

Educational Thoughts of Gandhi for Happy and Healthy Life in the 21st Century

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Abstract: The main aim of education is all-round development i.e. physical development, mental development, spiritual development, social development, political development, economic development and technological development. Education and development are two sides of the same coin. According to Gandhi “*education has to develop a person in all respects in order to enable him to become self-reliant*”. The aim of education is changing from character development to career development. The unemployment rate of educated people is increasing day by day. Gandhi had showed the right path through his ‘Basic Education’ for self-reliant of students. Money comes and goes but morality comes and grows. In the present world people are giving more importance for economy than character. Self respect, self motivation, self interest, self learning, self development (personality development) and self evaluation are stepping stones for success. Gandhi has touched all the dimensions of human life for happy and healthy life. Only thing is that we are not following his principles effectively in the field of education. Fortunately the present Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi has initiated Skill India programme and vocational programmes to provide job opportunities and inclusive development. In the 21st century the priorities of people and the role of teacher & educational institutions are also changing from time to time. There are so many types of problems viz., drug addiction, alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, pollution, corruption, malnutrition, unemployment and so on. Value based basic education is a solution for all these problems. In the present paper an attempt has been made to explore the educational thought of Mahatma Gandhiji for Happy and Healthy Life.

Index Terms: Educational Thoughts, Gandhi, Happy and Healthy Life and 21st Century.

INTRODUCTION

The future depends on what you do today.

...M.K. Gandhi

In the present industrialized, liberalized, privatized, globalized, and high-scientific and technological world people are facing so many types of problems viz., terrorism, corruption, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, alcoholism, drug addiction, teenage pregnancy, cyber crime, malnutrition, environmental pollution, green house effect, earth quake, tsunami and so on. There are two types of problems; one is problem created by nature and second one is problem created by man. The first type of problem is rare and can't predict also, but the second one is the most dangerous. The second problem appears with the absence of education, justice, peace, non-violence, love, co-operation, co-ordination, kindness, mercy, ethics and equality. Value based basic education is a solution for all these problems. Many people were influenced the world for the

betterment of human life. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (M.K. Gandhi), Gandhi in short was the most influenced person in the history of mankind through his thoughts, feelings and actions. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was the fourth and last child of his father's fourth and last wife. He was born at Porbandar on October 2nd, 1869. Gandhi showed a right path for all in the world for happy and healthy life without war. According to Gandhi “*the first condition of non-violence is justice all around in every department of life*” (Collective Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. V, p.278) and “*the education must correspond to the surrounding circumstances or it is not healthy growth*” (Collective Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXVI, p. 275, p.278). Truth and Non-violence are the two pillars of Gandhian Philosophy. There was no corner of sphere of human life untouched by Gandhi. His life itself is a right way for peaceful, healthy and happy life for all human beings in the world. There is an urgent need to concentrate on Gandhian Philosophy and Thoughts on Education. Many people and organizations are working to reach the people through Gandhian Philosophy and Thoughts.

The main aim of education is all-round development i.e. physical development, mental development, spiritual development, social development, political development, economic development and technological development. Education and development are two sides of the same coin. According to Gandhi “*education has to develop a person in all respects in order to enable him to become self-reliant*”. The aim of education is changing from character development to career development. The unemployment rate of educated people is increasing day by day. Gandhi had showed the right path through his ‘Basic Education’ for self-reliant of students. Money comes and goes but morality comes and grows. In the present world people are giving more importance for economy than character. Self respect, self motivation, self interest, self learning, self development (personality development) and self evaluation are stepping stones for success. Only thing is that we are not following his principles effectively in the field of education. Fortunately the present Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi has initiated Skill India programme and vocational programmes to provide job opportunities and inclusive development. In the 21st century the priorities of people and the role of teacher & educational institutions are also changing from time to time. The past is beyond recovery and we are not sure of the future. The given moment is the right time to do right actions. It is our foremost duty to rethink, replan and react about the existing educational system according to Gandhian philosophy and thoughts.

EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF GANDHI

Gandhi had touched all most all the aspects of education from primary level to higher level. The researcher has categorized each aspect separately to understand easily the educational thoughts of Gandhi.

Household Education

If we want to reach real peace in this world, we should start educating children.

