

Gandhiji's View on Education: Relevance in Present Scenario

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Abstract: Mahatma Gandhi, was a well-known Indian educationist, social reformer, and independence fighter. He placed a strong emphasis on a person's overall or holistic development. In addition to considering human spiritual development and placed a high value on social change. Every aspect of schooling incorporates his educational philosophy. Gandhi recommended an educational program called *Nayi Talim*, or Basic Education, which aims to train and educate all children to achieve both the objective of a just social order and their own ethical life goals. Mahatma Gandhi's views on education, which affect all societal classes worldwide will be highlighted in this essay. With the aid of a scientific perspective, this paper also attempts to analyze the overall benefits and drawbacks of basic education as well as its applicability in contemporary society.

Keywords: Basic education, Educational Philosophy, Self-realization, Spirituality and Character-building.

Introduction:

Born in India in modern times, M. K. Gandhi is a beautiful and universally kind person. With regard to India, he emphasized the importance of a traditional spiritual attitude along with the full development of knowledge in the modern world. Gandhiji is an educationist, a socialist, a philosopher, and a politician. He combines *Jñāna* yoga and Karma yoga in his daily life. Gandhiji believed that education was the foundation of everyone's existence. An analysis of Gandhiji's educational philosophy and its impact has been attempted, with particular regard to the notion of his basic education curriculum. The philosopher Mahatma Gandhi had a keen interest in all facets of human affairs. Gandhiji was well versed in both Western and Indian philosophy. Gandhiji's thoughts were profoundly influenced the society of South Africa of that time. This study, which is mostly factual and analytical in character, covers Gandhiji's educational philosophy in a number of areas, including his outlook on life, the history of basic education, its significance, its key components, and its curriculum. We want to stress on one important thing that Gandhiji was a very open-minded seeker of truth.

Gandhiji's view on education:

The thinker and inspiring figure Mahatma Gandhi had a special and deep understanding of the purpose of education. According to him, education ought to empower humans on all levels-academically, morally, socially, and spiritually. Gandhiji's educational theory, sometimes known as Basic Education, places a strong emphasis on social change, self-reliance, and holistic development. His broader beliefs in self-reliance, social justice, truth (Satya), and non-violence (Ahimsa) served as the foundation for his educational philosophy. Gandhiji educational theories were pragmatic, focused on moral, intellectual and physical growth, and emphasized the value of hard work and community service. He especially said that "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man - body, mind and spirit." (Dr.S.S.Neheru, 2014) Gandhiji thought that preparing students for a life of service for the nation's reconstruction was the main goal of education. He promoted an educational system that gave people the tools they needed to address the nation's socio-economic issues and lessen suffering. Gandhi saw education as a tool for fostering individual and collective

self-reliance. His *Nai Talim* (Basic Education) model was centered on teaching the rural populace occupational skills and information. This would support local livelihoods and crafts. Now the question arises here what is the goal of basic education according to Gandhiji? The goals of basic education (New education) are to give children the foundation of Indian culture, satisfy their basic needs and interests, such as their passion for creative activity, and build strong bonds with the fundamental jobs of society. When we acknowledge that education should be a function of time, place, and circumstance, Gandhiji's contribution to education is significant. Indian philosophy, history, customs, and culture provide the foundation of basic education. In Indian society, it draws attention to the environment. Gandhiji was aware of the shortcomings of the English educational model that had been introduced to India. It removed India's youth and children from their homeland. Gandhiji created the Indian educational system by supporting the New Education. Basic education is a national priority. It is consistent with Indian times, locations, and conditions.

Gandhiji believed that, "True education is that which draws out and stimulates the intellectual and physical faculties of the children". (Purkait, 2020) He provided a rationale for the educational system based on science. He believed the development of spiritual character strength is the aim of education. The body reaction to the mind is education. Educational psychologists continue to recognize the teacher as a tool for the holistic development of the individual. He mentioned using the mother tongue when instructing. Gandhiji advocated for unpaid education and for harmony between the family and school environments. He advocated universal education, which the government is currently attempting to implement. Through basic education, which stands for a new craft-centered approach full of spirit and self-realization that always pursues truth, he hoped to bring about a silent social revolution. Finally, a critical assessment of Gandhian educational philosophy is conducted based on the applicability of basic education in the modern era.

Gandhiji made the first attempt to create an indigenous educational system in British India, which makes his contribution to education unique. An alien imperial educational system was brought to India with the start of British colonial authority, which ran counter to India's long-standing, distinctive, and comprehensive holistic educational system. Gandhiji felt that teaching in local languages and decentralizing education would help individuals better comprehend their surroundings and culture. This would foster responsible citizenship and deepen their ties to the community. Gandhiji believed that the best way to inculcate moral and spiritual qualities like empathy, cooperation, and non-violence was via education. He believed that effective social reform movements and the advancement of the country might be fueled by these human qualities in conjunction with independence. Gandhiji saw that education as a powerful tool for bringing about social transformation. He believed that education must prepare the child to face the grim realities of life and enable him to adjust with his immediate environment for complete living.

