

**A Brief Resume about the Activities of the
Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore, for the year
2009-10, from 1st April, 2009 to 31st March, 2010.**

Museums, at present, are looked upon not only as clear – houses of informations, but also centres for awareness – building regarding aspects of life and living of the whole community. Keeping this in view the Commonwealth Association of Museums in a Triennial Conference a few years back fixed the thrust for museum – Endeavour – Peace, Democracy and good Governance in the 21st Century. It was a prudent and much necessary decision that unless and until people are involved in the peace-process it would be difficult for a violence – ridden world to come out of the predicament or overcome violence and peacelessness that has put a question–mark to our survival.

Interestingly in an article published in this Sangrahalaya’s quarterly bi-lingual Journal Gandhi Sangbad / Gandhi News, January- March. 2010, an Expert in the field has these to observe – “Peace is the central theme in the programme of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore. By presenting a great life based on the moral principles of truthfulness, non-violence, tolerance and peaceful co-existence and undertaking programmes like ‘Peace Convention’, whole-day fasting to protest against terrorism, etc., the Sangrahalaya has developed a ‘Culture of Peace’ and in this sense can be regarded as the only Peace Museum in this State”.

This, however, could be one aspect of the Sangrahalaya’s activities in the financial Year 2009-10, i.e., 1st April, 2009 to 31st March, 2010. Research, Publication, Academic Exercises, educational programmes, seminars, symposiums, collaborative programmes and providing financial assistance to several Gandhian organizations in this State and also of national level like the Sarba Seva Sangh to keep up Gandhian activities marked the endeavours of this Sangrahalaya in the financial year under review.

The most remarkable among these was the Gandhi Cycle Peace Rally undertaken in the violence ridden areas in this State, mainly in West Midnapur, Ihargram, Lodhasuli, Sankrile and some areas of East Midnapur to facilitate peace-process and bring back morale and courage of the frightened inhabitants, most of whom left their homes even. Although the main initiative came from the West Bengal Gandhi Peace Foundation the Sangrahalaya collaborated in every step for the success of the 'Satyagraha' and even Members of the Sangrahalaya's Managing Committee helped financially to purchase cycles. The Rally started from Digha Sea Shore in the morning of the 12th March, the day on which Gandhiji Started for Dandi Sea Shore to break the Salt Law and start the historic Salt Campaign in the year 1930. The rally ended in the 19th March, 2010, at the Gandhi Statue on the Mayo Road in Kolkata. On the 18th March, 2010, the Sangrahalaya organized a whole day Peace Convention as – the finale of the peace-endeavour.

Mentioned below, in brief the details of the activities :

- A. **New Collection:** A big traditional wooden Charka measuring 33”X18”X27”(height) supposed to have been used by Gandhiji in Kolkata in the year 1938 – donated by Mrs. Arati Mukherjee, Kolkata – 25. The state of preservation is good.
- B. **Research:** The Sangrahalaya could complete this year the present Research Study – “Social Role of Museums”. In the process another interesting study – ‘A Documentary of Museums in West Bengal’, altogether around 145 in numbers, could be completed. The Sangrahalaya, in this context, expresses its gratitude to Dr. Mahua Chakravarty, an expert Museologist. The Sangrahalaya intends to publish both the studies.
- C. **Publication:** i) 3 Numbers of the quarterly bi-lingual Journal Gandhi Sangbad / Gandhi News. The Contributors included Justice Rajinder Sachar, Chairman of the Minority Commission, Prof. Jahar Sen, Prof. Amalendu De, Prof. Chittabrata Palit, Swami Someswarananda, Dr. Sajal Basu, Prof. Shymalesh Das and host of others. Reminiscences of

eminent Freedom Fighter Surendra Nath Biswas, Ratanmani Chattopadhyay and also of Sri Barun Dasgupta of the Khadi Pratisthan - fame were published, drawn from the collection of recorded reminiscences of eminent Personalities who came in contact with Gandhiji.

ii) Mahatma Gandhi – A brief life sketch by Sri Pratik Ghosh, Assistant keeper of the Sangrahalaya, with a Preface by Prof. Jahar Sen.

iii) Reprint of Late Bhabani Prasad Chattopadhyay's book in Bengali – “Gandhijir Dristite Nari (women in Gandhiji's views) as all the earlier copies were sold out.

iv) ‘Dr. Ram Monohar Lohia's Samaj Bhabna’ in Bengali, translated from Dr. Lohia's English works.