...M.K. Gandhi

Gandhi had preferred that household education is good for young children. According to Gandhiji “Young children should not be separated from their parents. The education that children naturally imbibe in a well-ordered household is impossible to obtain in hostels. I therefore kept my children with me”. In the present world majority of rural based rich students are studying at residential schools by keeping themselves away from family. Family is the first social institution to teach good things for children in general and young children in particular. The strength of family bondage is decreasing because of residential school system. It is better to keep young children under the supervision of family members for their bright future.

Village Education and Practical Education

An ounce of practice is worth than tons of preaching.

...M.K. Gandhi

Gandhi had described the position of village and villagers. According to Gandhi “Let no one try to justify the glaring difference between the classes and the masses, the prince and the pauper, by saying that the former need more. That will be idle sophistry and a travesty of my argument. The contrast between the rich and the poor today is a painful sight. The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign government and also by their own countrymen- the city-dwellers. They produce the food and go hungry. They produce milk and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful. Everyone must have a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of one’s children and adequate medical relief.” He did not want to taboo everything above and beyond the bare necessities, but they must come after the essential needs of the poor are satisfied. First things must come first” (Harijan, 31-3-1946, 63).

Gandhi has given importance for work based education for practical knowledge. He had explained the need of practical experience..... “As I gained more experience of Bihar. I became convinced that work of a permanent nature was impossible without proper village education”.

Political Education

Wealth without Work

Pleasure without Conscience

Knowledge without Character

Commerce (Business) without Morality (Ethics)

Science without Humanity

Religion without Sacrifice

Politics without Principle

(Seven Sins)

...M.K. Gandhi

The Kheda Satyagraha marks the beginning of an awakening among the peasants of Gujarat, the beginning of their true political education. According to Gandhi principle oriented politics is good for democracy and people. In the present days we are seeing what is happening in the politics. There is an urgent need to rethink about the present politics in Indi. It is a right time for active participation of youth in politics for the welfare of all.

Entrepreneurship Education

In general people think that to start an enterprise a person need higher education. A highly qualified person is only eligible to start an enterprise. Courage is important to do any occupation. Gandhi had given a live example *“In the year 1917 I was taken by my Gujarati friends to preside at the Broach Educational Conference. It was here that I discovered that remarkable lady Majmudar. She was a widow, but her enterprising spirit knew no bounds. Her education, in the accepted sense of the term, was not much. But in courage and common sense she easily surpassed the general run of our educated women”*. Present Government of India is encouraging the youth to start own enterprise through ‘Make in India’ and ‘Skilling India’ programmes. Government is moving in a right direction by encouraging the youth towards entrepreneurship education and training.

Perfect Education

I saw that bad handwriting should be regarded as a sign of an imperfect education.

...M. K. Gandhi

Good handwriting is a part of perfect education. Gandhiji had explained the need of good handing in his own words *“I saw that bad handwriting should be regarded as a sign of an imperfect education. I tried later to improve mine, but it was too late. I could never repair the neglect of my youth. Let every young man and woman be warned by my example, and understand that good handwriting is a necessary part of education”*. It is a duty of parents and teachers to encourage children/students for good hand writing. Children can learn easily anything at early stage. We know that practice makes man perfect. The best way to improve hand writing is like, love and practice of hand writing.

Free Education

Gandhi had stressed the concept free education seventy years before. But still in India lakhs of students are out of schools. According to Gandhi *“There is too, for us, the inordinately expensive education. When it is difficult for millions even to make the two ends meet, when millions are dying of starvation, it is monstrous to think if giving our relatives a costly education. Expansion of the mind will come from hard experience, not necessarily in the college or the school-room. When some of us deny ourselves and ours the so called higher education, we shall find the true means of giving and receiving a really high education. Is there not, may there not be a way of each boy paying for his own education? There may be no such way. Whether there is or there is*

not such a way is irrelevant. But there is no doubt that when we deny ourselves the way of expensive education, seeing that aspiration after higher education is a laudable end, we shall find out a way of fulfilling it more in accord with our surroundings. The golden rule to apply in all such cases is resolutely to refuse to have what the millions cannot. The ability to refuse will not descend upon us all of a sudden. The first thing is to cultivate the mental attitude that we will not have possessions or facilities denied to millions, and the next immediate thing is to rearrange our lives as fast as possible in accordance with that mentality”.

Moral Education

If wealth is lost; nothing is lost.

