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Mahatma Gandhi Mission's Dental College and Hospital

KAMOTHE, NAVI MUMBAI.

अपनी खबर

COMMUNAL HARMONY WEEK



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Communal harmony plays a vital role in creating a peaceful and inclusive society. When people from different backgrounds, religions, and cultures come together in harmony, it fosters understanding, respect, and cooperation. It helps to break down barriers, eliminate prejudice, and promote unity. Communal harmony also leads to social stability and economic development. By embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity, we can build stronger communities and work towards a world where everyone feels valued and accepted. So let's continue to prioritize communal harmony in our day-to-day lives and make a positive impact on our society.

DEAN'S DESK: COMMUNAL HARMONY WEEK

Majhab nahin sikhata aapas mein bair rakhana -Iqbal meaning, religion does not teach us to bear ill-will towards one another. Gandhiji firmly believed that communal unity was essential for the freedom and growth of India. He believed in the sovereign rule of the law of love which makes no distinctions.

Communal harmony plays a vital role in fostering social cohesion and building strong communities. It goes beyond mere tolerance and embraces the idea of owning and celebrating our differences. When we promote communal harmony, we create an environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds can come together, learn from one another, and work towards common goals. It helps in reducing conflicts, promoting understanding, and creating a sense of belonging for everyone. By nurturing communal harmony, we can build a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Gandhiji foresaw a future where people belonging to different faiths will have the same regard for other faiths that they have for their own. In order to discover this underlying unity among all religions, Gandhiji had with him a master key of Truth and Non-violence. He stressed upon visionary universal peace, brotherhood, and reverence for all life.



DR. SRIVALLI NATARAJAN
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SUB-EDITOR'S SAY : COMMUNAL HARMONY WEEK

Communal harmony is very important in our day-to-day lives.

It's all about living together peacefully and respectfully, regardless of our different backgrounds and beliefs. When we have communal harmony, it means we're creating a society where everyone feels included and valued.

In our daily interactions, we can promote communal harmony by treating others with kindness and respect, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, or culture. We can take the time to learn about different traditions, customs, and festivals, which helps to foster understanding and appreciation.

Another way to promote communal harmony is by challenging stereotypes and prejudices. We can actively reject discrimination and prejudice, and instead, celebrate our differences. By promoting inclusivity and acceptance, we create a safe and harmonious environment for everyone.

Engaging in open and respectful conversations about communal harmony is also important. We can discuss the challenges and issues faced by different communities, and work together to find solutions. By actively participating in community events and initiatives, we can contribute to building a more harmonious society.

Remember, communal harmony starts with each one of us. Together, we can create a world where everyone feels respected, valued, and included.



DR. SARIKA SHETTY
PROFESSOR
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PERIODONTICS

THE HARMLESS STERLING SWORD

The rampant visceral prejudice among present-day youth for Gandhian thought, the premature dismissal of it and the ever-increasing need to embrace the same in word, thought and action, has never been more dire.

The expanse of Gandhian Thought and its utility in present times is vast. Youth have been and will always be instrumental in influencing the faith and fate of their peers, making each other realise the futility of structured and self-inflicted violence. It is, however, important for a better and deeper understanding into the mind of Mahatma Gandhi in consonance with contemporary challenges.

After more than 7 decades of basking in the glory of independence, it is harrowing to witness the invaluable teachings of Bapu fade away into obscurity in his own country. Despite his ideologies being adopted by tall figures around the world to bring personal and social transformation, Gandhian Thought is seen bearing the brunt of extremist ideas, causing impressionable and fully-grown minds to turn a blind eye and deaf ear to the timeless ideas put into practice by him.

With the spirit of service to society and the aim of propagating Bapu's teachings, the Gandhi Centre much recently started by the Mahatma Gandhi Mission Trust is a step in the direction of our journey towards self-realisation through social realisation.

The aim is not to drive people on the path of sainthood but to achieve radical levels of understanding into the youth psyche and provide a neat division between what will and will not serve humanity in times to come. It aims to devise an enabling mechanism based on the age-old principles of Satya and Ahimsa and understand the thinning threshold for tolerance. It recognises the void that faces us and intends to help cross the eclipse tunnel relying and drawing lessons from the invaluable teachings of Gandhi.