D. Developmental Works: a) The Sangrahalaya has installed this financial year 2 Inverters of 1650 watts capacity for lighting of galleries and showcases during load-shedding.

b) One LCD TV, 32” inches in size, with DVD Projector has been installed at the Mural Gallery this financial year and a VCD developed on the Mural Painting is played daily during the opening hours on the LCD Screen.

c) For Security glass-cover have been arranged for Gandhiji's Bronze Bust and 2 Charkhas. The Sangrahalaya has a proposal to provide transparent coverage for all open surfaced displays to protect against visitors' vagaries.

d) The Sangrahalaya has developed 2 DVDs - one on the Sangrahalaya itself and another on the Mural Painting and these are sold to the visitors at Rs. 30/- and Rs. 75/- respectively.

e) Digitalization of the Sangrahalaya's collections, both in the museum and Library, is almost complete and a software is being developed with this.

f) Repair and Renovation work of the auditorium is being continued by the West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation. The beatification of the Sangrahalaya gardens and illumination are being carried out.

E. Programmes: a) *Felicitatation of the eminent Gandhian Theoretician and Activist Sri Sailesh Kumar Bandopadhyay:*

The Sangrahalaya felicitated Sri Sailesh Kumar Bandopadhyay on his receiving the Padmabhusan Award this year at a public function at the Sangrahalaya on the 18th March, 2010 with a Silver Salver with a design of Lotus Flower embossed on it.

b) *Observance of the 142nd Birthday of Gandhiji:*

The Sangrahalaya arranged a whole day symposium on the 2nd October, 2009, at the Sangrahalaya to celebrate Gandhiji's 142nd Birthday. Since the Centenary of the Publication of the Hind Swaraj was being observed this year the theme of the symposium was its relevance and Prof. Amalendu De and Prof. Chittabrata Palit, both eminent Historians, spoke and Sri Sailesh Kumar Bandopadhyay, the eminent Gandhian Theoretician and Activist presided. The audience included some Members of the Managing Committee of the Sangrahalaya.

c) *Peace Convention:*

On the 18th March, 2010, the Sangrahalaya organized a whole day Peace Convention to discuss about the violent situation obtaining in some parts of this state and ways and means to overcome the malaise. The Sangrahalaya, on this occasion, felicitated the Satyagrahis who took part in the Gandhi Cycle Peace Rally with Bronze Medals Eminent Speakers who delivered inspiring speeches included Padmabhusan Sri Sailesh Kumar Bandopadhyay, Prof. Hossainur

Rahman, Sri Narayan Basu, Dr. Maya Ghose, Sri Bimal Chandra Pal, Sri Chandan Pal, Prof. Sankar Kumar Sanyal, etc.. Sri Salil Kumar Gupta presided and Dooradarshan, Kolkata, telecasted in the evening some portions of the Conversion.

d) *School Programme:*

“Satanatrata Senani Smarane” (Remembering the Freedom Fighter & their contributions)

In the early seventies of the last Century we introduced a School Programme to reach the Museum and its collection and services to different schools, colleges and University Departments, for awareness, information and dissemination of knowledge in particular areas. This year we have launched this Programme with a different perspective and backdrop of a civilizational culture that has created and produced wanton Violence, global warming, environmental pollution, depletion of natural resources, destruction of bio-diversity affecting the healthy existence of Man on Earth.

We wrote to schools and colleges to come to the Museum once and inter-act with us on an alternative civilizational culture, emanating from Gandhiji’s life-style, thoughts and programmes and their implementation in all the areas of human activities with ecological considerations uppermost. Astonishing was the response and Head Masters, Head Mistress, Principals and some Academicians and Social Activists, belonging to Urdu, Hindi, English and Bengali Mediums, activity participated in the deliberations and vied with each other to have follow up programmes – illustrated lectures and exhibitions - in their institutions.

Accordingly the Sangrahalaya could organize this programme at the following institutions on their invitation this financial year under review:

- (1) 28-08-2009 – Ichapur Nawabgunj H.S. School, North 24 Pgs.

- (2) 14-09-2009 – Kshetramohan H.S. School, Talpukur, Barrackpore.
- (3) 23-09-2009 – Jaffarpur Charaktola Girls' H.S. School.
- (4) 05-12-2009 – R.K. Mission Samaj Seva Sikshan Mandir, Belur Math, Howrah.
- (5) 10-12-2009 – Rathtala Fingepara Girls' H.S. School, Kankinara, 24 Pgs. (N).
- (6) 26-12-2009 – Kishore Bharati Christian Tribal Society, Kalianibas.

