

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI AND ITS RELEVANCE IN PRESENT EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi an idealist, pragmatist and naturalist philosopher and his educational philosophy is based on his philosophy of his life. Gandhiji made a special contribution to education. He was the first Indian to support an educational programme built around the core principles of Indian cultures and civilization. (Selvan and Devanesan, 2020) In this paper an attempt has been made to discuss the educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and its relevance to the present scenario. Descriptive method and secondary sources of data has been used for the present study.

Keywords: *Mahatma Gandhi, Educational Philosophy, Relevance,*

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi a great soul was also known as Father of nation. Mahatma Gandhi was born in a vaishnav Family on 2nd October, 1869 at Porbandar Kathiawar. His father Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was the dewan in the estate of Rajkot. His mother name Putlibai. He was 13 years old when he when married Kasturbai. He passed his matriculation in 1887 and proceeds to England for studying law but due to his introvert nature he failed to succeed and in 1893 he left for South Africa. But the miserable condition of Indian peoples in South Africa changed Gandhiji's direction of life. He served for Indian emigrant in South Africa and worked for their upliftment. In 1914, Gandhiji returned to India and established the Sabarmati Ashram on the principles of Phoenix Farm that he opened in South Africa for Indian emigrant. He started various movements to fight against the British rule. Due to his efforts British rule came in end on 15th august 1947, India became independent. Besides, Gandhiji also worked for social reform and writing.

Gandhi as an Idealist, believes that spiritual realization should be the primary goal of life which encompasses the growth of mind, body and spirit. He believes that everything in this universe is the manifestation of the Almighty. Gandhi placed a strong emphasis on leading a disciplined orderly life. Again as Naturalist he believes that

Gandhi as a Naturalist, Like Rousseau and other naturalist Gandhiji believes that child is good by nature and he also emphasizes freedom for the child. Gandhiji says that child should be educated in a natural setting and in a atmosphere of freedom. Gandhiji believes in child centredness. He was a great lover of children; therefore he argued that education should be according to the need of the child.

Gandhi as a Pragmatist, believed in experimental approach towards life. He wants to impart the scientific knowledge along with the skills on the basis of experiments. Like other pragmatist he believed in the utility in learning. Application of knowledge in practical aspect to solve the problems of life.

It is evident that Gandhiji's educational philosophy blends idealism, naturalism, pragmatism, all three educational thought. Following were the main principles of Gandhi's Philosophy of life:

- Truth and Ahimsa
- Satyagraha
- Supreme God
- Righteousness and Truth as Highest Religion
- Service of Humanity
- Ram Rajya as the concept of Society

Objective of the study

- To study the educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi
- To study the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy in the present educational scenario.

Method of the study

The research study is conducted on the basis of secondary sources of data. Secondary sources of data have been collected from various books, journals, research article, Internet etc. Descriptive method has been used by the researcher.

Significance of the study

The present study is significant in understanding the philosophical ideas of Gandhiji's life and his educational philosophy and how it is relevant to the present educational. In the present society to understand the human values and societal transformation requires Gandhian perspective and thought. Therefore the study is significant in the context that it helps to promote societal and individual growth.

Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi

- **Meaning of Education:** In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "By education I mean round drawing out of 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. I hold that the highest development of mind and the soul is possible under such system of education. Only every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as is done today, but scientifically, i.e. the child should know the why and the wherefore of every process."

- **Aims of Education:** Gandhiji divided the aim of education into two categories:
 - **Ultimate Aim:** Realization of ultimate reality, a knowledge of God and self – realization is the ultimate aim of education. According to Gandhiji, “development of the moral character, development of the whole- all were directed towards therealization of the ultimate reality- the merger of the finite being into the infinite.”
 - **Individual Aim:** The individual aim of education are as follows:
 - **Aim of Harmonious Development:** Harmonious development of personality which includes all the physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual development of his personality.
 - **Utilitarian Aim:** By Utilitarian aim he wants to mean self-supporting education by considering the basic needs of human being. He defines the utilitarian aim in two different aspects: Firstly making children self dependent to enable an individual to earn his livelihood by adopting some industry and business, Secondly, teacher’s salaries should be met out of the productive work of the children.
 - **Cultural Aim:** According to Gandhiji, “Culture is not the product of intellectual work, but the quality of soul permeating all aspects of human behaviour. Therefore, Gandhiji wants cultural development among children by providing training to express his culture in his conduct.
 - **Moral Aim or Aim of Character Building:** Gandhiji emphasized that the education system should focused on Moral aim or character development of individual. According to him, every should be taught to differentiate between right and wrong, any students lacks moral or ethical knowledge should not be considered as physically and mentally healthy.
 - **Training for Citizenship:** According to Gandhiji, children should be given the training for citizenship as they could be able to perform their duties and responsibilities of the society as a part of it.
- **Curriculum of Education:**
 - Basic Craft, Craft based education was suggested by Gandhiji in the curriculum such as spinning, weaving, agriculture etc.
 - Mother Tongue should be the medium of teaching
 - Mathematics to be included in the curriculum which is useful in craft and community life

