
MK Gandhi's Educational Thoughts: Today

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Abstract

Born on October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, Gujarat, Gandhi has been a philosopher, teacher, and leader who promoted non-violence and truth. He believed in God and thought that understanding truth was the main goal of life. Gandhi saw people as spiritual beings and believed that love is important for being moral. He wanted to create a society based on love, non-violence, and justice. In 1937, he presented the 'Basic Scheme' or 'Wardha Scheme' of education at a national conference, showing his dedication to improving education in India. In 2019, the United Nations General Assembly discussed important global issues, and Gandhi's ideas, like the Wardha Scheme of Education, were seen as important solutions. This scheme focused on job training and connecting education with the community to meet India's social and economic needs, while rejecting the British education system. Gandhi's educational philosophy is based on his beliefs in truth and non-violence, and it highlights the growth of the mind, body, and soul, reflecting his belief in the unity of humanity. For Gandhi, true education is a journey of learning that follows these values and leads to discovering Truth.

Keywords- Mahatma Gandhi; Educational Philosophy; Basic Education; Nai Talim; Experiential Learning; Moral Education.

Introduction

Gandhi believed that education is closely connected to society and personal change. He saw education as a way to improve both individuals and society, supporting a system that develops a person's overall character while also providing job skills. He stressed the value of manual work and crafts for building character and intellectual skills. His ideas about education came from his own experiences and aimed to fix the problems of the British-style education system in India. This led to his support for the Basic National Education or Wardha Scheme started in 1937, which focused on practical, value-based learning from the beginning. MK Gandhi's educational thoughts emphasize the integration of morality and practical knowledge, advocating for an education system that fosters social responsibility and character development. His principles remain relevant today, promoting holistic education that addresses both individual growth and communal welfare.

Concept of Education

Gandhi mentioned the education as the complete development of a person, including their body, mind, and spirit. He believes that just being able to read and write is not enough for real education. Instead, he stresses the need to support a child's growth and help them reach their full potential in all areas of their life.

Aims of Education

His two main goals of education: immediate aims and ultimate aim. The immediate aims focus on daily life, including the need for self-sustainability, promoting Indian culture, building moral character, and encouraging overall personal growth. The ultimate aim of education is self-realization, which helps people achieve spiritual freedom and understand themselves and God.

Curriculum

He suggested that education should include practical skills like farming, spinning, weaving, and woodworking based on local needs. He highlighted the importance of learning the mother tongue for better communication. Arithmetic should relate to everyday life, and social studies, such as history, civics, and geography, are important for building good values in society. General science, including nature study and domestic science for girls, should help develop a scientific way of thinking. Music and drawing should also be included to involve students, and Hindustani should be taught as a national language.

Methods of Teaching

Gandhi Ji highlighted the important role of crafts and production work in education, supporting a learning process that focuses on hands-on activities and personal experiences. He believed that subjects should be taught together, not separately, to create connections between different areas of knowledge. He also valued both lectures and questions as good teaching methods. Additionally, he strongly supported teaching in the mother tongue, seeing it as vital for making education easier and more relevant for students.

Discipline

Gandhi Ji emphasized the significance of discipline as a form of self-control, advocating for a voluntary discipline that is intrinsic rather than imposed externally. He believed that true self-discipline arises from a lifestyle characterized by purity, self-restraint, fearlessness, and self-sacrifice. According to Gandhi, such discipline is attainable through a commitment to non-violence, which serves as a foundational principle for cultivating inner strength and personal integrity. This approach calls for living a life that not only seeks personal growth but also contributes positively to the broader community.

Role of Teacher

Gandhi Ji highlighted how important it is to have the right kind of teacher to reach educational goals. This teacher should have knowledge, skills, enthusiasm, a love for the country, strong character, and special training. They need to be a friend, mentor, and guide, showing social values like non-violence and truth. It is essential for them to understand life and educational goals well. They should also demonstrate the qualities they want to teach their students and build personal connections to improve the learning experience.

Significance of Mahatma Gandhi's Educational ideas: Today

The talks about the belief that education is important for a child's body, mind, and spirit, and it distinguishes between being literate and being truly educated. It highlights that education should prepare people for jobs, especially through hands-on training, which is important given the high unemployment and underemployment among young people, particularly in Punjab, India, where many families have members working abroad and sending money home. The National Education Policy of 2020 supports this idea by promoting professional education. Additionally, it stresses the need for character development, not just literacy, referencing Gandhi's idea that character includes purity of soul, thoughts, actions, and non-violence. This focus is especially important due to rising violence in schools in the U.S. and Britain, indicating a decline in societal character. The document ends with concerns about the pressures of industrialization and high living costs, which increase workloads and safety worries for both men and women, making job readiness in education more complicated.

Nonviolence is a key part of Gandhi's educational philosophy and was an important tool during India's fight for freedom from British rule. Gandhi saw nonviolence and tolerance as signs of courage and patience, which are important in today's violent world. The UN General Assembly's resolution on June 15, 2007, highlights the need to promote nonviolence through education, linking it to the International Day of Non-Violence on

October 2, Gandhi's birthday, to encourage a culture of peace and understanding. Gandhi also supported teaching democratic values in education, believing that this would help children become responsible members of society. Current education systems need major changes to reflect the ideals of modern democratic and socialist societies, as pointed out by the Kothari Commission. The idea of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', or global unity, can help achieve Gandhi's vision of universal education in a globalized world. He pushed for equal opportunities in primary education for all, regardless of gender, and imagined global cooperation among countries. Even though countries are independent, they need to work together for everyone's benefit, suggesting that nations should adopt Gandhi's ideas to create a better world.

Additionally, Gandhi understood that adult education is important for changing society and believed that all adults, no matter their age, should have access to basic education. The "New India Literacy Programme" under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to increase educational access for adults, stressing that learning should continue throughout life. This initiative shows Gandhi's belief that education is essential and should be available to everyone, reinforcing that it's never too late to learn. Gandhi highlighted the importance of cleanliness with his motto Swacchta Hin Seva. The Swacchta Bharat Abhiyaan aims to achieve his dream of a clean India, which includes not just physical cleanliness but also the moral and ethical improvement of people. A truly clean society needs clean streets and sanitation, as well as a corruption-free environment that values transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

In nutshell, we can say that Gandhi saw education as a way to help individuals grow and improve society, tackling issues like unemployment, inequality, and moral decay. He believed education should increase knowledge and build character, which is important for good citizenship. His vision was to create self-sufficient communities with ideal citizens who are hard-working, self-respecting, and generous, thriving in cooperative settings. Gandhi suggested using local crafts as educational tools to develop the mind, body, and soul, providing solutions to modern issues like poverty and corruption through his educational ideas.

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