Idealism, Naturalism and pragmatism: He combines pragmatism, naturalism, and idealism in his view of educational philosophy. He firmly believed in God, which according to him is universal energy that pervades everything. The foundation of Gandhiji's ideology is idealism, whereas pragmatism and naturalism contribute in putting his ideas into practice. According to him, the ultimate aim of life should be realization of God, which can only be attained via truth and non-violence. He placed a strong emphasis on the balanced growth of the individual's moral, spiritual, mental, and physical aspects and thus his view can be said as an idealist position. Moreover, Gandhiji was also known to be fundamentally an experimentalist and a pragmatic educational philosopher. John Dewey's view of school as a 'doing and thinking' institution is also applicable in Gandhiji's vision. Each educational philosophy depends on activity principle. His pursuit of knowledge and truth served as the means by which his life's ambition was realized. He attempted to apply his philosophy to the realization of the development and creation of an ideal society in a number of his educational endeavors. Gandhiji was adamant about establishing a new social structure founded on non-violence and the truth. He thus is considered to be a practical-idealist. In the view of Dr. M.S. Patel: "Gandhiji's philosophy of education is naturalistic in its setting, idealistic in its aims and pragmatic in its method and programme of work". (Purkait, 2020, p. 431)

Aim of education according to Gandhiji:

Gandhiji believed that education should focus on fostering holistic growth, which includes mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects. He underlined that education should develop a well-rounded person who can deal with life's

obstacles with fortitude and discernment. He was adamant that character development should be the main goal of education. Gandhi emphasized that in order to produce morally pure individuals who make valuable contributions to society, it is crucial to instill ideals such as truth, non-violence, humility, and empathy. Instilling self-reliance in people was another major goal of Gandhiji's educational system. He believed that education was more than only acquiring knowledge or skills to support oneself. It sought to fully develop a person's personality, intelligence, physical health, and spirituality. He believed that developing moral and spiritual qualities as well as preparing students for a life of service and character development were the true goals of education. A learner's mind, body, and character should all be developed holistically through education. Learning from experiences, the environment, and nature should be added to what is learned from literature. Student ties to their culture and social reality should be strengthened rather than strained by education.

According to him, education should give pupils the information and skills required to become economically independent and less reliant on others. Gandhiji believed that education might help people develop a feeling of social responsibility. He urged pupils to perform community service because he recognized that real learning happens when people actively work to better the lives of others. According to him, education should instill in people the values of seeking the truth, speaking the truth, and living a non-violent life in all respects. Gandhiji promoted education that cut beyond economic, caste, and creed divides. With equitable access to educational possibilities, he sought to build a more inclusive society.

Gandhiji's teachings of truth (Satya) and non-violence (Ahimsa) served as the foundation for his educational goals. Gandhiji felt that education should not just prepare students for success in the classroom or in the workplace, but also for obstacles they may face in real life. In the similar way Krishnamurti especially said "Education is not only learning from books, memorizing some fact, but also learning how to look, how to listen to what the book are saying, whether they are saying something true or false". (Krishnamurti, 1998) Vivekananda and Gandhiji had a belief in "character- building education" . (Purkait, 2020, p. 435) Character results from purity of personal life. Gandhiji argued that children learn best in their native tongue and was a staunch opponent of early schooling that was taught in English. Indian culture would be preserved and education would gain greater significance. Gandhiji believed that true education included the development of virtues like compassion, truth, and non-violence in addition to reading. Gandhiji's educational program places a strong focus on the value of manual labor by encouraging active participation in productive work. Working by hand is not at all degrading on the contrary, it broadens the heart and enhances the personality.

Gandhiji proposed a highly thorough and useful educational system that is appropriate for our nation's intellect. It is a humane and constructive system that is incorporated with the goals and requirements of national life. He offered a workable educational plan founded on the values of social justice, equity, human dignity, economic prosperity, and cultural self-respect. Following Mahatma Gandhiji's example, we have made Basic Education the standard for national education. This type of education is unique in that it bases the entire educational process on productive employment. Gandhiji's basic education concept is sound and beneficial, and it can serve as a guide in the current situation. The moral principles and employability aspects of Gandhiji's basic education call for a change of the current educational system at the primary level. Gandhiji emphasizes education that is child-centered. According to him, each child brings their own experiences to school, which must be recreated. Mahatma Gandhi struggled against the ills of society as a true social worker. He was often saying that we ought to begin our own social work if we desire to do it. The child has lots of opportunity to express her creativity and grow in uniqueness. Along with the quest of knowledge, he wished for children to develop purity in their thoughts, words, and actions. This idea lies at the heart of every contemporary educational system in the globe.

