

PRESS RELEASE

There are many incidents in Indian History, especially during our struggle for independence, capturing the close relationship between the Father of our Nation and Tamil Nadu. Mahatma's appearance, speeches and his travels throughout the country and Tamil Nadu, not only stirred the conscience of the masses, but also impacted him, immensely. During one of his visits to Madurai on 22nd September, 1921, he took a historic decision to wear only simple dhoti and shawl. This decision sent a strong message to the World that British rule in India is keeping the Indians poor and in abject poverty. Mahatma's gesture further strengthened his relationship with masses. He remarked that it was Madurai that gave him necessary strength to wear 'Loin cloth' by giving up his regular attire.

As a member of the National Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble President of India, to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhiji, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, made the following suggestions that could be part of 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhiji.

- (i) Mahatma said, "The world has enough for everyone's needs, but not for everyone's greed". His teachings are more relevant to today's world, wherein unwanted consumption and wastage is dwindling the world's limited resources.

In order to encourage sustainable development, there is an urgent need to honour the individual / institution who promote Gandhiji's ideas on sustainable development.

Hence, a '**Gandhi Green Earth Award**' may be instituted on the lines of Nobel Prize and awarded annually to eligible individual / institution globally.

- (ii) **Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G.R.** as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, introduced a free dhoti and saree scheme for the poor in 1983 and ever since Government of Tamil Nadu has been giving free dhotis and sarees to the poor annually during the 'Pongal harvest festival'. On similar lines, Government of India can initiate a scheme to distribute free dhotis and sarees to the poor on Gandhi Jayanthi day.
- (iii) Our revered Leader **Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's** focus was on education and she opened many colleges from 2011 onwards. Thanks to her efforts, the Gross Enrollment Rate in Tamil Nadu is the highest in the country. Gandhigram Rural Institute in Tamil Nadu, which has the status of Deemed University may be upgraded as a Central University and a Centre of Eminence for Rural Development and Gandhian Philosophy may be established. A sum of Rs.500 crore may be sanctioned for the above purpose. This would further strengthen the efforts taken by the State Government in improving the Higher Education in Tamil Nadu.
- (iv) Gandhi Memorial Museum in Madurai, inaugurated in 1959, houses rare artefacts of Gandhiji. It is requested that additional corpus fund may be sanctioned to upgrade the facilities in this Museum.
- (v) Digital Museums on the Mahatma may be established in Metro Cities to propagate his messages / teachings to the younger generation.
- (vi) Milestone events in India's struggle for Independence (associated with Mahatma) such as 'Dandi March' may be re-enacted in different parts of India to educate youth and refresh the memories of general public.
- (vii) Short films / old footages to be released in Social Media, screened in Movie halls and hosted in Websites like youtube, vimeo etc.,

- (viii) District-wise essay writing, drawing, painting, debate, competitions etc. may be organised on the theme of Mahatma's messages and teachings and the winners may be honoured on 'Gandhi Jayanthi' Day.
- (ix) Universities and Colleges celebrate annual days. They may be encouraged to dedicate a session during these celebrations for propagating the teachings of Mahatma. Ministry of Human Resource Development may be asked to establish a Department of Gandhian Studies in all the Universities in the country.
- (x) Online 'Non-violence pledge' may be organised through the web by hosting the teachings of Mahatma on non-violence and young generation may be encouraged to take Non-violence pledge and practice it in their lives.
- (xi) Manual removal of human waste was abhorred by Mahatma Gandhiji. To eradicate this totally, Government of India may fund machineries to Local Bodies across the country.
- (xii) Khadi and Village Industries Commission may be asked to take steps to reach 'Khadi' to younger generation. A comprehensive campaign can be held throughout the year to promote khadi.

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