

## **Gandhian School of Educational Thought**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the changing global scenario, the main aim of education is to help people develop themselves as global and local responsible citizens who will make conscientious efforts for building a humane world with peace and harmony. The focus of education should be the development of values of peace and harmony based on the human mindset: human rights, mutual respect, mutual trust, cooperation, respect for life, social justice, open-mindedness, and co-existence. Keeping this in mind, it is necessary to reorient and restructure the education programme to include education for peace and harmony. The essence of this work is to expose the Gandhian school of educational thought. This work argues that trusteeship is a unique socio-economic doctrine of Gandhi; however, it has not received the serious attention of social scientists. This study examines trusteeship from a holistic perspective, which is an approach favoured by Gandhi. It highlights the theoretical and practical aspects of trusteeship and examines its present-day relevance.

**Keywords:** Gandhi; Gandhian school of educational thought; Education.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Born during the first phase of the industrial and scientific revolution and living through its second and third stages, Gandhiji saw both the positive and humane aspects of science and technology, as well as their destructive possibilities and potentialities for misutilization, which could lead to a growing wedge between the “haves” and “have nots” and hence to destruction (Breuhan, 2009). Realising something definitely wrong with the consumeristic way of life that many people were chasing in a society oriented to violence, exhibitionism, consumerism, a life far removed from nature, and moving in a direction that was not conducive to a balanced life or would promote equality of opportunity amongst people of different nations, races, castes, colours, and creeds, Gandhiji began his quest for the alternatives, which got even further reinforced and broadened with his experiences in South Africa (Dalton, 2012).

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in 1869 in Porbander, on the west coast of India. His father was the senior official of a small Indian state, Porbandar, before moving on to be the chief adviser in the principality of Rajkot (Gandhi, 2021). Gandhi did not particularly excel at anything but learned the things that were expected of him. He married in 1882. His wife, Kasturbai Makanji, was the daughter of a local merchant and was chosen for him. At the end of his formal schooling, he decided that he wanted to be a lawyer (Gandhi, 2021). To do this, he had to come to England to enrol at the Inner Temple. He was called to the bar in the summer of 1891. On his return to India, he found that he could not make a successful career as a lawyer, so he moved to South Africa in 1893.

In Gandhi, we find an educational eclecticism of a characteristic type in which idealism, naturalism, and pragmatism have found a place (Venkatesan & Joshi, 2015). Gandhi's aim was not to develop a professed school or tenet of

philosophy. He was responding in his own characteristic manner to the educational needs of his time, and he attempted at the same time to evolve a workable system to meet this need and develop the rationale necessary for such a system. Idealism became the very foundation of the Gandhian system of education, into which other tenets of thought have also found their way (Udofia & Alexander, 2017). Gandhi is above all an idealist, not a realist; he leaps far ahead in the moral consciousness of humanity. Ishwara Topa writes:

It was the idealist that made him function as a practical man. This peculiar combination of the idealist and the practical in his person gave him a unique place among the great thinkers of the world. He always strove after the real, knowing fully the shallowness of the unreal. His realism had a strong tinge of idealism (1964, p.3).

Gandhi held that the ideals relating to the ultimate purposes of education were unalterable and immutable. Man must do his utmost to comprehend, embrace, and uphold these principles (Akpan & Udofia, 2015). Man's conscience should be properly moulded, not to fit the relative conscience of the person, but to fit the values. Gandhi's notion of education provides a window into his amazing educational philosophy. He refers to genuine education as the whole development of a child or adult, including their body, mind, and soul. Gandhi believed that literacy was neither the beginning nor the end of education. It is only one method of educating both men and women. As a result, he places minimal weight on literacy in his educational philosophy. Narula (2012) says: "Gandhi was one of those rare spokesmen for the conscience of all mankind" (p. 32).

