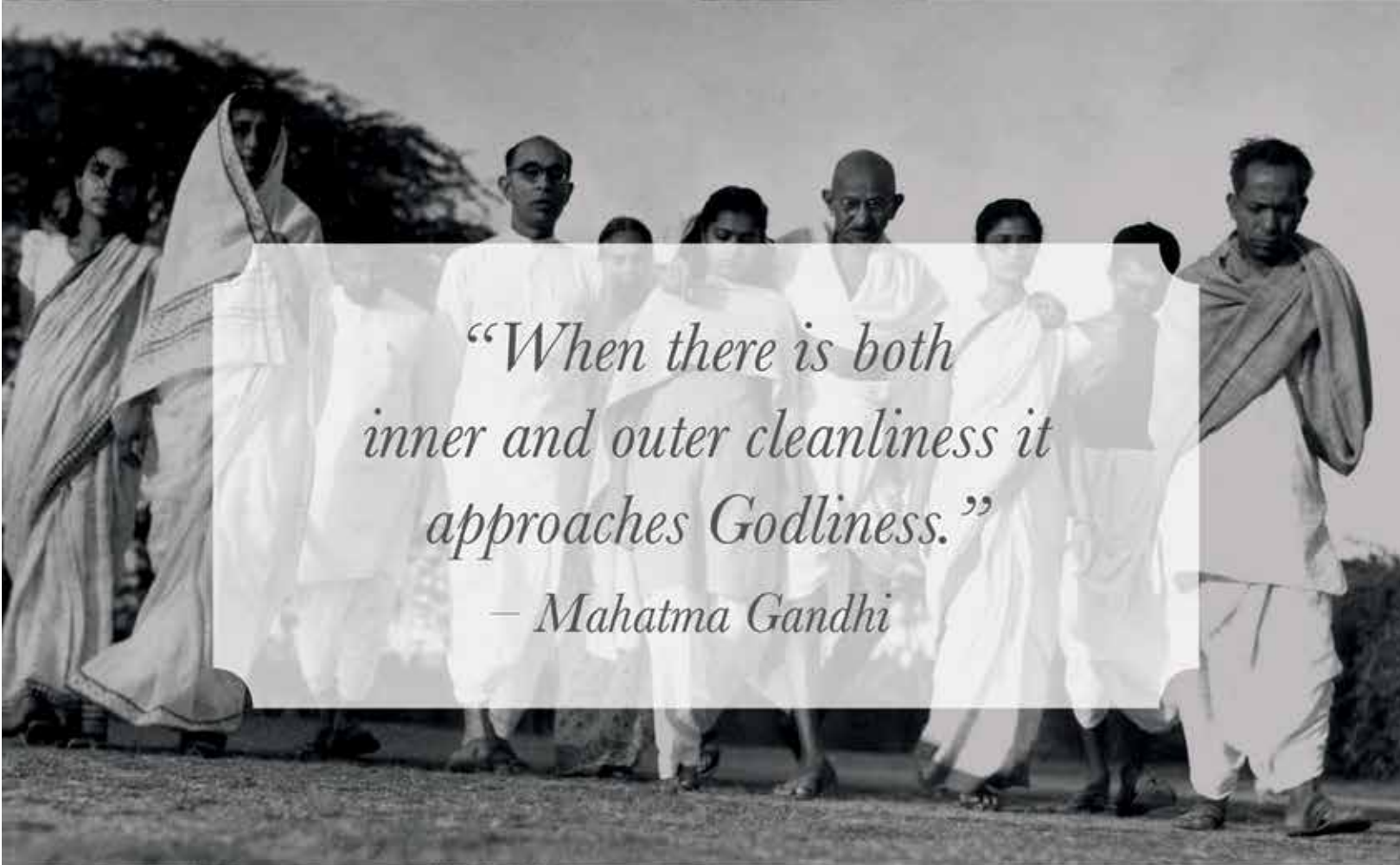
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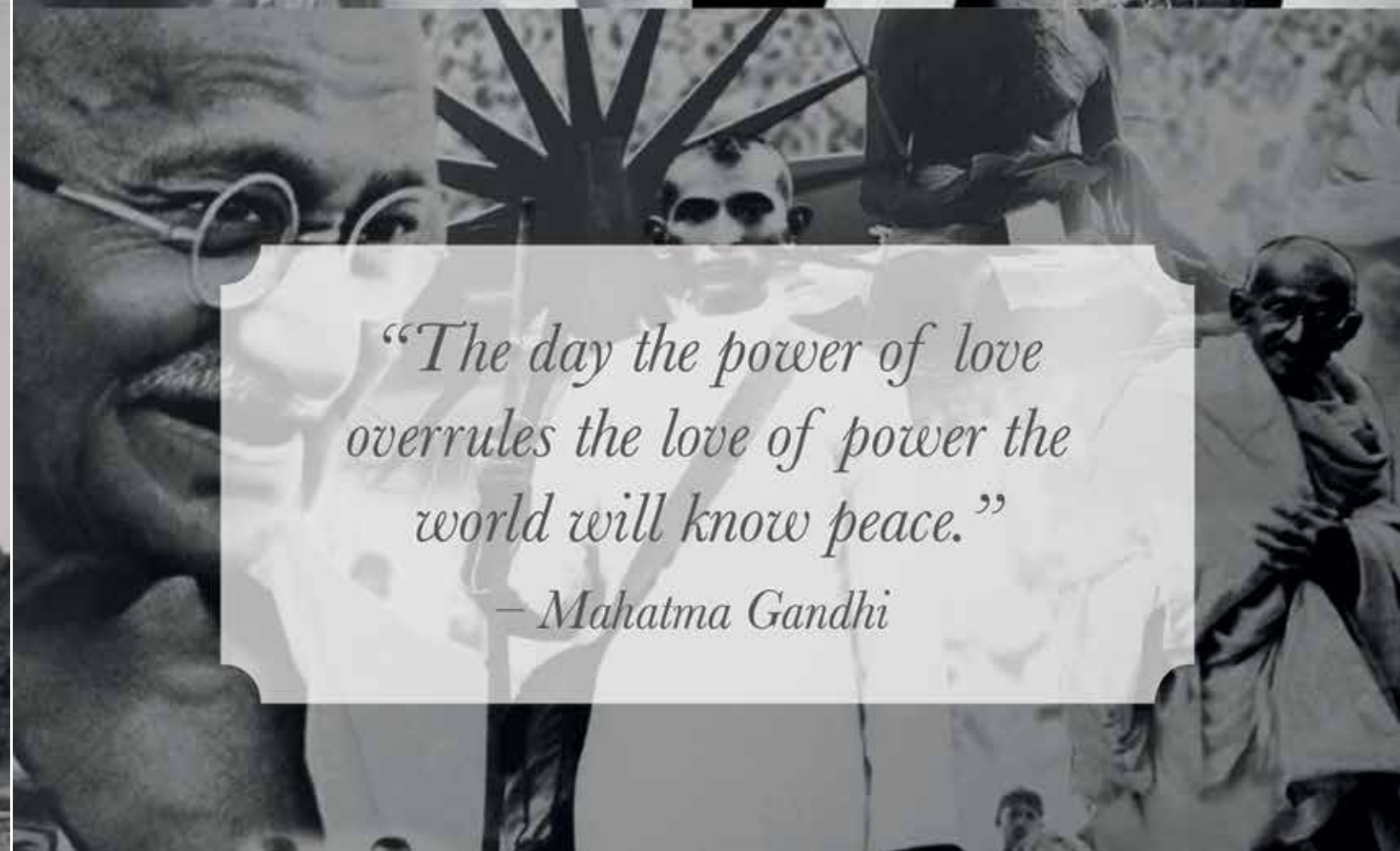
www.washalliance.org (Global Interfaith WASH Alliance)
www.parmarth.org (Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh)
www.gangaaction.org (Ganga Action Parivar)
www.divineshaktifoundation.org (Divine Shakti Foundation)
www.projecthope-india.org (Project Hope)





