

Mahatma Gandhi's Educational Philosophy and Importance of His Educational Thoughts

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Abstract: *Education is the continuous process which goes on whether school keeps or not. People learn anything before they enter in to school followed by continuity outside the schoolroom. They keep on learning even if the formal education comes to an end. Even during the hours of formal schooling, the student learns much outside, which does not constitute a part of the planned curriculum. The student secures a great deal of education from the church, political discussion and also from Magazines, Newspapers, Radio and Televisions which are employed as a mean of educating. As we all know that education is a lifelong process and the process of inserting new ideas in education system is still going on. From ancient time to modern the nature of education is changed through ages. Many educationists provide their valuable thoughts to improve Indian education system. Among these few are Shri. Rabindranath Tagore, Dr. Saravpalli Radhakrishnan, Mahatma Gandhi etc. Here we are going to know about educational views of Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi was not only a great leader of national freedom movement but also a great philosopher. His educational views are valuable for our society. He touched every aspect of education.*

Keywords: Mahatma Gandhi, philosophy, educational experiment, non-violence, satyagrah.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869, at Porbandar, Kathiawar, in Gujarat. Gandhi was youngest of the three sons of Putlibai and Karamchand Gandhi. His childhood name was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. His father was diwan of Rajkot. Gandhi's father, were popularly known as Kaba. Kaba Gandhi was an honest, upright, a strict disciplinarian, and very hot tempered. Gandhi's mother was an extremely religious, very loving and hard-working woman. At school, first the primary at Porbandar, and later the Albert High School, Rajkot. Gandhi showed no particular brilliance, played no games and avoided company. At school, he was slow, hesitant and shy. He read little beyond text books, but respected his teacher, though, even at his bidding. He would not copy from his neighbor's answers. To be at school at the stroke of the hour and to run back home as soon as the school closed- that was his daily habit. According to him he literally ran back, because he could not bear to talk to anybody. He was even afraid lest anyone should poke fun at me. He wore the traditional Indian dhoti and shawl, woven with yarn hand-spun on a charkha. Thus, he took for granted ahimsa, vegetarianism, fasting for self-purification. Gandhiji was married with Kasturba at the age of 13 Years. The values of truthfulness, honesty, integrity were instilled in him from the very beginning. He was mortally afraid of the dark, of ghosts and spirits, and also of snakes and scorpions. His father died in 1887. He passed the matriculation examination in 1887. After the matriculation Gandhi joins the Samaldas College. But everything was difficult for him in that college. At the end of the first term, he returned home. When 18 years old (in 1888), he was sent to London to study law where he remained for three years. He had promised his mother that he would not eat non-vegetarian food, or drink alcohol, and he remained true to his word. He returned to India in 1891, after the completion of his studies. He thinks forward to meeting his mother, and giving her the good news, but he was to be sorely disappointed. When he was away in England, his mother had passed away. The news of her death had been withheld from him because his brother thought he would be mentally disturbed, and his studies would be affected. After qualifying as a Barrister, he set up his practice as a lawyer, in Rajkot. As he did not get much work there, he came to Bombay. Even in Bombay he did not get any cases. Finally, he got one case. He prepared well for it, but in court he was unable to present it satisfactorily. Disappointed, he felt that he would never make a successful lawyer. Just at that time Gandhi's elder

brother managed to get him a case. He was asked to represent Mr. Abdulla, a rich businessman in South Africa. After much deliberation, Gandhiji agreed to accept that case. In April, 1893, he went to South Africa in connection with a civil law case of a firm Abdulla and handled it very well. He remained there for 21 years. Gandhi in South Africa developed his political views, ethics and politics. In 1915 Gandhi returned for India.

