

## AN EXCLUSIVE SURVEY ON THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIS CONCEPT ON BASIC EDUCATION

DR. SONU KUMAR

Assistant Professor (Education), DDM Sai College of Education, Kallar, Jalari, Nadaun, Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh, India

SUNITA DEVI

PRT in Lotus International Convent School, Sadwan Kaloha, Rakkar, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India

### ABSTRACT

Education is the basic requirement of human being to fulfil all the needs and aspirations as it the only way by which a human being can perform his/her sincere endeavours to achieve his/her pre-determined desired goal of life. It is education through which the whole mankind of the world civilization is undertaking the essential strives to thriving out their best and to reveal the mysteries of the universe. With the advancement and progress of the world heritage, the system of education has also been undergoing with radical changes in its consummation. Generation after generation, the system of education needs favourable implementation, evaluation and final desirable outcome to be drawn out through the effective performance and operations by the efficient management structure in education and proper accomplishment and prosecution in the educational planning and policies. Central government as well as state government are thriving their utmost important role to construct some efficacious plans and procedures in the forms of educational policies to have some essential productive outcomes favourable to the people of the motherland so that the true aim of education seems to have its fulfilment in real sense. There are wide scopes of diversity among learners undoubtedly. Henceforth, while constructing such fruitful plannings, the curriculum experts, designers, educators etc need to take great care of the need of the learners, society and time. Many educational thinkers and experts have given their convincing serviceable experience and guidance to such experts which is necessarily being desirable to undertake remarkably for studies. The educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi is one such didactic experience to such experts.

**KEY WORDS:** Civilization, Culture, Generation, Construction, Structure, Implementation, Policies, Curriculum and Didactic.

### INTRODUCTION

**Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi** (2 October 1869–30 January 1948) was an Indian lawyer, anti-colonial nationalist and political ethicist who employed nonviolent resistance to lead the successful campaign for India's independence from British rule. He inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. The honorific **Mahatma** (from Sanskrit 'great-souled, venerable'), first applied to him in South Africa in 1914, is now used throughout the world.

Born and raised in a Hindu family in coastal Gujarat, Gandhi trained in the law at the Inner Temple, London, and was called to the bar at age 22 in June 1891. After two uncertain years in India, where he was unable to start a successful law practice, he moved to South Africa in 1893 to represent an Indian merchant in a lawsuit. He went on to live in South Africa for 21 years. It was here that Gandhi raised a family and first employed nonviolent resistance in a campaign for civil rights. In 1915, aged 45, he returned to India and soon set about

organizing peasants, farmers, and urban labourers to protest against excessive land-tax and discrimination.

Assuming leadership of the Indian National Congress in 1921, Gandhi led nationwide campaigns for easing poverty, expanding women's rights, building religious and ethnic amity, ending untouchability, and, above all, achieving *swaraj* or self-rule. Gandhi adopted the short *dhoti* woven with hand-spun yarn as a mark of identification with India's rural poor. He began to live in a self-sufficient residential community, to eat simple food, and undertake long fasts as a means of both introspection and political protest. Bringing anti-colonial nationalism to the common Indians, Gandhi led them in challenging the British-imposed salt tax with the 400 km (250 mi) Dandi Salt March in 1930 and in calling for the British to quit India in 1942. He was imprisoned many times and for many years in both South Africa and India.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research paper has been written by keeping the following undermentioned objectives in mind:

- To study Gandhiji's teachings as well as philosophy of life.
- To study the legacy of Mahatma Gandhiji.
- To study the principal features of Gandhiji's Educational philosophy.
- To study the aim of education as per the philosophy of Gandhiji.
- To study about the curriculum and methods of teaching as ascribed by the philosophy of Gandhiji.
- To study about the concept of discipline and role/qualities of teacher according to philosophical ideas of Gandhiji.
- To study about Gandhiji's famous concept of basic Education.
- To study about the relevance of Gandhiji's educational philosophy in modern India.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research paper under study has been written through the viewpoint to investigate and analyze the philosophical background and ideology of Gandhiji in association to the concept of 'Basic Education' as according to the all-round development of child, educational for livelihood or concept of vocationalist in education system of India, which is purely qualitative in nature. The present study in the form of this research paper is prepared with the respective desirable data being collected from various articles, research papers, books and

through some of the other online sources etc. as per the requirement of the problem under study.

