

E-Content
Department of Education, Patna University.
M.Ed Semester II
Paper-C.C.5

By: -

Ankita Vishal
Assistant Professor
Department of Education
Patna University, Patna

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Department of Education, Patna University.

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Unit V: Indian Philosophies of Education.

Topic: Mahatma Gandhi.

Objectives:-

After going through this content, the students will be able to—

- Understand biographical sketch of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Explain Educational thought of Mahatma Gandhi.

Introduction

Gandhiji considered a human as a combination of body, mind and soul and considered that a human's ultimate objective in life is to attain enlightenment. He called it salvation. However, he emphasized a human to develop his physical knowledge and to get rid of physical scarcities. He has considered Anashakti yoga as the best practice for spiritual salvation and the importance of labour, morality and character for betterment of physical life. He considered these only as the values of a human life. To attain these, he emphasised on following Ekadash vrat (truth, non-violence, celibacy, distastefulness, renunciation, fearlessness, prevention of untouchability, Somatic labour, equal respect for all religions and courteousness).

Biographical Sketch of Mahatma Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is popularly known as 'Gandhiji' out of reverence, "Bapu" out of affection, "mahatma" on account of the saintly nature and 'Father of the Nation', for his role in the Freedom of India from British rule. He was born in October 2, 1869 at Porbander which was a small state in the Kathiawar Agency of British India. His Father was Diwan of Porbander & Mother was Putlibai. He grew up with the Jain traditions. When 18 years old, he was sent to London to study law. After returning from England, he started his law practice at Bombay. Later

Gandhiji gave up his legal practice. He complexly devoted himself to the service of the people. He put into practice ‘Satyagraha’ and ‘Ahinsa’.

Philosophical Thought of Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhiji had attained values of vaishnav religion. He had read an excerpt on memory power during his childhood only. He used to read ‘Geeta’ every day. In England, he had read ‘Bible’ and ‘Light of Asia’ and got acquainted with Ms. Anne Besant. On this basis, his religious and philosophical values were formed. However, his life’s main directive force remained ‘Geeta’. He referred to Geeta as ‘Geeta Mata’. Gandhiji didn’t create any new philosophy. He has formed Indian philosophy the base for practicality. However, this practicality is an outcome of his sensibility. That’s why it’s also called Gandhidarshan, Gandhiwad and Sarvodya Darshan. Elementary reflection, knowledge and argument reflection is presented here from Gandhiji’s Sarvodya Darshan.

Gandhiji’s Sarvodya Darshan’s Elementary reflection

Gandhiji considered Geeta as the epitome of all holy books. According to ‘Geeta’, there are two elements—human (god) and nature (substance) and amongst these, god is greatest. Gandhi considered it true. He clarified that god’s greatness is specified by two aspects. Firstly, god is present amongst each and every form of nature but nature is not present in god. Secondly, God is Creator and he is also the Destroyer. Gandhiji has highlighted the part of Geeta which mention, God is the almighty of this universe and nature is a factor. He considered God as form of truth. Truth is derived from the word ‘Sat’ and ‘Sat’ means existence. Therefore, Truth means, whatever exists is eternal. Gandhi believed that God is unchangeable, therefore eternal and nature (substance) changeable, therefore, unreal. He considered soul as a part of divine power. He believed that divine power is eternal and real and therefore, spirit is also eternal and real. Gandhi accepted soul, divine and truth as form of infinite power. Gandhi considered human as a combination of body, mind and soul and a human’s ultimate objective is to attain self knowledge, enlightenment and salvation. He has divided a human’s life into two aspects— firstly physical and secondly spiritual. According to him, both these aspects are dependent on each other and without developing one, the second one cannot be developed, therefore both these aspects of human should be developed together.

Now the question rises- how can both aspects of human- physical as well as spiritual can be developed together? Gandhi's answer to the question - for developing physical aspect, physical knowledge and activity are required, which can be attained through senses and for developing spiritual aspect, the spiritual knowledge and activity are required, which can be attained by reading religious books, prayers and social service. He considered observance of fast, truth, non-violence, celibacy, distastefulness, not to steal, renunciation, fearlessness, prevention of untouchability, somatic labour, all religion moderation, courteousness, to enable human to develop both these forms in the right manner.

Gandhiji's Sarvodya Darshan's Knowledge and Argument Reflection

Gandhiji has divided the knowledge into two parts – physical knowledge and spiritual knowledge. He has considered the physical world and a human life's various aspects (social, economic and political) within physical knowledge and creation and divine spirit related to abstract knowledge within spiritual knowledge. According to Gandhiji, a human should have the knowledge of both types, physical knowledge for physical life and spiritual knowledge for soul enlightenment and salvation. According to Gandhiji, the physical knowledge can be attained through senses and spiritual knowledge can be attained through reading texts and prayers. He considered 'Geeta' as the greatest source of spiritual knowledge.