The activities include the spinning of charkha, practice of meditation, learning, promoting and harnessing the concept of peace and inculcating the feeling of religious oneness and respect through the recitation of the inter-faith prayer, a ritual started by Gandhi himself and most prevalent in his Ashrams today. Bapu attributed his calm demeanour and ability to be more productive to the relentless practice of daily meditation and prayer.

A humanist in all his endeavours, Mahatma Gandhi gave a revolutionary and pragmatic dimension to the age-old principles of Satya, Ahimsa, Swaraj, Swadeshi, Sarvodaya, pioneered Nai Talim and endorsed the idea of Sarvadharmas Sambhava until his last breath.

In a world fed with social media fodder, there is little to no scope for originality and there are crumbs left for the younger minds to ponder upon. While every individual is entitled to their unique opinion, it is lethal to depend on hearsay and form distorted ideas about something that is inevitably beneficial in all its entirety, even if it might look abstract initially.

Today, more than ever, children, adolescents, and youth are succumbing to their inner turmoil, often times a hellhole of their own making or otherwise birthed by the need for external validation and the compulsion to fit in. Existential crisis is sparing no age and that unfortunately is the curse of this generation, driven by and high on the idea of intolerance, violence and injustice affecting every arena of life.

The 21st century is ripe with resources of all kinds yet mankind is psychologically depressed, frustrated, sad and living life devoid of harmony and peace. There are calcified ideas behind the resistance of a pacifist attitude prevailing so dominantly in this day and age and the sorry state of being torn between what to be and not to be.

From the unceremonious eviction of a young lawyer from the first-class compartment of a train at Pietermaritzburg Railway Station in South Africa to a man of seventy-eight being violently pelted for trying to douse a religious fire in Noakhali, the odyssey from Mohanya to Mahatma is a timeless series of lessons mankind cannot afford to ignore.

The bitter relationship between Gandhian Thought and the contemporary youth, the growing hostility towards the idea of absolutely anything to do with him or his philosophy, a scattered view of the freedom struggle and Gandhi's approach has been a major stressor in how he is viewed by his own countrymen.

With his departure, he left behind a lineage of extravagant yet selfless thought and action, and the guidebook to living a life devoid of hatred, violence, greed, lust and intolerance. 76 years later today, we remain eternally indebted to him for his moral and ethical approach towards the Indian freedom struggle.

Mahatma Gandhi was a man unfathomably ahead of his time whose sparkling world vision finds relevance even today amid the myriad of crisis we are facing today in all walks of life. His thought transcends all borders, boundaries and binaries.

While the idea of sainthood is unutterable, Gandhi never called himself one or ever intentionally drove people on the path of sainthood. What we, however, can do is bank upon the goodwill of society without being too attached to the idea of living a life devoid of taint, learn from mistakes and align ourselves with our life's highest purpose for the greater good of humanity. Gandhian Thought is both abstract and real, depending upon its application.

In this vast life, we are bound to falter a little and tiptoe to the brink of immorality but it is in self-realisation, inclusivity, accommodation and service, that we can live out the true meaning of our existence as human beings.



By-
Richa Deokar
Director, Gandhi Centre
Mahatma Gandhi Mission Trust,

Guest speaker on Communal Harmony

Indian culture: Plural and Inclusive

There has been an interaction of different cultures in India, leading to unique syncretic traditions. In North India it is also referred to as Ganga Jumni Tehjeeb.

Indian culture is a plural one, encompassing the diversity of the country, incorporating and drawing heavily from all those people who came and settled here. Even amongst Hindus there are multiple sects and culture is diverse. Only the culture of the elite is being projected as 'the' Hindu culture to the exclusion of the culture of the downtrodden. We see that there was extensive trade between the Malabar Coast and the Arabs. As a matter of fact Islam first came to India through Arab traders. Many coastal kings had erected mosques for worship by these traders and the local Muslim communities, evolved through interaction with Arabs.

The arrival of the Mughals on the political arena was marked by multiple changes.

The impact of Islam and the culture of the Mughals led to development of a synthesis - Hindustani culture, in all fields - music, sculpture, architecture, literature, fine arts and so on. At the religious level, Islam and local Hindu traditions interacted and strengthened Sufi saints and Bhakti cults, both of which were very popular and had a large subaltern following.

There is no clash between Religions. Human society has developed through alliance of religions and cultures. In India it is the same interaction which has given rise to our religious traditions and culture. Sufis were tilted more towards the spiritual side of Islam. They had to oppose the orthodox Ulema of Islam (learned in Islamic theology) who were close to the elite and power centers of the society.

