

Relevance of Gandhian Educational Philosophy In Present Context

Paper Submission: 10/10/2021, Date of Acceptance: 23/10/2021, Date of Publication: 24/10/2021

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The objective of this paper is to bring out all areas of Gandhian Educational Philosophy with a view to Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi, commonly known as the 'Father of Nation' lives with the accumulation of Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga. In this context, Education is more a way of life, an instrument for character building that enables us to achieve our goals and ideals of life and to determine the course of thought and actions. The Gandhian thought on Education is the basic way of everyone's life. He focused on traditional undeniably a great proponent of Indian modern education and his basic scheme of education sought to individual, social, moral, political, and economic development of man. Thus, an attempt has been made to evaluate the impact of Gandhi's educational philosophy with special reference to basic education. This study is analytical as well as empirical in nature that covers the areas of educational thought of Gandhiji and its relevance to present context.

Keywords: Educational Philosophy, Basic Education, Craft-centred Education, Self-supporting Education, Non-violence

Introduction

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, universally known as the 'Father of Nation' was a great philosopher, lives with the accumulation of Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga. In this perspective, Education is more a way of life, an instrument for character building that enables us to achieve our goals and ideals of life and to determine the course of thought and actions. Educational thought of Gandhiji is the basic way of everyone's life. Gandhiji was a leader, a socio-political reformer and an educationist, born in Modern India. He focused on tradition and was undeniably a great proponent of Indian modern education and his basic scheme of education sought to individual, social, moral, political, and economic development of man. Thus, an effort has been made to analyze the impact of Gandhi's educational philosophy with special reference to basic education. This study is analytical as well as empirical in nature so as to covers the areas of educational thought of Gandhiji and its relevance to present context.

Mahatma Gandhi was a promoter of peace as well as non-violence and also the champion of Indian freedom movement. He considered education as an effective force for social reconstruction. For him, education is an activity that is essential not only for social development but also for political, economic and moral development. He cherished an educational philosophy that he tried to work out in his Basic Scheme of Education. Basic Education is the best contribution of Gandhiji to Indian educational thought and practice.

Historical Appraisal Of Gandhi's Basic Education

Gandhiji developed a scheme of education after numerous experiments more than a period of 40 years to materialize the vision of society. That scheme of education is popularly recognized as Basic Education or *Buniyadi Shiksha* or Wardha Scheme of Education or else *Nai Talim* or new education. Gandhiji wrote his thought on education in the course of a series of article in Harijan in June 31, 1937, that later developed into Wardha Scheme of Basic Education. He positioned his Basic Scheme of Education to the country in Wardha Conference in 1937. He applied the idiom basic to depict the scheme of education as it is intimately related with the basic necessities and curiosity of children, and also intimately related to the natives living in villages. The aim of Basic Education is to permit the students to obtain the desired fruits through their own actions. Once Gandhiji declared "I have given many things to India But this system of Education together with its technique is, I feel, that the best of them. I do not think to have anything

better to offer the country".¹ Thus, it is better felt the importance of Basic education from the above statement.

His deep interest in education had always been profound and abiding, in spite of his other preoccupations – social, political, religious and economic. He gave a format of education to contemporary India that can be identified as the original blue print of the national scheme of education that is value based, employment oriented and mass oriented. This provided for manual work as well as intellectual

Gandhi's Idea on Basic Education

Gandhiji expressed his thought on education in Harijan and wrote, "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 nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training".² According to him, literacy was not education; rather it's a means of education. Education means an all round development of personality. Handicrafts can draw out the development of mind and spirit from the child. He believed by his own experience, that handicraft must be taught scientifically to the children. So that they could get a practical knowledge on every craft that could spontaneously teach them every possible subject in a joyful manner. Thus, the children would have an all-round development in the learning process.

