



Ends and Means

Acharya Vinoba

Many righteous persons have taught that one should tread on the path of goodness, yet man is still not convinced that good begets good only. He is still trying to find out whether evil could sometimes breed goodness. He does believe in the veracity of the dictum 'as you sow, so you reap', as he has no experience to the contrary. Yet he is not fully convinced about it is the realm of ethics.

Some people who consider themselves pragmatic fully subscribe to unadulterated goodness, but in individual life only. They believe that one must follow pure morality in individual life, that can even ultimately lead to spiritual liberation; but

some admixture of good and evil is unavoidable in social life. Gandhiji never accepted his idea. He made us apply fundamental principles like truth and nonviolence at the social level, as a result of which we attained independence. A theorem, which is true for one triangle, is true for all triangles. If absolute morality leads to the well-being of an individual, it must be conducive to the well-being of society.

Some people think that it is sufficient if the desired end is in tune with the truth; then the means do not matter. But Gandhiji consistently opposed

this notion. He held that swaraj could be attained through truthful means only; swaraj gained through pure means would be true swaraj. One should think more about the means than the end. The end comes in sight when the means are fully applied. Difference between ends and means is imaginary. It is not only true that the end is attained through the means it is also true that the nature of end depends on the means. Everyone thinks that his or her objects are good. So, the claim of having a good object does not matter much. There

should not be contradiction between the end and the means. This is not a new idea. But the scale on which Gandhiji

applied this idea in India in practice has no other parallel.

Some others say, insistence on goodness is all right, but it is more important to remain active under all circumstances. If the insistence on goodness becomes a hindrance in the way of remaining active, we should prefer activity over insistence on goodness. I think this is a fallacy. When people had to serve long sentences during the freedom struggle, it used to be called 'rotting in jails'.

**Our Heartfelt Tribute to
Acharya Vinoba on his Birth Anniverary
11 September**

Gandhiji then used to point out that there is great power in the inactivity of a pure soul. The Gita has termed it, in her inimitable style, 'action in inaction'. Activity indeed is valuable, but truth and goodness are even more valuable than activity. One may remain inactive in certain situations, but must never give up truth.

Some persons, who call themselves pragmatic, endorse truth, but think that unilateral adherence to truth is risky. They say that we would suffer if we continue to cling to truth and nonviolence when our opponent is resorting to untruth and violence. These people do not know the value of truth. Otherwise, they would not have so argued. They do not argue, 'Our adversary is starving, so why should we eat.' They know that

whosoever eats would gain strength. Unilateral eating is all right for them, but not unilateral adherence to truth. What does this mean? This means that we would imitate the opponent; we would place initiative in his hands. This is a timid notion, which creates a vicious circle. Evil is having a field day. We should have the guts to stop it. We should steadfastly stick to love and large heartedness without caring for the consequences. After all, truth, love and goodness are positive qualities; untruth and such qualities are negative. What does light have to fear in its battle against darkness?

(Translated from Hindi by Dr. Parag Cholkar)

*(Courtesy : Strands of a Vision,
Page 33-34)*

Special Report

Hidden Government Agenda behind illegal takeover of Sarva Seva Sangh Land in Varanasi

Jagdeep S. Chhokar*

Usurped is the appropriate word for what happened in Varanasi on July 22, 2023, when the Government of India, through the instrumentality of the Indian Railways and the active support of the Uttar Pradesh state government authorities, including the police, took over the lands (and buildings existing thereupon) legally belonging to a Gandhian institution, the Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh. All the occupants were evicted and eight persons who protested the action, were detained.

The events of July 22 were the culmination of a long-drawn, complicated saga going back to

the time of independence, stretched over three distinct phases – 1948 to 2006, 2007 to 2022, and January 2023 onwards. It is important to grasp the timeline for it points to a larger question, namely the place accorded to Gandhian institutions in the consciousness of India's journey post-independence.

