

NIRMAL
SEKHON GROUP
OF COMPANIES

Directors of the Sekhon group of companies attended on a business and community basis to assist the University of Bradford and the Indian high commission of Birmingham.

The issue of debate was in connection with the bust of Mahatma Gandhi being erected in the grounds of the University of Bradford to commemorate his life work and to remind students and visitors of the University of his principles of non-violence.

The debate was effectively conducted by the professors of the University and chaired by the vice chancellor. The arguments against installation of the memorial were that the honourable Mahatma Gandhi during his younger years at the age of 23 during his work and stay in Africa engaged in making certain comments against African peoples and tribes that could be considered racist.

In fact, such umbrage was taken to these comments that in past years, the Vice Chancellor of a university in Ghana who accepted such memorial was forced to leave his position as a consequence of the statue being erected Within the grounds of the University. This statue was removed by a subsequent Vice Chancellor who heard the voice of the youth who required his statue to be removed.

The great Mahatma Gandhi apologised for his comments in his later years and when he left South Africa after 21 years, fighting for human rights and equality, he said that people were taking his previous utterances out of context.

Furthermore, during his lifetime he made a formal apology for his previous views but had changed his whole ethos and thinking about The African peoples and nations and the people that were in power at the respective times.

During the debate, it was said that the University of Bradford is a place of academic excellence for peace studies and no syllabus would be complete without reference to considering the work and lifetime of Mahatma Gandhi.

In addition to this, whilst umbrage was taken with his previous comments, his life has been celebrated By Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, who all recite that his principles have been incorporated into their own strategies during the fight for freedom in their own respective lifetimes and encounters.

It was stated by those arguing for the installation of the bust that if this statue were to be installed, it should be viewed as a celebration of change and the fact that Mr Gandhi remained committed to nonviolence. Nelson Mandela stated

“I followed the Gandhian Strategy for as long as I could, but then there came a point in our struggle when the brute force of the oppressor could no longer be counted through passive resistance alone.”

Further debate continued and it was said that if a place of excellence and academic study could facilitate And accommodate such debate or facilitate the debate in respect of a controversial statue for Africans and people of the world then perhaps, all references to the great Mahatma Gandhi should be removed from studies of peace in such institutions.

Obviously this was just to make a point but could be viewed as an absurd comment.

If he was viewed as a racist then why would such eloquent global leaders use him as a reference point and why would the likes of Martin Luther King display a picture of Mahatma Gandhi in his office as depicted in pictures on the Internet.

Essentially, it was agreed by the debate forum that Mr Gandhi May have made mistakes in his earlier life but apologise for them and it shows that any person can make mistakes in their life but if they make a sincere apology then that should be accepted and it was said during the meeting the famous quote from our Prophet Jesus Christ was also referred to

““the one who is sinless let him cast the first stone“

it was concluded that we are all human and that we can all make mistakes and to shy away from commemorating his good work through the statue on the anniversary of 150 years since his birth would be a grave mistake and send a message to the Indian Diaspora and students from abroad that open debate is not encouraged at the University of Bradford.

It was decided by the business leaders present that further time should be given to the institution for them to reconsider their position and perhaps this debate should be put to the vote as we all live in a democratic society in the United Kingdom which is the foundation stone and principles of the forefathers of this country and the legal institutions which hold the fabric of society together.

Present were:

Dr Manoj Joshi DL

Iqbal Singh Sekhon

Nirmal Singh Mbe.

VC Shirley Congden

Professor Mark GARRETT.

Representative consulate of Indian High Commissioner Happy Guptan

Professor Udhi

George Schofield

Professor Anand (Peace studies)

Professor Riley power

Karl Oxford representing the African Caribbean community

CEO SEKHON GROUP