Educational philosophy of Gandhiji was not an upshot of any study of modern or ancient educational movements in India or elsewhere. His theory on education is 'original', 'new' and 'epoch making'. It evolved out of his wide and extensive experiences of the social, political, and economic life of his nation. He was a realistic philosopher in education and an experimentalist also. His experiment with education and truth were the instrument for the realization of his ideals of life. He wanted to create an ideal society basing on truth along with non-violence. Gandhiji thought that the revolutionary transform of educational structure could assist in bringing the silent social rebellion. The Basic scheme of Education placed for a new approach and spirit to all education.

Characteristic of Basic Education

The characteristics of basic education realize how to be better summarized as a two-fold objective, each part were integrally bound with each other. Each Indian boys and girls ought to develop as citizen of another social order, basing on co-operative effort as foreseen by basic education and through comprehension of their responsibilities, rights with obligations in such a society. Each child ought to encompass opportunity for the harmonious and balanced development of everyone of his faculties and ought to obtain the aptitude for self-confidence in each facet of a healthy, clean and cultured life accompanied by a perceptive of moral and social proposition of such a life. Thus, the basic intentions were to bring a social change just as all round development of the children.

Free and compulsory Education

According to Gandhi's point of view, free and compulsory education should be imparted for every boys and girls between seven to fourteen years. He believed that primary education must be available for all, as education is the birth right of all. Due to poverty most of the parents can't afford the cost of education, therefore, it should be free. Also many people do not realize the value of education in their life and they don't send their children to school, thus, it should be compulsory. Gandhiji remarked in Harijan, "Education ought to be for them (the people) a kind of insurance against unemployment. The child at the end of 14 years _ after he had finished his 7 years _ is to be discharged as earning units....."³

Craft-centred Education

Craft should be the centre of education. As said by Gandhiji, the utmost development of mind with soul was possible only through some handicraft. Thus, the education of child should be started with some useful and productive craft like agriculture, spinning, gardening, weaving, metal and wood work. This craft is not an additional subject in curriculum of basic education; rather it's to be taught as a means of education. He suggested teaching handicraft not for manufacture but for developing skill among children. Each school can be prepared self-supporting with the introduction of some useful craft as the centre of all instruction. Handicraft must not be taught mechanically but taught as scientifically.

Kothari Commission (1964-66) made an effort to interpret the Gandhian viewpoint when they proposed to initiate the idea of Work Experience at the entire stages of education in the nation. They examined the process of modernization through which our nation is passing. This concept has been also shaped in the form of Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW) by Ishwarbhai Patel Committee (1977).

Self-supporting Education

Self-supporting education is another important fundamental aspect of basic education, which implies the engagement of children in some productive work to cover some part of their educational expenses that would prepare them for 'earning while learning'. A little earning has a greater importance in their life and provides satisfaction and develops self-confidence. Gandhiji believed that a better social order can be created if there is economic independence which is the basis of all exploitation- social, moral and political. This self-supporting education aspires for a higher aim to prepare the individual for life. Gandhiji had opined, "The test of success is not self-supporting character, but that the whole man has been drawn out through the teaching of handicraft in a scientific manner. The self-supporting part should be a logical corollary to the fact that the pupil has learnt the use of all his faculties".⁴

All Round Development

- Basic education is intended for educating the body, intellect and spirit of the child, which asks for the total development the child.

Mother-tongue as the Medium of Instruction

Gandhiji understood that the utmost handicap of existing education system was that learning was being communicated through the medium of English. This considerably affected the development of understanding, clarity of ideas and precision of thought. On the contrary, Mother-tongue would facilitate the children to communicate clearly, freely and lucidly in speaking and writing, to recognize clearly the prosperous heritage of people's emotions, thoughts and aspirations, to apply the contents along with indices and to check with reference books and dictionaries.

Correlated teaching

Gandhian Basic education visualizes that the whole instruction must be imparted through the medium of purposeful activity. Craft was initially the centre of correlation of all knowledge. He wanted an effective and natural correlation between the craft and other subjects in addition to the coordination among all subjects. This principle of correlation is a sound educational principle as it has purposeful and meaningful knowledge for the children and also practical utility for the children.