He recommended a curriculum that was both highly wide and practical. A psychologically sound integrated curriculum is required. Instead of encouraging rivalry, schools ought to encourage collaboration. Self-control, not fear or punishment, should be the source of discipline. Gandhiji's educational philosophy is most significant because it places a strong emphasis on connecting classroom instruction to societal demands. He intended to use a system of learning while earning to accomplish this goal. He placed a high value on learning a craft. The curriculum of today's schools makes it clear that work experience and effective, socially beneficial labor are valued. His opinions on early childhood education are still very much in vogue. For the early phases of life to grow properly, parent education is emphasized. His focus on mother tongue instruction has been the prevailing idea at this time. Gandhiji believed that education was a way to improve society

as a whole, not just the individual. Like Gandhiji he wanted to establish a social order based on socio-economic justice in which “There will be no beggars or beggars, neither tall nor short, neither millionaire entrepreneurs nor half-starving employees”. (Behera, 2022) Gandhiji advocated for all boys and girls aged seven to fourteen to have free and mandatory education. He developed an educational plan that would address the issue of mass education in a useful manner while also being in line with Indian culture and civilization. Gandhiji put a high value on education's cultural purpose. He believes that education's cultural component is more significant than its literary component.

The development of the inner man, the one who always seeks to ensure the efflorescence of spirituality in the exercise of artistic tranquility already inside him, is seldom aided by education for the exclusive purpose of intellectual growth. Gandhiji notably advocates: “I hold that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, e.g. hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc. in other words, an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lopsided affair.” (Chakrabarti, 2011) This notion seems similar to the Krishnamurti's education. If we look at Krishnamurti's philosophy of education, we can see that according to him, “Education is not just to pass examination, take a degree and a job, get married and settle down, but also to be able to listen to the bird, to see the sky, to see the extraordinary beauty of a tree, and the shape of the hills, and to feel with them, to be really, directly in touch with them”. (Krishnamurti, 1998, p. 8) According to his theories and experiments, true education creates cooperation and unity. An aesthetic conception of altruism in terms of thinking for others in and around us-*parārtha-bhāvana* is realized when Gandhi talks about Sarvodaya. He notably said “I should love all the man not only in India but in the world ... belonging to the different faiths, to become better people by contact with one another, and if that happens, the world will be much better place to live in than it is today. I plead for the broadest toleration, and I am working to that end. I ask people to examine every religion from the point of the religionists themselves. I do not expect the India of my dream to develop one religion, i.e. to be wholly Hindu, or wholly Christian or wholly Musalman, but I want to be wholly tolerant, with its religions working side by side with one another.” (Chakrabarti, 2011)

Mahatma Gandhiji said, “True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of the children” (Dr.S.S.Neheru, 2014, p. 113) So the aim of education according to him is the complete development of the child, its physical, mental and spiritual aspects. Like Rousseau, Gandhiji also believed child Centric education. According to Rousseau, “whether play is seen as the recapitulation of the activities of primitive man or as a rehearsal of future life, adult activities, or as a means of discharging the energy of native propensities, all agreed that it is nature's mode of education” (R.K.Panchal, 2007). Gandhiji states that, “I value individual freedom, but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He was risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individuality to the requirements of social progress”. (Dr.S.S.Neheru, 2014, p. 113) Gandhian education was challenged by Jawaharlal Nehru and B.R. Ambedkar for being anti-industrial and insufficient in training pupils for a contemporary, technologically advanced society. They highlighted the need for India to have a solid grounding in technological know-how and scientific reasoning, which they felt Gandhiji's educational philosophy overlooked. Further we would like to mention here Krishnamurti's view in this context. If we look at the Jiddu Krishnamurti's philosophy of education we can see that, according to him, “Technological progress does solve certain kinds of problems for some people at one level, but it introduces wider and deeper issues too. To live at one level, disregarding the total process of life, is to invite misery and destruction”. (Krishnamurti, Education and Significance of life, 1992) Here we may observe a similar tone in Krishnamurti and Gandhiji's ideology. Gandhiji's Basic Education or *Nai Talim* method was challenged by Rabindranath Tagore, who said that it placed too much emphasis on manual work and practical training at the detriment of intellectual and creative growth. Tagore, felt Gandhiji's approach was anti-modern and restricted students access to the arts, sciences, and literature. Like seen in Santiniketan, Tagore advocated for a more humanistic, universal, and liberal approach to education.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Gandhiji viewed education as a tool to achieve a goal rather than an end in and of itself. It is regarded as a tool to support both the demands of the country and the holistic development of each person's personality. Gandhiji's idea of education appears to be significant in light of today's issues, which include terrorism, violence, moral decay, unemployment, inequality, and student unrest. Gandhiji believed that education should cultivate culture in the hands and in the heart in addition to increasing knowledge. Gandhiji is also interested in the development of character. He believed that a good citizen is built on a foundation of strong character. The ideal residents of Gandhiji's modest, self-sufficient communities would be hardworking, self-respecting, and giving individuals who lived in communities and cooperatives. In order to help youngsters grow their minds, bodies, and souls in harmony and to satisfy their future requirements, he hoped that some local handicrafts would be developed as a form of instruction. Gandhiji's educational ideas are applicable to development and offer answers to contemporary issues including poverty, unemployment, corruption, and many more.

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