

M.K.GANDHI'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL VALUES AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION

Education is rooted in a culture and is consciously or unconsciously guided by an ideology or world-view. The ideology of education can be studied historically as well as sociologically. The achievements of a society are closely related to be achievements in its class rooms. The success of an educational system depends to a great extent on the ideology, the values, beliefs and conceptions regarding man, society and universe – which it tries to uphold and propagate through its medium. The effect of ideology on education is not a one-sided action. Education in its turn tries to mould ideology by bringing changes in the way of thinking, attitudes and aspirations of people and bring about notable changes in the social and material conditions of man. “Education is a dynamic force in the life of every individual influencing his physical, mental, emotional, social and ethical development.”

In the emergence of civilization was the invention of writing as a means of communication. With a written word it has become possible for historical events to be accurately recorded, and for knowledge to be more widely and quickly disseminated among several generations. In writing about importance of education, it is believed that not only was trade, commerce and economic sector of the society radically altered, but also the nature of human interaction transformed. The educated person has greater powers of communication, critical consciousness and control over his or her environment.

The mobilization of human potential for social and collective action in ancient Egypt, Babylonia and Greece and even with partially literate populations dramatically surpassed that of pre-literate tribes or nomadic groups. Education is also a basic human right, which expands personal choice, control over one's own environment, and allows for collective action not otherwise possible. Much of the concern today in underdeveloped and developed countries about education stems, at least in part, from this consideration.

Many of the non-cognitive effects of education, receptivity to new ideas, competitiveness and willingness to accept discipline – are directly relevant to productive economic activity. Studies in several countries have shown that “modernity” of outlook towards activities ranging from voting to family planning, savings to working, is influenced by the level of individual's education.

Its object is to arrange and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states, which are demanded of than by both the political society as a whole and the social milieu for which he is specially destined. Another important role played by education

relates to modernization and national development, there by becoming an instrument of national change. Education is a continuous process starting with childhood and continuing through out life.

“Education is an attempt on the part of adult members of the human society to shape the development of the coming generation in accordance with its own ideals of life.”

Education is an important input both for the growth of the society as well as for the individual. Properly planner educational input can contribute to increase in the national gross products, cultural richness, build positive attitude towards technology, increase efficiency and effectiveness of the A aspirations and develops new values. It strengthens the competencies and develops commitment. Education generates in an individual, a critical outlook on social and political realities and sharpens the ability to self-examination, self-monitoring and self-criticism.

During the last five decades, we have gained valuable experiences in all spheres and stages of education in the country. The expectations from education perceived by learners, communities and people are being understood better. The potentialities for future growth are also before us. The expectations and the chance of their being achieved are separated by a wide gap of resource crunch, credibility of institutions, level of commitment, efficacy of functioning and several others.

Mere appreciation of creating a knowledge society and knowledgeable people is not sufficient. The message must reach each individual that these are times when every national needs to move towards a learning society and knowledge society. People in India are better equipped to understand and appreciate it. They are familiar with traditional systems of creating, generating, transferring knowledge and the in-built respect in the society for the learned and the knowledgeable.

At present, India has achieved a literacy rate of 60 percent but still the gross number of illiterates is the largest in the world. India has the third largest scientific and technological manpower of the world, but it has also a high drop-out rate, only 2 out of 10 students reach the 9th standards. “India has number of educational institutions like “Indian Institute of Technology”, “Indian Institute of Management” and several schools that can be compared with the best of the institutions in the world. It has also institutions where required infrastructure facilities are awfully lacking. There is a great disparity of educational achievements between good public schools and government run institutions in rural and slum metropolitan areas.”

Essentially system of education in a country would always be a social mission with close association between the society and the system of education. A close proximity has always been insisted upon for a viable and indelible system of education to bring in the required positive changes in the society. This in context, a brief attempt has been made in the following section to understand the system of education in India, scope and status of community participation, policies and programmes that are governing the Indian education system, and so on have been described.

Two of the noted statements of educational vision in India must be recalled while attempting a discussion on education. The first of these was pronounced by Gandhi in London in 1931 recording the context of universalizing education in India.