At the request of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, his "Political Guru" he joined the Indian National Congress. In 1930 Time magazine made him "Man of the Year". In 1934 Gandhi resigned from Congress party membership. Gandhi returned to active politics again in 1936, with the Nehru presidency. M. K. Gandhi is also called Bapu (Gujarati: endearment for "father", "papa") or Gandhiji or Nekat Faker or unofficially called the Father of the Nation or father of the modern India. Origin of this title is traced back to a radio address (on Singapore radio) on 6 July 1944, where Subhash Chandra Bose addressed Gandhi as "The Father of the Nation". On 28 April 1947, Sarojini Naidu during a conference also referred Gandhi as "Father of the Nation". He wanted to establish Ram Rajya which he identified with justice, peace, happiness and welfare of all. Gandhi always loved his people- Muslims as much as Hindus. Even when Pakistan was formed, he spoke for the Muslims of India who were comparatively so few in numbers. Many Hindus thought that he favoured the Muslims too much. Nathuram Godse held misguided ideas of this kind. On 30th January 1948, in Delhi, when Gandhi set out to attend a prayer meeting, he was shot dead by an assailant Naathuram Vinayak Godse advocate of Hindu nationalism. His last words were 'Hey Ram'. People all over the world paid rich tribute to Gandhi. He was murdered, yet he was calm and peaceful even in death. It seemed as if he were sleeping. The great Mahatma's life had come to an end! The place near Yamuna River where he was cremated is the Raj Ghat memorial in New Delhi.

II. GANDHIJI AIMS OF EDUCATION

The human society owes its existence because of education. There is need to know about the goals, aims or objectives of education. Without determining the aims of education, it is not possible to plan the curriculum and the methods to be followed to impart that curriculum. Aim enables to act with a purpose and meaning. Education gives right direction to that activity. In the absence of the aims in education, progress cannot be achieved. A study of the history of education reveals that hundreds of aims have been given at different times and different places by the different thinkers of education. No two persons think alike since their psychic structure varies.

So Plato aims at the state controlled compulsory education. His scheme of education can be categorized under two parts, the elementary education inclusive of training for young person's up to the age of twenty culminating in the beginning of military service and the higher education intended for the selected persons of both sexes who are the members of the ruling classes between the age of twenty and thirty five. The state directed scheme of education, which is compulsory, is an important innovation of Athenians practice. The aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education. The object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth.

Character building has first place in Gandhian education. Character is similar to foundation. A building built on sand collapses where as a building erected on a strong foundation lasts for long time. Gandhi holds that the school must be an extension of home. There must be agreement between the impressions, which a child gathers at home and at school to achieve the best results. The alien type of education produces a gulf between the educated classes and the masses. [1] Gandhi does not think it necessary to consider whether the adoption of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction would have any adverse effect on the knowledge of English or not. It is necessary of the foreign language. He further states that it is unnecessary to create and encourage a liking for it. Gandhi states that English cannot and ought not to become the National language. In this connection Gandhi refers to the requirement of a national language.

III. GANDHIJI SAYS THAT

- It should be easy to learn for government officials.
- It should be capable of serving as medium of religious, economic and political intercourse throughout India.
- It should be the speech of the majority of the inhabitants of India.
- Everybody should find it easy to learn.
- In choosing such a language considerations of temporary or passing interest should not count. [1]

IV. EDUCATION FOR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT:

Education is a one type of the system on the one hand and a process on the other hand. As a system of education is structured of definite and well definable constituents each of which is susceptible to analyse and study for better development and all round development of the system. As a process education is a functional, it has life and movement, it has progress in a direction and it remains permanently in a dynamic form. The dynamism of education is a significant factor because this dynamism is what enables education to deal with children as living and thinking beings.

Education goals constitute a significant component of the system of education. Education as conceived by Mahatma Gandhi and advocated by him primarily aims at the formation and development of the spiritual and moral personality of the each and every individual who is a active member of society. He says, “education is thus an awakening of the soul” [2] without education attempting this awakening of the soul of the individual and without developing and strenthening the ‘inner voice’ in the individual, education has no serious purpose to serve. Gandhian education in all its aspects in founded on spiritual principles. In this sense we shall talk of the Gandhian idealism; to the fully developed in a separate character. This is the most solid and character based foundation from which to build education at the base of all we have concepts and principles drawn from one or more religions developed into harmonious hole to which the goals of education are properly integrated. The univesality and eternal dimension of Gandhian values render them a highly spiritual dimension. We are most often hesitant to speak of Gandhian spiritually because Gandhi does not I any intimate way associate himself with any particular religious denomination are to any professed manner of spiritual way of life. What Gandhian spirituality is a wholesome attitude of the mind in every detail directed to the supreme being, God. Gandhian education cannot be thought of a divorced from this spirituality. This would mean several things. Education should pave the background for first, the practice of truth in every aspects of the individual’s life. Education as a process develops the environment necessary to him with reference to the detailed experience of life whoes agents are teacher, parents and the community. Success at this level depends on how much these agents can influence the individual in the process of learning.

V. EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Education in the Gandhian sense aims at the development of society. This aim of education primarily adds a great responsibility on the individual who is being educated as well as on the one after his education. The development of society is not an automatic thing; individual have to be pressed into service for that purpose. This requires great training for the individual as part of education that enables him to commit himself on a permanent basis for the welfare of society. Gandhi’s educational thought attach great importance to this goal o0feducation. Exhortations to students and educationists in the country to attach importance to the value of social service and social welfare in all aspects of education were common in his speeches and writings.

For Gandhiji, “individual development and social progress are interdependent” [3].He wished that a society in which all people should have to play their roles for the betterment of the whole without loosing their individual character. Every goal of education that Gandhien visaged in fact harmonized with others. He pleaded for character formation with its spiritual and moral values. Education for social development aims at thus creating in the education to number of social oriented values which is related to social atmosphere in which every individual has to adjust himself. Education in schools and colleges do everything at its disposal to nature in students a love and affection concern for society and its current needs. Individual must be ready to help the society as a active member all the time. Individual must have a compassion for all creation of life.

The very Gandhian norms of education became an orientation to the serviced of the people. He wanted education to turn itself to the needs of the people at the grass-root level. From this viewpoint he find out serious drawbacks in present-day education. Gandhian alleges that today’s education does not in any way reach the poverty and problems of the villages. It leaves a tremendous gap between the have not’s. It leaves a tremendous gap between the education and the illetyeate. The gap that has been created among those who know English and those who don’t had been a serious issue for Gandhi. Again the country is compelled to invest huge amounts for higher education which benefits only the

more affluent sections of India's population. Today's education from this viewpoint segregates the villages from towns in search of greater prospects. All these Gandhi viewed with great concern.

VI. GANDHIJI VIEWS ON WOMEN EDUCATION

The Mahatma's views on women's education are based on his belief in woman being a complement of man and are therefore out of sync in modern context. Man and woman are of equal rank but they are not identical. They are a peerless pair being supplementary to one another; each helps other. As for illiteracy among the women, its cause is not mere laziness and inertia as in the case of men. A more potent cause is the status of inferiority with which an immemorial tradition has, unjustly branded her. Man has converted her into a domestic drudge and an instrument of his pleasure, instead of regarding her as his helpmate and 'better half'. The result is a semi-paralysis of our society. Women have rightly been called the mother of race. We owe it to her and to ourselves to und the great wrong that we have done her.

VII. MOTHER TONGUE

Education must be imparted through mother tongue. People have been lured by English language. Those who advocate English language state that it is through English that an awakening has been created in the country. English literature is vast and widely used. Giving up the use of English is a misfortune. It is not possible to translate it into other languages. Unity could be achieved only through English. Encouragement for the promotion of different languages of India is tantamount to disrupt the unity and retard the growing feeling of unity that they are of one nation. These are the main arguments of the advocates of English. Education should not be made dependent on money. As the sun gives light to all the rich and the poor and rain falls on all so also learning must be made available to all.[4]

VIII. BASIC EDUCATION

Mahatma Gandhi stood for the educational system, which is literary and productive. But the existing system of education is completely separated from the life activities of the child with moral degradation. In order to abolish the evils that have beset the society and to achieve the ideal society economically self reliant peaceful and orderly and to uphold moral and spiritual life and to reduce the disparities and inequalities in the society he put forward a new scheme of education known as basic education which has its basis on morality and human values. This education whether confined to children or adults males or females will find its way to the homes of the pupils. Must learn an inter-provincial language. This language can only be Hindustani written in Nagar or Urdu script.[5]Gandhi's basic idea was to make education self supporting through craft, agriculture and other productive work there by by-passing potentially the need for government funding support. [6]