Keeping intellectual development in focus, they organised education on the basis of classified knowledge, both for the content and the experience of education. This knowledge is both the result of the content and the experience of education. This knowledge represented the total experience of the human race as presented to the individual in the form of systematic subjects. The same mental development was the aim in the teaching of mathematics or languages, especially classical languages such as Latin or Greek in the West. Gandhi kept his eyes fixed on the ultimate goal of self-realisation, or the attainment of God. The task of education in this sense is to keep this ideal constantly in the minds of the students, relate the personal, social, and national dimensions of this principle, and relate these immediate goals to the ultimate goal of self-realisation. Thus for Gandhi, education becomes an enduring search for God in the idealist sense and the final self-realisation. He wrote: "By education, I mean an all-around drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind, and spirit" (Steiner, 1997, p. 522).

Gandhi's philosophy of education is looked upon by Gandhi as an instrument for the establishment of such an ideal society. His philosophy of education aimed at forming a society of people who would be not only self-supporting but who would not be a burden to the society—a society of people well behaved, respecting the rights of others around them, and morally advanced enough to suffer no untruth. Gandhi was the person who dealt with practical problems of enormous dimensions, focusing his mind so well on God and spiritual values that he filled the entire scheme of education with these values. He was not the least embarrassed to defend his moral and spiritual foundations in the more

materialistic world of the twentieth century, which wanted education to have nothing to do with the world of religion and spirituality. For Gandhi, the values related to the ultimate goals of education are absolute and unchanging. Man is expected to understand, accept, and live these values to the best of his ability. Man's conscience is to be shaped accordingly, not to the satisfaction of the individual's relative conscience. Philosophy is the essence of life. Without it, man lives in vain. It is his guide in moments of doubt and uncertainty. It helps him with the formation of his ideas and the strengthening of his moral conduct. Gandhi says, "In the land of ours there is enough philosophy but little life" (Bilgrami, 2003, p. 64).

According to Gandhi, there should be complete accord between philosophy and life, supplementing each other and not working in opposition. There is always ample scope for exploring and interpreting the laws of human conduct. In this task, philosophy comes to the aid of life and, in its own peculiar way, enriches the contents of life. The intimacy of such a relationship between life and philosophy was no secret to Gandhi, who, on the contrary, intensively promoted it. Life is a complicated affair. It is not as simple as it appears. Gandhi also knew its complicatedness or involvements. He says that "life is governed by a multitude of forces. It should be smooth sailing if one could determine the course of one's actions only by one general principle" (Gandhi, 1980, p. 63). Thus, it is an expression of not one force or principle but of many such forces or principles. In this way, life is an endless series of encounters.

### **GANDHI'S VIEWS ON PROGRESS**

Gandhi does not consider them unreal in order to discard them. They may appear to be deceptive in reality, but it does not matter. The world is there for all practical purposes. It is a field of great activity. No turning back to or running away from the world is Gandhi's attitude. The world offers problems for man, and he is made to solve them. This is what Gandhi thinks about man and the world, and he believes that man cannot remain inactive or static in it. His activity can be progressive as he is a progressive being pushed up by nature, which is never at a standstill.

Gandhi believes that "things in this world are not what they seem and do not seem as they really are. Or if they are seen as they are, they appear only to a few who have perfected themselves after ages of penance. But none has yet been able to describe the reality, and no one can" (Topa, 1964, p. 6). Human progress is conditioned by factors of change. But though man is a "progressive being, he is also a fallible being. For him, being sure of his steps is not possible. But Gandhi has faith in the „fallible man, who can improve his condition by cultivating „a perfectly innocent heart, incapable of evil. Thus the fallible man, being a hindrance to his own self-development, can be corrected to follow the path of progress in the right spirit. It can only happen through lifelong education. Gandhi observes that "It is not literacy or learning that makes a man, but education for real life."