Phase I: 1948-2006

❖ April 1948: The Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh (ABSSS) was formed by Acharya Vinoba Bhave to propagate Mahatma Gandhi's ideas and philosophy by merging five organisations engaged in constructive work, namely the Akhil Bharat Charkha Sangh, Akhil Bharat Gram Udyog Sangh, Akhil Bharat Gau Seva Sangh, Hindustani Taleemi

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Sangh, and Maharogi Seva Mandal. ABSSS was set up as a registered society.

❖ May 15, 1960: ABSSS bought 2.65 acres of land from the “President of the Union of India through Divisional Engineer, Northern Railway, Lucknow” by way of a sale deed duly registered with the appropriate authority.

❖ March 1960: ABSSS, at the suggestion of Jayaprakash Narayan, decided to set up an institution, the Gandhian Institute of Studies (GIS) in collaboration with the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi (Gandhi Memorial Fund), at Rajghat, in Varanasi, where its own headquarters was located.

❖ January 24, 1961: The Gandhian Institute of Studies (established under the auspices of ABSSS) was registered with the Registrar of Societies.

❖ January 26-27, 1961: It was decided that the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi would set up the infrastructure for GIS.

❖ May 19, 1961: ABSSS bought 1.12 acres of land from the “President of the Union of India through Divisional Engineer, Northern Railway, Lucknow” by way of a sale deed duly registered with the appropriate authority.

❖ November 28, 1963: A lease deed was executed, leasing two parcels of land (1,453.78 sq. yards and 929 sq. yards) totalling 2,382.78 sq. yards, to the Uttar Pradesh Gandhi Smarak Nidhi (the lessor) “only for the use of Gandhi Vidya Sansthan”, or the Institute, by the ABSSS (the lessee) for a period of 30 years at an annual rent of Re 1. The lease deed stated that if the lessor, GIS, shifted or ceased to function, the ownership/possession of the leased land would revert to the lessee, ABSSS.

❖ May 20, 1970: ABSSS bought 2.99 acres

of land from the “President of the Union of India through Divisional Engineer, Northern Railway, Lucknow” by way of a sale deed duly registered with the appropriate authority.

❖ Early 1980s: The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), an organisation set up by the Government of India to support and fund research in the social sciences, contributed Rs 3 lakh for the extension of the Institute’s library building.

❖ 2002: The assistant registrar, firms, societies and chits, Varanasi, moved Misc. Application No. 243 of 2002, before the additional district judge, under Section 13(B) of the Societies Registration Act, 1860, seeking dissolution of the Institute on the grounds that it had ceased to function. Despite the fact that the chairpersons of ABSSS and the UP Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, respectively, were ex-officio members of GIS, no notice was sent to them despite the fact that they were necessary parties.

❖ June 29, 2003: Varanasi district magistrate Chandrabhanu, in Letter No. 1043(742) to the principal secretary, planning in the Uttar Pradesh government (Lucknow), among other things, wrote:

“Land Ownership Status: The land of Gandhi Vidya Sansthan [GIS], Rajghat, Varanasi has been declared as belonging to Sarva Seva Sangh [ABSSS] vide letter dated 23.05.2003 from Mr. Sandeep Pandey, Member Board of Management. In this regard, the Revenue Department got it examined.

According to this, Gandhi Vidya Sansthan is located in Khata No. 33, A.No. 8 M and 9 M, of Village Qila Kohna, Pargana Dehat, Amanat, Tehsil Sadar, whose area is 2.134 hectares. This land belongs to Jamman-14 under Non-ZA. The name of Akhil Bharti Sarva Seva Sangh is inscribed as its owner. Photocopy of the report and site map received from the

Deputy Collector (Sadar) is being attached for your perusal."

Phase II: 2007-2022

❖ May 28, 2007: The additional district judge ordered the dissolution of the GIS and issued an additional direction to the secretary of higher education in Uttar Pradesh to constitute a management committee within 45 days so that studies did not get disturbed due to the dissolution.

