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PRESS RELEASE
Dr Ramachandra Guha's Lecture on Sahitya Akademi's
65th Foundation Day

On its 65th Foundation Day, Sahitya Akademi invited Dr Ramachandra Guha the well-known historian, columnist, author and the recipient of the Padma Bhushan to deliver a lecture. Prof. Indranath Choudhuri, the former Secretary of Sahitya Akademi, welcomed Dr Guha with a packet of Akademi publications. Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi welcomed the gathering and introduced the speaker. He mentioned that the lecture series started in 2013 and so far we have had six lectures -- by Dr Kapila Vatsyayan, Honorable Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, Prof. S.L. Bhyrappa, Dr Shashi Tharoor, Dr Sitakant Mahapatra and Dr Karan Singh. He further said that Sahitya Akademi has been a "Writers' Home" and will always continue to be so.

Dr Ramachandra Guha's lecture was on 'Gandhi as a Communicator'. He started his speech by saying that unlike most of his counterparts, Gandhi had four callings—he was a freedom fighter, social reformer, religious pluralist and constructive worker. He was like a pianist playing different tunes, creating a symphony. Though he was not a very expressive writer initially, yet he has majorly contributed to Gujarati and English literature. Dr Guha recalled a book entitled *Mahatma Gandhi as a Student* which he had found during his research on Gandhi. It was by J.M Upadhyay, the headmaster of the school in which Gandhi had studied. The book dwelt on Gandhi's academic performance which did not at all show any signs that he would one day become a figure the entire nation would revere. Dr Guha went on to elucidate Gandhi's literary journey, which he began with a series of publications in the *Journal of the Vegetarian Society of London*. The newspaper, *Indian Opinion*, which he started in South Africa served as the platform for his ideas and perspectives and where he practised his literary craft. Dr Guha quoted C.N. Patel and K. Swaminathan, the scholars on Gandhi's writings--the former about his Gujarati writings, and the latter on his English writings—have profiled the literary talent Gandhi had. Returning to India from South Africa, Gandhi founded *Young India* which he later renamed Harijan. Then Dr. Guha mentioned about the 100 volumes of Gandhi's writings, which surpass any other known writers anywhere. His books *My Experiments with Truth* in Gujarati and English, and *Hind Swaraj* came in for quick analyses by Dr. Guha.

He concluded his speech by quoting Louis Fisher who gave an unprecedented comparison of Gandhi and Jinnah. Fisher observed that while Jinnah's responses were quite predictable like a phonograph record playing, his interaction with Gandhi was an actual conversation in which the interlocutor was free to convince Gandhi of his viewpoint, which was fulfilling as it led to insights into the personality of Gandhi and thus a creative process was built in the mind of the reporter.


(K.Sreenivasarao)



रामचंद्र गुहा
स्थापना दिवस

FOUNDATION DAY

by Ramachandra





रामचंद्र गुहा द्वारा
स्थापना दिवस व्याख्यान

FOUNDATION DAY LECTURE
by Ramachandra Guha

10 मार्च 2010 नई दिल्ली