Gandhi's Sarvodya Darshan's Values and Ethics

Gandhiji considered a human as a combination of body, mind and soul and considered that a human's ultimate objective in life is to attain enlightenment. He called it salvation. However, he emphasized a human to develop his physical knowledge and to get rid of physical scarcities. He has considered anashakti yoga as the best practice for spiritual salvation and the importance of labour, morality and character for betterment of physical life. He considered these only as the values of a human life. To attain these, he emphasised on following Ekadash vrat (truth, non-violence, celibacy, distastefulness, renunciation, fearlessness, prevention of untouchability, Somatic labour, equal respect for all religions and courteousness).

Truth had been both a 'source' and 'means' for Gandhiji. In source form, the truth is something which Notes has existence and which doesn't end, which means god.

And Gandhiji's interpretation of 'means' refers to true thoughts, true conduct and true speech. By non-violence, he means lack of evil motives against all living beings. According to Gandhiji, violence doesn't just refer to killing animals, but to exploit someone is also violence and to have evil motives against someone is also violence. According to him, due to lack of non-violence, neither truth can be followed nor can truth be attained. He considered nonviolence very important for completion of spiritual salvation. He considered celibacy as subjugating the mind through repressive sense. Distastefulness means—to be far from sensual pleasures. Astay means—not to steal. Renunciation means—not to collect. Fearlessness means—to be free from any kind of fear. Prevention of untouchability means—not to consider anyone inferior on the basis of birth. Somatic labour means- not to desire any object without working for it. Equality for all religions means—to consider all religions as the way to attain enlightenment. And courteousness means—to sacrifice ego and anger and to nurture mercifulness and pardon. According to Gandhiji, every human should follow these principles. A human who would follow these principles, would then think about welfare of all living beings and in the true meaning would be 'sarvodayi'. According to him, only such a generous human being would be able to achieve prosperity in physical life and experience spiritual values.

Educational Thought of Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi 'Father of Nation', was not only a political leader but also a great religious researcher and social servant. In his lifetime, he expressed a lot of views for improving bookish, doctrinal, compressive and examination-oriented education. He is also known as educationist in educational field. Gandhiji considered education as the birthright of a person and considered it equally necessary for any type of physical and spiritual progress as the mother milk for physical development for children. That is the reason that he forced for compulsorily making arrangement of general education for children up to certain age and he said it to be free of cost. His clear opinion was that this education cannot be given in foreign language English medium; this education can be given in mother tongue. Although, he considered English as mental slavery enhancer language. They wanted to make human independent by education, wanted him to earn his food and money, so they emphasize on hand-skills. Also he wanted spiritual advancement of human, so incited human to follow eleven vows (truth,

non-violence, celibacy, no-taste, non- theft, no storage of unnecessary things, non-fear, un-touchability, prevention, physical labor, multi-religious harmony and humility) by education. Gandhiji decided the face national education based on his this educational philosophy and named it Basic Education. Here sequent interpretation of educational thoughts is presented.

Concept of Education

Gandhiji did not consider literacy only as education. In his own words—Literacy is neither the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby men and women can be educated. Gandhiji considered the human as combination of body, mind, heart and soul. His clear opinion was that education should develop the body, mind, heart and soul of human. Gandhi converted the education of 3Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) in to 3Hs (Hand, Head and Heart) and said that the function of education is to develop hand, brain and heart. In his own words—By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best, in child and man-body, mind and spirit.

Objectives of Education

As per opinion of Gandhiji, salvation is the ultimate objective of human. He took salvation in a broad sense. First he talked about the salvation of physical, mental, economical and political later about spiritual salvation. His logic was as long as human is not free from physical weakness, mental stress, lack of economy and political slavery, he cannot achieve spiritual freedom. That was the reason that he wanted maximum development of human's body, mind and soul by education. What opinions Gandhiji expressed in relation with objectives of education, those we can express in the following sequence—

1. **Physical Growth**—Whatever objective is of human life, it can be achieved only through the body, so it should be developed. In his school life only Gandhiji experienced the necessity of this objective of education. Later on he understood it necessary for the spiritual growth.

2. **Mental and Intellectual Growth**—According to Gandhiji, mind and soul should also develop along with the body. He said that just like mother milk is

essential for physical growth, same way education is essential for mental growth. Education must do this function.