❖ 2007: ABSSS filed Writ Petition no.29975 of 2007 in the Allahabad high court seeking quashing of the additional district judge's order of May 28, 2007.

Phase III: January 2023 onwards

❖ January 2023: Enter Moinuddin, a villager and resident of Kilakohna village, located in Dehat Amaanat pargana of Sadar tehsil in Varanasi district. Moinuddin submitted several applications to various authorities, including the deputy collector of the Varanasi circle, in Varanasi district, on January 16, 2023, under the UP State Code 2006, stating that a particular piece of land had been *wrongly* entered in the records as belonging to the Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh when it actually belonged to the East Indian Railway. The application was referred to the Sadar tehsildar in Varanasi for an enquiry and report.

❖ January 7, 2023: The tehsildar wrote to the Northern Railway authorities enquiring about the ownership of the land.

❖ April 10, 2023: Northern Railway responded to the tehsildar claiming ownership of the land.

❖ May 16, 2023: The Allahabad high court delivered its judgment in Writ Petition no.29975 of 2007, and decided that:

"10. In the light of the above this court is of the view that the dispute pertaining to the ownership of the said property needs to be resolved. In case if, it is found that the

petitioners are the true owners of the said property then possession of the said property should revert back to the petitioner. In this regard it is necessary that the competent authority should go through the various documents including the lease deed as stated by the petitioners which was executed between the petitioner no.2 and respondent no.6. In case, it is found the petitioners are the owners of the property then the possession of the same should be reverted to the petitioners. To ascertain the aforesaid the District Magistrate, Varanasi is directed to examine the relevant records and come to a conclusion regarding the ownership of the said property expeditiously, say, within a period of two months from the date a certified copy of this order is produced before him in accordance with law, and pass a reasoned and speaking order after examining all relevant documents (emphasis added)."

❖ May 31, 2023: With the understanding that a district magistrate (an executive officer appointed by the government) deciding a "*dispute pertaining to the ownership of the said property*" in which the government itself was one of the parties to the dispute, was a clear case of conflict of interest and therefore against the principle of natural justice, ABSSS filed a civil suit, Case No. 522/2023, at the court of civil judge (senior division) in Varanasi, seeking, among other things, a declaration of title: "...by way of decree declare that the plaintiffs are owners and in continuous possession of the property described below in Item 'A' for decades and the plaintiff no.1 is the sole owner and in possession of the same (emphasis added)."

❖ June 26, 2023: Following the direction of the Allahabad high court in its judgement of May 16, 2023, Varanasi district magistrate, S. Rajalingam, gave his decision saying, "I come to the conclusion that the land/area mentioned in the

sale deeds dated 15.05.1960, 09.05.1961 and 20.05.1970 belongs to Northern Railway.”

❖ June 27, 2023: The Northern Railway administration issued the following notice:

“It is informed to all the encroachers that, in the sequence of Letter No. 1339 / Ra.Shah.First/2023 of the District Magistrate / Varanasi, on June 30, 2023, from 09:00 am on Friday, at the northern end of Kashi Railway Station, in the land of Northern Railway adjacent to GT Road, the demolition of illegal constructions constructed by Sarva Seva Sangh will be done by the Railway Administration.

Therefore, all the encroachers are informed to vacate the railway land immediately.

By order

Northern Railway Administration

Date 27.06.20233

❖ June 28, 2023: ABSSS filed Writ Petition no. 21078 of 2023 in the Allahabad high court challenging the district magistrate’s order of June 26, 2023, and the notice of the Northern Railway administration dated June 27, 2023.

❖ July 3, 2023: The Allahabad high court rejected the petition of ABSSS.

❖ July 4, 2023: ABSSS filed a special leave petition, SLP no.14209 of 2023, in the Supreme Court of India (SCI), challenging the Allahabad high court judgment of July 3, 2023.

