

A study based on Mahatma Gandhi's life philosophy, Educational philosophy and importance of his Aims and Ideals of Education in building the Nation

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Abstract: -

The present paper has been written to study the philosophy of Gandhiji regarding Education. The role of Education in building the nation no doubt is extremely vital, and a Nations progress and economic development depends on the quality of our Education system. This will be feasible if we follow Gandhi's theory of Education for Sarvodaya, Nai Talim (New Education), Nonviolent Education, Social revolution etc. and his ideology is channelized in the proper direction for the benefit of the nation. His theories of public service and non- violence are based on religious philosophy. In his word, "My duty is service of God and therefore service of humanity." The suggestions are truly and sincerely followed, it can have tremendous impact on education for every person because Gandhi was a staunch supporter of world brotherhood as a consequence of his belief in one God present in all living beings. Gandhi's theory of non-violence has become extremely comprehensive. . In this study we look on Mahatma Gandhiji Aims, Ideals of Education and Principle Features of Gandhiji's Philosophy of Life. I hope this study would add something to the vast sea of knowledge and be helpful to students and researchers in understanding Mahatma Gandhi's aims, Ideals of Education and Principle features of Gandhiji's Philosophy of Life. There are some ideas on aims of education "drawing out the basic, livelihood, character formation, complete development, all round growth, social aims, self-realization etc. There are some ideas on aim of education "drawing out the basic, livelihood, character formatting, complete development, all round growth, social aims, self-realization etc.

Keywords: Mahatma Gandhi, His life philosophy, Educational philosophy, ideology and Principles.

Introduction:-

Gandhiji was very much aware of the needs of the country and considered basic education as the only type of education which may lead to success. His chief aim in planning for education in India was to fulfil the needs of the country. India cannot afford to pay for its children's assistance

in their occupations. Therefore, Gandhiji planned for basic education which may not be a burden upon the parents and through which the children may be able to earn to meet the expenses of education themselves. Gandhi ji laid stress upon the importance of dignity of labour and manual skill. He was convinced that an education which prepares the young men for white-collar jobs can hardly be suitable for an agricultural community. It is hence that he so much emphasized the learning of craft in his plan of basic Education. In spite of all this idealism Gandhiji, s approach everywhere was pragmatic. He was an experimenter in every field of life. Before devising his plan of basic Education he experimented upon its different aspects. For him all human truths were relative. God was the only absolute. Therefore he tested everything before suggesting it for the education of the child. He postulated that the child should himself gather knowledge from the environment and put it in actual use in life. Like the pragmatists and instrumentalists Gandhiji stressed the importance of interest and activity and the need for variety in the subjects taught to the educand.

Objectives of the study: A brief study based on Gandhi's philosophy of life, his Educational philosophy, Aims and Ideals of education.

Research method: The research method used in the present study is Qualitative research method since it is a philosophical and historical research and Content analysis has been used.

Gandhiji's Philosophy of Life

1. *Supreme God:* He said, "God pervades everything. God is life, Truth and Light".
2. *Truth and Ahimsa (Non-violence):* According to Gandhiji, "Truth and Ahimsa are two sides of a coin. They are intertwined and it is practically impossible to separate them". *Satyagraha* implies holding of truth through love and purity.
3. *Service of humanity:* Gandhiji observed: "The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part because it is the only way to see Him in his creation".
4. *Self-discipline and self-purification:* Gandhiji always believed in the high ideals of purity, sacrifice and service.
5. *Righteousness and truth as the highest religion:* Gandhiji was of the firm view that "true religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other".
6. *Ram Rajya as the Concept of a Society:* he wanted to establish Ram Rajya which he identified with justice, peace, happiness and welfare of all.