For the Programme the Sangrahalaya has developed 3 DVDs – one on the Sangrahalaya, one on Barrackpore's Role in the Indian Freedom Movement and the other a biography of Gandhiji.

Usually the Sangrahalaya arranged the screening followed by talks. The programme has been found very popular.

e) Gandhi Sangrahalayas' Secretaries' Conference:

This has become an annual feature. Mainly Six or Seven Sangrahalayas in different parts of India meet annually to discuss about issues concerning Gandhiji, new developments, issues of mutual interest and problems, and financial positions etc.. This year Gandhi Memorial Museum, Madurai, hosted the Conference on the 5th and 6th March, 2010, and at the initiative of the Barrackpore Sangrahalaya a joint application was sent to the ho'ble Prime Minister to sanction each of the Sangrahalayas Rupees five crore (Rs. 5,00,00000/-) to augment their income.

f) Observance of the Centenary of 'Hind Swaraj', 'Gandhiji's Manifesto':

The year 2009 marked the Centenary of the publication of 'Hind Swaraj', a seminal booklet that contains the basic views of Gandhiji about matters mundane as well as metaphysical and his analysis of incidents and situations – Indian as well as global. It could also be regarded as a civilizational critique (originally written in Gujarati while travelling in a ship S.S. Kildonan Castle from England to South

Africa from the 13th to 22nd November, 1909, it was serialized in the Indian Opinion, edited by Gandhiji in South Africa, between the 11th and the 13th December, 1909).

The Sangrahalaya, in collaboration with several Gandhian organizations working at the state and even national level, organized several seminars and conferences on the relevance of the Book on different dates and at different places:

- (i) 04-04-2009 – At Belda, Midnapur (West) with the assistance of Sram Vidyapith, a whole-day seminar. The speakers included Sri Sailesh Kumar Bandopadhyay, Prof. Sandip Das, Dr. Sanmatha Nath Ghose and other Academicians, Social Activists, Panchayat Members, etc.. A write up by the Secretary of the Sangrahalaya ‘Remembering Hind Swaraj’ was distributed among the audience.
- (ii) 17-07-2009 & 18-07-2009 – At Maurigram, Howrah, in collaboration with West Bengal Gandhi Peace Foundation, All India Conference – Susbi Radha Bahtt, Chair Person, All India Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, inaugurated and Academicians and Activists from Sevagram, Maharashtra, Goa, Orissa, Bihar, Tamilnadu and from this state deliberated.
- (iii) 25-09-2009 – At Kapasarea, near Mahisadal, Midnapur (East), a whole-day seminar.
- (iv) 30-10-2009 & 31-10-2009 – 2 day All India Conference in collaboration with Sarva Seva Sangh, Rajghat, Varanasi, at the Mahabodhi Society, Kolkata, with all India participation.

g) Observance of the Birth Centenary of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia:

Legendary Freedom Fighter Dr. Usha Mehta described Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, the noted Socialist Leader, Freedom Fighter and

Parliamentarian, as ‘A Gandhian among the Socialists and a Socialist among the Gandhians’. Although an original Thinker, Gandhiji exerted a deep influence on him and between each other there was a unique relationship which Dr. Lohia had recorded in his ‘Anecdotes about Gandhiji’. The year 2009 marked his Birth Centenary and the Sangrahalaya in its Annual General Meeting for the year 2009-10 decided to observe the occasion in a befitting manner including a publication on Dr. Lohia.

The Sangrahalaya lent its services including financial assistance to organize the following programmes:

- (i) 09-01-2010 - At the Kanthi Book Fair, Kanthi, Midnapur (East).
- (ii) 30-01-2010 – At the Calcutta University Institute in collaboration with the Dr. Rammonahar Lohia Birth Centenary Committee where the main speakers were Justice Sri Rajinder Sachar, Chairman, Sachar Commission, Sri Kashikanta Maitra, the noted Orator, Prof. Probodh Chadra Sinha Sri Kiranmoy Nanda, Dr. Saja Basu, etc.. The Secretary of the Sangrahalaya opened the proceedings.
- (iii) 23-03-2010 – At the Mahajati Sadan, Kolkata, where the speakers included Sri Ashok Ghose, Sri Kshiti Goswami, Sri Kiranmoy Nanda, Dr. Sajal Basu etc. prof. Probodh Ch. Sinha presided and released the book ‘Bharate Samaj Bhabna’, a compilation of Bengali translation of Dr. Lohia’s works in English, published by the Sangrahalaya. The Secretary spoke first and introduced the book to a fully packed audience of old Socialists, Youths, etc..

