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Mahatma Gandhi's Views on Philosophy of Education

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Keywords: Dynamic, intellectual, virtues, principles

Abstract:

Education being the dynamic side of philosophy, Gandhi's philosophy of life determined his philosophy of education. He saw the realization and means of his ideals of life in education. He wanted to create a social order in which the conditions should be such that each man should be able to realize the highest aim in life. According to him true education is that which draws out and stimulates the intellectual and physical faculties of the children. He believed that a sound education should produce useful citizens. He thought that such education should teach the children fundamentally virtues of truth, love, justice and non-violence. In his opinion, life without religion is equal to life without principle. Life is very complex in the present age. Gandhi realised it and he formulated the scheme of education which would fit the child in later life. Coming into the grip with problems and difficulties, he prepared the child to face the adversities of life.

Introduction:

Mahatma Gandhi needs no introduction. He is regarded as the father of the nation. He was a great leader of the Indian freedom struggle. Apart from being a political leader, Gandhi was also known for his strict adherence to truth, his campaigns for human rights and for championing the philosophy of non-violence. Gandhi's life and teaching inspired many important leaders and sociopolitical movements, not just in India but around the world. Although he did not win the Nobel Prize himself, many winners of the Nobel Prize for peace have acknowledged Gandhi's influence in their lives. (Board of Editors)

Primarily a politician, statesman and social reformer, Mahatma Gandhi had made no less a substantial and solid contribution to the educational thought and practice in India. His life and career is so rich that volumes will be required to give a complete and full idea of his life's mission. Born in Porbandar, Gandhi studied in India and England. He regarded truth as the supreme power and ultimate end of the life of the individual as well as society and non-violence is the means. Ahimsa to Gandhi was not a negative concept. It was a positive feeling of love. He wanted to establish a classless society. He dreamt of Ram Rajya in India wherein the power of state was based on moral laws. (Pandey)

Mahatma Gandhi was the great thinker and experimenter. He formulated his own views about everything in the world. He expressed his ideas on everything from God to birth control. But his belief in God, truth, Ahimsa and dignity of labour are most important. On the basis of these Gandhi wanted to recreate an ideal spiritual society. He had a profound faith in one God and believed in the unity of man. Before 1931 he used to say 'God is Truth'. But after the realization that we are the sparks of truth, he used to say 'Truth is God'. Truth is an inner voice. It is the call of conscience. He insisted on complete frankness in daily inter course and condemned the insincerities practiced in the name of politeness. To him Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. Like Rousseau he wanted to recreate the society. He aimed at universal brotherhood, freedom, justice and equality for all. Service to God and community was the greatest creed of Mahatma Gandhi. He believed that the regeneration of Indian society could take place only if the villages could be



resuscitated. Villages were being exploited by the cities. He wanted to build a healthy and moral relationship between the two. (Taneja)

Education being the dynamic side of philosophy, Gandhi's philosophy of life determined his philosophy of education. He saw the realization and means of his ideals of life in education. He was dissatisfied with the prevailing system of education. He was of the opinion that system of education introduced by the English did not suit the country. In his view, English medium for all the branches of higher education was the greatest handicap. It had prevented knowledge from percolating to the masses. The education was not related to life. No training was given in power of observation. Gandhi was convinced that the prevailing system of primary education was not only wasteful but positively harmful. His conviction was that social, moral, political and economic regeneration of India depended on education. He wanted to create a social order in which the conditions should be such that each man should be able to realize the highest aim in life.

New Philosophy of Education:

By education Mahatma Gandhi meant, 'an all round drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and spirit'. He said that literacy should never be the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. According to him true education is that which draws out and stimulates the intellectual and physical faculties of the children. He believed that a sound education should produce useful citizens. He found many defects in the prevailing system of education. There were no efforts being made to adjust the child intelligently and actively to his environment. He took education in its broad and true sense of a lifelong process which begins with the beginning and ends with the end of life going on constantly and unceasingly. The chief tenets of his new educational philosophy were:

1. There should be free and compulsory primary education
2. The education should be craft-centered
3. It should be self-supporting
4. It should be given in the mother tongue
5. It should be based on non-violence

Free compulsory Education:

Mahatma Gandhi's opinion was that there should be free, compulsory universal primary education within the ages of 7 and 14. His conception of primary education was up to matriculation. He wanted to combine the present primary and secondary education into one. He wanted to cut English from this primary education. He was convinced that children get nothing more in the high school than a half baked knowledge of English besides a superficial knowledge of mathematics and history and geography. If English is cut from the curriculum together, the children can go through the whole course in 7 years instead of 10 years. By this, he never meant that pre-primary or higher education should be neglected altogether. He wanted that the state should accept the responsibility of providing pre-school education as and when their finances permit them to do the same. Regarding higher education he said that it should be left to private enterprises and for meeting national requirements in the various industries, technical arts or fine arts. The state universities should be purely examining bodies, supporting themselves the fees charged for examination. Their function should be to look after the whole field of education. They should prepare and approve courses of studies in the various departments of education. The university charters should be given liberally to anybody or persons of proved worth and integrity. The university, however, should not cost the state anything. The state should have a Central Education Department.(Pandey)

Craft-Centered Education:

M. K. Gandhi believed that the highest development of mind and soul was possible only through handicraft. He wanted to begin education of the child 'by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begin its training'. Thus every school can be made self-



supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufactures of those schools. He did not want to teach the handicraft side by side with the liberal education. It was his wish that the whole process of education should be imparted through some handicraft or industry. At the same time the handicraft should not be taught mechanically but scientifically. The child should know the why and wherefore of every process. Gandhi never believed that the vocational bias will make education dull or cramp the child's mind. The children can become bright and joyful if they receive vocational instruction under competent teachers. Mahatma Gandhi tried his methods on his grandson. By teaching craft, his object was not to produce craftsmen but he wanted to exploit the craft for educative purposes. He wanted that the stress should be laid on the principles of co-operative activity, planning, accuracy, initiative and individual responsibility in learning. He also wanted that craft should be learn systematically and scientifically to serve as a means for intellectual work and economic self-sufficiency.

