

# Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and its Impact on Present Education System

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## ABSTRACT

Education is a natural and continuous process of life. It is education which makes man active, industrious and ensures his process in present and future. Gandhiji was a great educational reformer. He propounded his philosophy of Education which can be properly understood in the background of his philosophy of life. He has expressed his thoughts about education in the "Harijan" of 31st July, 1937 in the following words: "As a nation we are so backward in education that we cannot hope to fulfill our obligation to the nation in this respect in a given time during this generation, if this programme is to depend on money. I have, therefore, made bold, even at the risk of losing a reputation for constructive ability to suggest that education should be self-supporting. By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man- body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and women can be educated." The aims of education, the curriculum, the methods of teaching, the financial aspect of education, educational planning, women education, teachers education, discipline for the whole country- all these areas are analyzed in his philosophy of education. He believed that the new Social order based on truth and non-violence may remove every type of corruption and exploitation in society. Thus he developed his educational planning.

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## 1. Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi the father of the Nation is one of the greatest teachers of mankind for all times to come – "A prophet of its spiritual regeneration." He was not a metaphysician, nor did he exhibit any interest in logical and epistemological problems. He was a social philosopher and essentially a man of religion. Gandhiji was an experimenter of his life. The theory or philosophy that he gave to the world was the result of his own daily living, his own experience: it reflects his own philosophy based on spiritualism whose fundamentals are – "Truth" and "Non-violence". This is a novel gift to posterity.

According to him Truth which is the end and which is all pervading can be realized only through a way of living characterized by strict discipline, poverty, non-possession, non-sense of humanity, a discipline of mind, body and spirit. Ahimsa or non-violence magnifies one defect; and minimize those of the opponent. It regards the mole in one's own eye as a beam in the opponent's eye as a mole. To Gandhiji, human life is a kind of motivation. Its ultimate goal is the realization of truth or God. For him, God is truth because truth is that which cannot be destroyed. The truth can be realized by living a life of non-violence or 'Ahimsa'. Truth and Non-violence are like two sides of an unstamped metallic disc, so that no one can say, which is observe and which the reverse. So non-violence is the mean and Truth is the ends. Non-violence means the resistance to evil through love.

Gandhi's Conception of an ideal society can be summed up in one word, "Sarvodaya". It means all-round development of all people irrespective of class, creed, religion or caste. According to Gandhiji, in an ideal society, property would be held as trust by its owners and the whole be used for public

good. He, therefore, prescribed voluntary privation so that the less fortunate fellow being might be nursed, fed and clothed. Sarvodaya is a many-sided programme which envisages development of cottage industries, establishment of panchayats, eradication of untouchability, communal harmony and above all the fostering of a cooperative attitude for the uplift and welfare of the community as a whole.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the great philosopher and the charming leader of India always worked for the well being of mankind. It has rightly been said about the great karma yogi, who believed in self-reliance that his philosophy is a fine combination of knowledge and work. Gandhism is a body of ideas and principles that describes the inspiration, vision and the lifework of Gandhi. His approach to most issues was down to earth and historic be it social, cultural, economic, health and education. His philosophy was pragmatic and farsighted in nature. His model was not only holistic and practical but it was also highly decentralized and integrated. Gandhi was not an economist but gave his views on economic issues. Gandhi's ideas were simple and straight forward which would make India economically self-sufficient, satisfying its own needs in domestic market in a home grown way. Therefore to make India financially independent Gandhi introduced a new education system based upon his scientific research.

Gandhi regarded education as a preparation of future life. Gandhi said, "By education I mean an all-round development and drawing out of the best in child and man body, mind and spirit." The principle "self sufficiency" became one of the fundamental features of his basic education. He regards craft and industry as the medium of education. He mainly suggests that handicrafts are to be taught not merely for productive work

but for developing the physical and intellectual power of the pupils. This helps them to be self-supporting. This type of education is life centered but not textbook centered. Gandhi holds that craft, art, health and education should be integrated into one scheme. In this system of whole education, man can be imparted through the medium of a basic handicraft. Thus he wanted to re-establish Indian economy in a new order.