h) *West Bengal State Constructive Workers’ Conference:*

Like previous years the Sangrahalaya funded the State Constructive Workers’ Conference held at Raigunge, West Dinajpur, on the 19th &

20th July, 2009. Many voluntary organizations other than bearing Gandhiji's name, also participated.

i) *Youth Camp:*

The Sangrahalaya assisted the West Bengal Gandhi Peace Foundation to organize a state-level Youth Camp on 10th to 12th February, 2010, for awareness-building and also to discuss about many social issues, problems and their solution in the Gandhian way. The Resource Persons included Sri Ramesh Sharma of Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, Academicians and Social Activists.

j) *Shishu Mela:*

The Sangrahalaya and ACCORD, an NGO working on women & Child Development, jointly organized a children's Fair this financial year also, on the 3rd January, 2010, at Subhas Palli, Barrackpore, Block-1. Prof. Tapan Kumar Chattopadhyay inaugurated the programme and different types of games and cultural function were organized for the children. Later on a fruitful discussion on importance of bio-fertilizer was arranged with the assistance of the Kalyani Agricultural University, Mohanpur. The Secretary of the Sangrahalaya presided over the total function.

k) *Internship of Museology Students:*

This has become an annual feature now. Students of Museology, belonging to both Calcutta and Rabindra Bharati Universities, are sent here for a few months practical training in museological aspects and computer, etc.. This year students from Rabindra Bharati University joined the Internship Course.

l) *Visit by Students and Faculty Members from different Universities, etc.:*

This is also an annual feature. Students and Professors of the Department of Museology of the Calcutta and Rabindra Bharati Universities visit the Sangrahalaya on mutually convenient dates, regarded as educational tour also. The Students are also asked to prepare a Tour Report which carry 10 marks during the final viva-examination. This year the students and Professors of the Dept. of Museology, Rabindra Bharati University, visited on 13-11-2009 – 27 students and Faculty-Members in all, and Calcutta University students and Professors visited on 20-03-2009.

Apart from these, students and Professors of the Dept. of History, Calcutta University, visited on 27-02-2010 and the Dept. of History, Education and English from the State University, Barasat, visited on 29-11-2009. Usually after an introductory talk on Gandhiji and Sangrahalaya, the students and teachers are taken round the galleries, films are shown and voice-records are played, etc.. Later on live question answer session is organized after lunch-break.

m) Public meeting to celebrate historic August Revolution:

On the 9th August, 2009, the Sangrahalaya collaborated with the Indian News Service and Juger Dak, Kolkata – 13, to organize a public meeting on the 9th August, 2009, at the ‘August Kranti Memorial Columns’ erected near the Srimani Market in North Kolkata, to celebrate the August Revolution, also known as the Quite India Movement. On 12th August, 1942, Aditya Sengupta and 2 others were killed in police firing for defying police order. Apart from recounting the glorious event, its significance and lessons that can be derived even today, glowing tributes were paid to the memories of the Martyrs by public leaders, academicians, social activists including veteran Socialist Leader and Freedom Fighter Sri Janmenjoy Ojha, Dr. Sajal Bas, the Secretary of the Sangrahalaya, etc..

n) Guest Lectureship:

The Secretary continues to be a Guest Lecturer at the Dept. of Museology and also in the M.A. Course in Buddhist Studies, both belonging to Calcutta University. He was also appointed Paper-Setter and Examiner at the Rabindra Bharati University this financial year and also lectured at the State University, Barasat, and numerous college, etc..

F) T.V. Shootings and telecast, talks and write ups, etc.:

- i) 04-10-2009 – Shooting and subsequent telecast by Door Darshan Kendra, Kolkata, on Gandhiji & Youth – interview of Secretary.
- ii) 29-01-2010 – Live broadcast by Gyanbani F.M. Channel (IGNOU) – Gandhiji in his own light – interview of the Secretary from 8:15 pm to 9 pm.
- iii) 02-10-2009 – Live T.V. interview of the Secretary by Door Darshan Kendra Kolkata, on various aspects and also on Gandhiji – 5 programmes.
- iv) 30-01-2010 – 3 T.V. interviews of the Secretary on Gandhiji by Door Darshan Kendra, Kolkata.
- v) 08-04-2009 – Talk on the Sepoy Mutiny – Sukanta Sadan, Barrackpore.
- vi) 10-04-2009 – On Late P.C.Sen at Nehru Children,s Museum, organized by the Prufulla Chandra Sen Memorial Committee.
- vii) 15-04-2009 – On Education organized by Bandhab Kalyan Samiti, Nonadanga, Kolkata.
- viii) 19-04-2009 – On co-operative Movement Tagore-Gandhi thoughts and endeavors – organized by Verner Lane, co-operative Society, Belgharia, North 24 Pgs.