India lives in its villages. It is there that our producers live, voters' life, the poor and illiterate live. It is the villages that hold the key to the country's problems. So vision of future India can be greater than to rebuild its half a million villages. The irony is that in terms of the teaming millions inhabiting these villages our developments, our democracy, and our education have all become irrelevant. But once we decide to approach them in the right spirit they are bound to respond, and rise to end their suffering. It may be that in the first phase selected homogeneous SC/ST and other backward village may have to be taken up. In case whole village do not come forward in the beginning, then mutual-aid teams may have to be formed. Naturally in the whole process of rebuilding villages it alone can prepare people's mind to receive new ideas, and accept new tools, new relationships, and new forms of organization. The second vision statement is contained in Article 45 of the Constitution of India (1950):

“The state shall endeavor to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.”

India after 1947 has remarkably marched ahead as a free, democratic, secular republic. During these years education has always been considered as the engine of personal, social and economic growth. Over the years, at regular intervals, the nation has taken stock of growth and developments in education and planned activities for its future development accordingly. In 1947, 1953 and 1966 it has looked respectively at university education, at secondary education and education in its totality. The nation has made concrete formulations on educational policy in 1968, 1986 and 1992.

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation and the maker of the modern independent republic, is held in high esteem and venerated as the great soul. His popular sayings that 'My life is my message' and 'My life is a series of experiments with truth' have literally come to be true. These statements establish his scientific temper and his adherence to the moral values in education.

Gandhi was not an academician and he did not make any systematic presentation of his educational philosophy. In order to present his philosophy in an organized and logically cogent manner, his ideas have to be culled from his various speeches and writings. Gandhi laid more stress on the basic values of the human life especially on truth and non-violence. As a defender of the human rights, he made people more conscious of their duties to set a moral order in the society and also to make the people learn that the true source of right is duty only.

Gandhi did not like people to remain as mere silent spectators in a helpless manner. He arouses their indomitable moral will and inherent potentialities to fight against the supposed wrong or injustice in a non-violent manner. He envisaged a casteless, classless and egalitarian society against the existing acquisitive and exploitative society.

Gandhi was not a system builder, but with great understanding and insight, he could bring about the scheme of his concepts in an appropriate and relevant manner so as to suit the modern requirements. His concepts underwent evolutionary and revolutionary changes. There is need for the social scientists to combine their scientific methods and theories with the Gandhian values to achieve better results.

The modern technology poses great threat and fear than hope and happiness. The significance of man is lost and his life has lost its meaning and purpose except to reduce it to a mere mechanical drudgery. The heavy industrialization is vulnerable to several evils like gambling and results in problems such as unemployment. His real happiness does not lie in his enjoyment of sensual pleasures and multiplication of desires but in leading a simple and ennobled life with moral consciousness and high thinking.

Gandhi formulated a pattern and a structure basing on his series of experiments with truth in the religio-moral, socio-economic and political spheres by keeping the individuality and dignity of the individual in view without losing sight of truth and non-violence.

Gandhi rejected the earlier formulated political theory that 'end justifies the means' as it tends to be opportunistic and expedient and the unscrupulous and immoral methods have been followed. He introduced a new moral code by making means as significant as end and also by establishing their convertibility to avoid the immoral means and violence to justify the end. He made a break through in the social structure by working for the removal of the social evils such as Untouchability and the creation of equal opportunities for the unprivileged for their social upliftment. As regards his notion of village autonomy and village development, he worked out for the village self sufficiency. He found majority of the people living in the village.

On the other hand the centralized power structure has to adopt the method of violence to defend its power and implement its policies forcibly. In the modern times politics has become a great preoccupation of the people. There has been a ruthless and unhealthy competition for power in every department of life. So Gandhi brought religion and politics together to purify politics. He stood for the decentralized democracy and *panchayat raj* system where in man is considered supreme and his role is significant. Gandhi was opposed to heavy industrialization, deforestation and depletion of natural resources, pollution and ecological imbalance. These modern trends have badly affected the health of mankind.

The Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's Educational Philosophy for the 21st Century

Gandhian educational ideas, founded as they are on certain eternal principles, will not lose their fundamental relevance in the years to come. Our planners will have to think of a self-supporting primary education, which will improve the lot of the poorest of the poor. That such an education would be based on action, problem-solving, and practical activity, rather than mere book learning is also perfectly valid. An integral education, which allows the whole being of a person to grow, an education which emphasizes character-building and cultural identity, is once again, obviously desirable. It is equally clear that we have failed miserably in our state-sponsored schemes to provide free, compulsory primary education to all. The Gandhian model, therefore, retains its relevance and attractiveness. However,

whether such an education can be imparted solely or primarily through the learning of a craft, and whether the potential beneficiaries or the state will accept it remains to be seen.

Finally, the Gandhian model needs, in my opinion, a built-in mechanism of absorbing or confronting the newer and newer technologies that are emerging each day. As it stands, it seems to be somewhat backward looking, or at any rate, designed for a static society in which stable ancestral occupations persist from generation to generation. I think that the coming age will be one of phenomenal and unprecedented change. But this does not mean that the perennial values that Gandhi lived by and advocated will lose their influence. What this does mean is that we shall have to find newer and newer ways to interpret, understand, impart, and live them out.

Gandhi believed in man's inner harmony with Nature and God. The trinity is in fact three aspects of the same unity. Similarly, in man also the physical, mental and other aspects are integrally related. Gandhi's philosophy of education was based upon harmony within man and harmony of man with other human beings and the Nature. This is also the result of non-violent attitude towards life. Non-violence, according to Gandhi, is not merely relative; it is not abstinence from all injury. It has also a positive aspect which in fact is more important. Thus, non-violence is love for all human beings, and it involves earnest efforts for the good of all. Thus ultimately, the ideal of Sarvodaya is a modern version of the ancient Indian integral humanism. This ideal of sarvodaya is the foundation of Gandhi's philosophy of education. Thus, Gandhi's philosophy of education is an attempt to build up an educational system on the philosophical basis of integral humanism.

A born teacher and one of the greatest educationists of the world, through years of deep thinking, personal experience, and experimentation, he evolved his concept of basic education which lays emphasis on the need for educating the mind and heart of the child through some craft work. "To him basic education was a vital part of the social revolution which was the essence of his concept of truth and nonviolence and of his own life. It is a system of education which from the very infancy trains human beings to live humanely as members of small vital communities and through personal and cooperative work, to satisfy their common needs and to organize their own economic and spiritual life."

A great revolutionary that he was, he revolted against all that limited the growth and development of human personality. He was out for liberating himself and other human beings from the shackles that bound individuals to status quo. Naturally, he revolted against the prevailing system of education. He did not stop at merely revolting against the established system. He sought in various ways to substitute the evils or the limiting factors by practices more in harmony with his own conception of education.

Education meant an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man, body, mind, and spirit. He wondered what better instrument can there be to do this than the book of humanity. He deplored very early in his life that the prevailing system of education had no connection with the surroundings of children and that the surroundings in turn remain practically untouched by the education received by a microscopic minority of boys and girls of the nation.

He was fed up with the purely literary education with English as the medium of instruction which the British introduced and popularized in India. This was devised to produce clerks for

the government but not to stimulate initiative or skill in production. Gandhi saw that such education not only isolated the educated from the people, but, what was worse, made their education of no practical use whatsoever to the people. With the destruction of the ancient village organization by the British and the dumping of goods manufactured abroad on the villages, the people of the villages were disorganized and were sinking steadily into poverty, unemployment and despair.

Gandhi wanted everyone in the country to be trained and equipped to produce and in that process his intellect to be stimulated and quickened. Many misunderstood the emphasis of craft work. They thought that he was preaching manual work as an alternative to other studies. He had to explain his position week after week in the Harijan. He wrote once:

“True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual, and physical faculties of the children. This education ought to be for them a kind of insurance against unemployment. It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thereby go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes.”