## **INDIAN CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

According to Gandhi, culture is a living phenomenon. It is not conceived in terms of brick and mortar or in the form of huge tomes which can be eaten by moths.<sup>13</sup> Culture resides in the hearts and souls of the people. It is in this living culture, not in a dead culture as a relic of an inherited past, that Gandhi's belief lies hidden. He also knows the significance of civilizational factors in the life of a man. But his conception of civilization differs from what Western civilization connotes. He says:

“Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment and increases the capacity for service. The network of human relationships spread out in the world is indicative of the fact that „life is not a straight line (Bose, 1991, p. 96).

The teaching of Gandhi is both explicit and implied in the sense that man is expected to use his discretion in the choice of conflicting duties. In this way, man is trained in the exercise of ranking the order of his duties without neglecting or ignoring any one single duty. It is the conscious effort on the part of man to finalise his preference in the scale of duties. This duty-conscious man is the creation of Gandhi.

This is the essence of his philosophy, which is nothing more and nothing less than action philosophised. The range of his activity is as wide as man's activity with respect to his interests. It is unrestricted and unlimited in its scope. It has a moral tone and a religious sanction. It becomes a series of activities constituting a continuity of activity expressed in different phases of a man's life. Such a philosophy of action takes into account not only the person himself but also mankind. This feature gives a peculiar background to human action and makes it work in consonance with other human beings. Thus, the idea of the separateness of human action is rejected. It forms itself into an integrated human activity.

According to Gandhi, detached action is the spirit of renunciation, and the validity of the principle of renunciation is conceived in and through action. It is not renunciation as a departure from life or cessation of all activity for realising Godhood in man. Inactivity is a false name for renunciation. Detached action is freedom of the spirit of action. In the spirit of the Dharma, it can be practised by all without distinction of caste, creed, or sex. The question of monopolising action ceases at all times. It is open to all and is the privilege of no one individual. The rise of man is the call of the spirit in man. With such faith in human nature, the cultivation of primary virtues in all, strong and weak, is the Gandhian plea. This attempt paves the way for the moral man to rise in the estimation of God's creation. According to Gandhi, life is a continuous chain of experiences that need to be linked by spiritual and personal convictions regarding life. Education is not different from that. Like a pragmatist, Gandhi stressed the role of these life experiences.

## **EXERCISE OF MIND AND BODY**

Gandhi argued that good physical activity, organ training, and heart education are all necessary for a person's mind to grow more effectively. In order to make education relevant and useful in a child's life, his plan depended on incorporating manual labour (Alter, 2000). He intended for basic crafts to occupy the centre stage in teaching. He emphasised the need for every kid to learn how to use a fundamental hand tool before learning the alphabet, and he intended the child's whole educational experience to revolve around that handicraft. The primary goal, he stressed, is “to impart the whole education of the body, mind, and soul through the handicraft... and all our lessons in history, geography, and arithmetic will be related to the craft.

Gandhi believed that physical labour shouldn't be viewed as being beneath cerebral labour. He believed that the “good life” should be modelled after the job of the artisan or labourer. Therefore, schools that were founded on constructive activity that was done for the benefit of everybody were educating students on a mind-body-spirit level. Gandhi emphasises the value of education from the inside out so that students can effectively express their intelligence. According to him, only via appropriate training and activity of the body's organs—such as the hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, and so on—can the mind truly be educated.

In other words, the finest and quickest method for a youngster to grow his mind is through the clever use of his body organs. But without a commensurate awakening of the soul, the growth of the mind and body on their own would prove to be an unbalanced endeavour. If there isn't a harmonious synchronisation between a child's natural physical and spiritual capacities, even spiritual training—which is education of the heart—becomes an abstraction. As he states:

By spiritual training I mean education of the heart. A proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds *pari passu* with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole. According to this theory, therefore, it would be a gross fallacy to suppose that they can be developed piecemeal or independently of one another (Gandhi & Kripalani, 1983, p.146).