If health is lost; something is lost.

If character is lost; everything is lost.

...M.K. Gandhi

Best of all things is character. According to Gandhi “*I want you to leave up to the name of the premier institution which must produce boys who will occupy the front rank in character. And what is education without character and what is character without elementary personal purity?*” (Young India, 15-9-27, 314).

At present society is facing many problems because of lack of moral education at educational institutions.

Gandhiji had answered to the following two questions by stressing the need of character building through moral education

Q. What is your goal in education when India obtains self-rule?

A. *Character- building. I would try to develop courage, strength, virtue, to ability to forget oneself in working towards great aims. This is more important than literacy, academic learning is only a means to this greater end. That is why India’s great lack of literacy, deplorable as it is, does not appeal to me nor make me feel that India is unfit for self -rule.*

Q. Would you try to bring about any specific kind of social organization through education?

A. *I would feel that if we succeed in building the character of the individual, society will take care of itself. I would be quite willing to trust the organization of society to individuals so developed.*

Mass Education

The main purpose of life is to live rightly, think rightly and act rightly.

...M. K. Gandhi

Gandhi was a great statesman. He had stressed the need of mass education for sustainable and inclusive development. According him “*In other words, it means national education i.e. education of the masses. It means an awakening of national consciousness among the masses. It will not spring like the magician’s mango.*

It will grow almost unperceived like the banyan tree. A bloody revolution will never perform the trick. Haste here is most certainly waste”(Young India, 21-5-25, 178.

He has also mentioned “*Education both general and scientific, of both men and women, should be regularly undertaken through night schools. Children of labourers should be educated after the basic education style. It would be different if there was mass civil disobedience. But that is out of the question for the time being at any rate. But they should have education in national consciousness. It is the duty of an independent State to teach its citizens to be patriotic”.*

Co-education

See the good in people and help them.

...M.K. Gandhi

Gandhi had encouraged the concept of co-education. According to him “*I cannot definitely state as yet whether it will be successful or not. It does not seem to have succeeded in the West. I tried it myself years ago when I even made boys and girls sleep in the same verandah with no partition between them, Mrs. Gandhi and myself sharing the verandah with them. I must say it brought undesirable results”.*

Real Education

According to Gandhi “*Real education consists in drawing the best out of yourself. What better book can there be than the book of humanity?” (Harijan, 30-3-34, 55).*

National Education

Gandhi had elaborated the concept of National Education. According to Gandhi the concept of national education.....

So many strange things have been said about my views on national education, that it would perhaps not be out of place to formulate them before the public.

In my opinion the existing system of education is defective, apart from its association with an utterly unjust Government, in three most important matters:

- (1) It is based upon foreign culture to the almost entire exclusion of indigenous culture.*
- (2) It ignores the culture of the heart and the hand, and confines itself simply to the head.*
- (3) Real education is impossible through a foreign medium.*

Let us examine the three defects. Almost from the commencement, the textbooks deal, not with things the boys and the girls have always to deal with in their homes, but things to which they are perfect strangers. It is not through the text-books, that a lad learns what is right and what is wrong in the home life. He is never taught to have any pride in his surroundings. The higher he goes, the farther he is removed from his home, so that at the end of his education he becomes estranged from his surroundings. He feels no poetry about the home life. The village scenes are all a sealed book to him. His own civilization is presented to him as imbecile,

barbarous, superstitious and useless for all practical purposes. His education is calculated to wean him from his traditional culture. And if the mass of educated youths are not entirely denationalized, it is because the ancient culture is too deeply embedded in them to be altogether uprooted even by an education adverse to its growth. If I had my way, I would certainly destroy the majority of the present text-books and cause to be written text-books which have a bearing on and correspondence with the home life, so that a boy as he learns may react upon his immediate surroundings.

Secondly, whatever may be true of other countries, in India at any rate where more than eighty per cent of the population is agricultural and another ten per cent industrial, it is a crime to make education merely literary and to unfit boys and girls for manual work in after-life. Indeed I hold that as the larger part of our time is devoted to labour for earning our bread, our children must from their infancy be taught the dignity of such labour. Our children should not be so taught as to despise labour. There is no reason, why a peasant's son after having gone to a school should become useless as he does become as agricultural labourers. It is a sad thing that our school boys look upon manual labour with disfavor, if not contempt. Moreover, in India, if we expect, as we must every boy and girl of school-going age to attend public schools, we have not the means to finance education in accordance with the existing style, nor are millions of parents able to pay the fees that are at present imposed.