Gandhi’s conception of education had a spiritual base more stout than the education under its traditional concept. Education to Gandhi meant socio-economic progress, prosperity, material abundance, political advancement, and moral progress of the individual as well as of the society. True education to Gandhi meant knowledge of one’s true essence and a conduct which befits such knowledge. Formal literacy is far from real education, as to him knowledge means the realization of the self. “One who has fully realized truth and nonviolence is a perfect “gyani” in spite of being unlettered.” He explains:

“Our real education lies in learning to be good. Everybody, whether healthy or ill, can do that. Knowledge of letters is like ornaments for the body.”

Gandhi’s concept of basic education stresses the fourfold development in human personality, namely body, mind, heart, and spirit. True education stimulates the spiritual, intellectual, and physical faculties of the individual. To Gandhi, “the clear implication is that meaningful education must not overlook any area of human development.” According to Gandhi, “true education is that which helps one to know the *alma*, our true self, God, and Truth. Every branch of knowledge should have as its goal knowledge of the self.”

“Education implies a child’s learning as to how to put his mind and all his senses to good use.” The concept of education essentially carries a spiritual overtone as Gandhi stressed that learning is knowledge of what is worth knowing about. The only thing worth knowing about is the *atman*. “True knowledge is thus knowledge of the self. But in order to attain this knowledge, one might emphasize that literacy in itself is no education but is one of the means only.” Hence “Gandhi emphasized that literacy in itself is no education but is one of the means whereby men and women can be educated.” Gandhi the pragmatist strongly advocated the practical aspects of education rather than its theoretical bearings.

All education should therefore enrich the personality of the individual, which otherwise is meaningless. In other words, “Gandhi stressed the importance of education for character building.” Embedding his faith in the necessity of character building as the foundation of education, Gandhi says:

“I had always given the first place to the culture of the heart or the building of character. I regarded character building as the proper foundation for education.”

“Gandhi rejected the modern system of education with its inherent contradictions and complexities. He condemned it because it leads us to denigrate the moral and spiritual aspects of education.” He expected an educational system to conform to the following two basic criteria that mere numbers are useless and that all force other than soul force is transitory and vain. Irrefutable as the above is, it should be the ceaseless pursuit of every student to arm himself with “this unique weapon of spirit by dint of self-purification.” Gandhi accepted the social significance of education by observing that education does not mean merely the production of good individuals but production of individuals better equipped to serve humanity and thereby to achieve self-realization. He maintained:

“Education here does not mean mere spiritual knowledge nor does liberation signify only spiritual liberation after death. Knowledge includes all training that is useful for the service of mankind and liberation means freedom from all manner of servitude even in the present life.”

Gandhi equates religion with truth and ahimsa, and he takes anything that promotes the cultivation of these virtues’s (Satya and Ahimsa) as the potent means for imparting religious education to students. He advocated the study of basic principles of all the faiths, besides the personal. “He thereby intended to make education cultivate an equal respect for all religions among students.” Gandhi held the view that the aim of education should be to make the student self-supporting. He was realistic enough to argue that:

“The education given to our boys and girls today makes them unmindful of their morals, unhealthy and restless, whereas by making education self-sustaining, we will be making them mentally poised and morally excellent.”

The student must be trained to think independently, critically, and creatively. For this he provides a scheme of basic education, wherein vocational training or work experience is of utmost importance. He prefers education through craft in comparison to book-centered education. All the same, “he links education with the socio-economic development of the nation and hence decries the adoption of any method in the education system which may prove to be wasteful and positively harmful. Gandhi regarded such a belief as a superstition in the field of education. “He was convinced that this wrong notion curbed the child’s development, as by insisting on the alphabet, his development is arrested.” This, according to Gandhi, applies not only to children but to every individual. In fact, he felt that knowledge of the alphabet has no place at all among the important aspects of life. Criticizing the modern educational system with its overemphasis on the learning of the alphabet, “Gandhi realized the necessity of an alternative system of education which should be more practical.”