These Sufis were close to Christians and Jew mystics and the spirituality of some Hindu sects. Moinuddin Ibn Arabi's doctrine demolished the barriers of caste and creed. Baba Farid of Punjab wrote his poetry in Punjabi and his verses were quoted in the Granth Saheb by Guru Nanak.

Miyan Mir, another Sufi saint, was requested to lay the foundation stone of Harmandir in the Golden Temple. Sayyid Waris Shah wrote Hir Ranzha, the greatest classic of medieval Punjabi literature. Nizamuddin Awliya, another major Sufi saint said that there are as many ways of worshipping God as there are particles of sand. He was fond of bhajans and qawwalis. One day he was passing along the bank of Jamuna in Delhi, accompanied by his celebrated disciple and noted poet, Khusrau. They saw some Hindu women bathing in the Jamuna and offering prayers to the sun. Hazrat said 'O Khusrau, these women are also praying to Allah. They have their own way of praying.'

Sheikh Moinuddin Chishti was a great Sufi saint with a large following. While Ulemas and Brahmins looked down upon other people's modes of worship, Sufi and Bhakti saints modified and integrated these modes into a new synthetic stream. They respected other people's spiritual practices, and kept away from power centers. Dara Shikoh was a great scholar and he wrote a book called Majama-ul-Baharayn (meeting of two great oceans, Hinduism and Islam).

Guest speaker on Communal Harmony

Kabir had a large following among the poor from amongst Muslims as well as Hindus. He criticised the orthodoxy of both Ulema and Bramins and pointed out that Ram, Rahim, Allah and Hari are the expressions of the same spiritual energy. As different ornaments are made from the same gold, so are these holy seers. They are the outer manifestation of the same divine power.

Kabir criticized the rituals, blind faith propagated by Mullahs and Brahmins. He emphasised on devotion for moral values of religions and unity of human beings across religions.

Hindus and Muslims did not have separate Languages.

Due to social interaction the language and cultures are all mixed up. Urdu was a language which was born through the interaction of Persian and Hindi. It is a language which is a mixture of Persian dialects with western Hindi spoken in and around Delhi. The interaction produced a dialect called Hindavi, Hindi, or Hindustani, later known as Urdu. Raja Todarmal, Akbar's finance minister, ordered all the accounts and correspondence to be kept in Persian. Mullah Abdul Kadir Badaunni in cooperation with Hindu pundits translated the Athrva Veda and the Ramayana into Persian. In due course Urdu emerged as the language, and it is an Indian language, which developed to the mixing of many languages, particularly Hindi and Persian. Muslims in different parts of the country have adopted the local languages all through the country, Bengali, Punjabi, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telgu, Oriya and Malyalam are as much language of Muslims as of any other community.

Hindu and Muslims did not remain aloof from each other.

There has been a thick interaction between these two religious communities, leading to the development of Ganga Jumni Tehjeeb and other regional cultures also have sprinkling of both the communities.

The most prominent element of the heritage of a nation is its culture. The culture of a nation finds expression in two ways: the visible elements are dresses worn by the people, the food they eat, music, dance and architecture. The invisible elements are the way people think, the values they hold dear, and their ideas and beliefs.

Culture is not something that has been there from time immemorial; it is also not something that is frozen in time. Culture is in fact something that is dynamic and constantly changing – it absorbs new influences and modifies them to suit local requirements. It constantly appropriates from other traditions and also gives to them in equal measure. It has always been so and will continue to be so as long as human beings live.

Almost everything that we see, taste, hear, smell and touch, the buildings we have built, the tools we use, the clothes we wear, the languages we speak and even the ideas that we have are products of processes, discoveries, inventions and developments that occurred at places far and near, in the distant and not-so-distant past, and have reached us through very complex and roundabout routes.

Guest speaker on Communal Harmony

Hindu and Muslim cultures are not opposite to each other.

The elements of our daily lives that we do not normally consider as part of our culture show that reality is something else. Interaction and mixing is there in our classical traditions in Dance and Music to begin with. Same is the case in our attire. This may come as a shock, but nothing that is stitched is Indian – there was no use of stitched cloth in India in earlier times. The shirt, the trouser, the coat and the waistcoat are all of European origin.