## **GANDHI ON RELIGION**

All religions teach that man is a dual being, participating in two worlds - the higher, the divine, the free world and the lower, the natural, the one in shackles of bondage. The highest task which man has to fulfill in life, says Gandhi, is to liberate his spirit from those shackles and to affirm spiritual purity. The aim of education should be initiation into the higher life of the spirit. In Gandhi's life religion was an important element and therefore it was a great living force for him. In his view, religion is related to every aspect of life (Nandy, 1988). Just as politics is not divorced from religion, so also education is not divorced from it (Udofia, 2021; Udofia & Uduigwomen, 2022). In his scheme of things a liberal education to all should include a reverent study of other faiths. He did not regard any of the great religions of the world as false or inferior. According to him, culture of the mind must be subservient to the culture of the heart and that

should be the basis of all sound education. In his philosophy of education, spiritual training is far more important than mere training of the intellect.

Gandhi's whole approach to politics, economics, social questions, and the national movement was governed by religious consideration. Religion predominated all his involvements, all the principles and values, and penetrated every detail of his public life (Rajagopal, 2003). Gandhi's religion is often called an ethical religion for a variety of reasons. The way he speaks of morality surprises me. He resorts more to moral principles in the explanation of religion, hence the label „ethical religion. It will not be correct to say that it is mere ethical concerns that make his religion. Gandhi says, “When morality incarnates itself in a living man, it becomes religion, because it binds, it holds, and it sustains him in the hour of trial” (Gandhi, 1968, p. 51). He further says, “Prayer is the heart and soul of religion. Therefore prayer should be the core of human life, and no one can live without religion” (Gandhi, 1968, p. 51).

It is that education that brings forth the oneness of God and man—the oneness that enkindles the lamp of true erudition to be placed. Gandhi explains the ultimate aim of education very characteristically in the light of service to God and man. He points out: “There is no religion higher than truth and righteousness.” The spiritual training of the boys was a much more difficult matter than their physical and mental training. I relied little on religious books for the training of the spirit. Of course, I believed that every student should be acquainted with the elements of his own religion and have a general knowledge of his own scriptures, and therefore, I provided for such knowledge as best I could. But that, to my mind, was part of the intellectual training. Long before I undertook the education of the youngsters of the Tolstoy Farm, I realised that the training of the spirit was something in itself. To develop the spirit is to build character and enable one to work towards knowledge of God and self-realisation. And I held that this was an essential part of the training of the young and that all training without a culture of the spirit was of no use and might even be harmful. He says:

“Man’s ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious; have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the Endeavour, simply because the only way find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all (Gandhi, 2011, p. 38).

## **HUMAN VALUES**

Awareness of human values is what Gandhi greatly pines for in the welfare of global humanity. The best of individuality should find its manifestation through education. As Gandhi observes, “Real education consists in drawing the best out of yourself. What better book can there be than the book of humanity?” (Armstrong, 2006). Man is often times weak-minded enough to be caught in the snare of greed and honeyed words. This is a daily occurrence. Thus, Gandhi teaches to offer resistance to temptation and not fall prey to it. The strength of character lies in not yielding but in conquering temptation. The weak-minded take

the easy road of temptation. It is the disciplined mind that stands in good stead to resist temptation. Otherwise, it is a lost battle in which man is engaged.

The force of good is sublimating in the sense that it lifts man from a lower to a higher plane of thinking and living. Evil is bad and vicious in the sense that it corrupts man and makes him a low creature. To choose between good and evil is difficult for a common man, as his life is governed by both. It is so easy for a man who believes in the living presence of God to take the road of goodness and to shun the path of evil. Good and evil are intimately connected with belief and disbelief. Thus, good is godly and evil is satanic. Man has to become godly by deserting the ways of Satan. He says, the business of every God-fearing man is to dissociate himself from evil with total disregard for consequences. He must have faith that a good deed will only produce a good result. He knows that it is better to die in the way of God than to live in the way of Satan (Pianalto, 2022).

