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Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophy and Educational Thoughts in 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this paper is to bring out all aspects of Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi with a view mahatma Gandhi. M. K. Gandhi, the lovely and very good minded universal person, who was born in India in the modern age. He stressed on traditional spiritual attitude with the total development from education, which is related to modern age of the world with reference to India. We are in 21st century which is commonly known as "The Century of development". Gandhian principles or value system is something that blends the entire India at one point of time. It initiates a revolution that took the whole of nation in its stomp and lasted till we were able to get independence. This value system gave the nation the principles of truth, non-violence, satyagraha which result in people's heart. We are still alarm by the uniqueness of Gandhiji's principled approach. He endorsed simple living and high thinking while practicing. At present political, economic, social and moral rights as well as values are going down and exploiting. In the course of development, we have to think of these problems and try to find out the solutions best suited to our needs. The best suited solutions for the above problems of contemporary world are to follow Gandhi's principles. It is Gandhi's philosophy and educational thoughts can save us from this predicament. Gandhi's profuse writings, speeches and talks cover every conceivable aspects of Indian life of his time as well as present world.

Keywords: Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhiji, Gandhian Philosophy, Non-Violence, Satyagraha.

1. Introduction

The field of education is a social institution meant for preparing every human being a good member of family, community and society and for their harmonious co-existence. It is through education that the form and the structure of the social order are established and maintained. Now we lived in 21st century which we can name as The Century of development. So in this current century we need more advanced education for development of our country. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi-The father of nation was not only a political leader but also was a great thinker or philosopher. He has been considered to be one of the revolutionary educational thinkers of modern India along with Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda and so on. He gifted his valuable thoughts in educational area. Gandhiji's contribution to education is unique in this sense that he made the first attempt to develop an indigenous scheme of education in British India. His philosophy of education is a harmonious blending of Idealism, Naturalism and Pragmatism. Idealism is the base of Gandhiji's philosophy whereas Naturalism and Pragmatism are the helpers in translating that philosophy into practice. Therefore, he is known as practical- idealist. His nation was "education for life, education through life, and education throughout life." This definition of Mahatma Gandhi would comprise everything that can be conceived under education.

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At present political, economic, social and moral rights as well as values are going down and exploiting. In the course of development, we have to think of these problems and try to find out the solutions best suited to our needs. The best suited solution for the above problems of contemporary world is to follow Gandhi's principles. It is Gandhi's philosophy and educational thoughts that can save us from this predicament. Gandhi's profuse writings, speeches and talks cover every conceivable aspects of Indian life of his time as well as present world.

2. Objectives of this Study

- To study Gandhiji's educational philosophy and educational thoughts.
- To identify the significance of Gandhiji's educational thoughts in present scenario.

3. Methodology

The study has been conducted based on the method of document review in accordance with the qualitative approach of research. It has been done on the basis of the secondary sources of data like books, research journals, newspaper articles and different websites. Collected data was analyzed qualitatively. In this research researcher trying to study Mahatma Gandhi's life, philosophy and opinions on various educational subject matters and it was aimed to make certain educational deductions from this point on. Each document contents are examined in detail by researchers with regards to Gandhi's educational philosophy and educational thought.

4. Gandhian Philosophy

Mahatma Gandhi is not merely a political philosopher; it is a message and philosophy of life. His mission was to reconstruct India from below upwards a decentralized socio-political and economic order with India's myriad villages as its base He was very much concerned with the nature, poor deprived and the downtrodden and he has intended to alter the evil, political, social, and economic system of the people. Gandhi is universally known as the most renowned theorist, philosopher and also the practitioner of truth, love, non-violence, tolerance freedom and peace. He was a leader of his people.

Two words are fundamental in his philosophy of life: 'Truth' and 'non-violence'. Mahatma Gandhi has observed, "Ahimsa and truth are like two sides of a coin". According to him "Ahimsa is the means, Truth the end." Gandhi's thoughts, values and principles of life have been well reflected in his scheme of Basic education in particular and in his philosophy of education. Gandhi was greatly respected for his simple living, high thinking, and fearless attitude. Gandhi was believed in "one God" and in his absolute control. The fearlessness is essential for truth and non-violence. Gandhi believed thus: Brahma Satyam, Jagat Spurthihi. Satya Shodhanam Janmaha. (Cosmic principles are the truth. Universe around provides the inspiration. Purpose of life is to discover the truth.)

Truth and Non-Violence: Truth is the Means to God realisation which is the ultimate aim of life. God is life, truth and light. He says 'Truth is God and God is Truth.' Thus truth in Gandhi's philosophy is "God".