Education to be universal must therefore be free. I fancy that even under an ideal system of government, we shall not be able to devote two thousand million rupees which we should require for finding education for all the children of school-going age. It follows, therefore, that our children must be made to pay in labour partly or wholly for all the education they receive. Such universal labour to be profitable can only be (to my thinking) hand-spinning and hand weaving. But for the purposes of my proposition, it is immaterial whether we have spinning or any other form of labour, so long as it can be turned to account. Only, it will be found upon examination, that on a practical, profitable and extensive scale, there is no occupation other than the processes connected with cloth-production which can be introduced in our schools throughout India.

The introduction of manual training will serve a double purpose in a poor country like ours. It will pay for the education of our children and teach them an occupation on which they can fall back in after-life, if they choose, for earning a living. Such a system must make our children self-reliant. Nothing will demoralize the nation so much as that we should learn to despise labour.

One word only as to the education of the heart. I do not believe, that this can be imparted through books. It can only be done through the living touch of the teacher. And, who are the teachers in the primary and even secondary schools?

Are they men and women of faith and character? Have they themselves received the training of the heart? Are they ever expected to take care of the permanent element in the boys and girls placed under their

charge? Is not the method of engaging teachers for lower schools an effective bar against character? Do the teachers get even a living wage? And we know, that the teachers of primary schools are not selected for their patriotism. They only come who cannot find any other employment.

Finally, the medium of instruction. My views on this point are too well known to need restating. The foreign medium has caused brain-fag, put an undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and imitators, unfitted them for original work and thought, and disabled them for filtrating their learning to the family or the masses. The foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own land. It is the greatest tragedy of the existing system. The foreign medium has prevented the growth of our vernaculars. If I had the powers of a despot, I would today stop the tuition of our boys and girls through a foreign medium, and require all the teachers and professors on pain of dismissal to introduce the change forthwith. I would not wait for the preparation of text-books. They will follow the change. It is an evil that needs a summary remedy.

According to Gandhi “the best national education for India is undoubtedly an intelligent handling of the spinning wheel”.

Religious Education

My religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth is my God. Non-violence is the means of realizing Him.

...M.K. Gandhi

Gandhiji had given the pivotal importance for religious education. According to Gandhi “I do not believe that the state can concern itself or cope with religious instruction. I believe that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations” (Harijan, 23-3-47, 76).

The Place of Literacy

Those who know how to think need no teachers.

...M.K. Gandhi

Gandhi had estimated the place of literacy. According to Gandhi literacy is not sufficient for good and quality life. Gandhi stated that “Literary training by itself adds not an inch to one’s moral height and character- building is independent of literary training” (Young India, 1-6-21, 172).

Village Swaraj through Education

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.

...M.K. Gandhi

Gandhi had stressed the need of education and work to eradicate poverty by addressing to the students of the Benares Hindu University....“Panditji has collected and has been still collecting lakhs and lakhs of rupees for you from Rajas and Maharajas. The money apparently comes from these wealthy Princes, but in

reality it comes from the millions of our poor. For unlike Europe, the rich of our land grow rich at the expense of our villagers the bulk of whom have to go without a square meal a day. The education that you receive today is thus paid for by the starving villagers who will never have the chance of such an education. It is your duty to refuse to have an education that is not within reach of the poor; but I do not ask that of you today. I ask you to render a slight return to the poor by doing a little yajna for them. For he who eats without doing his yajna steals his food, says the Gita. The yajna of our age and for us is the spinning wheel. Day in and day out I have been talking about it, writing about it" (Gandhi-Young India, 20-1-27, p.22).

According to Gandhi "My idea of Village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course".

Free Dowry System through Education

You must be the change you want to see in the world.

...M.K. Gandhi

It is possible to stop the dowry system through education. According to Gandhi "The system has to go. Marriage must cease to be a matter of arrangement made by parents for money. The system is intimately connected with caste. So long as the choice is restricted to a few hundred-young men or young women of a particular caste, the system, will persist no matter what is said against it. The girls or boys or their parents will have to break the bonds of caste if the evil is to be eradicated. All this means education of a character that will revolutionize the mentality of the youth of the nation" (Harijan, 23-5-36, 117).