## TEACHINGS AND PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi is a spirit of profound wisdom and captivating humility, armed with only an iron will and inflexible resolve and a frail man who confronted the brutality of military strength with the dignity of a simple human being. He believed in God implicitly. According to him, though individuals have different bodies, yet the same soul pervades in all of us. In short, Gandhiji experienced and realized Unity in Diversity. His philosophy of life has four elements namely- (1) Truth, (2) Non-Violence (3) Fearlessness and (4) Satyagraha (Saxena, 2003). Gandhiji's philosophy to life is based upon the philosophy of Idealism. He advocated the ideals of truth, non-violence and moral values to achieve the ultimate truth of self-realization. He is child according to his nature and he becomes a pragmatist when he advocates learning by doing and learning by experience. All these lead to an integration, so essential to effective education and development of the total personality. (Saxena, 2003). Gandhiji was not an academic philosopher but based on his own experiences he is one of those philosophers who believed in self-sacrifice. In his philosophy there is very clear inclination of his love for individual and national freedom. He had a multidimensional personality with clear vision and definite approach to problems which were present in the country. Gandhiji philosophy of non-violence has great relevance in current scenario. According to him non-violence does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil doer. It is the soul force or truth force. (Vijayalakshmi, 2016). The purpose of his Satyagraha is to fight against injustice. Satyagraha should have the moral face to achieve change of heart by self-suffering of the adherence of truth and non-violence. Such philosophy of life helped him in developing his philosophy of Education which can be the true source of inspiration for the present system of education.

## LEGACY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Gandhi is noted as the greatest figure of the successful Indian independence movement against the British rule. He is also hailed as the greatest figure of modern India. American historian Stanley Wolpert described Gandhi as "India's greatest revolutionary nationalist leader" and the greatest Indian since the Buddha. In 1999, Gandhi was named "Asian of the century" by *Asia week*. In a 2000 BBC poll, he was voted as the greatest man of the millennium. The word *Mahatma*, while often mistaken for Gandhi's given name in the West, is taken from the Sanskrit words *Maha* (meaning *Great*) and *atman* (meaning *Soul*). He was publicly bestowed with the honorific title "Mahatma" in July 1914 at farewell meeting in Town Hall, Durban. Rabindranath Tagore is said to have accorded the title to Gandhi by 1915. In his autobiography, Gandhi nevertheless explains that he never valued the title, and

was often pained by it. Innumerable streets, roads and localities in India are named after Gandhi.

These include M.G. Road (the main street of a number of Indian cities including Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Lucknow, Kanpur, Gangtok and Indore), Gandhi Market (near Sion, Mumbai) and Gandhinagar (the capital of the state of Gujarat, Gandhi's birthplace). As of 2008, over 150 countries released stamps on Gandhi. In October 2019, about 87 countries including Russia, Iran, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Palestine released commemorative Gandhi stamps on 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi. In October 2022, a statue of Gandhi was installed in Astana on the embankment of the rowing canal, opposite the cult monument to the defenders of Kazakhstan. On 15 December 2022, the United Nations headquarters in New York unveiled the statue of Gandhi. UN Secretary-General António Guterres called Gandhi an "uncompromising advocate for peaceful co-existence".

## **PRINCIPLE FEATURES OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI**

Gandhiji's educational philosophy is the harmonious blending of Idealism, Naturalism and Pragmatism. Idealism can be contemplated as the sole base of Gandhiji's philosophy whereas Naturalism and Pragmatism are the helpers in translating that philosophy into practice. Therefore, he is remarkably been known as practical- idealist. His nation was "...education for life, education through life, and education throughout life." This famous definition of Gandhiji comprises of everything that can be conceived under the influential procedure of education. Gandhiji's concept of 'Basic Education' has been considered the practical embodiment of his philosophy of education. His basic education is ultimately a challenging task of preparing the young learners to become morally strong, individually independents, socially usable, economically constructive as well as productive and as a responsible citizen for nation which can prove helpful in solving the real-life related problem of unemployment by making youth self-employed by providing them skill training with the help of education. Gandhiji had a firm faith that education should develop the overall capacities of the child to becomes a complete human personality. Gandhiji has himself explained - "By education I mean all-round drawing out of the best in child's and man's body, mind and spirit. Literacy is neither the beginning nor the end of education. This is only a means through which man or woman can be educated." His Basic Principles of Education includes the following undermentioned aspects:

- From seven to fourteen years of age, education of each child should be free, compulsory and universal.
- The medium of instruction should be mother-tongue.