Self-Supporting Element:

Gandhi saw that Indians were so backward in education that they could not be educated if the programme was to depend on money. Therefore he suggested that education should be self-supporting. It was his belief that handicraft besides developing the personality of the child, would make education self-supporting. This aspect of Gandhiji was much criticized. The critics feared that there would be enormous waste at the hands of small children. Some critics say that economic calculation in connection with education is sordid. On the contrary, India's circumstances demanded economic calculation. Mahatma Gandhi was aware of it. So the self supporting education was the only alternative. In this aspect he wanted the State to provide expenses for school buildings, furniture, books and all the tools required for craft work. He believed that right kind of teachers would teach the children the dignity of labour and those children would regard the craft as an integral part and means of their intellectual growth.

Emphasis on Mother-tongue:

Gandhiji emphasized mother-tongue both as a subject of study and as a medium of instruction. He found that the greatest handicap of the prevailing system of education was that learning was being imparted through the medium of English. This hindered the development of understanding and precision of thought or clarity of ideas. He believed that mother-tongue would enable the children not only to understand clearly the rich heritage of people's ideas, emotions and aspirations. It would also enable the children to express themselves effectively, clearly and lucidly. They would thereby appreciate and enjoy literature.

His Creed of Non-violence:

A unique feature of Gandhiji's education philosophy was the application of the law of non-violence in the training of the child as a prospective citizen of the world. He was sick of communal and international strife. He wanted to create a generation which should believe in non-violence. He said that every act of students should be accomplished by love. There should be mutual respect and mutual trust. His scheme of education wanted to bring an age from which class and communal hatred is eliminated and exploitation is eschewed.

Gandhiji's Aims of Education:

Being an idealist and a realist Gandhiji kept ultimate aim and immediate aims of education before him. According to him knowledge of God, self realization, spiritualism and oneness with God was the ultimate aim of education. He laid stress on the spirit and declared that we should realize the spirited force. True education should result not in the material power but in spiritual force. This shows that Gandhi was in favour of moral and religious education. He thought that such education should teach the children fundamentally virtues of truth, love, justice and non-violence. In his opinion, life without religion is equal to life without principle. He held life without principle is like a ship without rudder. Just as a ship without rudder will be tossed about from place to place and never reach a

destination, so a man without religious backing ... be also tossed about on this stormy ocean of the world without reaching the destined goal. According to him God could be achieved by living in a society and serving it.

In the immediate aims of education Gandhiji included

1. The Utilitarian aim
2. The Cultural aim
3. Harmonious Development of one's personality
4. Preparation for complete living
5. Character Building
6. Sociological aim or training for citizenship

Life is very complex in the present age. Gandhi realised it and he formulated the scheme of education which would fit the child in later life. Coming into the grip with problems and difficulties, he prepared the child to face the adversities of life. According to him training of the heart is important. It is the harmoniously developed person that adjusts to his life and environment. The central purpose of education is indeed the character building. Gandhi regarded character as the expression of the whole personality including its ethical and spiritual aspect. He viewed it as a dynamic force proceeding towards a definite direction. While he advocated self-supporting education, he aimed at producing useful citizens. This is the primary need of democratic India. Gandhi synthesized the individual and the social aims of education. He proved it by example and precept that 'self-realisation' and 'social service' were not contradictory. A fusion of the two in a man makes the man complete. (Taneja)

Conclusion:

To sum up, we can say that Mahatma Gandhi revolutionized the whole concept of education. His basic scheme of education is the most practical and unique contribution. He was the first educationist to advocate the large scale use of handicraft, not only as a productive work but as a pivot round which the teaching of all subjects should be undertaken. He put forward a system which is inexpensive and also in consonance with the needs of our vast rural population. His concept of primary education which should be free, compulsory and effective is accepted by our country. A new social order was his dream. Our society should be classless and equal. There should be simplicity, social service, sacrifice and justice. The chief means of achieving this social order is education. Education centered round handicraft would produce generation which would be useful and earning members.

Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts are in line with the best educational thinkers both in the East and in the West. His objectives of education are suited to the genius of Indian culture and heritage. Basic education is now come out of experimental age and is being tried on a very large scale. Like all other educators, recognition and appreciation of his theories and experiments came to him during his life time. Although recognized and accepted in India, Gandhiji's philosophy of education has not yet accepted universal recognition. But that time is not far off, when his philosophy will be accepted by all nations as the only way to world peace and progress. His dream of world full of love, fellow-feeling and free from greed and exploitation can be realized if his philosophy is followed. He proved it by his example and precept that inherently human heart is good. Only conditions and opportunities have to be created to develop that goodness. This is the only way to have one world 'knit together by bonds of affection and brotherhood'.

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Certificate

This certificate is awarded to **Dr. Pankaj Dnyaneshwar More Of Late Dattatraya Pusadkar Arts College, Nandgaon Peth, Dist. Amravati** for active participation in the One Day International Webinar on '**Borders, Migration and Pandemic**' held on Saturday, 16th May 2020. He/She has submitted a research paper entitled **The Identity Crisis in Indian Women Diaspora Writing** for publication.

Heartly congratulations.

Dt : 16/05/2020

Place : Nagpur


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