- Gandhiji also stressed to include social studies in the curriculum in order to make the children to aware regarding the socio-economic life of the community.
- General Science
- **Method of Teaching**
 - According to Gandhiji, all the subjects need to be correlated with craft. Craft should be the starting point of other subjects and meeting point of both physical and social environment.
 - Learning by Doing, According to Gandhiji, children should be given freedom to do his work according to his own pace and interest.
 - As a Pragmatist, Gandhiji also advocated questioning, experimentation, project method, and work experience through practical work etc.
- **Role of Teacher**

Gandhiji suggested for child-centred education, According to him, child should be given freedom and should not impose anything on students. A teacher should always play the role facilitator rather than instructor. Teacher should provide opportunities to the students to learn by their experience. According to Gandhiji, character building and moral development is an important aim of education. So, the teacher be highly concerned regarding the character building and moral development of students and they should also posses a good moral character to be a ‘model of behaviour’.
- **Basic Education**

Basic education is the most important aspect of his educational philosophy. The Basic education proposed by Gandhiji in 1937 in an All India Education Conference held at Wardha presided by Mahatma Gandhi and was accepted in 1938. The Basic education scheme also known as ‘NaiTalmi’. The first school of Basic education was established at Wardha. The resolution passed in the conference are: Free and compulsory education to be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale, craft education to be imparted for making child productive, Mother tongue to be the medium of Instruction.

Basic education was based on the principle of learning by doing for emphasizing the creative development and critical thinking among the children. Development of Patriotism, faith on non-violence Collaborative learning, moral education and character building are some of the important features of Basic education.

Relevance of Gandhiji’s Educational Philosophy in the Present Educational Scenerio

Gandhiji’s educational philophy is based on his philosophical thought which includes – Ahimsa, Satyagraha, Truth and Ahimsa, Supreme God, Righteousness and Truth as Highest Religion, Service of Humanity, RamRajya as the concept of Society. As in the meaning of education he says that Literacy is not the end of the education nor the beginning but the all round drawing out of best in mind, body and spirit is very much relevant in the present educational scenario it helps in creating manual work with learning and developing the culture peace. In the aims of education he indicates two types of aim i.e., ultimate and individual aim of education. The ultimate aim of self-realization is still relevant in the present context of education. Various educationist and psychologist recognized the importance of self-realization. Psychologically sound curriculum

suggested by Gandhiji, which help the students to become productive and also understanding their inner potentialities and his concept of production is still relevant. He also suggested for mother tongue to be the medium of teaching even at present situation it recognized that through mother tongue students can learn better. A pragmatic and pedagogically sound method of teaching was suggested by Gandhiji which provides students to learn by their experience at their own pace in natural circumstances in the present context of education at current situation many of institutions and applying this method of teaching for enabling the students to learn by their experience. Basic Education is the reflection of his educational philosophy. This educational scheme suggested by Gandhiji based on principles of equity, social justice, non – violence, human dignity, economic wellbeing and cultural self-respect will help to students to remember their responsibilities towards their society, community, nation etc. this scheme also provides a practical solution to the rural unemployment as it laid emphasis on developing the productive ability among the children through craft education in order to earn their livelihood. In present scenario this concept is very much significant as people are moving toward developing their own industries adopting their own business by utilizing their skills and abilities rather depending on government jobs. His concept of free education to all the children without discrimination on the basis of caste creed and religion is now implementing by government. His entire education is based on child-centered approach. Now a days child-centered education also given more importance.

Conclusion

From the above discussion it can be concluded that Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy is still relevant in the present scenario. His ideas and thoughts are using in present days. His concept of craft education is highly relevant in present times which help in decreasing the unemployment problem. His entire concept is very much useful in present educational scenario.

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