Dignity of Labor

Gandhi's Basic education instills the intrinsic worth of dignity of labour, an enthusiastic sense of responsibility and discipline

His creed of Non-violence

- A very outstanding attribute of Gandhiji's educational philosophy was the relevance of the law of Ahimsa/ non-violence in the training of children as a prospective world citizen. He wanted to create a generation, who believed in non-violence, who knew to live in harmony that was based on mutual love and respect, sympathy, cooperation and admiration for members of various communities. All that was possible only when we taught that to children from the very beginning of their life. Gandhiji saw that it might be realized through Basic education.

Relevance of Gandhian Educational Philosophy in Present Context

The most important point of Gandhi's Basic scheme of education is its prominence on school education to the requirements of the society. Gandhiji wanted to achieve this goal by learning while earning. The idea of Basic Education of Gandhiji has found the utmost consideration which endeavors all round development of Individual character. He gave more importance on 3 H's for example - Head, Hand and Heart, instead of on 3 R's for example - Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. As far as he might be concerned, the genuine development of head, heart and soul are essential for an agreeable arrangement of education.⁵ Right education pulls out also arouses the intellectual, spiritual and physical faculties. He opined, the purpose of education ought to be built the entire man and foster his integral personality. The intend of education must be to create to the complete possibilities of energy of children. Education is the method of bringing out the thing developing in an individual. "Literacy in itself is no education. It is not the end of education or even the beginning".⁶

Before Gandhiji's concept of Basic Education could take off and be marginalized for the development of society, probably won't be carried out with right spirit and thus, there is anxiety in the intellect of the educationist concerning the usefulness, adequacy along with relevance for contemporary time. Regardless of whether man of higher thoughts constantly consider the breakdown of the present educational framework, that has just duplicated the digit of seeming educated on unemployment and this enormous multitude of educated on unemployment is fitting a threat for the country and society both. On the other hand, there is an anticipation to find the concept of value education in Gandhian philosophy, to protect the civilization from the threat and all out obliteration.

Gandhi's philosophy of free and compulsory education has the relevance in existing scenario and because we have the poverty and illiteracy problems in our society. His views on craft-centred education and self-supporting education have also relevance in present context, as we have problems of self dependency and unemployment in our society. There is an enormous need of implementation of Gandhian educational philosophy among the youth. So that, the problem of unemployment can be removed in the society and values can be created in their mind, which will save society. Gandhiji left plentiful precious sayings for the society to fight for righteousness in society in a non-violent way. He stated "Non-violence", "is a tree of slow growth. It grows imperceptibly but surely".⁷ Further he said "Goodness must be joined with knowledge, courage and conviction. One must cultivate the fine discriminating quality which goes with spiritual courage and character".⁸ It can be surely assumed that, subsequent to the great Buddha and Jesus, Gandhiji once more confirmed that non-violence could also be one of the effectual instrument of social change in contemporary period. He effectively demonstrated to a world, exhausted with wars and continuing demolition which observance to Non-violence and Truth is not intended for individual behavior only but can be useful in global affairs too. Gandhian educational philosophy has more relevance in the twenty-first century, as he will inspire the present generations of human being struggling for the goodness of the society.

Objective of the Study

1. To study Gandhi's idea on basic education.
2. To present the relevance of Gandhian philosophy in present context

Conclusion

Gandhiji has excellent contribution toward education as he was the exceptional Indian who advocated the Basic scheme of education which was based upon the fundamental values of Indian culture and civilization. Gandhiji wanted to translate his ideals, thought and values into practice. This study exposed that Gandhi's educational philosophy highlighted mainly on free and compulsory education, craft-centred education, self-supporting education, correlated teaching, dignity of labour and creed on non-violence. His philosophy of education has relevance in the present context. An attempt has been set to analyze the impact of Gandhi's educational philosophy with special reference to features of Basic Education. This study is basically analytical as well as empirical in nature, covering the areas of Gandhian educational philosophy on Basic Education. In fact, his educational views and thoughts have significance relevance in present context

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