Learning with Courage

Courage is very important for students according to Gandhi. According to Gandhi "Let them (students) realize that learning without courage is like a waxen statue beautiful to look at but bound to melt at the least touch of a hot substance" (Young India, 12-7-28, 236). Teachers are responsible to prepare courageous students for the sake national development.

Mental Development through Education

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

...M.K. Gandhi

Work based or practice based learning is always good. According to Gandhi "I am not sure that it is not better for the children to have much of the preliminary instruction imparted to them vocally" (Young India, 16-9-26, 323).

Gandhi was a supporter for practical method. According to him “This utterly false idea that intelligence can be developed only through book-reading should give place to the truth that the quickest development of the mind can be achieved by artisan’s work being learnt in a scientific manner. True development of the mind commences immediately the apprentice is taught at every step why a particular manipulation of the hand or a tool is required. The problem of the unemployment of students can be solved without difficulty, if they will rank themselves among the common labourers” (*Harijan*, 9-1-37, 386).

Basic Education

Basic education links children whether of the cities or the villages, to all that is best and lasting in India.

...M.K. Gandhi

Gandhi’s basic education is world famous. It is very important to solve the problem of unemployment and to become self-reliant. For better understanding the investigator has taken the exact and original content of Gandhi on basic education. Gandhi opinion on basic education is as follows:

Exercise and Training

*I hold that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, e.g. hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc. In other words an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with prove to be a prove to be a poor lop-sided affair. By spiritual training I mean education of the heart. A proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds pari passu with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole. According to this theory, therefore, it would be a gross fallacy to suppose that they can be developed piecemeal or independently of one another (*Harijan*, 8-5-37, I04).*

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. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the state takes over the manufactures of these schools.

I hold that highest development of the mind and the soul is possible under such a 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. I am not writing this without some confidence, because it has the backing of experience. This method is being adopted more or less completely wherever spinning is being taught to workers.

I have myself taught sandal-making and even spinning on these lines with good results. This method does not exclude o these lines with good results. This method does not exclude knowledge of history and geography. But I find that this is best taught by transmitting such general information by word of mouth. One imparts ten times as much in this manner as by reading and writing. The signs of the alphabet may be taught later when the pupil has learnt to distinguish wheat from chaff and when he has somewhat developed his or her tastes. This is a revolutionary proposal but it saves immense labour and enables a student to acquire in one year what he may take much longer to learn. This means all-round economy. Of course the pupil learns mathematics whilst he is learning his handicraft. I attach the greatest importance to primary education which according to my conception should be equal to the present matriculation less English (Harijan, 31-7-37, 197).

We have up to now concentrated on stuffing children's minds with all kinds of information, without ever thinking of stimulating and developing them. Let us now cry a halt and concentrate on education the child properly through manual work, not as a side activity, but as the prime means of intellectual training. You have to train the boys in one occupation or another. Round this special occupation you will train up his mind, his body, his handwriting, his artistic sense, and so on. He will be master of the craft he learns (Harijan, 18-9-37,261).

Vocational Education

The scheme that I wish to place before you today is not the teaching of some handicraft side with so-called liberal education. I want that the whole education should be imparted through some handicraft or industry. It might be objected that in the middle ages only handicrafts were taught to the students; but the occupational training, then, was far from serving an educational purpose. The crafts were taught only for the sake of the crafts, without any attempt to develop the intellect as well. In this age those born to certain professions had forgotten them, had taken to clerical careers and were lost to countryside. The remedy lies in imparting the whole art and science of a craft through practical training and there through imparting the whole education.

Physical and Music Education

I am very keen on finding the expenses of a teacher through the product of the manual work of his pupils, because I am convinced that there is no other way to carry education to crores of our children. We cannot wait until we have the necessary revenue and until the Viceroy reduces the military expenditure. You should bear in mind that this primary education would include the elementary principles of sanitation, hygiene, nutrition, of doing their won work, helping parents at home etc. The present generation of boys knows no clean lines, no self-help, and is physically weak. I would therefore, give compulsory physical training through musical drill (Ed, Rec., 61-63 or Harijan, 30-10-37, 323).