❖ July 17, 2023: The SCI declined to entertain the SLP saying, inter alia, “However, it is made clear that the observations made in this order is only for the purpose of the Special Leave Petition and the same should have no bearing on the merit of the contentions to be advanced in the Civil Suit (OS No.522 of 2023) pending before the Court.”

❖ July 22, 2023: The Railway administration forcibly, with the help of the police, took over the land and buildings, evicting all occupants and throwing out all their belongings.

What does all this mean?

It is true that the struggle of Gandhian institutions in the prevailing social and political context is much larger. However, as a major part of that struggle is presently in the legal arena, it is necessary to focus on the salient questions of legal issues and motives that the timeline raises.

Three major legal issues

The first legal issue: Mentioned briefly above, it pertains to conflict of interest and principles of natural justice occasioned by the Allahabad high court judgment of May 16, 2023. The petition that the court was deciding, sought the quashing of the order of the additional district judge dissolving the Institute. In case the dissolution was not quashed, the petition sought an order for the disposal of GIS’s attests and properties in terms of the Memoranda of Association between itself and its founder, ABSSS. The high court, while recognising that this was in the nature of *a property ownership dispute between the government (Indian Railways) and a private party, ordered a government-appointed executive officer, district magistrate, to decide the entire issue.*

The second legal issue: The Supreme Court and the Allahabad high court having effectively *taken away the jurisdiction of the court of the civil judge, Varanasi, to decide that title of the suit.* It may be said in defence of both the constitutional courts that the high court has said in its judgment:

“However, it is always open to the petitioners to press the injunction application filed alongwith the aforesaid Original Suit before the Court below (and) The observations made by this Court would not affect the rights/ titles of the parties in the on-going proceeding and the same would be decided on its own merits.”

Similarly, the Supreme Court has said:

"However, it is made clear that the observations made in this order is only for the purpose of the Special Leave Petition and the same should have no bearing on the merit of the contentions to be advanced in the Civil Suit (OS No.522 of 2023) pending before the Court."

Without meaning any disrespect to the two courts, it must be said that these pious and well-meaning observations, made on July 3 and July 17, have no practical relevance without staying the notice of the Northern Railway threatening demolition starting "on June 30, 2023, from 09:00 am".

The fact is that the possession of the building and the land was taken by force on July 22, 2023. It is very much in the realm of possibility that the buildings may be demolished before any action is forthcoming from the lower civil court (**All the buildings at Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh, Varanasi campus demolished on August 12, 2023 by Northern Railway with the help of local administration and police-Editor**). In any case, a large number of invaluable books and documents, thrown about mindlessly by the police force during the eviction, have been irretrievably damaged.

The third legal issue pertains to the *onus of proof regarding the correctness, validity, and the legality of the three sale deeds*. All the three sale deeds, as has been mentioned above, are between the "President of the Union of India through Divisional Engineer, Northern Railway, Lucknow," and are duly registered with the appropriate authorities.

Reading the Varanasi district magistrate's decision of June 26, 2023, makes for an interesting exercise. The first objection of the Northern Railway, as recorded in this order, is that "on the sale deed, only the designation of Divisional Engineer Northern Railway Lucknow is mentioned, his name is not mentioned."

This is plain wrong as the reverse side of page 2 of the sale deed, dated May 15, 1960, has a note saying, "Having satisfied myself that this deed has been executed by Sri G.C. Banerji, Divisional Engineer, Northern Railway, Lucknow in his official capacity. His attendance and signature are dispensed with and the doct. (*sic*) is admitted to registration." So, the name of the divisional engineer is not a mystery.

It is worth noting that the sale deed is also signed by the "Divisional Superintendent, Northern Railway, Lucknow" along with his stamp on each page. The divisional superintendent (now re-designated as the divisional railway manager) is the head of the division in the railway system, a superior of the divisional engineer.

Some of the other objections by the Northern Railway, as summarised in the district magistrate's order of June 26, 2023, were as following:

❖ "Indian Railways has never had any policy of selling land to any private organisation or person."