- Mere literacy cannot be equated with education. Education should employ some craft as a medium of education so that the child gains economic self-reliance for his life.
- Education should develop human values in the child.
- Education should create useful, responsible and dynamic citizens. By education all the hidden powers of child should develop according to the community of which he is an integral part.
- Education should achieve the harmonious development of child's body, mind, heart and soul.
- All education should be imparted through some productive craft or industry and a useful correlation should be established with that industry. The industry should be such that the child is able to achieve gainful work experience through practical work.
- Education should be made self-supporting through some productive work. Education should lead to economic independence and self-reliance for livelihood.

### **AIMS OF EDUCATION AS ACCORDING MAHATMA GANDHI**

Gandhiji's concept of education has two-fold aims i.e., immediate aim of education and the other one is ultimate aim of education. Both these aims have been divided into two broad categories, described as under:

***Immediate Aims of Education:*** In this category the aims of education are concerned with our day-to-day life. These are as the following:

- **Bread and Batter Aim (Vocational Aim) of Education:** Gandhiji had strong faith that in a poor country like India, where earning of bread is the main concern of every individual, the education must be aimed at enabling every individual to earn sufficient for his/her livelihood. Subsequently, education must enable human being to stand on one's own feet. In the words of Gandhiji, "Education ought to be for them (children) a kind of insurance against unemployment".
- **Cultural Aim of Education:** Gandhiji has never admitted vocation as the end of life. Therefore, one must also pay considerable attention to culture. In the words of Gandhiji, "I attach more importance to cultural factor of education than its literary factor. Culture is primary and basic thing which the learners should receive from school." As according to this point of view, Gandhiji has regarded cultural aim of education as an important aim. The cultural aim has its criteria to put a genuine effort on obtaining knowledge of Indian culture. The culture that is reflected in our dress, our manners, in our speech, our way of conduct and behaviour) Education. With this aim,

the individuals will be able to liberate their soul from pride, prejudice and encumbrances to see things in their true perspective.

- **Character Aim of Education:** Gandhiji has observed character formation as the exact foundation of education. Henceforth, the end of all knowledge must be to foster up the spirit towards building up of character. He has pondered about character as the expression of the whole personality including its ethical and spiritual aspects. Character building implies to cultivate such moral virtues namely; courage, strength of conviction, righteousness, purity in personal life, self-restraint and service of mankind. According to Gandhiji, “Education should develop the mind, body and character of the learner in a holistic manner.”
- **Perfect Development Aim of Education:** As per the conviction of Gandhiji, the all-round and perfect development is one of the most important immediate aims of education. The all round

The basic aim of education as per the educational philosophy of Gandhiji, Self-realization or self-actualization is the ultimate aim of human life. In this connection, he has further said, “Development of the moral character, development of the whole - all were directed towards the realization of the ultimate reality-the merger of the finite being into the infinite.”

## **SCHEME OF CURRICULUM ACCORDING TO MAHATMA GANDHI**

As Gandhiji was the prominent torchbearer to the basic education, he has advocated that the curriculum must be activity-centered. Because this scheme of education will certainly help to the development of all-round personality of the learners. Subsequently, Gandhiji has suggested the teaching with the following subjects in education:

- **Basic crafts:** according to Mahatma Gandhi, basic crafts include agriculture, spinning and weaving, wood work, card board work, metal, work, gardening and leather work etc. which should be included on capacity of necessary basis by keeping in mind, the local conditions of social life. Gandhiji has strongly been asserted that education should be craft- centered. Therefore, craft has a primary place in Gandhi's system of education.
- **Mother-tongue:** Gandhiji has emphasized that the mother-tongue must be used as the medium of instruction within all the schools of our country because it is more effective instrument for the expression and communication of ideas within the members of society.
- **Arithmetic:** Arithmetic as a subject must be able to correlated the different situations to the real-life situations. It also should be correlated with the basic craft. He has further advocated that Arithmetic is a very useful subject for day-to-day life.



