**Mahatma Gandhi**

**Educational Thoughts**

**Paper 1-Educational Thoughts and Practices**

**Unit 1- Educational Thoughts of Indian Thinkers**

**For B.A Education (Semester -4)**



**Shia P.G. College, Lucknow**

**Content Developed by:**

Dr. Kaneez Mehdi Zaidi

Assistant Professor

**Department of Education**

**Shia P.G. College**

**Lucknow**

**Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)**

**Educational Thoughts**

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* **Life Sketch**

Mahatma Gandhi the father of nation was born on October 2, 1869 at Porbandar in the estate of Kutch Kathiawar of Gujarat. He father was a Prime Minister of Rajkot State. He was very Truthful and an honest man .At the age of 13 years Mahatma Gandhi was married to Kasturba. At the age of 17yrs he left to England to study Barrister’s course. After returning to India he took the practice of Law and went to South Africa to look after the legal matters of a rich Indian Firm. His stay in Africa changed his course of life. He tried to fight the case of Indian settlers in Africa and evolved the principle of 'Truth ' and 'non-violence'. He came to India and started taking leading part in India freedom struggle. It was on account of him that India achieved freedom .It is a great irony that this apostle of peace and non-violence was shot dead on the 30th January, 1948.

Mahatma Gandhi was not only a great political and social reformer he was a great thinker as well. He has presented a comprehensive philosophy of life. This philosophy is based on spiritualism whose fundamentals are-truth and non-violence. Ultimate truth or God was the end of Gandhi’s philosophy of life. Truth was the mean to achieve that ultimate truth. He himself said "*Truth which is the end and which is all pervading can be realized only through a way of living characterized by strict discipline*, poverty*, non-possession...”* In Gandhiji's philosophy ahimsa cannot be separated from truth. If God is the aim non-violence is the means to achieve it. Ahimsa includes love, purity of heart, capacity to rise above attachment and repulsion and freedom from passion in thought, word and action.

* **Philosophy of Education**

Gandhi’s views on education are the outcome of long years of sustained thought and experience. His educational philosophy emerged from his general philosophy of life and his faith in education as an instrument of social, economic, political, moral and spiritual regeneration of India. Gandhi stood for a social order woven around truth, non-violence and justice.

Gandhi believed in integrated approach to education. He believed that the child has several innate potentialities which need to be blossomed through the educational process. Through education, children can be helped to develop physically, socially, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Education should transmit cultural heritage, refine and enrich it for the benefit of posterity. However, he emphasizes that education has to be life itself and through life.

Gandhi aimed at self-reliance through education. He initiated Basic education scheme centered round the craft including training in handicraft to children so that they may become self-dependent and learn dignity of labour. The ability to earn one’s livelihood is part of this independence. For Gandhi, the cultural aspect of education is far more important than its literacy aspect and knowledge is useless without good character. He remarks the welfare of the individual and the nation is complementary to each other. The school according to Gandhi is itself a small democratic society in which democratic values are imparted to the children. System of education should be such which roots out exploitation and centralization in society and create a non-violent social order. He emphasized the principle of non-violence in every field of life. He considers non-violence as a great human quality. Another salient characteristic of Gandhian philosophy is the aim of Sarvodaya which means welfare of the whole community.

Therefore, he planned different types of education for country including adult and women education. In other words he believed in life-centered as well as child centered education. Besides learning of three R’s (reading, writing and arithmetic) in school, he insisted on development of three H’s –hand, heart and head. According to Gandhi, the aim of education should be build the whole man and develop his integral personality. *“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 or even the beginning. It is one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education.”*

* **Aims of Education**

* **All round development**

Education should aim at harmonious development of child’s body, mind and soul and offer an opportunity for self-realization and full development of a child's personality. He said *“true education is that which draws out and stimulated the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of children*.” Unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul education of a child cannot said to be complete.

* **Self –reliance**

Gandhi desired that education system should be self-supporting and each student should become self-reliant by learning a craft or occupational skill. He wanted education to be a kind of insurance against unemployment. Education should lead to economic independence and self-reliance for livelihood.

* **Vocational education:**

Emphasis on vocational and functional education is another important aim of Gandhi’s philosophy. “*Earn while you learn”* was the motto of Gandhi’s education system. Gandhi wanted to make Indian village self-sufficient unit, he emphasized that vocational education would increase the efficiency of students. It should aim at development of feeling of love of labour in children.

* **Value Education**

Education aimed at the development of moral values within a student. A student should adopt certain moral ethical codes like truth, nonviolence, charity which will illumine his character. Thus a character building through education was the prime concern for Gandhi. The aim of education as character formation should be more important than literacy.