It is the reign of God under which man is to live. Thus, the fight between God and Satan in the person of man is the fight between good and evil, according to Gandhi. Gandhi's belief is that man is not a lost creature. He is always capable of self-development. Even the lowest human being is inherently fit to cultivate virtue and aspire to full manhood. Gandhi observes that he has been taught since childhood and has tested the truth by experience that the primary virtues of mankind are possible for cultivation by the meanest of the human species. It is this undoubted universal possibility that distinguishes the human from the rest of God's creator" (Pianalto, 2022, p. 64).

### **AIM OF EDUCATION**

While explaining the goal of education, Gandhi states this point of moral education for character building very clearly.

I would try to develop courage, strength, virtue, the ability to forget oneself in working towards great aims. This is more important than literacy; academic learning is only a means to this greater end. That is why India's great lack of literacy, deplorable as it is, does not appeal to me nor make me feel that India is unfit for self-rule (Patel, 1958, p. 35).

Character building is independent of literary training. Gandhi aimed at education that will help one be self-supporting in later life and education that in itself is self-supporting. Gandhi is not averse to the bread-and-butter aim of education. The education system ought to be a kind of insurance against unemployment. Gandhi wants the student to learn while he earns and to earn while he learns. The aim of education should be to produce good citizens. Gandhi's scheme of education aims at giving the citizens of the future a keen sense of personal worth, dignity, and efficiency and will strengthen in them the desire for self-improvement and social service in a cooperative community. The highest aim of education is the knowledge of God and self-realisation. All other aims are subordinate to this supreme aim of life and education. Defining the aim of education, Gandhi said, "Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning. It is one of the means by which men and women can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education" (Ode, et al., 2021, p. 32).

The aim of education is the total development of the child—physical, mental, and spiritual. Character formation is more important than literacy in education. He supported the ancient Indian ideals of education as aiming towards salvation. Education that develops one aspect of a child's personality at the expense of another is narrow and one-sided. Such an education was imposed by the British, which has been the bane of Indian society. Again, instead of limiting it to providing the child with bits of information, education should aim at developing the child's personality. Ultimately, education should guide the individual to self-realisation; however, this does not lead to neglecting the social development of the educator. Gandhi values individual freedom, but one must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individuality to the requirements of social progress.”<sup>31</sup> The goal of education was self-reliance. Every educated man and woman should be able to rely on themselves to carry on their lives. The earning of one's livelihood is part of this self-reliance. Explaining this aim of education, Gandhi said, “This education ought to be for them a kind of insurance against unemployment” (Pissarides, 2011, p. 39)

### **THE GOAL OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is a social institution in which the child's consciousness of social values is developed and where he is helped to develop his inherited social resources in such a way as to be useful to society. The school is to be a reflection of the larger society outside its walls, in which life can be learned by living. But it is to be a purified, simplified, and better-balanced society. Gandhi's goal of education is both social and individual. His aim was not only individual perfection, but he also wanted to bring about a new social order based on truth and non-violence. Gandhi says, “If your education is substantial, then it should permeate the neighbourhood and exercise its influence” (Gour, 2014, p. 24). If the education that we get separates us from God or does not help us serve our fellow men, then such education is not worthy of its name. According to Gandhi, “life consisted of a chain of experiments to discover the extent to which truth was embodied in human life. He simply wants to tell the story of his experiments with truth and say, My life consists of nothing but those experiments” (Gour, 2014, p. 24).

### **EDUCATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION**

Gandhi also emphasised the need for an intelligent approach to industrial training. In his educational reconstruction, he laid a special emphasis on manual and industrial training. On the other hand, the view that an intelligent approach to industrial training would often be a more valuable aid to the intellect than an indifferent reading of literature Gandhi aimed at the self-supporting aspect of education from two points of view. One from the point of view of quickening the pace of literacy and bringing about universal literacy within as short a period as possible. That was the only thing he could think of. Secondly, he wanted to teach children the dignity of labour and make them learn to regard it as an integral part



and a means of their intellectual growth, and to make them realise that it was patriotic to pay for their training through their labour.

