

Educational Philosophy of Mahatma in purview of Real Independence

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi was a frontier leader all through the movement for independence against British rule in India. He had struggled not only for one cause but for many causes at the same time for human welfares. He was not only a crusader who had fought battle for nation's freedom but along with this he had also took steps to remove flaws widespread within the society and so faced social, individual, psychological, philosophical problems prevalent in contemporary society which was rooted very deep. His purpose was to enliven every sect of society with equality, love, cooperation, peace, excellence, liberty without any discrimination of levels among people such as caste, creed, and economic status, racial or based on colour in social settlement. No one is suppressed on the basis of difference, feels his identity in equal manner, and should be treated in such manner. This was the base of his that he wanted to be part of education.

INTRODUCTION

An attempt has been made in this paper to comprise Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy with its purpose in actual, what he wanted to implement in education. It was come through his life's experiences of long struggle and freedom movements, meditation and concrete observation of human subsistence forced him to talk and write educational treaties which were the need of time to shape Indian struggle for freedom. It can be summarized as educational ideal of Gandhiji to empower every human being.

Gandhi himself a great teacher and philosopher, he impart education in whatever he practices throughout his life became aspirational and inspirational for common to learn and follow the real ideals of Mahatma. Dr. M.S. Patel remarked in educational philosophy about the Mahatma in very clear manner that he is not only educational philosopher but a great teacher even relevant in modern values too.

It is very important to code this quotation written by Dr. M.S. Patel that "Gandhiji has secured a unique place in the galaxy of the teachers who have brought light in the fields of education." and "The real greatness of Gandhiji as

an educational philosopher consists in the fact that the dominant tendencies of naturalism and pragmatism are not separated and independent in his philosophy, but they fuse into a unity, giving rise to a theory of education which would suit the needs of the day satisfy and loftiest aspirations of the human soul. ”

Gandhiji’s philosophy of life has broadly based on four major factors that are truth (satya), nonviolence(ahimsa), fearlessness(nirbhayta) and holding fast to truth(satyagraha). By this he wanted to establish the society which is free from exploitation for the Indian people and for this he tried to give concrete shape in his basic education entreaties. According to this vision it is clear that Gandhi was a great educationist. To confirm this association of Gandhiji with educational perceptibility, it is essential to quote Dr. M.S. Patel’s remark that “Green remarked the Pestalozzi was the starting point of modern educational theory and practice. This may be true so far as western education is concerned. An impartial study of Gandhiji’s educational teachings will reveal that he is the starting point of modern educational theory and practice in the East.”

Gandhiji was highly influenced by Tolstoy and Ruskin. He assumed Tolstoy as his preceptor and admitted his influence over him many times. Gandhi wanted to imply their thoughts in actions. He started work in South Africa after reading Ruskin’s book ‘Unto This Last’. He wished to correlate natural environment with the vocational principle of Tolstoy and Ruskin. This was the turning point of historical and practical background in his educational philosophy.

Gandhi’s work on education is largely compiled and edited in books like ‘Basic Education’ and ‘Towards New Education’ and altogether represents his speeches, consisting of letters, extracts from books all constitute his philosophy of education. The most important pact on education was delivered by Gandhiji in 1937 at Wardha conference. Some of the important minute of the Wardha conference are as follows:

1. “The present system of education does not meet the requirements of the country....”
2. “The course of primary education should be extended at least to seven years and should include the general knowledge gained up to the matriculation standard, less English and plus a substantial vocation.”
3. “For the all-round development of boys and girls all training should as far as possible be given through a profit-yielding vocation.”

4. “Higher education should be left to private enterprise and should be to meet national requirements whether in the various industries, technical arts, belles-letters or fine arts”

Four resolutions were adopted at the end of the conference under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain, a committee had been proposed to work on. The resolutions were:

1. “That...free and compulsory education is provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale.”
2. “That the medium of instruction should be the mother-tongue.”
3. “That ... the process of education ... should centre on some form of manual and productive work....
4. “That...this system of education ... be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.”

His ideas on education were an outcome of untiring activities and movement throughout the nation. Gandhiji understood that real independence would be invalid in lack of true education, because education can not only set free humans from slavery but liberate them also. So it is essential to circulate education in purview of real independence.

For Gandhiji education means an all around drawing out of best in child's body, mind and soul. That was the reason in one of his conference Gandhiji said that the present system of education is imperfect. He elaborated by saying that

“I am convinced that the present system of primary education is not only wasteful but positively harmful” and answers his own question with what is the quintessence of his educational philosophy: “I think the remedy lies in educating them by means of vocational or manual training” .

Gandhiji was against the model of education system in India that had nothing to do with character building means education imparting was not related to the value education of ideas and ideals in education.

It would be helpful to paraphrase in brief the diverse facets of Gandhi's educational philosophy as outlined above, easing them to the following suggestions:

- 1) Education means all round development; it is best obtained through action.
- 2) Education has to be through a craft, not merely through books and abstractions.

- 3) The basis of true education is character building; an educated person should become an ideal citizen.
- 4) Education should be self-supporting as far as possible and also equip the pupil to better his own economic conditions.
- 5) Education should be based on non-violence and should work for communal harmony.
- 6) The medium of instruction should be the mother-tongue, not English.
- 7) Primary education should be free and compulsory for all children and should last for at least seven years.
- 8) All educational planning should be undertaken with the rural Indian masses in mind; in other words, education should not be elitist, but popular in its character.

He also gave his ideas on education aims some of few listed in brief here are.

- 1) Vocational Aim.
- 2) Cultural Aim.
- 3) Character Development Aim.
- 4) All-round Development.
- 5) Spiritual Freedom.
- 6) Knowledge of God and self –realisation.
- 7) Individual and social Aims.

By all these facts in mind, that we should approach the question of the relevance of Gandhi's educational ideas in the coming millennium. It is clear that certain fundamental principles are intrinsic to Gandhi's educational philosophy. These principles include equality, social justice, non-violence, human dignity, economic well being, and cultural self-respect. These all can be termed under the philosophy of Swaraj. By Swaraj Gandhi meant equality and equal opportunity to all to grow and survive with love, peace, cooperation, brotherhood without any discrimination.

Gandhiji has given the model of Swadhaya as well with some modification embrace some brightness. In previous time the work of Swadhyaya was based on the perception of Kriti-Bhakti. But Gandhi had given new meaning to word Swadhaya by saying to acquire more and more

knowledge is in true the concept of Swadhaya and it is very essential. Definitely it would be favourable and helpful in achieving social goals. It is based on spiritual volunteerism and inner awakening of self.

Gandhian educational views are also originated from certain eternal principles and will not lose their elemental significance in the time to come. The policy of ‘education to all (sarve shiksha abhiyan)’ running by the government is also one of Gandhi’s principles to provide education to all without any prejudice to improve the poorest of the poor. These all based on action, problem-solving, and practical activity, rather than merely book learning is also perfectly valid. He has given the concept of an integral education with much practical and vocational aims to make it significance and useful for life, by education he means an all-round development of mind, body and spirit. This sort of education can only provide to the whole being to grow and prosper. An education which emphasizes on all these factors is highly desirable for character-building and cultural identity.

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