* **Aim of Social service**

Gandhi believed that social service should be an essential part of education. He used to advise students to inculcate the spirit of service and self-sacrifice. Addressing the college students once he said, “*Your education, if it is a vital thing, must shed its fragrance in your surroundings. You must devote a certain portion of your time daily to serving the people around in a practical manner. You must therefore, be prepared to take the spade, the broomstick and the basket. You must become voluntary scavengers of this holy place. That would be the richest part of your education, not learning by heart literary thesis”.* Gandhi synthesized the ideals of social service and individual development in the system of education. In his view, *'If learning becomes merely a means of living, it will lead to degradation’.*

* **Creating Responsible Citizens**

Education should create responsible citizens and development of democratic values in students by inculcating democratic ideals in them. Gandhi envisaged education as an instrument for the training of a better individual and the creation of a more worthy social order. Education should aim at the development of creative and productive traits in students.

* **Curriculum**

Gandhi aimed at the development of intellectual, physical and spiritual powers of a child in the best possible manner and makes him grow into a whole man. With this point of view he suggested teaching of the following subjects in his scheme of education -teaching of craft has a primary place in Gandhi’s system of education. This craft related to the local conditions of life and society .He stressed on the teaching of the mother tongue as it is an effective instrument for expression and communication of ideas and acquisition of knowledge. Arithmetic, social studies, general sciences, art and music also occupied an essential place in Gandhiji's curriculum.

* **Teaching Methods**

Gandhiji had a different aim and concept of education his methods and procedures of education could not be those in vogue in present day education system. He laid stress on learning of some craft .This craft should be the starting point of other subjects. Teaching of craft should be based on co-operative activity, planning, accuracy, initiative and individual responsibility in learning. He adopted a realistic approach to the problem of education. Craft should be chosen so as to make life self-sufficient and self-supporting. The teaching of the craft should provide for livelihood of the child in future. Through it a relationship between education and actual life would be established. Favoring mother tongue as the medium of instruction, Gandhi believed that a child can best receive education through his mother tongue.

* **Teacher Taught Relationship**

Gandhi remarks teacher-taught relationship should be characterized by feeling of love, mutual trust and respect. Gandhi states, *“Where there is no true love between the teacher and the pupil, where the pupils’ delinquency has not been touched by the teacher and where the pupil has no respect for the teacher, there is no question about teacher’s responsibility for the errors of their pupils.”* It is the duty of the teacher to teach his pupils’ discrimination. If teachers go on taking

Indiscriminately, they would be no better than machines. Teachers must in this period distinguish truth from untruth. Gandhi emphasizes that students have their individual interests, aptitudes and abilities. The function of a teacher is to draw out the best of them and to inspire them to be capable of utilizing the talent which may or may not exist in them. As students are deemed to be the nation builders and are likely to have the largest share of responsibility on their shoulders, teachers should sublimate their responsibilities with proper insight and guidance. Teacher taught relation according to Gandhi is deemed as spiritual which springs up spontaneously. It is not an artificial thing or a product of pressure and compulsion .Gandhi emphasizes that students should respect their teachers and teachers should bear loving and affectionate attitude towards their students. This cordial relationship, in the words of Gandhi, paves the way for inculcation of sound values of professional ethics among teachers.

* **Role of a Teacher**

Gandhi stands that true text book for the pupil is his teacher. The teacher must possess all those qualities which he wants to promote in his children. He should be able to influence his students through his behaviour and conduct more outside his class room than through his teaching in the class room. He perceives teacher as a friend of his pupils who touches the inner springs of students. Gandhi says *real teacher must touch the hearts of students, must share their joys and sorrows. A teacher must help the students to solve the problems faced by them and he must take along the right channel the surging aspirations of their youth.”* The role of teachers towards students is to guide, direct and channelize their actions in a right way. He firmly believes that a teacher plays a distinct role in molding the personality of his students. A teacher in his views should be an individual to follow indiscrimination and unbiased attitude towards his students. Gandhi asserts that primary duty of a teacher should be to cultivate the heart for building character of students. He too asserts that the life of a teacher should be an example or model for his students in which they get inspired towards their devotions and attitudes. Spirit of service according to Gandhi should be of utmost importance for the teachers which entails the cultivation and building up of character and moral training for the students.

* **Discipline**

Gandhiji put forward the idea of voluntary discipline. Discipline should not be imposed rather it should be self-discipline that springs from within. He says that self-discipline can grow in an ideal atmosphere of life .This situation should be pure life-restlessness, fearlessness, usefulness and self-sacrifice. Discipline may be achieved by non-violent conduct of life. He believed that craft centered education would encourage such cooperation that discipline would automatically come. His concept of discipline was not individual but social.

* **Relevance in Contemporary Education System**

Gandhi’s educational philosophy revolves around social reconstruction by eradicating social evils which is possible through education of heart, mind and spirit. Another significant contribution of Gandhi in the field of education is the training of three ‘H’ i.e. hand, heart and hand. He envisaged education as an instrument for training of a better individual and creation of a more worthy social order. The dominant tendencies of Naturalism, Idealism and Pragmatism are fused into a unity, giving rise to a theory of education which would suit the needs of human beings and satisfy the loftiest aspirations of human soul.

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