A committee constituted by educationists was headed by Dr. Zakir Hussein in order to work out the details of the curriculum. The report of the committee received in the year 1938 was placed before Indian National Congress, which was accepted. The first basic school was established at Sevagram near Wardha in 1938 under Gandhi's personal supervision but the proposal of basic education was opposed by congress leaders and industrialists. They showed great reluctance in moving from colonially derived system of basic education. They objected to the emphasis on vocation condemning it as child labor. Instead they offered broad based curriculum for elementary education and expansion of facilities for technical education. [7]

The system of basic education proposed by Gandhi leads to the development of the mind, body and soul whereas the ordinary system of education cares only for the mind. [8]

Literacy for him is not the end of education and it is not even the beginning of education. It is only a means to educate the people but literacy is not education. Gandhi wishes that child's education should begin with the teaching of a useful handicraft. This enables the child to produce from the moment the child begins histraining. This helps every school to be self-supporting. Under such system of education, the highest envelopment of mind and soul becomes possible. Every handicraft needs to be taught not in a mechanical manner alone but scientifically. The child has to be in

a position to know every process of it. The proposal introduced by Gandhi is of revolutionary type, which saves immense labor. It is economical on the other hand. [9]

Gandhi holds that an intellect which is developed through the medium of socially useful labor will be an instrument for service and it will not easily be led astray or fall into devious path. [10]

Gandhi looks upon education as an integral whole and also as an instrument of social revolution lifting the human life continually to something better culturally, socially, morally and spiritually.

Gandhi has named his educational programme as NaiTalim, which implies new education under which education has become life centered, instead of textbook centered. NaiTalim has been defined as education for life, through life and throughout life. NaiTalim has been divided into pre-basic, basic, post-basic, university and social education. Pre-basic is the nursery school part, basic is elementary education for a period of eight years, between 7 and 15 years of age. Post-basic is High school education and social education has become adult education. [11]

Gandhi has taken up basic education for boys and girls between 7 and 15 years of age for a period of 8 years. In the view of Gandhi basic education is the birthright of every child in India. No child could remain without it if Indian humanity is to make progress. [12]

Basic education or NaiTalim (new system of education) as Gandhi calls it is revolutionary in its conception. It is based on the theory that it is the activity known as the 'thinking hand' which more than anything else has guided the evolution of man and society. In this system of whole education, man can be imparted through the medium of a basic handicraft. Its goal is to build up a non-violent, non-exploiting social order in which the ideals of freedom, equality, and brotherhood can be fully and universally realized. [13] This type of education is life centered but not textbook centered. [14]

Gandhi holds that craft, art, health and education should all be integrated into one scheme. NaiTalim is a beautiful blend of all the four and covers the whole education of the individual from the time of conception to the moment of death. He regards craft and industry as the medium of education. [15] He is of the opinion that if right kind of teachers are given, children will be taught the dignity of labor and learn to regard it as an integral part and as a means of their intellectual growth. He mainly suggests that handicrafts are to be taught not merely for productive work but for developing the intellect of the pupils. This helps them to be self-supporting. [16]

Education is popularly and correctly described as education through handicrafts but it is part by true. The root of the new education goes much deeper. It lies in the application of truth and love in every human activity. The notion of education through handicrafts rises from the contemplation of truth and love, which permeates every activity of the human life. True education should be made easily accessible to all. It should be of much use to every villager in his daily life. Such type of education does not depend on books. [17] The teacher's earning in this new education stands as the art of living. Therefore, both the teacher and the taught have to produce in the very act of teaching and learning, which enriches life from the very beginning. [18]

A) Discipline

Gandhi accepted the importance of discipline. But he was in favour of self-control discipline. He says that self-control discipline helped to be a good and ideal citizen. He stressed to keep the children in healthy environment. If the boys and girls do not learn discipline in their school days, money and time spent on their education is a national loss [19].

B) Teaching Methods

- Education through craft.
- Emphasis on activity and learning by self-experience.
- Correlation method.
- Lecture and questioning method.
- Mother tongue as medium of instruction.