Free and Compulsory Primary Education

I am a firm believer in the principle of free and compulsory primary education For India. I also hold that we shall realize this only by teaching the children useful vocation and utilizing it as a means for cultivating their mental, physical and spiritual faculties. Let no one consider these economic calculations in connection with education as sordid or out of place. There is nothing essentially sordid about economic calculations. True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as true ethics to be worth its name must at the same time, be also good economics (Harijan 9-10-37, 292).

Connecting Villages and Cities

What kinds of vocation are the fittest for being taught to children in urban schools? There is no hard and fast rule about it. But my reply is clear. I want to resuscitate the villages of India. Today our villages have become a mere appendage to the cities. They exist, as it were, to be exploited by the latter and depend on the latter's sufferance. This is unnatural. It is only when the cities realize the duty of making an adequate return to the villages for the strength and sustenance which they derive from them, instead of selfishly exploiting them, that a healthy and moral relationship between the two will spring up. And if the city children are to play their part in this great and noble work of social reconstruction, the vocations through which they are to achieve their education ought to be directly related to the requirements of the villages.

So far as I can see, the various processes of cotton manufacture from ginning and cleaning of cotton to the spinning of yarn, answer this test as nothing else does. Even today the cotton is grown in the villages and is ginned and spun and converted into cloth in the cities. But the chain of processes which cotton undergoes in the mills from the beginning to the end constitutes a huge tragedy of waste in men, materials and mechanical power.

Village Handicrafts and the Right to Freedom

My plan to impart primary education through the medium of village handicrafts like spinning and carding, etc. is thus conceived as the spearhead of a silent social revolution fraught with most far-reaching consequences. 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 of a living wage and the right to freedom.

And all this would be accomplished without the horror of a bloody class war or a colossal 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 of technical skill. Lastly, by obviating the necessity for highly specialized talent, it would place the destiny of the masses, as it were, in their own hands. But who will bell the cat? Will the city-folk listen to me at all? Or, will mine remain a mere cry in the wilderness? Replies to

these and similar questions will depend more on lovers of education like my correspondent living in cities than on me (Harijan, 9-10-37, 293).

Music in School Education

Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress.

...M.K. Gandhi

Gandhiji always gives importance for others opinions also. He had readily accepted the opinion of Pandit Khare. He had explained the need of music in school education “*In Pandit Khare’s opinion, based upon wide experience, music should form part of the syllabus of primary education. I heartily endorse the proposition. The modulation of the voice is as necessary as the training of the hand. Physical drill, handicrafts, drawing and music should go hand in hand in order to draw the best out of the boys and girls and create in them a real interest in their tuition*”. After seventy years of Independence also majority of schools in India do not have music education and music teachers. Only selected schools are teaching music to students. Many researchers have proved that music education is positively correlated with achievement of the students.

Purpose of Primary Education

Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory.

...M.K. Gandhi

The purpose of primary education according to Gandhi “*One has only to visit only primary school to have a striking demonstration of slovenliness, disorderliness and discordant speech. I have no doubt, therefore, that when the Education Ministers in the several provinces recast the system of education and make it answer the requirements of the country, they will not omit the essentials to which I have drawn attention. My plan of primary education certainly comprises these things which easily become possible the moment you remove from the children’s shoulders the burden of having to master a difficult foreign language*”(Harijan, 11-9-37, 250).

Education for Freedom

Gandhi had given the true meaning and purpose of education. According to Gandhi “*The motto of the Gujarat Vidyapith is. It means: That is knowledge which is designed for salvation. On the principle that the greater includes the less, national independence or material freedom is included in the spiritual. The knowledge gained in educational institutions must therefore at least teach the way and lead to such freedom* (Young India, 20-3-30, 100).

Higher Education

Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.

...M.K. Gandhi

Gandhiji had given the true meaning of higher education. According to him “*I would revolutionize college education and relate it to national necessities. There would be degrees for mechanical and other*

engineers. They would be attached to the different industries which would pay for the training of the graduates they need. Thus the Tatas would be expected to run a college for training engineers under the supervision of the state, the mill associations would run among them a college for training graduates whom they need. Similarly for other industries that may be named. Commerce will have its college. There remain arts, medicine and agriculture. Several private arts colleges are today self-supporting. That State would. Therefore, cease to run its own. Medical colleges would be attached to certified hospitals. As they are popular among moneyed men they may be expected by voluntary contribution to support medical colleges. And agricultural colleges to be worthy of the name must be self-supporting. I have a painful experience of some agricultural graduates. Their knowledge is superficial. They lack practical experience. But if they had their apprenticeship on farms which are self-sustained and answer the requirements of the country, they would not have to gain experience after getting their degrees and at the expense of their employers”(Harijan, 31-7-37, 197).