- **Social studies:** Gandhiji has the standpoint that children should acquire necessary knowledge of social studies including history, geography, civics and current events for promoting individual's intellectual and social virtues.
- **General sciences:** The general science including nature study, zoology, physiology, mental hygiene, chemistry, botany and astronomy must be taught to the young learners for promoting intelligent and scientific outlook towards the natural phenomenon.
- **Music and drawing:** These subjects must be added in the curriculum to create the interest of young learners for learning in educational procedures.

## METHODS OF TEACHING

Gandhiji has suggested the undermentioned following methods of teaching:

- **Education through craft:** Gandhiji has emphasized on the fact that education should be given to child through the medium of some craft or production work and all other subjects must be taught around this craft-centered education. Because this type of education is essential for the character formation and to develop morality.
- **Emphasis on activity method and learning by self-experience:** Gandhiji has put stress upon the activity method in the field of teaching. He has emphasized that learning by doing and learning by self-experience is very effective way of teaching.
- **Correlation method:** Gandhiji has advocated the method of establishing correlation of a subject with the other one. Teaching of different subjects must be in the form of correlated knowledge and not in the form of separate individual subjects. Teaching of craft must be the central point and all subjects should be related to craft. There should be correlation with craft and with environment, and coordination with all other subjects.
- **Lecture and questioning method:** Gandhiji has put forward his viewpoint by saying that the use of lecture method as well as of questioning method, can make the process of all educational processes, the more effective one.
- **Mother-tongue as medium of Instruction:** Gandhiji has a very strong ideology that all education must be given through the medium of mother tongue only. He was against the use of English language which was according to him is responsible to spoil the young learners as well as the culture of Indian society.

## CONCEPT OF DISCIPLINE ACCORDING TO MAHATMA GANDHI

Gandhiji's own whole life has been a remained a perfect example of a disciplined life towards the masses of the nation. He has suggested everyone to follow the certain rules and regulations of the rich cultural heritage of Indian highly privileged civilization. In the field of

educational procedures, he has advocated a discipline to be maintained in the life of students through self-control not by the imposed practices of some of the authorities. He emphasized upon the voluntary discipline, self-discipline or a kind of discipline that springs from innermost feelings and desires of all human being rather than the forced discipline by someone. Self-discipline arises only from a pure life of self-restraint, fearlessness, usefulness and self-sacrifice by the human being with complete dedication. It may also be achieved through non-violence-oriented conduct. Gandhiji's craft-centered education is highly appreciated to encourage social discipline. Subsequently, his concept of discipline was not to be considered as an individual aspect. It was a concept of social discipline in its real sense. He has emphasized upon the building up of some ideal citizens for the motherland through responsible education system. He wanted that the students might really be successful and responsible future citizens of the country if they follow the path of self-disciplined practices sincerely.

#### **ROLE/ QUALITIES OF TEACHER ACCORDING TO MAHATMA GANDHI**

Gandhiji has asserted that the teachers with enthusiasm, patriotism, strong character, special training and genuine personality can only be helpful in getting the objectives of education. A teacher must play his/her effective role for the students as a friend, philosopher and guide to them. He should inspire his young learner towards gaining best in life. He must possess sound knowledge, effective skills, positive attitudes and ideals of Ahimsa and Truth. He should be well equipped with his/her teaching methods, skills, techniques, strategies and approaches of teaching as well as must be fully alive to the objectives of life and education. He/ She must have the virtues that he/she wants to inculcate within the minds of the students. He/ She must strive endeavour to practice these virtues himself/ herself. He should be able to establish a heart-to-heart contact with the students under study.

#### **RELEVANCE OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI IN MODERN INDIA**

The modern system of education acts as an instrument to increase the value of consumerism, materialism, undue competition and violence. The growing concern over the erosion of ethical values, youth unrest, ecological violence and increasing cynicism in society have brought to focus the need of revival of indigenous Indian heritage and life-style. Gandhiji could foresee such possible developments half a century ago and advocated a new alternative of Basic education (Shah, 2017). By which Of course, the emphasis on learning through craft may be retained, but perhaps modified to suit the times. His educational thoughts are based on eternal principles of truth, love, self-sacrifice, character building non-violence, so, will never lose their relevance. The requirement is to adapt his thoughts according to the present scenario. When Environmental consciousness, moral values, intrapersonal skills, community



and society-oriented awareness are all inculcated in young minds through education, then only development of the country in true sense can be possible.