IX. IMPORTANCE OF GANDHI'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS IN MODERN ERA

Gandhi's ideas on education are based on the study of psychological, sociological and economic principles, which is very useful in modern era. Gandhi's ideas on education not only prescribe new methods and techniques of education but also a new way of life. A scheme based on such foundations is certainly progressive and dynamic. Basic education is related to life. This is modern psychological maxims. It is based on the socio-economic structure which is very useful thought for poor students. Education should fit the child rather than that the child should fit education, is an educational maxim accepted as the days of Comenius, Rousseau and Pestalozzi. In spite of the repeated assertion of these principles, in the case of India it found expression only in the basic education. Nowadays in modern India the contact between school and community are decreasing so Gandhi's concept of intimate contact between the school and the local community helpful for increasing. Gandhi's thoughts; child works at his own pace and plans and executes in his own way which maxims is used in modern education system. In modern era, Childs curiosities are satisfied with the help of Gandhi's teaching methods: learning by doing, correlation, experimentation methods and work experience. His method shrawanmanannidhityasan (listening, thinking and practice) used in yoga in present time. The teacher of basic education has to be more active than the traditional teacher. The most distinctive features of basic education are correlation. Its emphasis is on co-operation as against competition. Basic education gives opportunities for self-expression which is related to modern psychological concept child-centered education. Basic education is Combination of Naturalism, Pragmatism and Idealism. He accepts that the discipline and training will be must if they wanted to develop their powers to the fullest. Gandhi advocated the ideals of truth, non-violence and moral values to achieve the ultimate truth of self-realisation. These values are important to develop character and moral values in student in present time, because in the present time students are more indisciplined. His message was honoured by the Kothari Commission (1964-66) in its recommendation for work-experience in school education as an integral part of the curriculum. Advocating work experience, the report observed that: "In our country, a revolutionary experiment was launched by Mahatma Gandhi in the form of basic education. The concept of work-experience is essential similar. It may be described as a redefined of his educational thinking in terms of a society launched on the road to industrialisation." Even now it is accommodated in the form of socially useful productive work. Craft is correlated with knowledge, life and environment. Co-education is there. This concept is useful for modern developing India because there is not available of much teachers, separate buildings, laboratories, libraries and computer labs etc. There is no verbalism as it is based on an activity and is full of direct experiences. Nowadays there are large demands of technical education such as B. Tech., M. Tech., B. C. A., M. C. A., B. B. A. Etc. This is related to Gandhi's craft-centered vocational skills development. Basic education is highly psychological, being related to the child's immediate life. Gandhi also addressed the issue of free and compulsory education. The application of Gandhi's concept of education was first suggested for children between the ages of 7 and 14 by Indian constitution. This was later on extended to all the stages. He opposed corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is banned by Indian government in present time according to RTE act 2009. Gandhi laid the foundation of a scheme of national education that was suited to our needs, requirements, genius, and aspirations for the future. It encompassed the physical, intellectual and spiritual faculties of the individual and their harmonious development. Gandhi speaks and struggle for untouchability, religion, mass education and women education in India, which results are shown in front of us. Gandhi worried about illiteracy of India. So they want to literate Indian peoples. Nowadays Indian literateracy rate is high approx 74.04%. Whatever may be its merits and demerits, we should not forget that education to Gandhi meant inspiring the children with a new ideology based upon personal purity and unselfish service, resulting in the creation of a society based upon truth and love. Gandhi formulated his scheme of basic education in the context of poverty, illiteracy, backwardness, frustration, and the degeneration of our masses, resulting from the disruption of traditional social institutions and the destruction of the small-scale cottage industry. The basic educational scheme was an essential ingredient of Gandhi's plan to eliminate the rural-urban divide and redress the structural and socio-economic imbalances that were abound in Indian society.

X. CONCLUSION

Although the people of middle and upper class of the society underestimated the system of basic education but still undoubtedly Gandhiji demonstrated a new scientific outlook through this new educational planning. In spite of various drawbacks, his socio-economical concern in it can never be neglected. The failure of it was caused by its mechanical application. The thought of Gandhi on Education is the basic way of life for all. An attempt has been made to analyze the impact assessment of educational philosophy of Gandhiji with special reference to curriculum of basic education. This study is primarily empirical as well as analytical in nature covering the areas of Gandhiji's educational philosophy such as view of life, historical background of basic education, meaning of basic education, main features of basic education and curriculum of basic education. It is not the fault of his theory.

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