A piece of cloth that had been cut with scissors was considered un-whole – kshit as opposed to akshit, and therefore impure. In fact most rituals related to birth, death and Upanayan among the Hindus and even among the Jains and Buddhists are performed in unstitched garments. Even today a very large majority of our population primarily dresses in unstitched garments: dhoti, lungi, mundu, saree.

We had no stitched garments before the Kushanas, and it was probably the Greeks who brought the scissors to us.

The Taj Mahal's soaring facades are an example of the subtle blending of Islamic and Hindu ideas. White marble, rather than the red sandstone used by former Muslim rulers for their palaces and forts, was chosen as the material by Shah Jahan, who had been impressed by the beauty of the white marble buildings he had seen in Delhi and Rajasthan. Pointed arches of Muslim inspiration frame windows and doors, in which are set perforated marble grilles of the type often found in Hindu temples. The arabesques and chevrons on the outside are Muslim patterns, but here they take the form of semi-precious stones inlaid in the marble, a technique imported from Italy and mastered by Hindu artisans.



Dr. Ram Puniyani
Writer, Volunteer, Public Speaker,
Doctor, Teacher, Medical
Researcher

COMMUNAL HARMONY CAMPAIGNING WEEK- DAY ONE

The National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH) observes Communal Harmony Campaign and Fundraising Week every year from 19th to 25th November and the last working day of this week is observed as the Flag Day.



Day One started with an initial discourse on communal harmony by Literary Head, Aqsa Javed.

The literary committee also held an online slogan and essay competition with the theme as communal harmony. The winners were awarded certificates by Ms Richa Deokar, Director of Gandhi centre, MGMIHS



COMMUNAL HARMONY CAMPAIGNING WEEK- DAY TWO

On Day two Mr Faraz Khan who is a musician in addition to being a communal harmony advocate was invited to give a lecture on the importance of communal harmony in our everyday day life. He requested an interview style discourse which allowed the audience to interact freely with him and understand the topic with greater depth



The session was concluded with the music club of MGMDCH, Musical Strings themselves giving an extremely melodious performance by singing a collection of songs from various cultural backgrounds



COMMUNAL HARMONY CAMPAIGNING WEEK- DAY THREE

On day 3, Dr Ram Puniyani who is an expert in the subject of communal harmony in addition to being a speaker, writer, teacher as well as a medical researcher gave an extremely thought provoking lecture on the importance of communal harmony in our current society



The chief guest Dr Sudhir Kadam, Medical Director of MGMIHS as well as our Dean, Dr Srivalli Natranjan also spoke a few words on the subject. The session ended with an enthusiastic Q&A session with the audience



COMMUNAL HARMONY CAMPAIGNING WEEK- DAY FOUR

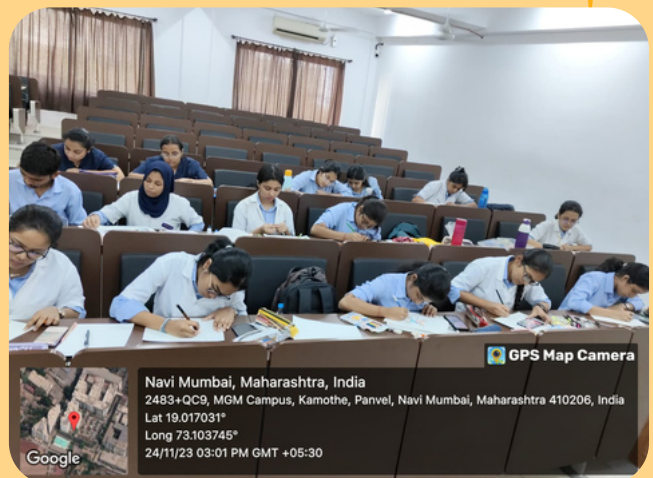
Day 4 had the dance group of MGMDCH, NRUTYA exhibiting a dance performance which showcased various cultural dances of India in an ode to the harmonious existence of different cultures




COMMUNAL HARMONY CAMPAIGNING WEEK- DAY FIVE



Day 5 was the Flag day where the Artville club of MGMDCH held a flag designing competition. There were a good number of students as well as faculty members who participated in this event and came up with some beautiful and innovative designs




QUOTES OF THE MONTH




Unity to be real must stand the severest strain without breaking. - Mahatma Gandhi

The significance which is in unity is an eternal wonder. - Rabindranath Tagore



Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. - Helen Keller



Strength lies in differences, not in similarities. - Stephen Covey