❖ "The Chief Engineer in Railway is authorised for licensing and lease deed. The Divisional Engineer does not have the said right."

❖ "Due to non-vesting of right to sell in Divisional Engineer and non-presentation of authority letter regarding sale of railway land by Divisional Engineer, the legality of the said three sale deeds is questionable, the said sale deeds are forged."

What is astounding is that after listening to the above, the district magistrate asked ABSSS to provide proof that the divisional engineer did indeed have the requisite authority, *under Railway Rules*, to execute the sale deeds, recording the following:

"After listening to the concerned parties, the petitioner Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh

[ABSSS] was asked to provide the records on the following two points for the disposal of the case:

1. Whether any correspondence / order has been issued by the Railways to sell the said gaate (sic) from the Railways or from the plaintiff? If done, a copy of the same should be made available.

2. Whether any letter/notification was issued by the Railways to authorise the sale of the property mentioned in the sale deeds dated 15.05.1960, 09.05.1961 and dated 20.05.1970 executed by Divisional Engineer Northern Railway?"

The astounding bit is that while Northern Railway is a party to the dispute, it is the other party to the dispute that was asked to provide proof of actions that the Railway should have taken!

It is on this basis of shifting the onus of proof that the following conclusion is recorded:

"In order of paragraph 804 Relinquishment of Railway Land of Railway Works Manual by Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh, in relation to the release of the said land by the Railways and in the order of Point No. 1041 Power of Sanction of Chapter 10 of the Indian Railway Code, no record related to any reference of Railway Board was made available [obviously by the ABSSS]. The Indian Evidence Act and Section 88 of Registration Act provided by it are irrelevant in this case. Neither any letter/notification issued by the Railways to sell the property mentioned be made available by the representatives of Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh, nor was any authority letter/notification issued by the Railways in favour of the Divisional Engineer Northern Railway to execute the sale deed could be made available [again, obviously by the ABSSS]. Thus, the petitioner Akhil Bharat

Sarva Se[v]a Sangh has completely failed to prove its ownership over the property allegedly purchased. Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh did not provide any authentic evidence/records to confirm the legality of the sales letters of the years 1960, 1961 and 1970. It is clear from the above that the land mentioned in the sale deeds dated 15.05.1960, 09.05.1961 and dated 20.05.1970 belongs to Northern Railway (emphasis added)."

The issue of motive

In order to infer the motive behind this action, it is necessary to look at some documentary evidence.

What the chronology says: The lands were acquired through sale deeds and consideration paid into the government treasury (each of the three sale deeds specifically mention the treasury challan number and date) in 1960, 1961 and 1970.

Things were quiet for over 30 years. Then:

- ❖ In 2002, the assistant registrar of societies initiated some action.

- ❖ That action lay dormant for five years when, in 2007, the additional district judge (ADJ) made a decision.

- ❖ ABSSS filed an appeal in the Allahabad high court against the additional district judge's order.

- ❖ Nothing significant happened to that appeal for 13 years. Then, a hitherto unknown individual, Moinuddin, entered the scene in early January 2023 and a flurry of action followed on the part of the district administration, Northern Railway, even the judiciary, which still continues.

Did something happen in the months or years immediately preceding January 2023 that caused this flurry of action?

Why now? The clue may lie in the documents

In an affidavit filed by the Railways in the Supreme Court on July 13, 2023, paragraphs 4

to 10, spread over five pages (pages 4-8) are titled Details of the Project in which Petitioner's Alleged/ Claimed Land Falls. These paragraphs, after describing the ancient and religious significance of Varanasi, give some details of what is "envisaged [as] a mega project of construction of 'Inter-Modal Station' (IMS) at Varanasi (Kashi Railway Station) which contemplates creation of an (*sic*) novel infrastructure which could act as a gateway to road and waterway routes in addition to the rail network".

