

Lecture on the birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and Former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, by Vice Chancellor of Birsa Agricultural University, Ranchi on 02/10/2021

Today, on 2nd October, we are celebrating the birth anniversary of two of the most iconic leaders of India, Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri. They dealt with adversity and encouraged people to stay with true while leading.

Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2nd October 1869 is one of the most important learning's for today's leaders and organizations due to empathetic and effective communication in a crisis. The reason why Gandhi was effective in mobilizing millions in India and around the world was because he was an effective communicator. In rallied whether his speeches hundreds of thousands participated in Satyagraha (fighting with peace). Gandhi's life and works are replete with examples as how a leader needs to communicate with people and organizations in order to lead them. During the British rule, the British officials imposed a ridiculous salt tax. This really moved Mahatma Gandhi and acted on it. In this situation, Mahatma Gandhi chose patience and non-violence. The world was really stunned when Mahatma Gandhi, along with thousands of followers initiated a long walk of 390 kms from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to Dandi which took 24 days to reach by foot. This is known as the Dandi March or the Salt March; this literally changed the Indian history. This way of protest i.e. patient and non-violent actually ignited souls; it forced the world to watch India, and condemn Britishers. Historians have argued that Salt March acted like a catalyst which ignited a million sparks all across India and millions of people joined the freedom movement for the first time and more than 80,000 people were arrested. Being patient in most provoking situations, whether it is the huge number of people he met daily, or the alien government he had to deal with, is a great learning for leaders. The life of Mahatma Gandhi indicates that to attain a goal you have a goal and persistence. He believed in hard work, learning from mistakes and being patient. When we think of Mahatma Gandhi, we immediately have this image of him in a dhoti and shawl. Throughout his life, he had also changed his diet and attachment towards any material possessions which helped him to communicate his message more forcefully.

After the sudden demise of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri took oath of office and became Prime Minister for only 19 month but leaving a great impact on people. He showed that just because you are the head of an organization, you're not

entitled to anything or everything. Shashtri believed in this and treated everyone at par in his ministry. He was deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. Once he said that hard work is equal to prayer. He worked as Parliamentary Secretary in his home State of Uttar Pradesh and later rose to the position of Home Minister. He held several portfolios in the Union Cabinet – Minister for Railways; Minister for Transport and Communications; Minister for Commerce and Industry; Home Minister. He resigned his post as Minister for Railways following a railway accident in which many lives were lost. The gesture was greatly appreciated by the Parliament and the country. As Home Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri was assigned several troubleshooting missions, including the controversy simmering in Assam, the crisis in Punjab, dealing with increasing language hostilities in the then Madras and managing the implementation of the Emergency in the period of Chinese aggression in 1962. He never ran away from challenges and always faced them with great grit and rigor. After India Pakistan War 1965 country faced food scarcity at that time he was Prime Minister, he skipped two meals and stopped drawing his salary while he suggested others skipped one. He considered himself as a government servant and never promoted the idea of luxuries. He handled the crisis very well and got everyone together. He gave the slogan “Jai Jawan Jai Kisan” to encourage the soldiers who defend India and simultaneously cheered farmers for their hard works to reduce dependency of food grain on imports.