Gandhiji said "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of man-kind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by ingenuity of man". This is also need of today's scenario as terrorism is major threat all around the world and we have to raise voice the concept of nonviolence (ahimsa) and nonviolent resistance has a long history in Indian religious thought and has had many revivals in Christianity, Buddhist, Hinduism, Muslim, and Jain contexts. Gandhi explains his philosophy and way of life in his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. He was quoted as saying: "What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans, and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty and democracy?"

Satyagraha: Satyagraha is formed by two Sanskrit words Satya which have meaning Truth and Agrahave meaning holding firmly. The term was famous and popular during the Indian Independence Movement The central concept of Gandhi's philosophy is "Satyagraha". The pivotal and defining element of Gandhism is Satya, it is a Sanskrit word for truth. It also refers to a virtue in Indian religions, referring to being truthful in one's thought, speech and action. Satya is also called as truth. It is itself a whole philosophy of non violence. A Satyagraha campaign is undertaken only after all other peaceful means have proven ineffective. An attempt is made to convert, perused the opponent. A Satyagraha campaign is undertaken only after all other peaceful means have proven ineffective. At its heart is non-violence. An attempt is made to convert, persuade or win over the opponent. Gandhi said: "The Truth is far more powerful than any weapon of mass destruction. The purpose of Satyagrah is to fight against injustice and tyranny. Satyagrahi should have moral force; he makes understand by means of reason. There is no place for physical force. In Gandhi views satyagrah as most powerful weapon and he suggested some important methods. They are:

1. Strike
2. Fasting
3. Non-cooperation

Gandhi's Economy Philosophy: Mahatma Gandhi had his own approach to the economic problem of India. He did not essentially believe in prompting large scale industrialization. Gandhi espoused an economic theory of simple living and self-sufficiency/import substitution, rather than generating exports.

He envisioned a more agrarian India upon independence that would focus on meeting the material needs of its citizenry prior to generating wealth and industrializing.

Gandhi also adopted Khadi the clothing style of most Indians in the early 20th century. His adoption of khadi, or homespun cloth, was intended to help small scale industries and to eradicate the evils of poverty, social and economic discrimination. It was also aimed as a challenge to the contrast that he saw between most Indians, who were poor and traditional, and the richer classes of educated, liberalminded Indians who had adopted Western mannerisms, clothing and practices.

Gandhian Decentralization in Democracy philosophy: Gandhiji stood for the decentralization of both political and economic power which he believed is possible only by beginning from bottom upwards and not vice-versa. Village Swaraj was an essential component of decentralized polity or decentralized governance. Swaraj is the best form of governance. It cannot be established by a few people sitting at the top but by sharing authority with the people. Gandhiji envisaged an ideal political order in which everybody is his own ruler and he rules himself in such a way that he is never a hindrance to other. Swaraj of Gandhiji's dream is the poor man's swaraj. It also meant Poorna Swarj or complete independence. It signifies that the masses should become conscious of their capacity to regulate and control authority when it goes astray. It is not the government of the omnipotent state but the government of the people, by the people and for the people. It is democracy of the highest order for its guiding principle is equality and justice. Real Swaraj comes only by individual initiative and by one's own effort. What others have done for me is not home-rule but foreign rule. Self-rule even if it leads to anarchy is better than orderly foreign rule. Gandhiji preferred self-rule over and above all forms of government. Gandhiji conceived true democracy along non-violent lines in which non-violence becomes a creed, an article of faith rather than a matter of mere policy. Gandhiji believed that, true democracy is an outcome of un-adulterated non-violence. That government alone can be considered best which governs the largest number of happy and virtuous individuals. True democracy or the Swaraj of the masses can never come through nonviolent and untruthful means. For democracy and violence seldom go together. In the non-violent democracy of Gandhiji's conception, the basic unit is the villages which will always be abide by the ideals of truth and non-violence. Every village is a self-sufficient republic or panchayat. The government of the village will be the panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers both male and female. It is considered as the unit of local self-government. It is the original custodian of all authority. The panchayat system as viewed by Gandhiji represents a village community. It is an autonomous Indian political institution as far as the internal village administration is concerned.