Therefore, the education system which has been proposed by Mahatma Gandhiji, is popularly been known as "Basic Education". He has put strong stress upon the education to be provided in mother tongue and has appealed for activity-centred education to make children skilled and independent in life. Gandhiji wanted to make his motherland; the nation of his dreams to be constructed in small, self-reliant communities with its ideal citizens being all industrious, self-respecting and generous individuals living in a small co-operative and community. He has a strong desire that some local craft should be made as medium of education for children so that they may be able to develop their mind, body and soul in a harmonious way and meet the needs of their future life. Such Gandhian Educational thoughts are relevant for development and providing solutions of the current problems like unemployment, poverty, corruption and many others. An attempt has been made in this paper to discuss the Gandhi's educational thoughts.

## SUMMARIZATION

As per Gandhiji's educational philosophy, the all-round development of the personality of child is more important than mere getting about the literacy or knowledge of different subjects. He has possessed the ideology of life-centred as well as child-centred education. Besides learning of three R's, i.e., Reading, Writing and Arithmetic in schools, Gandhiji has insisted on the development of these three H's, i.e., Hand, Heart and Head. Thus, he has been suggested that the aim of education must be to develop the integrated personality of the child. Gandhiji has also advocated that one of the basic principles of education is amalgamation of assignments and understanding, means that the practical aspects to develop efficiencies for work and getting awareness about theoretical knowledge must never be separated from each other. Separation of learning from work education might results in social injustices as according to Gandhiji. He has further revealed that in Indian dynamic societies, the education must prepare individuals with the necessary skills and attitudes which are mandatory for them to adapt to changing conditions, and for favourable constructive participation in the different tasks of social change. This procedure certainly will be helpful in solving the unwanted prevailed problems among individuals of society such as the dilemma of frustration, depression, anxiety and feeling of committing suicide within the youths of our respective communities. Gandhiji has said that with the help of education, a child must be able to learn a productive craft to meet his/her future desirable needs of life by adopting some industry or business work through work education. Henceforth, he has stressed upon the education for self-reliance and capacity to earn one's livelihood as it must be the main aim of education. Gandhiji has insisted that education must aim to develop all aspects of individual's personality harmoniously. He has believed that the one of essential aims of education surely

must be the moral development or character development. Gandhiji has wished that every child should grow into a divine human being by realizing about the goodness as well as Godliness in his/her self. Gandhiji himself has written, "To develop the self, is to build character and to prepare the self for complete realization and realization of Godliness."

## REFERENCES

- Aggarwal, J.C. (2008). Education in the Emerging Indian Society. New Delhi: Shipra Publications.
- Andrews, C. F. (2008) [1930]. "VII – The Teaching of Ahimsa". Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas Including Selections from His Writings. *Pierids Press*.
- Brown, Judith M. (2004). "Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand [Mahatma Gandhi] (1869–1948)", Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press.
- Duncan, Ronald, ed. (2011). Selected Writings of Mahatma Gandhi. *Literary Licensing, LLC*.
- Gandhi, M. K.; Fischer, Louis (2002). *Louis Fischer (ed.)*. The Essential Gandhi: An Anthology of His Writings on His Life, Work and Ideas. *Vintage Books*.
- Gupta. S. (2008). Education in Emerging India. Delhi. Shipra Publications. P, 169-185.
- Jack, Homer A., ed. (1994). The Gandhi Reader: A Source Book of His Life and Writings. *Grove Press*.
- Johnson, Richard L. (2006). Gandhi's Experiments with Truth: Essential Writings by and about Mahatma Gandhi. *Lexington Books*.
- Saxena, S. (2003), "Principles of Education", Meerut, Surya Publication.
- Thacker, Dhirubhai (2006). ""Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand" (entry)". In Amaresh Datta (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Indian Literature (Volume Two) (Devraj to Jyoti)*. *Sahitya Akademi*. p. 1345.
- Vijayalakshmi, N. and others (2016), "Relevance of Gandhian Philosophy in the 21st century", International Journal of Research in Engineering, I T and Social Science, Vol. 6, Issue1.
- Walia. J.S. (2003). Theory and Principles of Education. Jalandhar City. Paul Publishers. P, 445-461
- Wolpert, Stanley (2002). Gandhi's Passion: the life and legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. Oxford University Press.