Gandhi's condemnation of modern education implies the condemnation of the education system prevalent in India brought into being by a capitalistic society. An integrated system of primary and secondary education is Gandhi's possible solution of this predicament. he suggested:

“Real education and an all-round development of the child is not possible without it. And such education must be self-supporting. However, boys or girls who will go through the seven-year curriculum in a craft-based school will be able to pay all these years' expenses through their earnings from the crafts.”

The idea of need-based education eliminates unemployment. Gandhi suggested:

“Even so the State takes charge of the child at *seven* and returns it to the family as an earning unit. You impart education and simultaneously cut at the root of unemployment. You have to train the boys in one occupation or another. Round this special occupation, you will train up his mind, his body, his handwriting, his artistic sense, and so on. He will be the master of the craft he learns.”

Although Gandhi never condoned compulsion or coercion in any context, his compulsion in the matter of primary education was an exception because he recommended that it should be compulsory as well as free for all boys and girls from seven to fourteen years. Article 45 of the Constitution has anchored the Gandhian idea :

“Gandhi also recommended that besides teaching different subjects to students, they might also be assigned some manual work whereby they can make a fair return to the society. He held the view that the development of mind should come through manual training. Manual training will not consist in producing articles for a school museum or toys which have no value. Rather it would produce marketable articles. The children will not do this as they used to do under the whip in the early days of the factories.”

Gandhi suggested that the State should make use of goods produced by students by providing market for them as and when necessary. He was confident that by proper implementation of craft based education. “It would become both self-supporting and self-acting.” Gandhi sought to revive rural economy by relating his concept of basic education to the creation of more and more village occupations. In a psychological sense, “Gandhi's scheme of basic education provides education through some craft by creating a balance between intellectual development and practical activities. Its sociological impact is no less important, as it seeks to remove social conflicts and tensions ill society by inculcating a sense of dignity of labour.”

Gandhi's concept of basic education is embedded in the soil of reality followed by his commitment to the emancipation of the villagers of India. He is convinced that the

introduction of vocational training would not only make the system of education more purposeful but would also bring about radical changes in the pattern of social relationships.

Education is a life-long process. Hence he scoffs at the idea of compartmentalizing education into formal arid literary, primary and higher perspectives. He takes a very comprehensive view of education and considers it to be the sum-total of all the techniques and processes through which the individual develops abilities and aptitudes as positive values for the development of a progressive society. Hence schools and colleges do not hold as much importance for Gandhi as is ascribed to them, in the modern educational system, for acquiring knowledge. So Gandhi says:

“There is nothing so ennobling or lasting as self-study. Schools and colleges make most of us mere receptacles for holding the superfluities of knowledge. Wheat is left out and mere husk is taken in. I do not wish to decry schools and colleges as such. They have their use. But we are making altogether too much of them. They are but one of the many means of gaining knowledge.”

Gandhi suggests that degrees for mechanical and other engineers be attached to the different industries which should pay for the training of the graduates they need. He pleads that the state would therefore cease to run its own institutions of higher education. Medical colleges should be attached to certified hospitals. “As they are popular among monied men, they may be expected by voluntary contributions to support medical colleges. And agricultural colleges to be worthy of the name must be self-supporting.”

While elaborating his scheme of basic education, Gandhi never ignored the significance of higher education. However, he was not happy with the scheme and state of affairs of higher education as prevailing in the country. While he clarified that he was not opposed to higher education as such, he emphasized in categorical terms that higher education should not be run at the expense of State exchequer.

Gandhi advocates State funding only for such branches of higher education which would prepare young men to serve different disciplines of society. “He maintains that for all other branches of learning the State should encourage private efforts.” He was opposed to English language being retained as the medium of transaction in higher education. He believed that all education, whether primary or higher, should be imparted in the students’ own mother tongue. Since English as a medium of instruction could not be replaced by some other language which was not essentially the mother tongue of the students concerned, Gandhi stressed that regional or provincial languages should be given their rightful place in the scheme of education. Gandhi’s Scheme of education has its basis on the tacit assumption of an intimate rapport between the teacher and the student. As he says:

“I take from him more than I give him. In this way, a true teacher regards himself as a student of his students. If you will teach your pupils with this attitude, you will benefit much from them.”