Specific Views of Gandhi on Higher Education

- 1) I am opposed to all higher education being paid for from the general revenue.
- 2) It is my firm conviction that the vast amount of the so-called education in arts, given in our colleges, is sheer waste and has resulted in unemployment among the educated classes. What is more, it has destroyed the health, both mental and physical, of the boys and girls who have the misfortune to go through the grind in our colleges.
- 3) The medium of a foreign language through which higher education has been imparted in India has caused incalculable intellectual and moral injury to the nation. We are too near our own times to judge the enormity of the damage done. And we judges-an almost impossible feat.

It was a painful discovery to have to learn a language that was not pronounced as it was written. It was a strange experience to have to learn the spelling by heart.

This English medium created an impassable barrier between me and the members of my family, who had not gone through English schools. My father knew nothing of what I was doing. I could not, even if I had wished it, interest my father in what I was learning. For though he had ample intelligence, he knew not a word of English. I was fast becoming a strange in my own home.

It would be good economy to set apart a class of students whose business would be to learn the best of what is to be learnt in the different languages of the world and give the translation in the vernaculars. Our masters chose the wrong way for us, and habit has made the wrong appear as right.

Universities must be made self-supporting The State should simply educate those whose services it would need. For all other branches of learning it should encourage private effort. The medium of instruction should be altered at once and at any cost, the provincial languages being given their rightful place. I would prefer temporary chaos in higher education to the criminal waste that is daily accumulating.

In my opinion this is not a question to be decided by academicians. They cannot decide through what language the boys and girls of a place are to be educated. That question is already decided for them in every free country. Nor can they decide the subjects to be taught. That depends upon the wants of the country to which they belong. Theirs is the privilege of enforcing the nation's will in the best manner possible. When this country becomes really free, the question of medium will be settled only one way. The academicians will frame the syllabus and prepare text-books accordingly. And the products of the education of a free India will answer the requirements of the country as today they answer those of the foreign ruler. So long as we the educated classes play with this question, I very much fear we shall not produce the free and healthy India of our dream. We have to grow by strenuous effort out of our bondage, whether it is educational, economical, social or political. The effort itself is three-fourths of the battle.

True Higher Education

Thus I claim that I am not an enemy of higher education. But I am an enemy of higher education as it is given in this country. Under my scheme there will be more and better libraries, more and better laboratories, more and better research institutes. Under it we should have an army of chemists, engineers and other experts who will be real servants of the nation, and answer the varied and growing requirements of a people who are becoming increasingly conscious of their rights and wants. And all these experts will speak, not a foreign tongue, but the language of the people. The knowledge gained by them will be the common property of the people. There will be truly original work instead of mere imitation. And the cost will be evenly and justly distributed (Harijan, 9-7-38, 176).

Take the illustration of the new educational experiment. The experiment I said must go on without asking for monetary help. Otherwise, after my death the whole organization would go to pieces. The fact is that the moment financial stability is assured, spiritual bankruptcy is also assured (Harijan, 10-12-38,371).

At present the higher education in India is not up to the mark when compared to higher education in developed countries. The links between monetary bodies of higher education and higher educational institutions are very weak. The planning, implementation and evaluation process of higher education in India is poor. The accountability is also missing. It is a right time to rethink, replan and reevaluate the higher education in India based on views of Gandhiji.

CONCLUSION

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.

...M.K. Gandhi

Education is a key for development. The Gandhian thoughts of Education are relevant in the present globalized world also. He had touched all the aspects of education for all-round development of an individual. Education is an important tool for promoting peace and non-violence. We have to recast the curriculum of present education in order to incorporate peace education and conflict resolution practices. The institutions of higher education can play an important role in training the youth for nonviolent action and conflict transformation. Truth, peace and non-violence can be realized through education. Gandhian thoughts are very important for rural development. Value based education is very important in the present world. All types of problems will be solved through basic education of Gandhi. It is a right time to rethink about the thoughts of Gandhi on education for happy and healthy life in the 21st century.

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