*"When there is both
inner and outer cleanliness it
approaches Godliness."*

— Mahatma Gandhi



*"The day the power of love
overrules the love of power the
world will know peace."*

— Mahatma Gandhi



Hon'ble Vice President of India inaugurates the Gandhian Conference at the Gandhi Ashram in Delhi

Hon'ble Vice President Shri Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the All India Gandhian Constructive Workers Conference with Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan and Co-Founder of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, Harijan Sevak Sangh President Shri Sankar Sanyalji, and GIWA's revered spiritual leaders of India's many faiths, to inspire 3000 Gandhian and tribal representatives from across India to become trailblazers for a Swachh Bharat.

This historic event was jointly organized by the Harijan Sevak Sangh (founded by Mahatma Gandhi) and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance under the collected leadership and vision of Professor Sankar Kumar Sanyal, President of Harijan Sevak Sangh, and HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Founder/Chair, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance.

Patriotism was palpable in the massive event, as rousing speeches led the crowd towards collectively pledging for taking Mahatma Gandhi's vision for a clean India into mission mode. The Swachh Bharat Mission, which was launched on Gandhi Jayanti 2014, is due to expire in less than two years, making sanitation the need of the day if our nation is to achieve its historic targets of toilets and sanitation for all.

On the auspicious occasion, as a symbol of GIWA's message of Sanitation and Meditation for all the newly renovated Mahatma Gandhi Yoga Centre was also inaugurated at the Gandhi Ashram premises by the Hon'ble Vice President of India, Pujya Swamiji, Sankar Sanyalji and other eminent members of HSS. Just besides the Yoga Centre a beautiful Sanitation and Toilet Park was also toured by the Hon'ble Venkaiah Naiduji and all eminent delegates where different toilet models was shared by Jayeshbhai Patelji, President of Manav Sadhna & President of HSS, Gujarat.

Said Prof Sankar Kumar Sanyal: "It may noted that this Conference is the first of its kind after passing away of our beloved Nirmala Didi on 1st May 2008. My attempt and effort is to bring everyone together, all members of the Gandhian organisation and all faiths, now also with the support of Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, to bring everyone together to make a world of Gandhiji's dreams. We look forward to supporting the efforts of Swachh Bharat as a people's movement. We are deeply honoured to have the Hon'ble Vice President inaugurate this two day All India Gandhian Constructive Workers Conference."



Said Hon'ble Vice President Venkaiah Naidu: "Our tradition is unity in diversity. We are one nation, one people and one world. That should be our path. More than a century ago Mahatma Gandhi had given a powerful message that sanitation is more important than political independence and that cleanliness is next to Godliness which are still relevant and show the importance of this issue. Today, we need to protect this great sanskriti (heritage) of our country which is to serve and give to others before oneself- his life was his message."

Said HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati: "Gandhiji laid a great emphasis on sanitation, to him it was greater than independence and to me Sanitation IS Meditation. As Mahatma Gandhiji emphasised that the external cleanliness (safai) and inner cleanliness (sachai- truthfulness) must go hand in hand. We must pledge today collectively and individually to BE the change and DO the change. I honour our Hon'ble Vice President for being a great inspiration to the youth and for being an example of living the principles of Gandhiji."

Pujya Swamiji and Sankar Sanyalji honoured the Hon'ble Vice President with a khadi shawl, a khadi and elachi mala as well as a sacred Rudraksha sapling for his ever green, youthful leadership.

Added Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Secretary General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance: "Today, we saw something unique and beautiful as flags waved and chants for a Swachh Bharat filled the air. The wheels have been set in motion for an incredible journey of change."