The core of his suggestion was that handicrafts should be taught not merely for productive work but for developing the intellect of the pupils. He hoped that every boy and girl would work, not as a machine but as one intelligent unit, taking interest in the corporate work done. According to Gandhi, an education that cannot be self-supporting must turn out only intellectual bankrupts, directing the energy of the students to waste so as to get from them nothing valuable (Gandhi, 1958). Therefore, he considered thorough industrial training to be essential if the students were to become self-reliant and self-supporting.

In a country like India, which is predominantly agricultural, he held the view that as part of the training of every youth, he must have a fair amount of practical knowledge of agriculture and hand weaving. According to him, a boy thus trained and equipped will never feel helpless in battling with the world and will never be in want of employment. He also held the view that knowledge of the laws of hygiene and sanitation as well as the art of rearing children should form a necessary part of the education of every boy and girl. For Gandhi, abstract syllabuses and textbooks had only a partial role to play. Even knowledge had the goal of character development. "The syllabus will be different according to the progress of the children. It should therefore be drawn up every three months. The children constituting the class come from different backgrounds of nurture. As a result, we cannot use the same curriculum for all of them. At times, it may be necessary to induce them to unlearn what they have learned.

Gandhi prescribes the lesson of fearlessness, the lesson that directs mankind towards the pursuit of purity of mind and steadfastness to truth under any circumstances. Gandhi interprets cowardice as a great hindrance to humanity and advises parents to allow their children to face the realities of life under diverse circumstances. He says that:

The remedy against cowardice is not physical culture but the braving of dangers. So long as parents of the middle class Hindus, themselves timid, continue to transmit their timidity by keeping their grown up children in cotton-wool, so long will there be the desire to shun dangers and run no risks. They will have a dare to leave their children alone, let them run risks and even at times get killed in s doing. The puniest individual may have stout heart (Chakrabarti, 1992, p. 74).

## **OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION**

Gandhi held the view that the highest development of the mind and the soul would be possible under such a system of education, with the provision that every handicraft will be taught not merely mechanically but scientifically. That is the most essential feature of Gandhi's philosophy of education. According to him, education must revolve around vocational and manual activities as its centre, and all curricula should be woven around vocational training. All training will be mainly done through the medium of a productive industry. According to Gandhi, a suitable handicraft should form the centre and basis of all education (Behera,

2016). That is the core of Gandhi's educational philosophy. He considers the handicraft chosen to be the source from which every activity and experience should spring. According to Gandhi, training centred around a suitable handicraft has both educational and economic value. The educational value lies in the development of the whole man through the craft, and its economic value lies in its productive or self-supporting aspect (Behera, 2016).

Gandhi's aim of education is both social and individual. His aim was not only individual perfection but also the creation of a new social order based on truth and non-violence. According to him, that education is not national, which takes no account of the starving millions in India and devises no means for their relief. Therefore, in his view, education must have another motive besides the economic one. Education is that which liberates. It is one of the most important aims of education. Education for freedom can be interpreted in more than one sense. It may mean political freedom as well as spiritual liberation. Since the country was in bondage at that time, he was very particular that national education should aim at freedom, enabling the students by their training to emancipate India from Western domination. He interpreted it as follows:

It means that there is knowledge that is designed for salvation. On the principle that the greater includes the less, national independence or material freedom is included in the spiritual. The knowledge gained in educational institutions must therefore at the very least teach the way and lead to such freedom (Mani, 1961, p. 14).

Education is preparation for life. If education is to prepare one for life, it must enable him to face the problems of life then and there. Only through a good education and proper training can such a preparation for life be made. According to Gandhi, an education of this kind should enable the students to fight against social or other evils. Gandhi observes:

There is something radically wrong in the system of education that fails to arm boys and girls against social or other evils." "Education alone is of value; it draws out the faculties of a student so as to enable him or her to solve correctly the problems of life in every department (Mishra, 2015, p. 283).

