

SAVE GANGA MOVEMENT

A GANDHIAN NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENT FOR A NON-VIOLENT CULTURE OF DEVELOPMENT

Gandhi symbolizes a culture of Truth and non-violence, i.e. a culture of pursuit of ethical perfection as the ultimate goal of life and pursuit of selfless ethical life of universal love as its means; the **Ganga** symbolizes all rivers, water bodies and aquatic life, and the **Giriraj Himalaya** symbolizes all mountains, forests and wildlife.

A note on Gandhi, Ganga, Giriraj- Awareness Yatra throughout the Country as part of the Centenary Celebrations of the Champaran and Kheda Satyagraha

As the next major step of our Save Ganga Movement, to celebrate the Centenary Year of Gandhiji's Champaran and Kheda Satyagraha in Collaboration with Gandhi Smriti, Darsan Samiti, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust and other likeminded organizations/ institutions, and with the help of various likeminded eminent persons from different streams of life, we are organizing a "Gandhi, Ganga, Giriraj- Awareness Yatra consisting of Save Ganga, Giriraj Himalays, Truth & Non-violence Meetings/ Seminars/ Discussions/Workshops/ Marches etc." It is intended to create with the help of various like-minded organizations and eminent persons from different streams of life, especially scientists and Educational Institutions, Gandhians and Gandhian institutions and religious leaders and religious institutions of different faiths, social activists and NGOs, (1) **the mass-awareness necessary to save the Ganga, symbolizing all rivers, water bodies and aquatic life, and the Giriraj Himalaya, symbolizing all mountains, forests and wildlife and (2) the mass-awareness necessary to create a Gandhian Non-violent Culture of Development, which is the surest and perhaps the only solution to our impending catastrophic Global Ecological Crisis along with the present all pervasive deep rooted moral and spiritual crisis.** (For the recommendations of our Save Ganga Movement, please see the notes entitled "Main Recommendations/ Points of our Save Ganga Movement" and "What we must do to save the Ganga" in our website: www.savegangamovement.com.)

Gandhiji's Satyagraha at Champaran and Kheda does show the best and surest means to solve the problems of exploitation of rural India in general and of our present very grave agrarian crisis in particular through absolutely non-violent way with the help of soul force. We must take time-bound decisive steps to solve the problem of forced migration of rural unemployed to cities by converting rural India into an ideal place for leading enlightened ethical life of simple living and high thinking in an atmosphere of natural purity and beauty with loving care of the life-& health-sustaining aesthetically and religiously invaluable natural eco-systems with the help of the Gandhian conceptions of Truth and non-violence, village Swaraj, Swadeshi, dignified exhilarating& health-friendly body-labor, cottage industry, **non-exploitative rural-friendly eco-friendly decentralized industrialization and urbanization**, Antyodaya, Sarvodaya, satyagraha, character-building ethics education, etc. In *Harijan* on 4th August 1946 Gandhiji wrote: "When our villages are fully developed, there will be no dearth in them of men with a high degree of skill and artistic talent. There will be village poets, village artists, village architects, linguists and research workers. In short there will be nothing in life which will not be had in the villages. Today the villages are dung heaps. Tomorrow they will be like tiny gardens of Eden where dwell highly intelligent folk whom no one can deceive or exploit. The reconstruction of villages along these lines should begin right now...not on a temporary but permanent basis." **Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of Truth and Non-violence of our age, does show us the surest and best way, and perhaps the only way in the long run, how to build a New India free from Corruption, Poverty, Uncleanliness, Terrorism, Communalism, Casteism, class-injustice, Gender-injustice, species-injustice, etc. with a sustainable, equitable, loving and caring Non-violent Culture of Development.**