While this affidavit mentions two sub-projects – upgradation of the Kashi railway station to provide "modern, state of the art amenities for the passengers and the city dwellers" and "major remodelling of Kashi yard (involving expansion of tracks and platforms to accommodate more trains and passengers with allied facilities and infrastructure, both for train operation and passenger comfort)" – it does not disclose one vital piece of information.

A quick online search unearthed two reports, one by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML), both public sector companies, and the other by the international consultants, PwC. Slide 7 of the NHAI/NHLML report shows the location of ABSSS land clearly in reference to the proposed development.

Slide 10 of the same report shows that three hotels (including one luxury hotel), one Hotel Plaza, and a multi-storied commercial building are also part of the "Master Plan of IMS Kashi".

ABSSS finds mention at two places in this report. Slide 14 says, "Sarva Se[v]a Sangh, Mathh Shri Niwas Bhagwanji and Private Land would need to be acquired" and Slide 19 says "State Govt/VDA to acquire Sarv[a] Se[v]a Sangh land of 1.3 acre".

The crucial give away in this report is its date – July 30, 2022. Herein lies the answer to the question as to what happened in the months or years immediately preceding January 2023 that caused this flurry of action?

It does not require rocket science to speculate that when the need for "acquiring" the land belonging to ABSSS came to be realised – on, or before, July 30, 2022 – the "authorities" came to an assessment that:

- ❖ the Gandhians would not be willing to "sell" the land at any price; and

- ❖ they would resist the process of acquisition under the current land acquisition law in force in the country, which would result in delay and uncertainty.

Hence the decision to "acquire" the land by other means.

The other report, by consultants PwC, repeats many things contained in the NHAI/ NHLML report but also reveals two new issues which, though not related to the ABSSS issue, are important from a larger societal viewpoint. Slide 13 of the PwC report states:

"The proposed site is approx. 200m from the Kachhua wildlife Sanctuary. Wildlife clearance is required from National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) for development of project within 10 km of protected area."

Slide 15 of the report says:

"The project site is abutting the Rajghat archaeological site, which is under Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Construction is prohibited within 100m range from the boundary of the heritage site, and is known as prohibited area. This may lead to some non-usable area for IMS development in the available land."

From 100 m to 300m, the area is known ➡

At Gujarat Vidyapith Students stopped from performing Sarva Dharm Prarthana

The ruling dispensation's takeover of the Gujarat Vidyapith, founded by Mahatma Gandhi, last year has started showing its true colours.

During the customary Upasana (prayer meet) on August 4, the Vidyapith's girl students were stopped from performing Sarva Dharm Prarthana by a Hindi professor. Not only that, the girls were publicly insulted.

A lady professor, who was present at the time, protested on the spot against such shameful behaviour of the Hindi professor. The Sarva Dharm Prarthana has been the Vidyapith's tradition and part of the value system since its inception.

On August 14, the Vidyapith's students held a black-ribbon protest in Gandhian way against the wilful act of stopping the Sarva Dharm Prarthana.

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On Monday, the Vidyapith's students held a black-ribbon protest in Gandhian way against the wilful act of stopping the Sarva Dharm Prarthana.

The project of taking over Gandhian institutes all over the country is a mission accomplished. From the demolition of Sarv Seva Sangh at Varanasi to conferring the Gandhi peace prize on the Gita Press, the scheme was very well thought out.

As the 2024 general election nears, the ruling regime's political laboratory, that is the Gujarat government's machinery, is in full gear. It does not have the time to take over universities one after another.

So, the Gujarat government is all set to table a common universities bill in the upcoming monsoon session of the Assembly.

Once this bill is passed and it becomes the common university act, six of the major universities of Gujarat will come under the total control of the government.

This act will pull the plug on senate and syndicate elections. There won't be any elections,

was regulated area. For construction in regulated area, approval from National Monuments Authority is required which takes approx. 3-4 months."

The conclusion that logically flows from the above is as follows: There was an urgency to "acquire" the land owned by the Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh for the commercial development of the 'Inter-Modal Station' at Varanasi (Kashi Railway Station). As straightforward legal means were not likely to work, the purpose would have to be achieved by hook or by crook.

