



## **RELEVANCE OF MAHATMA GANDHI'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY IN PRESENT PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract**

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*Mahatma Gandhi (1868-1948) contribution to the field of educational theory and practice is really outstanding. He has been considered to be a revolutionary and educational thinker of modern India. When we talk about Gandhi ji, automatically certain ideals come to our mind i.e. truth, nonviolence, simplicity, love for all, leadership, dignity of labor and implementation or practising ideas rather than just propagating them. These ideals or qualities reflected to educational philosophy of Gandhi ji. Through his educational scheme he wanted to bring about a social revolution in our country, thereby leading to the creation of a new social order, reflecting his philosophy of education and life. He is regarded as a practical educational philosopher and experimenter on education to the core. The whole of his life was spent in experimentation with Truth.*



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### **INTRODUCTION**

Man is rational and thoughtful from the very early dawn of life. This thinking ability has given birth to so many new inventions in various fields of knowledge. The moral and spiritual aspect of man determines his moral and spiritual necessity. Man is thoughtful and spiritual being. In order to know his own conscious, he made new investigations. This process goes throughout life. All this is done to make human society and human life progressive. For this, reflections of philosophical and educational thoughts of great thinkers have always shown the right path to the nation by giving some directions for the scheme of education of our country. Philosophy affects education and education affects philosophy as both are interdependent. So, the thought of each philosopher plays an important role in the development of his educational philosophy.

In the same way Mahatma Gandhi (1868-1948) contribution to the field of educational theory and practice is really outstanding. He has been considered to be a revolutionary and educational thinker of modern India. Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2nd October, 1869 at Porbander in Gujarat. His father was a Dewan of Rajkot. After completing his studies up to Metric, he went to England for studying law. He passed his law examination and called to the bar in 1891. He did not do well here. In 1893, he went to South Africa as legal advisor. There

he resist for 20 years the inhuman treatment of the British Government against the Indians in a non-violent way.

In 1914 Gandhi ji returned to India and continued his educational experiments for a short time at Shantiniketan and then at Sabarmati and Sewagram. It was here that Gandhi ji not only conceived the idea of his continued his efforts in liberating India in a number of ways. A few wonderful events of his times are Non –co-operation Movement after the Jalianawala massacre, Quit India Movement, his historic fast of 1931 etc. He died on January 30, 1948 at the hands of a fanatic Nathu Ram Godse.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the brief life sketch and literature of Mahatma Gandhi.
2. To analyses general philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi in terms of metaphysics, epistemology and axiology.
3. To study Mahatma Gandhi background of Educational philosophy i.e., historical, religious, philosophical social and cultural conditions prevailing in India during the time of Gandhi.
4. To analyses Mahatma Gandhi educational thoughts in terms of concept of education, aims, curriculum, methods of teaching, role of teacher, teacher-taught relationship, discipline, religious and spiritual education, women education and education of backward and scheduled caste people.

### **TOOL AND TECHNIQUES OF THE STUDY**

Due to the philosophical nature of the study, historical and philosophical methods were employed. The reference from various books, journals etc. were used extensively.

### **MAHATMA GANDHI'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE**

Mahatma Gandhi great philosopher, educationist and experimenter expressed his views on everything from God to birth control. He was deeply influenced by the humanist idealism of India's past. Here is given a brief description of some of his philosophical doctrines:

#### **❖ Firm Faith in God:**

Like all idealists, Gandhi Ji had firm faith in God. To him, God is all- pervasive Reality, immanent in man and also in the world. He is Ultimate Reality and Supreme Ruler. He is Truth and Love, Ethics and Morality, Source of Light and Life. He is the creator, dissolver and retreator. Hence he advised to have a living faith and absolute God. The ultimate aim of life should be the realization of God.

### ❖ **Truth**

To Gandhi ji truth is the supreme principle. The realization of truth is the only way to realize God. According to Gandhi ji, God is Truth and Truth is God. Truth has a divine significance and is manifested in the voice of conscience. Truth should be the basis of whole life.

### ❖ **Ahimsa or non violence**

Ahimsa or non violence is the means to attain the goal of truth. Ahimsa implies complete freedom from Himsha (violence); freedom from hate, anger, fear, vanity and ill-will. Ahimsa includes humility, charity, love, patience, purity of the heart and freedom from passion in thought, word art and action. It inspires us to love all creatures. It purifies spirit. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, non-violence is preferred to violence.