3. Individual and Social Growth—Gandhiji forced on both individual and social growth of a person. They considered person's individual growth is essential for person, society and nation, for all. In his terms, spiritual growth in the peak form of individual growth and social growth is essential for spiritual growth of a human. Gandhiji's meaning of social growth was to teach human to live in society with love and cooperation. He believed that spiritual growth is possible only through loving every human and serving to every human. He was the supporter of cosmopolitanism.

4. Cultural Growth—According to Gandhiji, culture is related with soul and it is expressed in human behavior. They believed that cultural growth is essential for controlling the behavior of human and its spiritual growth and considered it the main objective of education.

5. Moral and Ethical Growth—Gandhiji had known the strength of character. They forced on its growth through education. They felt that these qualities – truth, non-violence, celibacy, non-taste, non- theft, no storage of unnecessary things and non-fear should be present in good character. Schools were told factory of character building by him. He wrote in relation with character building that the end of all the knowledge must be the building up of character, personal purity.

6. Occupational growth—To get rid of economic deprivation Gandhiji forced on occupational growth. He wanted to make every human self-dependent and for it he emphasized on providing him hands skills or industrial education. He told clearly that through education, children should be made able at least to earn their subsistence.

7. Spiritual Growth—According to Gandhiji, the ultimate objective of life is to achieve salvation, self-realization or enlightenment. Which physical, mental, individual, social, cultural, ethical and occupational growth we discussed above, the ultimate objective of all these is also to help human to in self-realization. Gandhiji understood the necessity of religious and moral education for it. Gandhiji was impressed with Geeta in this relation. He equally forced on knowledge, deeds,

devotion and Yoga. Non-violence and Satyagrah were considered as its physical form.

Curriculum of Education

Gandhiji was alert for basic needs of the country. To meet these needs and to build of division less society, he forced to make action dominant curriculum. He made action dominant curriculum only for basic education (from class 1 to class 8), proposed by him and the foremost position was given to hands kills education and second position was given to mother-tongue in that. He proposed the following curriculum of basic education—

1. Hand-skills and Industry (Spinning, Weaving, Gardening, Agriculture, Carpentry, Leather work, Book arts, Clay work, Fisheries, Home Science etc.).
2. Mother Language
3. Hindi
4. Applied Mathematics (Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Measurement etc.).
5. Social Subjects (History, Geometry, Civics and Sociology).
6. General Science (Gardening, Botany, Zoology, Chemistry, Physics and Home science).
7. Music
8. Painting
9. Health Science (Hygiene, Exercise and Games and Sports etc.).
10. Behavior Education (Moral education, Social service and other Social work).

Methodologies of Education

Gandhiji considered human as a combination of body, mind and soul and he considered that all these should be developed for overall development. In other words, human development depends up on these three – body, mind and soul. That was the reason that in teaching methodology, he gave position to actions of body, mind and soul all three actions of human. He did not study psychology but it seems

that he was the master of applied psychology. He was emphasizing maximum to action in the field of education. According to him, learning by doing and learning from your own experience is the best learning. Although he accepted the importance of statement, lecture and question and answer method. He also believed in hearing, rumination and chanting method predicted by Upanishada and Vedanta. Present knowledge in the form of complete unit and its development through any method were the main bases of his education methodology. It is called Correlation Method. Gandhiji forced on naturally use of all these methodologies of education. Here we belief it is essential to put some light on it.

1. **Emulation Method**—Gandhiji cleared that emulation is the natural tendency of children, initially they learn through emulation only; so they should be taught through this method. Gandhiji considered it the best method for good behavior. In his opinion, foundation of good behavior should be kept in childhood only; rites developed at this time are permanent. He forced a lot on this matter that parents and teachers must always treat children with love, so they learn to love and always do truth, nonviolence, celibacy, no-taste, non- theft, no storage of unnecessary things, non-fear, un-touchability, physical labor, multi-religious harmony and humility behavior in-front-of them, which they can emulate and follow good behavior.

2. **Action Method**—Gandhiji cleared that action is the natural tendency of children; somewhat they do always; so education of any subject or art-skill should be given through action method. Gandhiji emphasized learning by doing and learning from your own experience for any knowledge or skill as far as possible. Today's games method and practical method itself are action methods. Gandhiji forced to use these methods for the education of art, music and hand-skills.

3. **Oral Method**—Lecture, question-answer and debate etc. methods come under oral methods. Gandhi ordering to use these methods as associated methods only. He cleared that children are so curious, you teach with any method, they ask you questions in between, their questions should be answered, their doubts should be cleared immediately; but with one caution that children will always be active in both term physical and mental, not only an inactive listener.