Mahatma Gandhi rightly says: "When there is both inner and outer cleanliness, it approaches Godliness." He sees clearly that pursuit of outer purification and inner purification, i.e. self-purification, is necessary for self-enlightenment and self-realization, i.e. realization of Truth. **Our national mission of clean India must include, in addition to making India open defecation-free, providing clean air, clean water and clean food to all, without which our make in India mission with the present fundamentally unspiritual and greed for wealth and lust for luxuries based, extremely eco-hostile, inherently unsustainable out-and-out consumerist global culture of development of our Modern Civilization which Gandhiji considered False and Satanic, is bound to have in the long run devastating consequences for all of us, especially to our future generations and to our fellow lower forms of life. We must realize and never forget that rejuvenating and preserving the Ganga and its tributaries and their source the Himalayas and the Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery and their source the Western Ghats, and our other great river mothers and their sources is absolutely necessary to ensure lasting water, food, air and health security to our masses, and saving our national river Ganga would be a major step in the direction to save all our other great rivers which are also in the process of slow death. We have now the necessary wealth, knowledge, skill and a holistic scientific National Ganga Basin Management Plan (NGRBMP) to save and rejuvenate our national river mother Ganga: Let us now try to the best of our ability to take some major positive steps in the right direction for this great noble national task.** It would be highly unethical and satanic to allow our development activities, essentially to satisfy our greed for wealth and lust for luxuries, in the name of development for the common people, to deprive the masses the various invaluable services they have been getting freely since ages from our life-giving and life- & health-sustaining aesthetically and religiously invaluable natural eco-systems.

Protection of the Ganga, symbolizing all rivers, water bodies and aquatic life, and the Giriraj Himalaya, symbolizing all mountains, forests and wildlife, must be accorded highest priority in our national development process.

As soon as possible:

- (a) We must take necessary steps to declare the Ganga constitutionally as our National River with statutory provisions that ensure due respect and protection to her, considering her National River status;
- (b) We must take decisive time-bound course of actions to ensure an adequate environmental flow of natural fresh water with sediments on the Ganga bed throughout the stretch of the river throughout the year not only to protect and preserve her ecology but also to meet the basic water needs of the habitations on her banks, and restore the unique health promoting bactericidal, non-putrefying, self-purifying qualities of Gangajal (the water of Ganga);
- (c) We must accept and implement the policy of zero discharge into the rivers and maintenance of Adequate Environmental Flow in the rivers throughout the country.
- (d) We must declare the highly earthquake-prone, eco-fragile and ecologically, aesthetically and religiously invaluable Uttarakhand region of the Ganga Basin “Ecologically Fragile and a Sanctuary for Himalayan Flora and Fauna”, and its rivers “wild rivers” and take all the necessary steps to protect them and the natural ecosystems they support. We must also declare this religiously invaluable Uttarakhand region to be our national Spiritual Heritage Zone and must not allow any eco-hostile tourism in the Name of Tirtha Yatra: we must know that Tirtha Yatra is a Form of Tapah (Purificatory action/Austerity/ Self-control)
- (e) To begin with let us Recycle and Reuse eco-friendly our waste and try to Reduce our desires for luxuries with the help of the eternal ethical principles of non-possession (*aparigraha*) and contentment (*santosha*) (3Rs).

In the long run, we must make serious efforts to solve the problems of eco-hostile industrialization, urbanization, population-growth, and corruption, which constitute the root of our problem of environmental degradation in general and the slow death of our rivers in particular, by a radical change from our current ideas of development and growth to a Gandhian alternative, **which essentially involves retelling the basic ethics of our ancient civilization as well as of all great religions in the context of our technological age, and which is the surest and perhaps the only solution to our impending catastrophic global ecological crisis, including the problem of Global Warming and Climate Change, along with the present all pervasive deep rooted moral and spiritual crisis.** (For a discussion on this issue, please see the note entitled “Gandhian Solution to Global Ecological Crisis” in our website, www.savegangamovement.org.)

Let us build a new India rejuvenating and preserving our great ancient civilization of Truth and non-violence and save India and through it the world at large from the impending catastrophic global ecological crisis along with the present all pervasive deep rooted moral and spiritual crisis. Surely rejuvenating & preserving the Ganga and its tributaries and their source the Himalayas and the Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery and their source the Western Ghats would be a major step in the right direction to rejuvenate and preserve our great ancient civilization of Truth and non-violence in the context of our present technological age.