## **THE ATTAINMENT OF FREEDOM**

Gandhi feared no one but God. He considered fearlessness to be the greatest virtue that could be developed through proper education. He believes that the attainment of freedom, whether for a man, a nation, or the world, must be in exact proportion to the attainment of non-violence by each. According to him, there is no absolute freedom. It is relative and conditional. Real freedom enjoyed by man is in exact proportion to his attainment in the practise of non-violence; otherwise, freedom becomes a farce. It is the illusion of freedom rather than the essence of freedom that rules mankind if non-violence is absent from its life.

Gandhi's education is the surest means of arriving at the truth that knows no fear. This is the stepping stone towards reaching the other noble qualities of head and heart. He says that fearlessness is indispensable for the growth of the

other noble qualities. How can one seek the truth or cherish love without being fearless? The path of Hari (the Lord) is the path of the brave, not of cowards; Hari here means truth, and the brave are those armed with fearlessness (Wolpert, 2021). Gandhi thinks that cowards can never be morally perfect; he places particular emphasis on the education of fearlessness. In his experiments on basic education, he allows children freedom of learning in an atmosphere favourable to their mental nourishment. The nursing of the human soul, as he serenely feels, must have its origin in the depth of vision and courage of conviction. Only then will there be unison between the individual and the infinite.

### **A LIBERAL TEACHER**

A teacher who establishes rapport with the students, becomes one with them, and learns more from them than he teaches them, Whoever learns nothing from his disciples is, in my opinion, worthless. Whenever I talk with someone, I learn from him. I take more from him 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 greatly from them.

Gandhi wanted to free the Indian teacher from interference from outside, particularly from the government or state bureaucracy. Under colonial rule, the teacher had a prescribed job to do that was based on what the authorities wanted the children to learn. Textbooks were mandatory, so Gandhi found that 'the living word of the teacher has very little value. A teacher who teaches from textbooks does not impart originality to his pupils'. Gandhi's plan, on the other hand, implied the end of the teacher's subservience to the prescribed textbook and the curriculum. It presented a concept of learning that simply could not be fully implemented with the help of textbooks. Of equal, if not greater, importance was the freedom it gave the teacher in matters of curriculum. It denied the state the power to decide what teachers taught and what they did in the classroom. It gave autonomy to the teacher, but it was, above all, a libertarian approach to schooling that transferred power from the state to the village.

Gandhi wanted to free the Indian teacher from interference from outside, particularly from the government or state bureaucracy (Vasanthada, 2012). He must be a political and independent man. A teacher who teaches from textbooks does not impart originality to his pupils. Gandhi's plan, on the other hand, implied the end of the teacher's subservience to the prescribed textbook and the curriculum. It presented a concept of learning that simply could not be fully implemented with the help of textbooks. It denied the state the power to decide what teachers taught and what they did in the classroom. It gave autonomy to the teacher, but it was, above all, a libertarian approach to schooling that transferred power from the state to the village. Gandhi's insistence on autonomy and self-regulation is reflected in the ethos of informal education. Gandhi's conception of basic education was concerned with learning that was generated within everyday life, which is the basis on which informal educators work. It was also an education focused on the individual but reliant on cooperation between individuals. There is also a familiar picture of the relationships between educators and students or

learners. A teacher who establishes rapport with the students becomes one with them and learns more from them than he teaches them.

### **PRINCIPLE OF NON-VIOLENCE**

According to Gandhi, it is through the complete elimination of hatred from the human heart that man hopes to tread the path of humanism. It is possible only through love, which rules the human heart and drives away the demon of hatred. In Gandhi's estimation, hatred can only be overcome by love, as counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as the depth of hatred. Gandhi never practised violence and advocated *ahimsa*. In his estimation, the only thing lawful is non-violence. Non-violence is a term he coined in order to bring out the root meaning of *Ahimsa* (Kumar, 2002). In spite of the negative particle, it is not a negative force. It is a force that is more positive than electricity and more powerful than even either. But it does not express a negative force but a force superior to all the forces put together. One person who can express *ahimsa* in life exercises a force superior to all the forces of brutality.