4. Correlation Method—Gandhiji forced a lot on this matter that whatever taught to the children, it should be taught in actual circumstances and in actual form. For this, he forced that education of total knowledge and action should be given with the medium of children's natural atmosphere, social atmosphere or making centre of education of hand-skills, attached to their life. The method of teaching where all subjects and actions of curriculum are taught by correlating with each other is called correlation method. Then considering children's natural atmosphere, social atmosphere or hand-skills as central subject and education of all subjects and actions of curriculum is given by correlating with them should be called Centralization Method. But in general use also it is called correlation or coordination method that according to Gandhiji, children participate in practical work in practical circumstances in this method and this way they learn it naturally, learning through this way, their physical and mental activities correlate and they get prepared for practical life.

5. Learning through Hearing and rumination—Learning through hearing and rumination is our traditional method of education. In this process, students used to hear the teachers, listen to the verbal teachings, then contemplate it and then at last practice it. In reality, knowledge does not have any meaning unless and until it doesn't help in developing us by becoming a part of it. Gandhiji has accepted the use of this method for subjects like religion and philosophy, but with few changes. According to him, when the children grow up they should pray, hear the preachings, read, contemplate, find out the truth through their intelligence and patience and use them in their daily lives. But this method can only be used when the children are able to contemplate.

Discipline

Gandhiji accepted the importance of discipline. According to him true discipline is self-inspired. He was against the use of power for attaining the discipline. According to him, the real discipline could be developed only by impactful method. He laid emphasis on keeping the children in natural environment and superior social environment. He believed that in this environment, the children would adopt high ideals and habits. But still, if the children get distracted to wrong path the teachers should use will power to bring them to the right track. Will power is not attained just like that. For this, the teachers have to follow celibacy.

Teacher

According to Gandhiji, a teacher is a centre of process for education. According to Gandhiji, a teacher should be disciplined and he should follow celibacy. Gandhiji gave all the freedom to the children for their overall development but keeping in mind their physical and spiritual requirements. Gandhiji, right from day one itself, emphasized on physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual development and making them self-independent. According to his view, only such a person could do some good to himself and the world. According to Gandhiji, a teacher should be inquisitive along with being patient.

Trainee

Learner is the center of the education process. Shikshrthy of Gandhi's thought and celibacy should be disciplined. Vayshtik their full growth Gandhi children-would complete remission, but his social and spiritual development while keeping sight. Gandhi early childhood physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual force was stressing to grow and make them self-reliant. They think it is the same person may own and bless the world. According to Gandhi with Spartan learners - must be curious as well.

School

Gandhiji had his own views for schools. According to him schools should be such institutions where teachers educate and serve with full dedication and along with it there should be so much output by their join efforts that they should become self-independent. He laid emphasis on making the schools as communal centres. According to him, various activities of the community should be carried out on the schools and people from the community should be provided access to study and work here. Here, old age education should also be carried out by running night schools. On one hand community should help out the schools in their activities and on the other hand schools should assist the community in their various activities

Merits of Basic Education

Principally, this scheme seems very advantageous but in practice, this has been really inappropriate. Its principles are considered as its advantages—

1. **Self-independent scheme**—at that point of time, the government did not have enough funds to make provide for compulsory and free education. At that time, the school expenditure was to be met by the sale of goods produced by hand skills by making the basic education based on hand skills. It is a different aspect that this could not happen.

2. **Overall development of a human being**—A human's physical, mental, social, traditional, moral and characteristic, commercial and spiritual development have been emphasized in Basic education. It is a different thing altogether that through this, all these objectives cannot be achieved.

3. **Preparation for the real world**—Our nation is a nation of villages. In basic education, education for rural work- farming and breeding livestock etc. and rural handicrafts- harvesting and knitting etc., was made mandatory for children and after acquiring this they could earn their own livelihood. Principally, this sounds really good. It is a different matter that we could not achieve this through basic education.

4. **Fundamental curriculum for Indians**—Basic education is related to the real lives of Indians. In this, all the subjects and social work for overall development of humans have been provided for and most important of all, Hindi has been mandatory for all children of the nation. We wish we could have done the same, and then we would have been unified.

5. **End of class distinction**—There are lot of classes in our country based on caste, religion and labour. Equal education and equal work has been provided for in the basic education. The class distinction can atleast be reduced, if not ended.

6. **End of difference of physical and mental labour**—In that era, foreigners used to make us 'babus' by teaching some English words, raise our status. The aftermath of the same was that people who did mental tasks started considering people who do physical work inferior. Handwork and industrial education and social service work were made mandatory for children in basic education. When everybody would work, nobody would discriminate those who work. This should have ended class distinction. It is a different matter altogether that nothing like this happened.