5. Gandhiji's Educational Point of View

Gandhiji was not only a political leader but also was a great thinker or philosopher. He gifted his valuable thoughts also in educational area. Gandhiji's educational philosophy was realistic. He wanted education for the betterment of society. Explaining the meaning of genuine education Gandhiji says, "Genuine education does not consist of cramming a lot of information and numbers in mind, nor it lies in passing the examination by reading a number of books but it lies in developing character. It is a real education which inculcates internal virtues in human beings. If you can develop such virtues, it will be the best education" Gandhiji said that education is not only literacy but all round development. He said, "By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit"

Meaning of Education: Gandhi believed in the total development of the human personality through education. He advocated that education should start with hand. His emphasis was more on 3H's (head, heart and hand) than on 3R's (reading, writing and arithmetic). His concept of education means "an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man-body, mind and spirit". He viewed education as a quest for truth and non-violence. Gandhi emphasized the craft-centered education. Gandhi said that "literacy should never be the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and women can be educated". He felt that true education calls for a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs and mental faculties. Gandhi gives importance both of individual and society. Gandhi hence mentioned in the Young India dated 26th March, "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." True education, according to Gandhi, is that which draw out and stimulates the intellectual and physical faculties of the children.

Basic Principles of Education:

- From seven to fourteen years of age, education of each child should be free, compulsory and universal.
- The medium of instruction should be mother tongue.
- Mere literacy cannot be equated with education. Education should employ some craft as a medium of education so that the child gains economic self-reliance for his life.
- Education should develop human values in the child.
- Education should create useful, responsible and dynamic citizens. By education all the hidden powers of child should develop according to the community of which he is an integral part.
- Education should achieve the harmonious development of child's body, mind, and soul.
- All education should be imparted through some productive craft or industry and a useful correlation should be established with that industry. The industry should be such that the child is able to achieve gainful work experience through practical work.
- Education should be made self-supporting through some productive work. Education should lead to economic independence and self-reliance for livelihood.

Basic Education: Gandhiji was a great revolutionary person. He had deeply overall the aspect relating to life. Gandhiji set-up Phonenix Ashram in South Africa He took up experiments of education, thus it can be said that the seeds of educational thoughts were in Gandhiji in South Africa. Gandhiji gave a new vision of education to educational world by placing Wardha educational scheme before the nation in 1937. It covered only the primary state of education. But in 1945 Gandhiji put the concept of comprehensive basic education (Samagra Nai Talim) training before the nation.

Learning by Doing and Craft Education: He believed in learning by doing. Activity and interest are the central part of Teaching. "The hand will handle tools before it draws or traces the writing, the eyes will read the pictures of letters and words as they will know other things in life, the ears will catch the names and meanings of things and sentences", According to Mahatma Gandhi. In Gandhian philosophy of education craft should be in center of education. Craft centered education, develop mental or intellectual capability. There could be dignity of labour responsibility, feeling of cooperation in craft centered education. Education should be for self-support. Gandhiji also favored there should be cult of non-violence in education. Gandhiji wrote, "Where the whole atmosphere is redolent with the pure fragrance of Ahinsa (non-violence) boys and girls studying together will live like brothers and sisters in freedom and yet in self-imposed restraint, the students will be bound to the teachers in the ties of filial love, mutual respect and mutual trust" Gandhiji also favored life centered education. Education should be correlate with life, activity and problems of a child.

Gandhiji Views on Women Education: The Mahatma's views on women's education are based on his belief in woman being a complement of man and are therefore out of sync in modern context. Man and woman are of equal rank but they are not identical. They are a peerless pair being supplementary to on another; each helps other. As for illiteracy among the women, its cause is not mere laziness and inertia as in the case of men. A more potent cause is the status of inferiority with which an immemorial tradition has, unjustly branded her. Man has converted her into a domestic drudge and an instrument of his pleasure, instead of regarding her as his helpmate and 'better half'. The result is a semi-paralysis of our society. Women has rightly been called the mother of race. We owe it to her and to ourselves to und the great wrong that we have done her.

Education for Social and Spiritual Development: In Gandhian views of education's aim into develop the society. Gandhiji wanted such type of education which deals with the development of society. The development of society is not an automatic thing, individual have to be indulged into service for that pose. For Gandhiji individual development and social progress an interdependent. Education as conceived by Mahatma Gandhi and advocated by him primarily aims at the formation and development of the spiritual and mora personality of each and every individual who is a active member of society. Gandhiji says, "Education is thus an awakening of soul."