## 2. Objectives

On the basis of above regarding views in this paper, an attempt has been made to discuss the following objectives –

1. To study Gandhiji's contribution to educational thought and practice for all round development of a child.
2. To study the relevance of Gandhiji's Education in the present century.

## 3. Methodology

The present study has been carried out with descriptive method. Secondary data were collected from different books, journals, published articles, Magazine, Newspaper, World Wide Web materials.

## 4. Aims of Education

According to Gandhiji the true aim of education is to drawing out of the best in child and man body, mind and spirit. The system of education must produce efficient citizen and true leaders of the country. One of the important aspects of Gandhiji's educational philosophy is basic or technical education, which means the knowledge, or education that could help rural people in the promotion of village handicrafts or to establish cottage industries. The ultimate purpose behind this attempt was to make young men and women self-reliant in the economic field. Even in the modern perspective his idea or basic education is well worth and it has no clash with the concept of today's job oriented or technical education. In fact, Gandhiji wants the students to prepare themselves for technical knowledge right from the days of his primary level or education; it can prove to be a milestone in the direction of value education.

Secondly, education should aim at life oriented teaching; child centered and craft centered education which bridge gaps between theory and practice in education. The education must reduce the evils prejudices among the intellectual and manual labour.

Thirdly, some of the person is born with some innate potentialities which are to develop through educational processes. Education should aim at developing in child all the knowledge simultaneously.

Fourthly, Education should aim at training mind which develops the realization of soul. Thus the training of the soul refines the emotions and impulses of the child and gives rise to the deepest feeling for love, sympathy, cooperation, brotherhood and developed the source of Ahimsa. Self realization is the summum bonum of life and education.

Fifthly, Financial self-reliance is a primary aim of education. Gandhi wanted an education which will enable the learners to stand on his own feet.

Sixthly, Knowledge must build character. The aim of education is to develop bravery, self – confidence, honesty and devotion in the mind of the learner.

Seventhly, Gandhi had a firm faith in self-realization, the way through which man can achieve spiritual knowledge and self-fulfilment.

## 5. Curriculum

The curriculum of basic education should be completely reoriented, so as to eliminate narrow, exclusive, competitive nationalism and emphasis the ideal of a united world. Thus the curriculum would set Indian history & Indian geography against a background of world history with special reference to social and cultural development of a man. The curriculum would also provide for the study of fundamental universal ethics. Thus Gandhiji suggested the following studies in the Basic Scheme in order to develop the whole man—the intellectual, physical and spiritual powers :- 1. A basic craft in accordance with the local conditions, 2. Mother tongue, 3. Arithmetic, 4. Social Studies, 5. General Science including Health and Hygiene, Astronomy, 6. Art-Music and Painting, 7. Hindi, 8. Home Science for girls and 8. Physical Education.

## 6. Method of Teaching

According to Gandhi, the method of teaching should be such as it provides to the child freedom, a chance to come into closer contact with the teacher, a chance to be an investigator, observer and experimenter. Gandhiji once wrote in young India (1921) that "School and Colleges should become almost, if not wholly, Self-supporting." He then emphasized that teaching should be done through art and crafts, work and play, voluntary activity and self-chosen activity. The teaching methods in the Gandhian scheme of education can be deduced from his Basic Education. It consists of the the following methods:

1. Activity method: All true education is based on activities and experiences of real situations. Clear concepts and ideas of children can be developed, when sense organs are directly involved in concrete objects and activities.
2. Learning by doing: Doing activities of gardening of craft requires involvement of entire personality of the child. As such the child develops both mental and manual skills, interests, attitudes and values.
3. Method of correction: Fragment of knowledge of different subjects is neither useful nor meaningful. The child should be first taught a basic craft and all the other subjects such as arithmetic, language, history etc. should be taught through the craft as center of correction.
4. Method of learning by experiment: This method lays emphasis on practical work. Through this method, a child studies the cause of origin of different problems their present state and comprehend them.

