

## GANDHI'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS

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“Literacy in itself is no education. Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning. By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man-body, mind and spirit”, the statement of Mahatma Gandhi is sufficient enough to comprehend his views about education - his philosophy of education.

Gandhi's thoughts of education coming out through his speeches, statements, his write ups appeared from various articles and his addresses in educational institutions. Gandhi's philosophy on education focused on all-round development of one's personality. Wardha Conference on Indian Education in 1937 evidently reveal that Gandhi takes education as lifelong process. This process ends only with one's last breath. Mahatma Gandhi believed that self-sufficiency - all-round development of one's personality is the basic spirit of education. In the present paper, an attempt has been made to focus the Gandhi's thoughts on education.

### **Objectives**

1. To study the brief life of Mahatma Gandhi
2. To study Gandhi's educational thoughts

### **Research Methodology**

The study is based on secondary data and it is collected from various books, journals, articles, internet etc. Analytical method was used for the study.

### **Life of Mahatma**

Mohandas Karmchand Gandhi well known as Mahatma Gandhi born on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1869. Karamchand Gandhi, a father of Mahatma Gandhi was *dewan* of Rajkote State. This family was affluent business family belonging to merchant community of Gujrat. His parents were highly religious and pious people. He was also deeply religious and spending hours reading religious texts. In 1887, at the age of thirteen he got married with Kasturba. In 1888, Gandhi went London for studying to study law. In this time he first began to develop his political views. He was greatly influenced by the works of British thinkers such as John Stuart Mill and Henry David Thoreau. In 1893, he went to South Africa to be the lawyer. He was there for almost 21 years and this period he developed his political views and ethics. In South Africa, Gandhiji was insulted with color discrimination. He started fight against color discrimination and for human decency. At that time South Africa was under British rule and British people (white color people) had ill-treated to other communities' people especially black color's people. Gandhi trembled with shame and fear. He opposed that ill treatment with his well known weapon Satyagrah for long. He got success in his struggle against color discrimination.

In 1915, Gandhiji came back to India from South Africa. He realized the condition of the Indian and it was like slave. He joined with national congress which started freedom movement in India. He met Gopal Krishna Gokhale and under his guidance he visited different parts of India and took part in Indian freedom struggle. He started his freedom struggle in 1917 with Champaran Agitation in Bihar. After Lokmanya Tilak (1920), he played major role in nation's freedom struggle. His main struggle movements were *Khilafat movement, non-*

cooperation movement, and civil disobedient, quit India movement. Under his leadership India has got independence in 1947.

### **Gandhiji's Views on Education**

Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi was not only a great leader of national freedom movement but he was also a great thinker, philosopher and reformer. He developed firm views on education and his educational views are valuable for the society. As well as moulds the new generation, education reflects a society's basic assumptions about itself. He realized the role of education in his struggling experience in South Africa. He recognized the important education while he was in Africa, therefore he convinced Indians to take advantage of education. He explained in *Harijan*, 1937 that education means an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man body, mind and spirit. Literacy is neither the end of education nor the beginning; it is one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Education is also 'awakening of the soul' and strengthening the inner voice'. He opined that true education does not consist of cramming a lot of information and numbers in mind, nor it lies in passing the examination by reading a number of books but it lies in developing a character and inculcates internal virtues in human beings. True education brings about a harmonious functioning of the body, heart, mind and soul and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical abilities. It creates the ideal citizens. Gandhiji gave much importance to the cultural aspect of education, wherein the inner culture must be reflected in one's speech and conduct towards others, it is not an intellectual work but the quality of the soul. There is no room for pride, prejudice, vanity or falsehood in this culture.

In the British period especially by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the old and indigenous education system in India was totally replaced by modern system. British Govt. started their education programmes in India. The system in the villages that ran public institutions like temples, monasteries, hospitals and schools were replaced destroying the indigenous culture and found an immediate acceptance from the younger generation. In the earlier ages, Gandhiji was more attracted to western education but in later ages he mentioned the value of India's education system. Gandhiji highly condemned of the education system in India as being wasteful, and unethical and artificial. Gandhi was more concerned with what the education has to offer to the individual in terms of development and not its tools and subjects.

Gandhiji felt the importance of education in productive work and proficiency. he proposes to 'accord dignity to labour, ensure modest and honest livelihood and alter the characters and language through which education is imparted'. He believed in learning by doing. Activity and interest is the central part of Teaching. He believed that true education needs to be imparted through non-violence, without which exploitation and acquisition may take the lead. These views coincide with 'bread and butter' scheme and aim of education, wherein education is put to use to acquire basic necessities of life. Gandhi's Social Thought leads a self-supporting life, or turn to hereditary occupations. He mentioned that learning while earning or vice versa is one of the basic components of the self-supporting system of the human society. He preferred hand, heart and head than on reading, writing and arithmetic. According to him education should imparts of responsibility via compulsory physical training. The aim of education should be rural development and social welfare. Some of his words need to be quoted

in this context: ‘The end of all education should surely be service, and if a student gets an opportunity of rendering service even whilst he is studying, he should consider it as a rare opportunity and treat it not really as a suspension of his education but rather its complement’ (Young India, 13-10-1927).

Earlier Gandhiji proposed the extension of primary education for at least seven years and it would be dealt with profit-yielding vocation, introduction of spinning, carding, dyeing, tailoring, toy-making, book-binding and paper making, making etc. The State Universities should support and examine the arena of education. Later, he gave importance higher education with primary education. In his views, primary education should be free and compulsory, education should be productive, it should be in mother tongue and introduce the child to its rich heritage and culture and instilling in him the right ethical and moral values, it should be making the students understand the ideals of citizenship, to understand their rights, duties and obligations as members of civilized communities. Gandhi’s views on education do not confine to basic and higher education only but he was equally concerned about the education of women and the marginalized and excluded sections.

### **Conclusions**

In the present study, it is examined the views of Gandhiji on education. Mahatma Gandhi was not only a great leader of national freedom movement but he was also a great thinker, philosopher and reformer. He developed firm views on education and his educational views are valuable for the society. He gave more importance to education. In his views, some key features should be included in education viz. self-realisation, God-realisation, truth, non-violence, conduct of human life, righteousness, discipline, physical training, craft learning and most importantly, to treat all living beings with respect, compassion, humility and love. These features were the most essential in attaining Swaraj whereby he integrated the individual virtues with that of the welfare of society and nation.

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