Gandhiji scheme of education:

Sarvodaya Society the social philosophy of M.K. Gandhi may be termed as "Sarvodaya". This was the foundation of his philosophy of education. Sarvodaya aims at all-round development of all, without distinction of caste, creed, sex and nationality. Gandhiji wanted to establish a welfare state in India which he called 'Ram Rajya'. The ideal of Sarvodaya does not aim at the maximum number but maximum good of all without exceptions. While Marx aimed at the welfare of the

proletariat, Gandhiji aimed even at the welfare of the capitalist. **According to Vinoba Bhave** “the important characteristics of the Sarvodaya Society are the abolition of all monopoly, emphasis on social welfare and equal, moral, social and economic importance and honest work”. There is no place for any type of exploitation in Sarvodaya Society. No one may be forced to do a certain type of work, so much so that even the wealth of the capitalist cannot be forcibly snatched away. Centralization, according to Gandhiji, is the chief source of social evils. Sarvodaya requires decentralization. Gandhiji aimed at political, economic, social and all other types of decentralization. In the political field decentralization requires establishment of village panchayats. In the economic field it requires that wealth and money should not be allowed to be concentrated in few hands but should be distributed among all the people. Social decentralization means the abolition of all types of untouchability and social distinctions.

Nai Talim: in order to achieve the abovementioned aims of Sarvodaya in India, Gandhiji presented his plan of basic education. He called it Nai Talim (new education) because it sought to build up a new society in the country. He realized that what the country needs today is not so much higher education as the education of the masses. Therefore, he did not lay so much emphasis upon higher education. The basic education sought to fulfil the needs of the educands in a Sarvodaya Society. It is hence that Gandhiji planned for craft centred education with mother tongue as the medium. Literacy, according to him, is not an end but only a mean of education. Education ultimately aims at the development of both mind and body and the capacity of earning one’s livelihood. The syllabi for the new education were framed in such a way so as to eliminate narrow nationalism and emphasize the ideal of Sarvodaya. World history was taught along with Indian history. Similarly, the syllabus included the study of fundamental universal ethics. The cost of education was brought down by compulsory manual labours and education was tried to be made self-sufficient as far as possible.

Social Revolution

Pointing out the value of basic education for bringing about a silent social revolution in the country, Gandhiji said, ‘it will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes. It will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a just social order in which there is no unnatural division between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ and everybody is assured on a living wage and the right of freedom. And all this would be accomplished without the horrors of a bloody class war or a social capital expenditure such as would be involved in the mechanization of a vast continent like India. Nor would it entail a helpless dependence on foreign imported machinery or technical skill. Lastly, by obviating the necessity for highly specialized talent, it would place the destiny of the masses, as if were in their own hands.

Non-violent Education

Gandhi emphasized the principle of non-violence in every field of life. He considered non-violence as the characteristic human quality. He said, “Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of brutes”. Even truth was subordinate to non-violence. Gandhiji said, “One had better not speak it (truth) if one cannot do so in a gentle way”. To those who doubted the value of non-violence to be the principle of human social organization, pointed out,” The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on force of arms but on the force of truth and love”. This principle of non-violence Gandhiji used in every aspect of education, so much so that his theory of education may be called non-violent education. Explaining his idea he wrote,” India has resolved to eschew violence, this system of education becomes an integral part of the discipline she has to go through. We are told that English spend millions on education. America also does so. But we forget that all wealth is obtained through exploitation. They have reduced the art of exploitation to a science, and might well give their boys the costly education, and we have no alternative but this plan of education which is based on non-violence.” Thus, according to Gandhiji, India can play her role in the community of nations only by adopting the gospel of non-violence. To quote Gandhiji again, “Good brought about through force destroyed individuality. Only when the change was effected through the persuasive power of non-violent, non-co-operative (i.e., love), could the foundation of individuality be preserved and real, abiding progress be assured for the world.”

Aims and Ideals of Education

1. *Drawing out the Basic:* elaborating his views about the aims of education, Gandhiji has said, “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, not even the beginning. It is one of the means whereby man and women can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education”.
2. *Livelihood:* Gandhiji was highly critical of the educational policy implemented by British government. In his opinion one must enable every girl and boy to develop the ability to depend upon himself or herself. The ability to earn one’s livelihood is part of this independence or self-reliance. As he himself puts it. “This education ought to be for them a kind of insurance against unemployment”. That is why Gandhiji placed so much emphasis upon industrial training in his own plan for basic education which was intended to acquaint the child with real life. He wanted the educator to become the means the means of producing ideal citizens. Seeing the endemic poverty of the nation, he suggested that education in India should be based on industrial training and the development of manual skill and handicrafts.
3. *Character formation:* Like Rousseau Gandhiji also believed in childcentric education, that is, education which centres around the child. He impressed upon people that the cultural aspect of education was far more important than its literary aspect, because it is through the cultural aspect that the child learns conduct and ideas and develops his