According to Gandhi, Teacher is the real architect of the nation. The teacher could develop the creative and self-supporting attitude, clean knowledge and understanding of physiological, physical problems of the child. Teacher should

be impartial and should have respect for democratic institutions like school and colleges. Lady teachers should be appointed in a primary school.

## 7. Discipline

Regarding discipline Gandhi advocates self-discipline in education as the children have clean and tender mind. The children should be given to the full freedom in activities that lead the development of discipline and they could develop the discipline through free activities.

## 8. Woman's Education

Education of little boys and girls could be more effectively handled by women than men. For this purpose there was need of educated mothers. So he advocated that women should have the same facilities for receiving the education as men were necessary.

## 9. Creed of Non-Violence

The unique features of Gandhiji's educational philosophy is application of the laws of non-violence in the training of the child. The teaching of non-violence and truth would develop the self discipline and self restraint in child and child would learn to dedicate his life for the well being of the society. The child could accomplish his activities through the sense of love and fraternity which save the child from evils, hatred and exploitation in social life.

## 10. Social Uplift and Welfare

Education must be based on social good welfare for all, and must uplift the human aspect rather than the mechanistic aspect. National education must build our society free from exploitation and class-distinction and ideal state. These ideals must be put into actual practice in the school. The fundamental principles of his social philosophy are brotherhood, citizenship, economic equality and Sarvodaya samaj. Love, Ahimsa, truth and justice were the chief characteristics of sarvodaya samaj. A society based on love and Ahimsa would remove all types of exploitations- social, economic, religious and political. In such a society every type of man and woman even the child can enjoy the fundamental rights.

## 11. Relevance of Gandhiji's education in the present century

From the above discussion it is found that Gandhiji's educational thought and practice has a great relevance towards the present century. Because, his philosophy of education is found to be sound from psychological, Physical

and social point of view. This philosophy has been *Psychologically* appropriate, because children appreciate learning through their own activities. The activity-centered method in school will establish a correction between real life and mental life. From *physical* point of view also this philosophy is appropriate because learning things in this manner will make the children healthy. From *social* point of view it is appropriate because through this children can learn the importance of labour, gets an idea of self-reliance by picking up some productive work, and inculcates sense of social responsibilities.

Another significance of Gandhiji's Education which has a great relevance in the present century is that we all live in an age of unpredicted violence with constant threats of intolerance and fanaticism which cannot make our lives peaceful. People lost sight of inner self. The ultimate goal of education is 'self realization' in last in the digital world. Thus education should make the learner aware and able to live in harmony with oneself and with others. Gandhiji's concept of truth and non-violence is a new dimension in education for which a strong base of human and social values is to be built for conservation of human civilization.

## 12. Conclusion

From the above discussion it is seen that certain fundamental principles like equity, social justice, Non-Violence, human dignity, economy well being and cultural self-respect are intensive to Gandhiji's educational philosophy and all of these can be subsumed into the broader term and it is Swaraj. Gandhi's main goal was to reconstruct the society which will be free from any kind of distresses. Gandhi's thoughts have great impact on Indian people. These have significant importance for the development of socio-economic condition of the people. Gandhi is recognized as the great leader of action all over the universe. His relevance in different fields is unquestionable and unchallengeable. His ideas were very constructive. If these ideas are implemented in India, there would have been little space for various socio-economic problems in the country. Although critics have underestimated the system of basic education but still undoubtedly Gandhi demonstrated a new scientific outlook through this new educational planning which will help in enhancement of cottage industry and thereby upgrading the standard of living of the common people. The failure of it was mainly due to its improper mechanical application but not the fault of the base of his theory. In a scenario of various problems there is an urgent need to rethink over Gandhi's ideology. What is needed is to implement his thoughts into practice with some modifications. In spite of various drawbacks, his ideology can never be neglected.

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