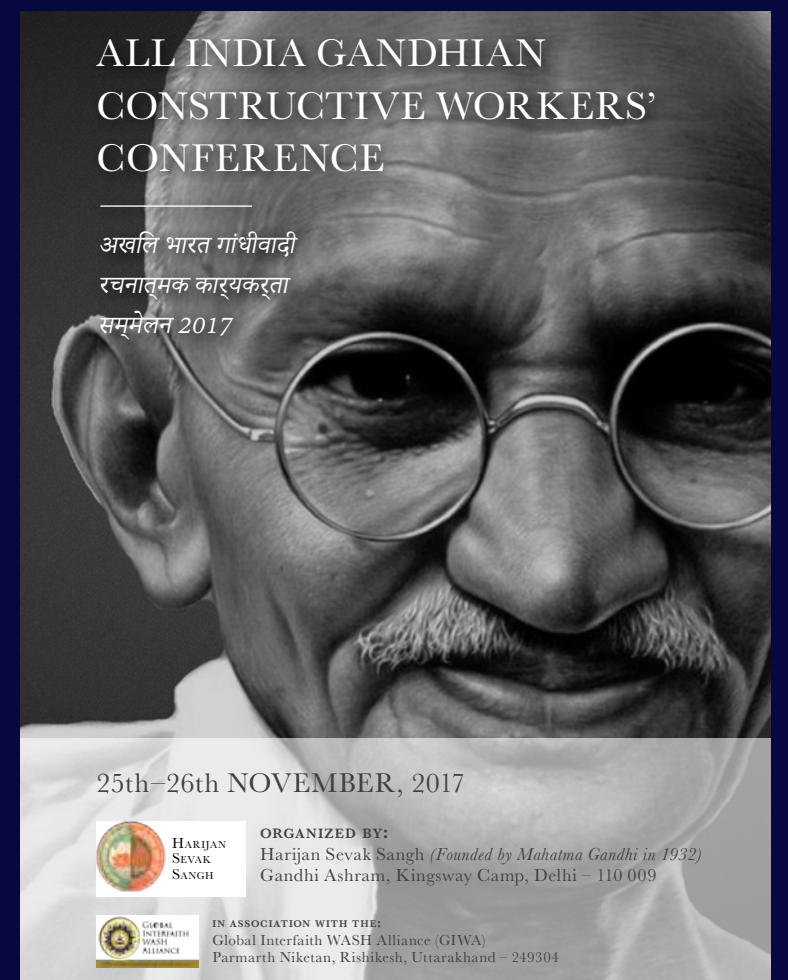
[Click Here to see Highlights from the Conference and Speeches of some of the Main Speakers](#)



Inauguration of the Mahatma Gandhi Yoga & Meditation Centre at the Gandhi Ashram by the Hon'ble Vice President of India, Pujya Swamiji & President of HSS.



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Sarva Dharma, Swachhhta, Samrasta Evam Sadbhavna Samvaad

Interfaith Harmony, Cleanliness & Social Equity Dialogue

A very special interfaith panel on Interfaith Harmony, Cleanliness & Social Equity began just after the inaugural session and included inspiring speeches and blessings by GIWA's respected faith leaders, including: H.H The 37th Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang; Giani Iqbal Singh, Jathedar, Patna Saheb Gurudwara; Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Secretary General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and President, Divine Shakti Foundation; Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi, President, All India Association of Imams of Mosques; Venerable Lama Lobzang, Convenor, Global Buddhist Congregation; Acharya Yeshe Phuntsok, Deputy Speaker, Tibetan Parliament in Exile, Representative to HH the Dalai Lama; Haji Syed Salman Chisthy, 26th Generation Gaddi Nash-

in of Sultan ul Hind Hazret Khwaja Moinuddin Hasan Chisthy; Vivek Muni, Respected Jain Monk; Swami BA Paramadvaiti, Braj Vrindavan ACT Now, Germany; Swamini Adityananda Saraswati, Director, Programmes, Policy and Development, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance; Dr. Binny Sareen, Brahmakumaris; Mufti Nasihur Rahman Qasimi, Principal of Al Jamiatul Islamia Mangaldai Banat Madrasa; and representatives of all states and people from over 10 countries. In addition to the interfaith leaders, Union Minister of State Agriculture Shri Krishna Raj and Bharat Mitra, Founder-President of Organic India, were also part of the session.



Minister of State Agriculture, Smt. Krishna Raj is given a beautiful Rudraksha sapling by Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji, Shri Sankar Sanyal and Bharat Mitra as a symbol of her commitment to Organic and Green India.



H.H. PUJYA SWAMI CHIDANAND SARASWATI, PRESIDENT, PARMARTH NIKETAN, RISHIKESH AND CO-FOUNDER, GIWA

“India is not just a piece of land but a land of peace. It has never attacked anyone but always attracted countless many. India is not only divine because we have the mighty Himalayas and the sacred River Ganga but it is truly divine because we have leaders like Mahatma Gandhiji whose life was like the mighty Himalayas and the ever-flowing and pure Maa Ganga.”



SADHVI BHAGAWATI SARASWATI, SECRETARY GENERAL, GLOBAL INTERFAITH WASH ALLIANCE (GIWA), PRESIDENT, DIVINE SHAKTI FOUNDATION

“If there is a lack of cleanliness in our villages and our nation, we cannot even begin to talk about peace or freedom. This is exactly why Gandhiji said that sanitation is more important than political freedom. Today, we are a sovereign country but we still need to work tenaciously to gain freedom from our pollution and filth.”