character and ideals. As he puts it, “True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of the children”. Hence, the aim of education is the complete development of the child, its physical, mental and spiritual aspects. For him character formation was more important than literacy. He was once asked what his education would aim at after the country won its independence. He answered without hesitation that it would be designed to develop the character of the people. And, in character, Gandhiji addressed the importance of thought, word and deed, non-violence and truth. He, like many before him, felt that abstinence was an essential weapon for the educand. He was a supporter of the ancient Indian ideals of education. He in fact felt that the words educand and Brahmachari should be treated as synonymous. And for him, abstinence meant a persistent effort to reach God in the least possible time.

4. *Complete Development*: it is clear from the foregoing account that Gandhiji viewed education from a comprehensive or broad-minded standpoint. Any education that develops only one aspect of a child’s personality can be dubbed narrow and one-sided. And it is just such an education which has been the bane of our culture. Education must aim at developing the child’s personality instead of limiting itself to providing the child with bits and pieces of information. Not only must education guide the individual towards self-knowledge, it must instill in him all those qualities which go to the making up of a good and responsible citizen. Gandhiji has made a distinction between the immediate and long-term aims of education, suggesting that such aims as getting certificates of merits or degrees or obtaining education for livelihood should be considered the immediate aims. But the final aim of education can only be self-knowledge. Thus, Gandhiji states that education must make the individual to live and earn his daily bread to be the means of his sustenance. As he himself puts it, “I value individual freedom, but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individuality to the requirement of social progress”. His faith in religion is at the base of his liberal attitude to education. Realization of God is, in fact, its finest means. It is only natural that such a faith should lead him to stress the social objectives of education more than the personal or individual ones.
5. *Synthesis of individual and social aims*: in this way Gandhiji synthesized the individual and social aims of education. He did not restrict education to the achievement of any one single aim. He looked to the process of education from various perspectives. Therefore, he assigned different aims to education at different times, so much so that sometimes they looked mutually contradictory and even self-defeating. A closer examination of all these statements of Gandhiji, however, shows that these aims of education are complementary to each other.
6. *All-round growth*: in this history of education different educationists have defined the ideals of education in different ways. Most educationists have, however, felt that the aim of education is integral development of human personality. Such was also the ideal of

education formulated by Gandhiji. Like Vivekananda, Gandhiji maintained that character formation and manual skill were equally important. On the one hand, he wanted the child to earn while he learns. On the other hand, he also wanted the child to develop his character. According to him the criterion of an individual's cultural development is not the width of his knowledge but his inner growth. Culture according to him is not an adjunct of the mind but a characteristic of the soul. The aim of education is the development of such a culture. Gandhiji's plan of education laid stress upon all types of education-physical, mental, moral, aesthetic and religious.

7. *Self-Reliance*: as has been already pointed out, Gandhiji aimed at self-reliance through education. Therefore, he visualized a craft-centred education. Explaining his scheme of basic Education as an insurance against unemployment in India, Gandhiji said, "the child at the age of 14, that is, after finishing a seven-year course should be discharged as an earning unit. Even now the poor people's children automatically lend a helping hand to their parents- the feeling at the back of their minds being what shall they give men to eat, if I do not work with them? That is an education in itself. Even so the state takes charge of the child at seven and returns it to the family as an earning unit. You impart education and simultaneously cut at the root of unemployment". Recommending this scheme of education in the report on national education, the Kothari commission declared, "We recommend that work-experience should be introduced as an integral part of all education-general or vocational. We define work-experience as participation in productive work in school, in the home, in a workshop, on a farm, in a factory or in any other productive situation".
8. *Democratic Ideals*: like his contemporary Indian educationists, Gandhiji aimed at the evolution of democratic ideals through education. His basic plan of education amply demonstrates this fact. He aimed at an education for ideal citizenship. Education, according to him, should make children ideal members of a democratic society. The school, according to Gandhiji, is itself a small democratic society in which such democratic values are imparted to the children as wide outlook, tolerance and good neighbourhood. In the miniature society of the school the child learns the virtues of sympathy, service, love, brotherhood, equality and liberty, etc. these qualities are transferred from one generation to another through education. The welfare of the individual and the Nation are complementary to each other. Therefore, if the country has to progress, the future generation should develop the virtues of democratic citizenship. As Gandhiji said, "A nation cannot advance without the units of which it is composed advancing, and conversely, no individual can advance without the nation of which it is a part also advancing".
9. *Moral and Spiritual*: all knowledge is useless without a good character in his speeches to the students at various institutions. Emphasizing the moral aim of education, Gandhiji said, "The end of all knowledge must be the building up of character". Character building is the moral ideal of education. According to Gandhiji that is most important in

