

GANDHIJI AND MODERNITY

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Chaired by: Prof. Rajvir Sharma, Associate Professor, Delhi University
Shri Dinesh Kumar, Researcher and Columnist



For the present seminar on Gandhiji and Modernity, we picked up the issue of modernity in the overall context of Gandhian writings. It is our firm belief that an alternative to Western modernity, if at all, can emanate only from the Gandhian stream of thought. In this context, it is important to note that many ills of the non-Western societies lie in the aping of modern ideas and institutions. In addition, it is implicit in such an attempt that we also undermine the time-tested indigenous ideas and institutions. Therefore, with this perspective in mind, we turn to Gandhian ideas to evolve an antidote to modernity.

Sh. Dinesh Kumar, providing a new perspective to the issue, challenged the popular perception that Gandhiji was anti-modernist, which he said stemmed from the dominance of the Western world view that equated modernity with industrialisation, and consequent Westernisation. Gandhiji knew that modernity, unless mediated by morality, would only degenerate into an instrument for aggrandizement. Kumar argued that Gandhiji's futuristic insights and his innovative experiments place him among the most modern men in world history. His ideas have the answers to some of the complex problems that the so-called modern society has thrown up.