H.H. DRIKUNG KYABGON CHETSANG RINPOCHE, 37TH THRONE HOLDER OF THE DRIKUNG KAGYU LINEAGE AND 7TH REINCARNATION OF THE CHETSANG RINPOCHE

“We come from different cultures and religious backgrounds. However, we are all equal and share the same human nature. In order to fulfill Mahatma Gandhiji’s vision of peace and security of the nation and the world, we need to clean and save water and we need to take immediate action to protect our environment.”



GIANI IQBAL SINGH, JATHEDAR PATNA SAHEB GURUDWARA

“Those who love each other only they will unite with the Divine. Hatred is not a path to the Divine. This was the basic principle of Guru Nanak Devji Maharaj. This is why Guru Nanakji taught us to live in unity and equality with all beings. He reminded us to work hard, remember God and share your wealth, in the form of food, knowledge, material possessions, etc, with all beings.”



IMAM UMER AHMED ILYASI, PRESIDENT, ALL INDIA IMAM ORGANISATION

“We need cleanliness both within and outside of ourselves. Just like Mahatma Gandhiji walked with everyone as one, with equality, this is the mission and vision of Pujya Swamiji, Sadhviiji and all of GIWA’s Faith Leaders. This is the only way India can truly be a World Leader.”



VEN LAMA LOBSANG, CONVENOR, GLOBAL BUDDHIST CONGREGATION, PRESIDENT, ASOKA MISSION

“Good hygiene is very important for good health and India needs better hygiene for people of all walks of life and every religion.”



ACHARYA YESHI PHUNSTOK, DEPUTY SPEAKER, TIBETAN PARLIAMENT-IN-EXILE, REPRESENTATIVE HH THE DALAI LAMA

“I have been associated for so many years with the Harijan Sevak Sangh and Nirmala Didi. I saw her great vision and dedication to the organization and I look forward to working together to unite all beings across faiths with the principles of Mahatma Gandhiji.”



HAJI SYED SALMAN CHISHTY, 26TH GENERATION GADDI NASHIN OF SULTAN UL HIND HAZRET KHWAJA MOINUDDIN HASAN CHISTHY

“Hazrat Khwaja Garib Nawaz taught us first and foremost, ‘Love all, Hate none.’ This is the cornerstone of the Sufi teachings. Khwaja Saheb said that just like the sun, ocean and land give to all beings life and bounty without any discrimination so to we must serve all of humanity like Mother Nature to truly be united with the Divine.”



VIVEK MUNI, JAIN MONK

“This beautiful event is the need of the hour. I congratulate Pujya Swamiji and all of our interfaith leaders who are working together in India and the world for cleanliness, interfaith harmony and equality.”



MUFTI NASIHUR RAHMAN, PRINCIPAL OF AL JAMIATUL ISLAMIA MANGALDAI BANAT MADRASA, ASSAM

“Cleanliness in our mind and body is the most important. If we can see each other as one family, as sisters and brothers, then we can began to work together. When we work together for cleanliness then India will become progressive and can become a world leader.”



Hon'ble Minister of Social Justice & Many Others Grace the First Day of the Conference

The first day of the All India Gandhian Constructive Workers Conference was graced by Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Dr. Thawarchand Gehlotji, Union Minister of State Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Ramdas Athawaleji, and Minister of Health, Government of Delhi, Shri Satyendra Jainji.

Just after the Sarva Dharma Swachhta Session there was a panel on Mahatma Gandhiji's vision on Cleanliness (Swachhataya), Environment (Paryavaran) & Gram Swaraj followed with the Importance of Cleanliness and the Role of Harijan Sevak Sangh in Swachh Bharat Mission, concluding with a beautiful cultural programme meant to inspire people to protect our environment.

Each session concluded with pledges and commitments to take these learnings back to their communities, countries, and regions, and spread the values and teachings of Gandhiji amongst all.



Visit to Toilet Park & Cafe in the Gandhi Ashram

The second day of the All India Gandhian Constructive Workers Conference began with Pujiya Swamiji's visit to the Toilet Park and Cafe in the Ashram. He learned from the divine team from the Gandhi ashram in Gujarat about the different toilet technologies exhibited in the park, lauded them for their commitment to WASH, and even enjoyed some chai at the park.