7. **Action-oriented education process**—In basic education, people were given opportunities and learn with their own experiences by participating in real activities in practical circumstances. This is a psychological method to learn. The knowledge and skills learnt through this way remains permanent.

8. **Consolidation of all knowledge and activities**—In basic education, knowledge and activities are considered inseparable and the subjects and activities are consolidated in a unit through handwork and commercial and natural environmental and social environment. This is an apt process of education.

9. **Mother Tongue as the Medium of Instruction for Education**—Though the British had made mother tongue (regional languages) as the medium of instruction in primary schools, but along with that they also ran primary schools where the medium was English. Gandhiji insisted only on mother tongue to be the medium of instruction for providing education. Only then, equality could have been achieved.

10. **Close relation between schools and society**—The British education methodology did not have any relation to Indian lifestyle. The basic education ended these differences between the schools and society. The societal language, societal craftsmanship skills, societal commercial activities, societal festivals and other societal activities were given importance. This established a close relation between the schools and society

Disadvantages of Basic education

Theoretically, the basic education might have many disadvantages and no matter how much they might be praised, but practically, they have been unsuccessful.

1. **Incomplete scheme**—though its called national policy, but in reality it is only a mandatory and free primary education. Only the needs of rural children are kept in mind in this, not the needs of urban children.

2. **Lack of relation to the higher education**—Basic education is for children aged between 7 and 14 years old. Its curriculum is based only on the requirements of this particular age bracket and needs of rural children. There was no correlation done with the secondary and higher education, it wasn't made the base for the

higher education. It seems like children would not study after this. Education should be in a sequential manner.

3. Inappropriate for the urban areas—It is said that India is nation of villages, but it is not appropriate to fulfill just the rural needs through the primary school curriculum. No co-relation with the lives of urban children is a big disadvantage. It seems like the basic education was meant only for the poor population of the country.

4. More emphasis on handwork—In basic education, the most emphasis has been laid on the handwork. This has been made the central subject of the curriculum and on depending on this other subjects and activities have been emphasized. Zakir Hussain committee had provided for a duration of 3 hrs 20 min, out of 5 hrs 30 min for handwork activities. It seems that the developers of the basic education wanted to create India as a nation of hand skilled people. And then in school education, giving more importance to a specific subject or activity means giving less importance to other subjects and activities. Then how the overall development of the children could have been done.

5. Wastage of raw materials—It is just an imagination to expect the production by small children, it is not suitable for usage, it cannot be sold in the market. Nothing is achieved in this scheme except wastage of materials.

6. Dissipation of time and power—In early stage, it is not possible to impart training of handwork to the small children. In basic education, neither could the children be trained in the handwork nor the expenditure of the school be met by the goods produced by them. Along with the wastage of raw materials, the time and power of children also gets wasted.

7. Prodigious process of education—Though the manner in which the education provided in the basic education is a natural process, psychological process, however, when imparted forcibly in a crowd, its natural and psychological aspects remain no more. Then, integrating all the subjects and activities and that too, considering handwork, commercial, natural environmental and social work as focal subject, remains just an imagination.

8. **Serial order education is impossible**—Even if it was possible to develop some subjects and activities in an integrated manner, then another problem arises, to present a subject or an activity in a logical order. It is not possible to arrange it into serial order.

9. **Lack of religious knowledge**—It is said that the basic education is called fundamental education, however, the basic religious education of the Indian society doesn't find any place in the same, only moral education finds it place. Gandhiji feared that the hatred would have taken place in case of religious education. Does any religion teach about hatred?

Gandhiji As An Idealist, Naturalist And Pragmatic Educationist

Idealism: Gandhiji emphasis on truth, non-violence and character development clearly indicates that he was an idealist. Naturalism: Gandhiji views of making mother-tongue as the medium of instruction and providing freedom to the child reflect his naturalism. Pragmatism: Gandhiji had an experimental approach to educational and other issues. He also emphasized learning through real life activities.

Relevance Of Gandhiji's Views on Education in Modern Times

1. The most important point in Gandhi's scheme of education is its emphasis on relating school education to the needs of the society. He wanted to achieve this objective through a system of 'Learning while earning'. He gave an important place to the learning of craft. It will be seen from the curriculum of the present day schools that work experience and socially useful productive work find an important place.

2. His emphasis on education through the mother-tongue is the accepted principle by all thinkers.

3. Gandhiji stress on inculcating dignity of labour is the need of the hour. There is the dire need to develop elements of spirituality in our life which is dominated by materialism.

Check your progress:

- Critically examine the educational views of M.K. Gandhi.

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By:-

Ankita Vishal
Assistant Professor
Email - ankitavishal3@gmail.com