In the meanwhile, the Gandhian struggle goes on.

(Courtesy: The Wire)

and the government will directly appoint the members of a new body called the board of governance.

It will spell an end to student politics in the universities of Gujarat. In addition to this, the vice-chancellor's three-year term will be increased to five years.

Power-hungry leaders always fear student protests inside universities. Protests by students across the world have changed the course of history.

The Navnirman Andolan (1974) of Gujarat started with the student agitation on campus against the hike in the hostel food bill and it resulted in a state-wide public protest and the dissolution of the elected government.

Many political leaders came from student politics. Controlling universities means controlling the academia and students and also dictating what they study.

The proposed act will do away with the autonomy of universities. It will fully empower the

government to carry out all the administrative and academic appointments.

In 2022, the Supreme Court had quashed one such appointment of the vice-chancellor of Sardar Patel University, one of the prominent universities of Gujarat, and found it contrary to the UGC's norms.

The proposed common university act is not as simple as it looks. These universities located on prime locations in major cities of Gujarat own land worth thousands of crores of rupees.

It is feared that the government may claim these lands in the name of redevelopment and expansion in the future. The Sabarmati Ashram redevelopment project is a recent example.

"Ishwar Allah Tero Naam, Sabko Sanmati De Bhagwan" — one of the favourite Bhajans of Mahatma Gandhi — will become a thing of the past for the Gujarat Vidyapith and it should not surprise anyone. After all, nothing surprises us anymore these days.

(Courtesy: [telegraphindia.com](https://www.telegraphindia.com),
Date: 14.08.2023)

Secretary's Diary

Demolition of Sarv Seva Sangh's Varanasi buildings is illegal. This government is working for the capitalists and has lost its conscience. Unabashedly, The Government is insulting our national leaders. It hardly cares for democratic values and traditions. Even contempt of Court does not bother these people. There was a hope during the Supreme Court hearing but forgery and deceit by the Administration prevailed. Country is in turmoil, people are angry and sad. All over India, sit-ins, meetings and Satyagrah are being organised against the demolition of Gandhi's heritage.

In Lucknow (U.P.), demonstrations at Gandhi

Bhawan are continuing. Concerned citizens, with abiding faith in democracy and non-violence have been assembling before Gandhiji's statue and raising their protest. They are awakening public resistance against this dastardly act.

Gandhians and representatives of many social organisations assembled at Gandhi Bhavan, Bengaluru and performed *Satyagrah*. A number of meetings were organised, not only in Bengaluru but other districts of the state. Local newspapers are also covering these events.

In M.P., Sarvodaya activists have organised protest marches in Bhopal, Indore, Chhatarpur, Gwalior, Muraina, Satna, Anurpur, Shahdol, Umariya, Ujjain and other cities and towns. A big

social media campaign is also being organised. The youth are protesting on roads and public places and working for popular awareness.

At Gandhi Bhawan, Hyderabad, Gandhian activists are protesting against the draconian acts of the Central and the U.P. Government.

In Maharashtra, protests are being organised in Sevagram, Mumbai, Ahmadnagar, Akola, Nagpur, Pune, Dhule and other places. In Sevagram, many organisations organised a mammoth rally. In Navi Mumbai, veteran Gandhian J.J. Parikh led the protests. Kerala Sarvodaya Mandal and Gandhi Memorial Trust also organised multiple events. Articles were published in local languages.

In Kolkata also, Gandhian activists and intelligentsia stood against this draconian action. Bengali newspapers gave wide coverage to these happenings and condemned Government's action.

In Odisha, massive protests were held at many places including Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Rourkela and Jajpur. Articles are being written and pamphlets being distributed in Odia language continuously. People are condemning the Government's action in this matter.

In Bihar also, people are protesting against the demolition of Sarv Seva Sangh premises in Varanasi. Protests are being organised at Patna Gandhi Bhawan, Mujaffarpur and other districts of the state.

