



# EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI AND IT'S PRESENT- DAY IMPLICATIONS

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**ABSTRACT:** Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was primarily a politician and social reformer. He is also known as Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Indian nation. Mahatma Gandhi had made remarkable contribution to the field of education. He had done vast educational experiments in Tolstoy Farm. He placed the theory of all-round development of the children through education. Training of heart and building of character were also emphasised by him. Learning by doing was the guiding principle of Gandhiji. The educational experiments which he tried in Africa were further continued at Sabarmati and Sevagram in India. The Sabarmati Ashram was established in May 1915. Gandhiji founded the Sevagram Ashrama near Wardha in April 1935. In this Ashrama Gandhiji conceived the idea of his new system of education which is commonly known as “Buniyadi Shiksha” or Basic Education. The Scheme of Basic Education is a plan of education made by Gandhiji and it is just a part of his total educational philosophy.

**INTRODUCTION:** Gandhiji, the great thinker and educational reformer, regarded education as a potent force for social development and social reconstruction. According to Mahatma Gandhi, education is an activity which is necessary not only for social progress but also for moral, political and economic development. According to Gandhiji, true education is, “an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and spirit.”

Mahatma Gandhi wanted to create a new a new society based on truth, non-violence, justice, equality and universal brotherhood. His belief in universal compulsory education, with its emphasis on mother-tongue is a philosophy which may be interpreted as pragmatic in its approach. A deep study on Gandhiji’s educational principles will create a sound philosophical as well as sociological foundation of his educational thought.

**OBJECTIVES:** The objectives of the present study are to trace the main ideas of the educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and to find out its present-day implications.

**Aims of Education as Highlighted in Gandhian Philosophy:** Being an idealist and a realist, Gandhiji advocated for ultimate aim and immediate aims of education. Self-realisation, spiritualism and oneness with god is the ultimate aim of education. He laid great stress on religious education.

In the immediate aim of education Gandhiji included the utilitarian aim, cultural aim, and harmonious development of personality, preparation for complete living, character building and training of good citizenship.

The chief tenets of Gandhiji's educational philosophy may be mentioned as:

- Free and compulsory primary education.
- Education should be craft centred.
- Education should be self-supporting and self-sufficient.
- Education should be given in mother tongue.

**Curriculum of Education:** The curriculum of education, as advised by Mahatma Gandhi, may be mentioned as:

- Curriculum of education should be related to the environment of the child. Our emphasis should be up on our own country, our people, our life and our physical and social environment.
- Emphasis should be given on teaching of mother tongue.
- Craft should be introduced as an essential part of curriculum. The whole process of education should be imparted through some handicrafts. The purpose of introducing craft was not to produce some craftsman but to exploit its educative value.

**Method of Teaching:** Gandhiji advocated that education should be given through some productive work. All the subjects will be taught through the medium of some crafts. He emphasised the principle of "learning by doing" and "activity method" in the field of teaching. As per his opinion, education process is mainly activity centred and all kind of learning is to be imparted through a craft-based work. Gandhiji also advocated for the method of correlation. The teaching of various school subjects should be in the form of correlated knowledge. He also wanted that all education must be given through the medium of mother tongue.

**Concept of Basic Education:** Basic Education (Buniyadi Shiksha) is the scheme of education propounded by Mahatma Gandhi, aiming at the reconstruction of the existing system of education in India. This scheme of education is also known as "Nai Talim" or "Wardha Scheme of Education". Practically, Basic Education is a philosophy of education, as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, based on the cultural, social, spiritual and economic needs of the people of the country. Gandhiji defined it as "education for life and through life." Basic Education is the foundational education, fundamental to the whole scheme of education.

Gandhiji's Basic Education was really a "basic concept of education" because:

- (1) It attempts to provide the minimum of learning to be acquired by an average child.
- (2) It is directly linked with the basic urges of human life.
- (3) It is mainly correlated with the basic needs of the child.
- (4) It makes use of the native potentialities of the child.
- (5) It is closely related to the basic occupations of the community.

Further, the essential features of Basic Education Scheme of Mahatma Gandhi may be mentioned as:

- (1) The scheme was designed for free and compulsory education for all children between the ages 6 to 14 years.
- (2) This scheme of education centres on some purposeful and productive activities.
- (3) It is a scheme of self-supporting education.
- (4) Basic education scheme of Mahatma Gandhi aims at bringing about a new co-operative regime.
- (5) This scheme of education inculcates the virtues of dignity of labour, a keen sense of discipline and a great sense of responsibility.

- (6) This scheme of education advocated for integrated teaching.
- (7) The scheme of Basic Education seeks to develop the child as a whole with the development of his/her body, mind and spirit.

**Philosophy behind the Gandhian Concept of Education:** Gandhiji developed his scheme or planning of education in the light of his philosophy of life. His scheme of education is based on some fundamental ideas. These ideas are:

- (1) Ideal of classless society.
- (2) Freedom and equality for all.
- (3) Dignity of labour.
- (4) Non-violent social order.
- (5) Development of sense of social responsibility.

By analysing the philosophical basis of Gandhiji's educational thought and practice it can be rightly said that Gandhian philosophy of education is naturalistic in its setting, idealistic in its aims and objectives, and pragmatic in its method and programme of work.

**Present Day Relevance of Gandhiji's Concept on Education:** Educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi refers to all ideas developed by Gandhiji in his life time. Basically, all the theories of Gandhiji's educational philosophy are practiced in practical life. Gandhiji advocated for equity in our social system. According to him our goal should be to achieve the ideals of "Sarvodaya", which means welfare of all without exception. In his educational planning he gave more importance on the principle of equity rather than principal of equality in our society. Gandhiji advocated for peaceful life in human society. According to him every student should learn the concept human ethics as it necessary for individual and social development in every society.

As per Gandhian philosophy of education, all educational institutions must prepare their students to accept the truth and discard the untruth in their life. In any developing social system like India a planned approach towards development should be adopted where education must be considered as the key agent of socio-economic reform. Gandhiji described his thought on education as "education for life, education through life and education throughout life." Now, the modern thinkers on education like to define the process of education in the words of Mahatma Gandhi. They also accepted the basic idea of "Sarvodaya" underlying the new educational concept of Gandhiji. Mahatma Gandhi described his philosophy of education as the process for inspiring the learners with a new ideology based upon personal purity and unselfish service for creation of a society based upon truth, love and non-violence. Gandhiji established the idea in his educational theory that knowledge and work must never be separated. This is also the demand of the present day social life. In 1937 Gandhiji advocated for vocationalisation of the school education. We must observe that this issue is considered as a significant one in the National Education Policy 2020.

**Conclusion:** To sum up, Gandhian philosophy of education is simultaneously traditional and modern. Being rooted in Indian culture and heritage, the concept of Gandhian educational philosophy projected the moral and ethical principles of our country. There is no western biasness in his educational aims and practice. The multifaceted nature of Gandhiji's thought placed his educational ideas ahead of its time. Gandhiji included all the needs of the present and coming social life in the process of his educational planning. Due to all these matters Gandhian philosophy of education has its relevance in the present day social and national life.

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