6. Significance of Gandhi's Educational Thoughts in Modern Era

Gandhi's ideas on education are based on the study of psychological, sociological and economic principles, which is very useful in modern era. Gandhi's ideas on education not only prescribe new methods and techniques of education but also a new way of life. A scheme based on such foundations is certainly progressive and dynamic. Basic education is related to life. This is modern psychological maxims. It is based on the socio-economic structure which is very useful thought for poor students. Education should fit the child rather than that the child should fit education, is an educational maxim accepted as the days of Comenius, Rousseau and Pestalozzi. In spite of the repeated assertion of these principles, in the case of India it found expression only in the basic education. Nowadays in modern India the contact between school and community are decreasing so Gandhi's concept of intimate contact between the school and the local community helpful for increasing. Gandhi's thoughts; child works at his own pace and plans and executes in his own way which maxims is used in modern education system. In modern era, Childs curiosities are satisfied with the help of Gandhi's teaching methods: learning by doing, correlation, experimentation methods and work experience. His method shrawan manan nidhhityasan (listening, thinking and practice) used in yoga in present time. The teacher of basic education has to be more active than the traditional teacher. The most distinctive features of basic education are correlation. Its emphasis is on cooperation as against competition. Basic education gives opportunities for self-expression which is related to modern psychological concept child-centered education. Basic education is Combination of Naturalism, Pragmatism and Idealism. He accepts that the discipline and training will be must if they wanted to develop their powers to the fullest. Gandhi advocated the ideals of truth, non-violence and moral values to achieve the ultimate truth of self-realization. These values are important to develop character and moral values in student in present time, because in the present time students are more indiscipline.

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) honored Gandhiji's messages and reflect this on its recommendation for work-experience in school education as an integral part of the curriculum. Advocating work experience, the report observed that: "In our country, a revolutionary experiment was launched by Mahatma Gandhi in the form of basic education. The concept of work-experience is essential similar. It may be described as a redefined of his educational thinking in terms of a society launched on the road to industrialization." Even now it is accommodated in the form of socially useful productive work. Craft is correlated with knowledge, life and environment. Co-education is there. This concept is useful for modern developing India because there is not available of much teachers, separate buildings, laboratories, libraries and computer labs etc. There is no verbalism as it is based on an activity and is full of direct experiences. Nowadays there are large demands of technical education such as B. Tech., M. Tech., B. C. A., M. C. A., B. B. A. Etc. This is related to Gandhi's craft-centered vocational skills development. Basic education is highly psychological, being related to the child's immediate life. Gandhi also addressed the issue of free and compulsory education. The application of Gandhi's concept of education was first suggested for children between the ages of 7 and 14 by Indian constitution. This was later on extended to all the stages. He opposed corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is banned by Indian government in present time according to RTE act 2009. Gandhi laid the foundation of a scheme of national education that was suited to our needs, requirements, genius, and aspirations for the future. It encompassed the physical, intellectual and spiritual faculties of the individual and their harmonious development. Gandhi speaks and struggle for untouchability, religion, mass education and women education in India, which results are shown in front of us. Gandhi worried about illiteracy of India. So, they want to literate Indian peoples. Nowadays Indian literacy rate is high approx. 74.04%. Whatever may

be its merits and demerits, we should not forget that education to Gandhi meant inspiring the children with a new ideology based upon personal purity and unselfish service, resulting in the creation of a society based upon truth and love. Gandhi formulated his scheme of basic education in the context of poverty, illiteracy, backwardness, frustration, and the degeneration of our masses, resulting from the disruption of traditional social institutions and the destruction of the small-scale cottage industry. The basic educational scheme was an essential ingredient of Gandhi's plan to eliminate the rural-urban divide and redress the structural and socio-economic imbalances that were abound in Indian society.

7. Conclusions

To conclude, we can say that most of the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi hold relevance even in today's world Gandhian philosophy is not only simultaneously political, moral and religious, it is also traditional and modern simple and complex. The path shown or followed by Gandhiji at that time still remains a very valid one if somebody chooses to tread on it. His relevance in different fields is unquestionable unchallengeable. For the very survival of human being, it is a imperative on our part to an act open his advice because only on his relevance, In today's scenario, 'Eye for an Eye' is no solution as it only aggravates the situation. Peaceful coexistence, economic independence, respect for women, child centered education and basic education for everyone, universal brotherhood-all these principles should serve as a beacon of light to guide humanity of a better world we shall survive together or if we fail in our venture, we are bound to perish together. Gandhian ways and his ideals seem to be the only solution to overcome the present ever growing problem of terrorism which is leading the world to a doomsday. Gandhiji was leader of the past runs into the present and marches towards the future. He had always been a leader of the time ahead. No leader neither today nor in future can match him with the charisma and caliber and wisdom that he had.

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