He says: "Non-violence is in Hinduism; it is in Christianity as well as in Islam. If non-violence disappears, Hindu Dharma disappears. Islam does not forbid its followers from following non-violence as a policy" (Topa, 1964, p. 77). Gandhi's education may be called non-violent education. The principle of non-violence was the basis of Gandhi's scheme of basic education. Through this scheme, he wanted to develop those qualities in future citizens of India that he considered necessary for building a non-violent society. His system of education wanted to root out exploitation and centralization in society and create a non-violent social order. The purpose of life and that of education were to attain the *Brahman*. Gandhi believes that it is the ultimate aim of education. Bhatia says: "The ultimate aim of Gandhi is related to the ultimate goal of life—the aim of realisation, the knowledge of truth, and God in one's life" (Gandhi, 1980, p. 33). Gandhi was so fond of the *Gurukula* system of the Vedic period, in which the pupils depended on the *guru* for everything. It was an important part of the pupil's personality development. The teacher taught and guided the pupils. The pupils lived with the teacher's family, participated in his day-to-day life, and rendered him the kind of help they could. The *gurukula* searched for the refinements of truth and love, which Gandhi later made the central principles of his life. The *gurukula*, in all its details, emphasised the spiritual aspects of the pupil's life. This was a principle that Gandhi never ceased to drive home.

### **DISCIPLINE**

According to Gandhi, students require the drive for action. They should not be mere imitators. They should learn to think and act for themselves, and at the same time behave with full discipline and obedience (Bandura, 1978). Vedic education constituted the very groundwork of Gandhian thoughts. Vedic education integrated the goals of life and education, and it was the same for Gandhi. It was an education that aimed at educating the whole person rather than concentrating on one aspect. It was a highly moral activity. Gandhi takes an altogether different approach to education. To him, it is not only a means to an

end but a continual striving for re-orienting humanity towards a heightened sense of divinity. Gandhi believes that the joy of education is the joy of the origin of human consciousness, which is always mounded in purity of vision and sincerity of perfection. It is the joy that originates in the learner quite spontaneously and knows no end in itself, since the source of joy is the promise of perfection. The desire to be a partner in that infinite world of joy as a learner is the urge to discover himself anew in order to be worthy of himself. It is the inner urge of a learner that quickens the thought of action, and, as Gandhi believes, it is the typical behavioural design where education, true to its meaning, begins (Bandura, 1978).

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 that 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 and emphasises 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 a built-in mechanism for 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 static societies 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.

## **CONCLUSION**

Gandhi's educational philosophy, which evolved during his lifetime in the form of the Gandhian School of Educational Thought, has not received adequate attention in policy formulations during the last five decades. Globally, it is being realised that his views were dynamic and futuristic in nature. Fully understanding the inadequacies of our overdependence on the alien model of education and the needs of the weakest, the poorest, and the most neglected, he evolved an indigenous strategy to provide equality of opportunity and success to every individual in this category.

Gandhi's innovative approach to political activism, passive resistance, belief in non-violence, and firm faith in *satyagraha* against oppressive regimes came as the biggest surprise to all across the globe. People became curious and attentive when he not only preached but also practised his doctrine in action as part of his personal life as a staunch believer in personal example rather than mere

precept, that efforts have to be made to eliminate the misdeeds of the oppressor rather than the oppressor himself. Truth, non-violence, and *satyagraha* were successfully used, and their credibility as effective instruments of social and political transformation was established. Though the world saw the success of his faith, strategy, and effort in achieving his goals, the Mahatma himself was not fully satisfied.

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