Gandhi insists that what students learn through books is of little or no avail in comparison to what they perceive through the mode of living and attitude of their teachers. Hence he

expects the teachers to set an ideal example before their students by living a simple and austere life themselves. Gandhi asserted:

“A cowardly teacher would never succeed in making his boys valiant, and a stranger to self-restraint could never teach his pupils the value of self-restraint. I saw, therefore, that I must be an eternal object lesson to the boys and girls living with me. They thus became my teachers and I learnt. I must be good and live straight, if only for their sake. I may say that the increasing discipline and restraint I imposed on myself at Tolstoy Farm was mostly due to those wards of mine.”

To Gandhi, education is not a mechanical activity. It is also not an end in itself. His educational philosophy is pregnant with individual and social values. Like Plato, he believed that if the scheme of education is brought on to perfect lines, it would benefit the individual and society both. Through a life-long process of learning, the individual could attain his ultimate ideal, the truth or “Brahma”, and, as a necessary consequence of the individual’s quest for truth, society will also have better citizens ensuring a perfect social order based on sound morals, wherein there could be no place for hatred, injustice, or exploitation.

Gandhi’s education was based on truth which is totally lacking in our time. We talk too much to revive this principle knowing that it is beneficial for our country and people at the same time but who cares for this in this violent world where everyone is running after money. Gandhi was a positive man on all fronts but no one is going to listen to him, not even his followers who treat him like a saint. One might say that education as an amalgamation of various aspects of life should come closer to each other. This was the dream of Gandhi. But future alone will show whether Gandhi’s method of total change would be accepted at all, because it involves much self-discipline, culture, and education of want which seems, if not impossible, at least difficult in the present-day materialistic civilization.

Mahatma, the great soul, epitomizes the meaning of a man who was possibly the greatest human being the 20th century has seen.

“Mahatma Gandhi was a modern messiah whose life became the message to the world. The message was truth and freedom through non-violence. Non violence is the most beautiful gift mankind has received since the existence of civilized evolution. Violence, wars, terrorism and human injustice are the focus of the central issues of world problems. The constructive aspects of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy can regenerate a world bordering on the chaos”

Gandhi's altruistic philosophy may appear to be a utopian ideal. However, if we want to find permanent solutions to life's problems, it is essential to adopt universal welfare as a central precept. Only an individual with considerable self-respect, unshakable faith in human nature and detachment can find sanity where alienation, soaring crime and unmitigated violence are ripping the society apart. Today Mahatma Gandhi is no more a person, he has become a phenomenon. In his lifetime he fought for many causes; colonialism, racial discrimination,

economic exploitation and India's Independence, but predominantly he fought for human rights which was the pivot of his existence. His weapons were Satya (truth) and Ahimsa (non-violence). Gandhi's entire life was a powerful message for mankind. His every breath was dedicated to the pursuit of truth (god), in its most pristine manifestations, justice and liberty for man.

He was a great human being with a deep understanding of human nature. He made every effort to encourage the full development of the positive aspects of the human potential and to reduce or restrain the negative. His life has inspired the people through out the world. *Ahimsa* or nonviolence is the powerful idea that Mahatma Gandhi made familiar throughout the world. But nonviolence does not mean the mere absence of violence. It is something more positive, more meaningful than that, for it depends wholly on the power of truth. The true expression of nonviolence is compassion. Some people seem to think that compassion is just a passive emotional response instead of a rational stimulus to action. To experience genuine compassion is to develop a feeling of closeness to others combined with a sense of responsibility for their welfare. This develops when we accept that other people are just like ourselves in wanting happiness and not wanting suffering.