a man's life. His ideals in this connection were as much in agreement with the ancient Indian thinkers as with contemporary Western thinkers like Emerson, Ruskin, etc.,. Gandhiji very much admired the Indian *Gurukula* system of education and the ideal of *Brahmacharya*. According to ancient Indian ideal, education aims at liberation. This was also the aim of Gujarat Vidyapeeth established by Gandhiji in 1929. Gandhiji, however, defined liberation in a very wide sense, including political, social and economic liberation of all the members of society. Real freedom is spiritual freedom. To attain the freedom is the task of education. Again, education equally aims at intellectual, economic and political uplift, though its chief aim is moral and spiritual. Condemning the widespread indiscipline among the students Gandhiji asked the widespread indiscipline among the students Gandhiji asked them to follow the ideal of *Brahmacharya*.

10. *God-Realization*: according to Indian philosophy the ultimate end of the knowledge is God-realization. This God-realization again, is the meaning of self-realization which has been considered to be the ideal of education by most of the educational philosophers in East and West. Agreeing with this line of thinking Gandhiji maintained that a student should live a life of *Sanyasi*. God-realization and self-realization are mutually complementary, the one lead self-realization are mutually complementary, the one leads to the other. This spiritual ideal of education does not negate mundane or immediate ideals but fulfils them. In the words of Gandhiji, "self-realization is in itself an all comprehensive ideal". This ideal includes other ideals of education. With Sri Aurobindo, Gandhiji believed that the ultimate aim of education is spiritual. He also agreed that spiritual growth includes physical and mental, individual and social development. Thus, he synthesized different ideals of education. In this scheme of basic education, he planned for an education suitable to present-day Indian society. He pondered over the difficulties of the present-day Indian society and tried to find out their solution through education. He educational philosophy is based upon ancient Indian idealism. While he did not restrict the scope of physical education, his attention was mainly directed towards spiritual growth.

According to Gandhiji, man's ultimate aim is the realization of God and all his endeavour-political, religious and social-must be guided to this end: "The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it-I am a part and parcel of the whole and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity". For Gandhiji, God lives in the temple of humanity and becomes great exactly in the degree to which he works for the welfare of his fellow men.

CONCLUSION AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Our discussion of the Gandhiji scheme of education so far shows his emphasis upon primary education and the education of the child. He, however, equally devoted his thought to the adult education also known as social education. He realized that in order to bring about a Sarvodaya Society in India, the views of the adults should be changed. Thousands of volunteers were

trained in adult education at Sabarmati and Sevagram Ashrams. They spread in thousands of villages and hundreds of urban centers to educate the adults male and female in night schools. The help of thousands of regular teachers in so many educational institutions was also utilized for this purpose. An important characteristic of Gandhian philosophy is the aim of Sarvodaya. Therefore, he planned different types of education for the country. Besides basic education and social education he thought seriously over rural education and education for women. Thus Gandhiji planned for education suitable for all the sections of society. This was a necessary corollary to his social ideal of Sarvodaya. His scheme of education not only aimed at character building but also social, political and economic uplift of all the sections of the society. It is not quite fair to limit Gandhiji's ideology and principles of philosophy to basic education system of education. His contribution goes far beyond. Basic aims and ideas for education system is just one of his contributions to education. There are some ideas on aim of education "drawing out the basic, livelihood, character formatting, complete development, all round growth, social aims, self-realization etc. Gandhiji's, education was an integral part of a comprehensive programme of socio-economic re-construction of Indian society. As a political and spiritual leader and an economic and social and spiritualist were organically interconnected Gandhiji wrote "My life is indivisible whole and all my activities run into one another, and they all have their rise in my insatiable love for mankind".

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