There is no scarcity of wealth, knowledge and skill to save and rejuvenate our villages along with our rivers, water bodies, mountains, forests and wildlife which are in the process of slow death. There is lack of will due to our moral and spiritual bankruptcy. We must introduce universal compulsory critical ethics education with character-building ethics education as its core and the problem of the ultimate meaning of life as its central problem from the beginning of our education system, which would be a major step in the direction to overcome our present deep rooted moral and spiritual crisis. We must study critically the views of great religions and of great teachers and thinkers of mankind about various fundamental issues of ethics concerning ethical values and the nature (form and content), value and means of ethically good life. **Building a new India with the help of the massive power of science and technology of our present age without building our ethical character is bound to lead to massive unethical use of science and technology with devastating consequences in the long run.**

The great teachers and seers of our ancient Indian civilization explicitly accept universal non-violence, i.e. non-violence to both human and non-human life, to be the foundation of ethics. **They see clearly that enlightened selfless desireless ethical life of love (i.e. enlightened selfless ethical life of love with detachment to the fruits of actions) is intrinsically deeply peaceful and blissful and far superior to any kind of selfish life and hence constitutes the core of Truth, i.e. of the true ultimate goal of life, and pursuit of selfless ethical life of love, serving selflessly to society to the best of one's ability through some work required for the general good and making constant effort to progress towards ethical perfection, constitutes the core of its means.** They see clearly that any person through conscious effort can pursue liberation and progress towards it from evil to good life, from selfish good life to unselfish good life, from unselfish good life to enlightened selfless good life with detachment to the fruits of actions, and from it finally to liberated life. They explicitly accept that pursuit of wealth and pleasure within the limits of ethics is essential not only for the pursuit of the ultimate goal of life, but also for lasting development, prosperity, peace and happiness in

society. **Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda see clearly that all great religions also explicitly or implicitly accept the same.**

We will have the 1st phase of our **“ Save Ganga, Giriraj Himalays, Truth & Non-violence Yatra”** consisting of Meetings/ Seminars/ Discussions/ Workshops/ Marches etc. till March 2018 to celebrate the Centenary Year of Gandhiji’s **Champan Satyagraha**. We will continue its 2nd phase in the year 2018 to celebrate the Centenary Year of Gandhiji’s **Kheda Satyagraha**. We could continue the Yatra in the year 2019 to celebrate Gandhiji’s 150th Birthday Year. We could further continue the Yatra till the 75th year of our country’s Independence in 2022.

It is our deep conviction that acceptance and implementation of our Save Ganga Movement’s Save Ganga & Save Himalayas Recommendations is necessary to rejuvenate and preserve our national River mother Ganga and our other great river mothers. They are the result of the churning discussions of many Save Ganga and Save Himalayas Seminars/ Meetings/ Workshops held in different parts of our country in the course of our Save Ganga Movement. We earnestly request Various likeminded eminent persons from different streams of life to give their moral support for the acceptance and implementation of the Save Ganga & Save Himalayas Recommendations.

Under the spell of the glamour of the modern civilization, which Mahatma Gandhi called a Nine days wonder, let us not become modern Dhrtarastras. Various likeminded eminent persons from different streams of life, especially spiritual leaders, Gandhians, intellectuals and social activists, must unite to put moral pressure on the government to take the necessary steps to save and rejuvenate our great river mothers, the lifelines of our masses since ages, which are in the process of slow death. **Mother Nature will not forgive us if we fail to save our national river mother Ganga and other great river mothers, and surely our future generations will condemn and curse us.**

It is our firm conviction if there is political will and moral power, it is possible to make mother Ganga Aviral & Nirmal by 2019 and rejuvenate it by 2022, the 75th year of our country’s Independence. **Rejuvenating & Preserving mother Ganga and her tributaries and their source the Himalayas and introducing universal compulsory critical ethics education with character-building ethics education as its core and the problem of the ultimate meaning of life as its central problem from the beginning of our education system would certainly be some major steps in the right direction to rejuvenate and preserve our great ancient civilization of Truth and non-violence and establish a Kingdom of Righteousness(Rama Rajya, Kingdom of God) in the context of our present technological age.**

Smt Rama Rauta
President, National Women’s Organization, Pune
Founder& Convener, Save Ganga Movement
Expert Member, Expert Advisory Committee, Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of WR, RD&GR, GOI
Former Expert Member NGRBA, Govt. of India
Mobile: 09765359040
Email: ramarauta@rediffmail.com, ramarauta29@gmail.com
Website: www.savegangamovement.org