As Mahatma Gandhi showed by his own example, nonviolence can be implemented not only in politics but also in day-to-day life. That was his great achievement. He showed that nonviolence should be active in helping others. Nonviolence means that if you can help and serve others you should do so. If you cannot, you must at least restrain yourself from harming others. I believe that it is very important that we find positive ways in which children and adults can be educated in the path of compassion, kindness and nonviolence. If we can actively do this I believe we will be fulfilling Mahatma Gandhi's legacy to us. It is my prayer that, as we enter this new century, "nonviolence and dialogue will increasingly come to govern all human relations."

CONCLUSION

According to Gandhi, character cannot be built with mortar and stone. It cannot be built by hands other than your own. An education which does not teach us to discriminate between good and bad, to assimilate the one and eschew the other, is a misnomer. Education should be so revolutionized as to answer the wants of the poorest villager, instead of answering those of an imperial exploiter.

"Education in the understanding of citizenship is a short-term affair if we are honest and earnest. Basic education links the children, whether of cities or the villages, to all that is best and lasting in India. Education is the art of drawing out full manhood of the children under training."

He emphasizes that literacy in itself is no education. Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning. Literacy education should follow the education of the hand-the one gift that visibly distinguishes man from beast. Real education has to draw out the best from the boys and girls to be educated. True education must correspond to the surrounding circumstances or it is not a healthy growth. What is really needed to make democracy function is not knowledge of facts, but right education.

National education to be truly national must reflect the national condition for the time being. The function of Naye-Talim is not to teach an occupation, but through it to develop the whole man.

“Gandhi believes that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations. By education he means an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man-body, mind and spirit. By spiritual training he means education of the heart.”

Experience gained in two schools under his control has taught him that punishment does not purify, if anything, it hardens children. He considers writing as a fine art. We kill it by imposing the alphabet on little children and making it the beginning of learning. He regards spinning and weaving as the necessary part of any national system of education.

The aim of university education should be to turn out true servants of the people who will live and die for the country's freedom. A balanced intellect presupposes a harmonious growth of body, mind and soul. Love requires that true education should be easily accessible to all and should be of use to every villager in this daily life. The notion of education through handicrafts rises from the contemplation of truth and love permeating life's activities. The fees that you pay do not cover even a fraction of the amount that is spent on your education from the public exchanger. “Persistent questioning and healthy inquisitiveness are the first requisite for acquiring learning of any kind. If we want to impart education best suited to the needs of the villagers, we should take the *Vidyapith* to the villages.”

In a democratic scheme, money invested in the promotion of learning gives a tenfold return to the people even as a seed sown in good soil returns a luxuriant crop. All education in a country has got to be demonstrably in promotion of the progress of the country in which it is given. The schools and colleges are really a factory for turning out clerks for Government. The canker has so eaten into the society that in many cases the only meaning of education is knowledge of English. The emphasis laid on the principle of spending every minute of one's life usefully is the best education for citizenship. Many of his principles have universal application and eternal validity, and the passing years will show that his faith in the efficacy of nonviolent pressure as an agent for peaceful change is as justified today all over the world as it was in his time in India. Rabindranath Tagore said : Mahatma Gandhi came and stood at the door of India's destitute millions, clad as one of themselves, speaking to them in their own language...who else has so unreservedly accepted the vast masses of the Indian people as his flesh and blood...Truth awakened Truth.

It will be clear that certain fundamental principles are intrinsic to Gandhi's educational philosophy. These principles include equity, social justice, non-violence, human dignity, economic well being, and cultural self-respect. All of these can be subsumed into the broader, umbrella term of *Swaraj*. If we think of the coming decades from the point of view of *Swaraj*, we'll see that there is much work to be done. In our country, especially, it is obvious that we are very far from achieving the ideal of *Swaraj*. There is tremendous inequality and injustice in our society. There is also an unconscionable gap between the rich and the poor. In addition to the old division of India and Bharat, we now have the third category of an international super class, resident in India, but living really in dollarized, global, air-conditioned habitat. Coming to education, each of these classes and sub-classes

are marked by their own brand and type. Of course, the vast under class of over 400 million souls has no access to any sort of proper education at all. For them, only a Gandhian model, which requires the least amount of capital outlay, may do.

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14. Young India, 13, November 1929.
15. Harijan, 19, March 1946.