The Hon'ble Vice President stops by the Mokshda Green Crematorium System exhibition and learns more about the technology that saves 60% of the wood used in traditional cremations.



[Click here to learn about Harijan Sevak Sangh's work to make Swachh Bharat a people's movement](#)



Women's Empowerment & Social Uplift

On the second day, there was a special session dedicated to Women's Empowerment and Social Uplift, which offered tribute to Kasturba Gandhiji and acknowledged the shakti (power) and the tireless efforts of women in spreading and sharing Gandhiji's life and message with the world. It was chaired by Smt Urmila Srivastava, President of Women's Wing of HSS and President, Sarvodaya Ashram, Hardoi and Smt Shikha Sanyal, Hon'y Secretary, HSS, Bengal. At the end of the session, a special Rudraksha sapling was given to Vice President of Harijan Sevak Sangh (HSS) Shri Laxmi Dassji as a symbol of his great leadership and his ability to work as a brother, empowering all women to lead the way to a more inclusive world.

Young children from the ashram joined for the sessions, listening intently, and also meticulously engaged in the spinning wheel or charka.



Sadhvi Bhagawatiji and Radhaben Bhatt honour the chorus and Geeta Nattya by the United Women Forum on the theme of Buddha, Rabindranath and Gandhiji's thoughts and teachings, which was coordinated by the Vice President of UWF Ms Hena Chakraborty



Pujya Swamiji was deeply touched by all of the speeches and especially the work being done by Geetanjali Babbar. He warmly invited the women from Kat Katha to Rishikesh for a divine vacation to experience the love and oneness of being on the banks of Mother Ganga.



Sadhvi Bhagawatiji blessed the audience by sharing, "It is the tireless efforts of Kasturba Gandhiji that was the power that sustained in large part Gandhiji's service to the nation. Hence, women should never feel themselves less or inferior to men, in fact they should know that they have within them the power to co-create a better world for everyone."



Smt Prema Cariappa, Ex MP & Former Chairperson, Central Social Welfare, Govt of India, said, "Mahatma Gandhi when he started the freedom movement, he would go every nook and corner of the nation and encouraged them to participate in nation building."



Swamini Adityanand, Director of Programmes, Policy & Partnerships, GIWA said, "Time has come to move from a Satyagraha to a Shakti-graha or a She-graha in which women are asked to lead the way to social change and upliftment. Let us join our hands and our hearts to channelize our collective power to lead this revolution. I truly believe that each one of us has the power to be the change and lead the change."



Dr Binny Sareen, Brahmakumaris said, "In the letters of the world women lies the key to empowerment. W stands for wisdom, O stands for optimism, M for morality, E for empowerment/spirituality and N for nobility. If we simply remember these values then we have the key to women's empowerment."



Smt Kusum Johari, President, HSS UP, shared the wonderful work and dedication of the Gandhi Ashram in Lucknow, where the head offices of the Harijan Sevak Sangh are headquartered in Uttar Pradesh. She also expressed her great desire to bring together a major conference, such as the one in Delhi, at the state level in UP.



Geetanjali Babbar, Founder and Director of a non-profit named Kat-Katha, shared about her work in the brothels of Delhi in GB Road and asked everyone to visit the women she works with and to see the humanity in them. She expressed how so many people had told her not to work with and spend time with sex-workers but how she sees humanity in them. She said that she feels more safe and protected with them than on the streets of Delhi.



Role of Youth & Constructive Work

The second day began with a session entitled Role of Youth & Constructive Work, which really delved into applying the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi into our lives and being the example that youth would like to follow.

The session was chaired by Shri B R Kamrah, Chairman, KIIT Group of Educational Institution and Shri Naresh Yadav, Ex. MP and Vice President, HSS. It included inspiring speeches by Shri Kumwar Shekhar Vijendra, Chancellor, Shobhit University; Shri Annamalai, Director, National Gandhi Museum, Delhi; Shri Dipankar Srigyan, Director, Gandhi Smriti & Darshan Samiti, Delhi; Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Secretary General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), President, Divine Shakti Foundation; Shri Mohan Joshi, MLC, President, Maharashtra HSS; Shri Deo Raj Singh, President, Mumbai HSS; Shri Aditya Pattanayak, Antyodaya Chetana Mandal; Shri Ramkumar Mandal, President, Bihar HSS; Shri Rajendra Malviya, President, M.P State HSS; Shri Prabir Mahanti, Vice President, Odisha HSS; and so many others.