### ❖ **Sense of Human Unity**

Gandhi advocated that as the source of all the rays of the sun is the absolute and one whole, in the same way though the persons are different, yet the same light pervades in all of them. He experienced and realized unity in diversity.

### ❖ **Love**

Gandhi had a firm faith in the love for mankind. To him, love is essence of morality. No morality is possible without love. Truth can be attained through love. Love takes him towards the God. Hence love should guide all life.

### ❖ **Satyagraha**

Satyagraha is the practical application of Ahimsa. It is method of securing a right by personal suffering and not by inflicting injury on others. Defenses of peace can be constructed only through Satyagraha. A satyagrahi is one who has faith in Truth, non-violence, bramcharya, fear-lessees and non-stealing or non-possession. Thus the life of a satyagrahi implies strict discipline.

### ❖ **Brotherhood of man**

He wanted to establish a universal community of free persons without racial discrimination and artificial barriers of caste and creed. He had firm faith in the gospel or brotherhood of man.

### ❖ **Spiritual nature of individual**

Gandhi ji believes that individual has a divine spirit. He is a spiritual being. Therefore, the aim of the individual must be spiritual and not material For realizing this aim the individual must be considered as end up to himself. He should not be used as means.

### ❖ **Concept of spiritual society**

Gandhi ji was anxious to establish a spiritual society based on the principle of love, non-violence, Truth, justice and equitable distribution of wealth. Such a society will be free from any kind of exploitation- Social, political, economic or religious. This society will be free from all types of conflicts and struggles.

### ❖ **Service unto Humanity**

Service into humanity is the core of his philosophy. His greatest creed was service of God through service of humanity. Man becomes great when he works for the welfare of his fellow men. He stated, I shall work for an India in which the protest shall feel that it is their country. In communities shall live in perfect harmony.

## **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI**

Gandhi ji evolved a philosophy of education as the dynamic side of his philosophy of life. He viewed education as a potent instrument of social reconstruction. On account of his new scheme of education known as 'Basic Education'. Gandhi ji considered as the starting point of modern educational theory and practice of the East.

### ❖ **MEANING OF EDUCATION**

- **Education is not literacy**

According to Gandhi ji, literacy in itself is no education. Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning of it. It is not knowledge or even the medium of knowledge. It is one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated.

- **Education is development**

For Mahatma Gandhi ji, education means an all round development of the child and man. In the words of Gandhi ji, "By education means an all round drawing out best in child and man- Body, Mind and Soul. Gandhi ji further says that, ' True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual, and physical faculties of the children.

### ❖ **AIMS OF EDUCATION**

Gandhi ji advocated the following aims of teaching:

- **Vocational Aim**

It is also known as self-supporting aim of education. Gandhi ji wanted that each child should be able to learn a productive craft to meet his future needs of life and become self-supporting. He advocated education for self-reliance and capacity to earn one's livelihood.

- **cultural Aim**

He advocated that vocational education and cultural development should go side by side. He considered the culture aspect of education as more essential as its academic aspect. Culture is the main foundation and essential part of education. According to Gandhi ji, "I attach more importance to cultural factor of education rather than the literacy factor."

- **Spiritual Aim**

Self realization and spiritual development find perfect support in Gandhian scheme. According to Gandhi, "Development of moral character, development of the whole- all were directed towards the realization of the ultimate reality- the merger of the finite being into the infinite." It is realizing Godliness in his self."

❖ **CURRICULUM**

Gandhi's scheme of education is known as 'Basic Scheme' of Education'. Its curriculum was activity centered. This scheme of education aimed at the development of whole man-physical, intellectual and spiritual powers in the best possible manner. Gandhi ji suggested that teaching of the following subjects in his scheme of education.

- **Basic crafts**

Basic crafts which may be agriculture, spinning and weaving, wood work, cardboard work, metal work, gardening and leather work etc. should be included in accordance with local condition of life and society. Gandhi ji asserted that education should be craft centered and hence craft has a primary place in Gandhi ji system of education.

- **Mother-tongue**

Gandhi ji emphasized that the mother tongue is to be used as the medium of instruction in the schools, as it is an effective instrument for the expression and communication of ideas.