- ix) 27-06-2009 – On Daw Ang Sun Su Ki – at Serampore Town Hall Hooghly Dt.
- x) 09-07-2009 – On Dr. Mahanambrata Brahmachari & Mahatma Gandhi – organized by Dr.Mahanambrata Mahanam Angan, Kolkata.
- xi) 18-07-2009 – On ‘Relevance of Hind Swaraj’ – organized by West Bengal Gandhi Peace Foundation, Maurigram, Howrah.
- xii) 31-07-2009 – On Human Rights & the Information Bill, at Barasat, North 24 Pgs.
- xiii) 09-08-2009 – On ‘August Revolution’ – organized by Socialist Forum – in North Kolkata.
- xiv) 09-11-2009 – on ‘Educational Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi’ at the Dept. of Education, West Bengal State University, Barasat, North 24 Pgw.
- xv) 23-12-2009 – On the ‘Partition of India’ at Khardah Book Fai.
- xvi) 09-01-2010 – On Dr. Rammanhar Lohia at Kanthi Book Fair, Midnapur (East).
- xvii) 20-01-2010 – On ‘Gandhiji & Aesthetics’ at Sukanta Sadan, Barrackpore.
- xviii) 07-02-2010 – On ‘Role of N.G.O.s in Rural Development’ – organized by Centre for Total Development at Loknath, Tarakeswar, Hooghly.
- xix) 11-02-2010 – On ‘Non-Violence’ – at Darua Gandhi Mela, Midnapur (East).

- xx) 16-02-2010 – On ‘Gandhiji & Tagore’ – organized by the Depts. Of History, English & Education, West Bengal State University, Barasat, 24 Pgs. (N). The Vice-Chancellor was also present among Professors and Students.
- xxi) 21-02-2010 – On Ekushe February – the International Mother Tongue Day – organized by the State Government Information & Culture Dept.

Also write ups on Gandhiji, allied themes, Sangrahalaya, etc., in at different journals, compilations including Puja Numbers.

G) Observance of Important National Day's:

Like previous years the Sangrahalaya observed in befitting manners Mahatma Gandhi's 141st Birthday on the 2nd October, 2009 with a public meeting at the Sangrahalaya where Prof. Amlan Datta was awarded this year's Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Award, the Independence Day on the 15th August, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's Birthday on the 8th May, 2009 and Netaji's Birthday on the 23 January, 2010. On all these days the Sangrahalaya was kept open from 9:30 am for the visitors.

H) Library:

The library has also grown with new books, both purchased and received as gifts. Some rare books have been bound, laminated and photo copies of these were done for preservation. Presently the pest control of books is done directly by us.

No. of Books: Around 12,000

No. of Visitors: 15,000

No. of Readers: 1600

No. of Journals: Subscribed: 15, Gifts: 17

Daily News Papers: 3

Press-clippings of important news and write ups are carried out regularly.

Research Scholars and eminent Personalities, using the Library:

- a) H.E. the Governor of West Bengal Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi.
 - b) Dr. Tapas Kumar Banerjee.
 - c) Prof. Hossainur Rahman.
 - d) Prof Jahar Sen.
 - e) Dr. Sajal Basu.
 - f) Dr. Suparna Guptoo.
 - g) Prof. Sandip Das.
 - h) Prof. Kanai Pada Roy.
 - i) Dr. P.M. Roy.
 - j) Prof. Dhruva Narayan Banerjee.
 - k) Prof. Sukanya Sarkar.
 - l) Prof. Anindita Banerjee.
 - m) Prof. Sarmistha Nath.
 - n) Prof. Manjushree Mukherjee.
 - o) Prof. Somasree Ghosh.
 - p) Prof. Soma Dhar.
 - q) Prof. Sima Roy.
- & host of students doing their Ph.D & M.Phils at various Universities.

Prof. Supriya Munshi,
Secretary,
GANDHI SMARAK SANGRAHALAYA,
BARRACKPORE.