There was also a special yoga class with the students in the morning of the second day entitled “Yoga for All: A tribute to Mahatma Gandhiji”, led by Sushri Nandini Tripathi, Director of Programme Implementation & Integration, GIWA – Parmarth Niketan.



Prayers for Kashmir

*Seeds of love, hope and non-violence being planted for Kashmir,
spreading Gandhiji's life and message*

The main focus of the day, concerning the young especially, was the conflict and turmoil in Kashmir. Voices were heard, tears were welcomed, and pain was shared by a large delegation of youth from Kashmir. They requested Pujya Swamiji to grace their land and to help find ways to engage the youth there towards constructive, rather than destructive activities and programmes. Plans were made in which the Harijan Sevak Sangh and Global Interfaith WASH Alliance would work together to plan a visit to the region and create a strategy to engage the people there towards living Gandhiji's principles in their lives.

The sessions ended with Pujya Swamiji's incredible and inspiring blessings and pledges to work together for restoring peace in our world whilst also making India clean and green.



HE President Ram Nath Kovind Welcomes Historic Summit of Gandhian, Tribal & Revered Faith Leaders for Valedictory Session

Pujya Swamiji Presented with the HSS Mahatma Gandhi Lifetime Peace and Service Award by hands of HE the President

President Ram Nath Kovind concluded the historic Summit of Gandhian, Tribal and Faith leaders at Rashtrapati Bhavan with an intimate Valedictory Session.

In the celebrated grounds of Rashtrapati Bhavan, President Kovind congratulated all assembled for their unity, under the collective leadership and vision of Pujya Swamiji, Founder/Chair, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Professor Sankar Kumar Sanyal, President of Harijan Sevak Sangh.

Pujya Swamiji shared with the Honourable President how all the

HSS leaders and faith leaders agreed to work together to help inspire the meeting of our nation's Swachh Bharat Mission goals, with an emphasis on the government's drive for toilets for all and the conservation of our natural resources.

By the hands of HE the President HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati was presented with the Mahatma Gandhi Lifetime Peace and Service Award from the Harijan Sevak Sangh for his unparalleled work for interfaith harmony and service for all of humanity, with no discrimination, no expectation, no hesitation and no vacation.

As a symbol of compassion, oneness and unity, as emphasized by Mahatma Gandhiji, a piece of the Bodhi Tree from Bodh Gaya was planted by HE the President with Pujya Swamiji and the other faith leaders and HSS leaders, to send an important message on environmental conservation and preservation.

The Honourable President emphasized in his speech how Pujya Swamiji is renowned for bringing saplings from Rishikesh as gifts, to bring the green message to the masses.

Said HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, “if we are to have a clean India, we must also have a green India. Today, we plant a sapling in the name of unity towards a future in which our air is sweet, our water flows like nectar and our children are assured of healthy futures.”

Said Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Secretary General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and President, Divine Shakti Foundation, “Today, we saw something unique and beautiful as this tree was planted with our esteemed President and hope for a Swachh Bharat filled the air. The wheels have been set in motion for an incredible journey of change.”

Professor Sankar Kumar Sanyal, President of Harijan Sevak Sangh shared with the Honourable President about the work of HSS and their hope to be a part of the planning for the 150th Celebration of Mahatma Gandhiji’s birth. He deeply appreciated the leadership Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji had provided to HSS for this historic event, and especially for infusing HSS with new energy and vision to host this event after 11 years.