- **Arithmetic**

Arithmetic should be correlated with life situations. The various processes of arithmetic should be correlated with basic craft. Arithmetic is a very useful subject for day to day life.

- **Social studies**

Gandhi ji wanted that children should acquire knowledge of social studies including history, geography, civics and current events for promoting individual and social values.

- **General Sciences**

Including nature study, zoology, physiology, hygiene, chemistry, Botany and astronomy should be taught for promoting intelligent and scientific outlook. Domestic sciences should be added for the girls in the fourth and fifth grades.

- **Music and drawing**

These subjects should be included to create in boys and girls in a real interest in education.

- **Place for Hindustani**

Hindustani should be included as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum for developing national language.

### **METHODS OF TEACHING**

Gandhi ji advocated the following methods of teaching:-

- **Education through craft**

Education through craft is the basis of Gandhian scheme of education..It is around this craft that all other subjects in the school will be taught.

- **Mother Tongue to be the medium of Instruction**

According to Gandhi ji, all education should take place through the medium of mother-tongue. It makes the process of education natural and meaningful.

- **Emphasis on Activity Method**

Gandhian education is not bookish in nature. Education is imparted through creative and productive activities..

- **Learning by doing**

Learning by doing is the watch word of Gandhian system of education. Thus the child participates in some activity and learns through experiences.

- **Technique of correlation**

Basic education envisages that the whole instruction should be imparted through the medium of some of activity, experience or craft.

- **Discipline**

Gandhi ji advocated discipline through self-control. He emphasized voluntary discipline, Self-discipline or discipline that springs from within. Self-discipline arises from a pure life of self-restraint, fearless, usefulness and self-sacrifice. So his concept of discipline was not individual. It was a concept of social discipline.

- **Teacher**

Gandhi ji asserted that only right type of teachers can help in achieving the objectives of education. He should possess knowledge, skill, enthusiasm, patriotism. Strong character and special training. He should be friend, philosopher and guide.

- **Women Education**

Gandhi ji felt strongly for the emancipation of women. He said, "My greatest hope is in women. They want a helping hand to lift them out of the hell in which they have been kept." Thus Gandhi ji felt strongly for the emancipation of women.

- **Place of Religion Education**

Religion was an essential element in Gandhi ji's life. "Life without religion Gandhi ji held if life without principle, life without principle is a ship without rudder, and just a ship without rudder will be tossed about from place to place and never to reach a destination." Gandhi ji regarded religion as an abiding faith in the absolute values of truth, love and justice.

## **CONCLUSION**

Mohan Dass Karam Chand Gandhi was a great leader, a practical philosopher and an educational thinker of great repute. He wanted to establish a free and compulsory casteless society with no exploitation and racial discrimination. For this purpose, he used education as an instrument. His philosophy of education was the outcome of his long experience of political, social and economic life of the country. To sum up, Gandhian philosophy is not only simultaneously political, moral and religious; it is also traditional and modern, simple and complex. It embodies numerous Western influences to which Gandhi was exposed, but being rooted in ancient Indian culture and harnessing eternal and universal moral and religious principles, there is much in it that is not at all new. This is why Gandhi could say: "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills." Gandhi is concerned even more with the spirit than with the form. If the spirit is consistent with truth and nonviolence, the truthful and nonviolent form will automatically result. Despite its anti-Westernism, many hold its outlook to be ultra-modern, in fact ahead of its time - even far ahead. Perhaps the philosophy is best seen as a harmonious blend of the traditional and modern. The multifaceted nature of Gandhi's thought also can easily lead to the view that it is extremely complex. Perhaps in one sense it is. One could easily write volumes in describing it! Yet Gandhi described much of his thought as mere commonsense. To sum up Gandhi's thought in a few words: "The four words, truth, nonviolence, Sarvodaya and Satyagraha and their significance constitute Gandhi and his teaching." These are indeed the four pillars of

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Gandhian though activities students will be in a position to think practically and they will be attentive and active, this will help them to mould their character. Thus Gandhian education has been characterized as encompassing the head, the heart and the hands that means the all-around development of child. According to him education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of children. Thus Gandhiji's purpose of education is to raise man to a higher order through full development of the individual and the evolution of a "new man."

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