In Haryana. Protests are being organised in Panipat,, Samalakhya, Hisar and other places. Chandigarh also witnessed similar protests. Many centres have issued press releases in this regard.

In Uttarkhand, Gandhians are protesting against the demolitions at Kausani, Dehradun, Almora and other places. They are taking pledges to work for change of the incumbent Fascist regime.

In Chhattisgarh, activists are spreading public awareness against the forces that run bulldozers over Gandhiji's heritage.

Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning.

- Mahatma Gandhi

In Rajasthan, veteran Sarvodaya activists are organising protests and meetings in Jaipur, Kota, Jaisalmer and other places.

Colleagues from Assam have expressed anguish over the events and they are interacting with people in this regard. Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh has also witnessed protests over the government's move.

Reports of similar protests from other parts of the country are pouring in. Sarvodaya workers are organising protests at their local levels.

Units of Gandhi Memorial Trust, Gandhi Peace Foundation, state units of *Sarv Seva Sangh, Raashtriya Yuva Sangthan, Sevagram Ashram, Samagra Seva Sangh* and *Gandhi Bhawans* all over the country are participating in these protest activities. Veteran leaders of a number of people's organisations are also providing support to this cause. An atmosphere of protest against this draconian move is building up all along the country.

- Sanjoy Singha

(Translated from Hindi by Rajendra Bhatnagar)

Homage:

Karuna Futane Departed

Karuna Futane, secretary of Gram Seva Mondal, Gopuri, Wardha died on August 5, 2023 in morning 6.00 A.M..

Gram Seva Mandal, founded by Acharya Vinoba for constructive work at local level, have been publishing thousands of books on Gandhi-Vinoba's ideology. Gram Seva Mondal involved in other constructive activities including Khadi production. Karuna Behan, after late Ranjit Bhai, gave this iconic institution a new height.

**Social Reformer
Bindeshwar Pathak is
No More**

Bindeshwar Pathak, noted social reformer and founder of Sulabh International Social Service Organisations who championed the cause of sanitation by building over 10,000 public toilets across the country, died on August 15, 2023. He was 80 years old.

"He complained of uneasiness amid Independence Day celebrations at Sulabh complex at Palam-Dabri Road, New Delhi. He was taken to AIIMS. He died of cardiac arrest", the Sulabh International said in a statement.

Born at Rampur Baghel village in Bihar's Vaishali district, Pathak started the Sulabh movement in 1970 and dedicated his life to eradicating manual scavenging and spreading awareness on sanitation. He was credited with designing and popularising the low-cost twin-pit flush toilets.

In 1974, the first Sulabh public toilet — with 48 seats, 20 bathrooms, urinals and washbasins — was thrown open to the public in Patna.

After completing schooling at his village, Pathak graduated in Sociology from BN College, Patna. In 1969 he joined Gandhi Centenary Committee in Patna as a volunteer. The Committee, constituted by Bihar Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, sent him to work for restoration of human rights and dignity of people from Dalit community in Bihar's Bettiah. From there, he took a resolve to start a mission to eradicate manual scavenging and open defecation — a common phenomenon at the time.

In 1974, the Bihar government sent a circular to all local bodies to take Sulabh's help to convert bucket toilets into two-pit pour-flush toilets, and by 1980, 25,000 people were using Sulabh public facilities in Patna alone.

In 1991, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan for his work on liberating and rehabilitating manual scavengers and received the International St Francis Prize for Environment the following year.

Manoj Tyagi is No More

Sansthakul was ready about to go to the press that one more condolence message came in. Manoj Tyagi, a dedicated worker of **Azadi Bachao Andolan**, died on August 16, 2023 at a hospital in Delhi. He was 69 years old and suffering with some illness for few days. Untimely demise of a revolutionary friend like Manoj Tyagi is painful news for us.

Our heartfelt tribute to departed souls and we pray God to give strength to bereaved families to bear the losses.