Attending the session were foremost leaders of India’s five faiths, including:

HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Founder of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), President of Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh)

Maulana Mahmood Madani, Secretary General, Jamia Ulama-i-Hind

H.H. Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang, 37th throne holder of the Drikung Kagyu Lineage and 7th reincarnation of the Chetsang Rinpoche

Archbishop Dr Anil Cuoto, Diocese of Delhi

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary General, GIWA, President Divine Shakti Foundation

Sardar Kuldeep Bhogal, Sikh Leader

Rajyogi BK Brij Mohan, Addl Secretary General, Brahma Kumaris

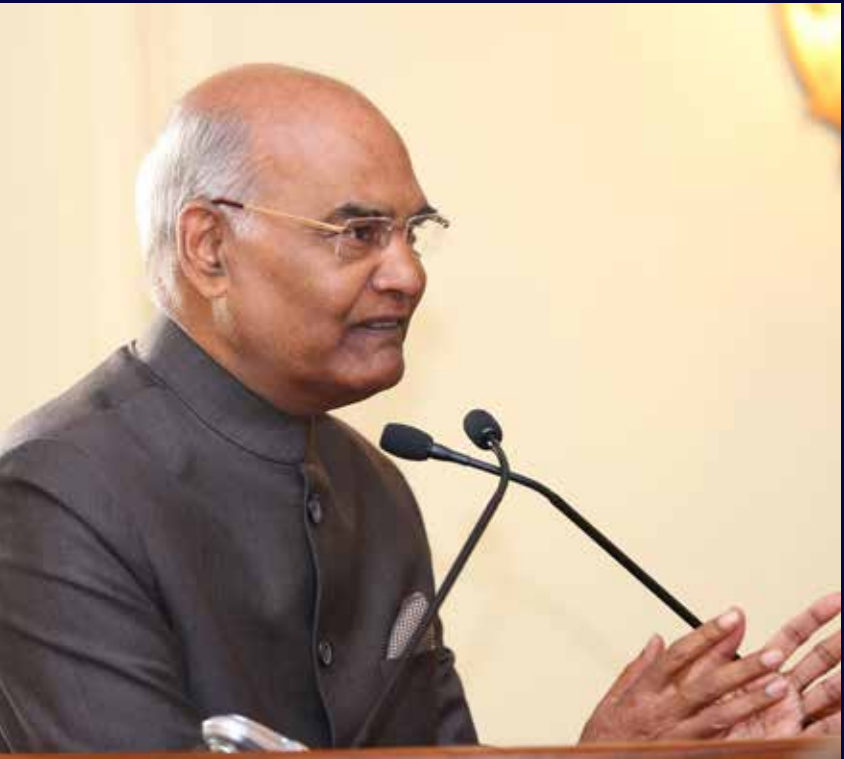
Bharat Mitra, Founder/President, Organic India

BK Sapna Didi, Brahma Kumaris

Swamini Adityananda Saraswati, Director Programmes, Partnerships, Policy and Development, GIWA

Mufti Nasihur Rahman, Principal of Al Jamiatul Islamia Mangaldai Banat Madrasa, Assam

Nandini Tripathi, Director of Programme Implementation, GIWA



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Inspiring Media Coverage



Social Media Coverage



A Letter from Shri Sankar Kumar Sanyal, President, Harijan Sevak Sangh



Respected Pujjya Swami Ji,

Pranaam ! Jai Gange !

After such a successful conference, I offer my heartfelt gratitude for all your valuable time, advice and support in this historic mega event. I will never forget all these support, help and cooperation on your part. Without this it would never have been possible to such great achievement, where Shri M Venkaiah Naidu ji, Hon'ble Vice President of India inaugurated and valedictory session held at

Rastrapati Bhawan by Shri Ram Nath Kovind Ji, Hon'ble President of India. So many interfaith leaders participated along with eminent Intellectuals, Academicians, Public figures, Ministers and also grass root level Gandhian workers and youth participated in the Conference upholding the principles and ideals of Gandhi Ji with a view to bring about a sense of peace, harmony and brother hood which was the very near to the heart of our beloved Didi Nirmala Deshpande. I believe to get the same blessings, support and cooperation from you in future also, which will go a long way.

In this conference my sister Nandini has devoted herself in a manner is commendable and unparallel inspite of all odds. I salute her. Your other devotees and workers of different sections from the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, Ganga Action Parivar, Divine Shakti Foundation - Parmarth Niketan also worked very hard. I also admire them.

I on behalf of the historic organisation sincerely acknowledge the support given by you and we are grateful for the same. I wish to have further communication with you shortly.

With highest regards,
Sankar Kumar Sanyal
President, Harijan Sevak Sangh founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1932



Before the transformation...



Transformation of the Gandhi Ashram



See More Photos From the Historic Event:

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First Day

Second Day

Valedictory Session with President of India

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