



Nai-Talim: A look at Gandhian basic education programme

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Abstract

Gandhi believed that education should be intimately related with human experience. He wanted to present an alternative of British colonial system of education, straining that educational system must be one in which the highest development of mind and soul is possible and which instils courage and self-reliance in the individual, while at the same time, helping them cultivate the highest intellectual scientific, moral, and ethical accomplishments. To create a Sarvodaya society Gandhiji says, boys and girls should grow up acquiring as much of learning as possible in and through productive work. In basic education system it is recommended to impart education through mother tongue, which helps inculcating values like love towards mother tongue and Swadeshi (native). Education through industry helps in developing values like respect for manual labour, sense of co-operation, feeling of being mutually helpful through manual work, development of friendship feeling, economical self-reliance, team spirit and sincerity. This paper discusses about meaning, definition, division and objectives of Gandhiji's Basic Education called Nai-Talim. The paper also tries to explain main points of Nai-Talim, as well as required qualities of Basic teacher.

Keywords: Gandhiji, basic education, Nai-talim, manual labour

Introduction

Gandhi was a many-sided personality, the outward simplicity of his life, minded devotion to truth clocked innumerable deep currents ideas, disciplines, loyalty, and aspirations. He was at once saint and revolutionary politician and social reformer, economist and man of religion, educationalist and Satyagrahi, devotee alike of faith and reasons. In the story of 'Experiments with Truth' he experiments with food, health and cure, clothes and dress, politics and economics, education and reforms, organization and revolution, ethics and spirituality with almost everything that his life. Gandhiji was not an intellectual in the academic sense of terms, not a scholar or a philosopher, his thinking had the quality of creative genius and not that of a student.

In his philosophical discourse and practical experiments societies, machinery nature, environment, and cultural values as the main referents, to which we must return again and again to find out his views. He was not a theorist, primarily an actionist or a 'karmyogi'. For Gandhiji the means to knowledge was not contemplation but action.

Gandhi's contribution to the education system can be seen as his two-fold approach, where not only did he focus on the soil, i.e. the physical labour and the life of the commoners and the poor, but also some elements of Universal validity that put it into line with the progressive educational thinking of the time. Gandhi saw life as a whole, as a unity, and as the only transformative tool that could contribute to something greater, wealthier, and fuller, both materially and spiritually. Gandhiji's personality and life is characterised by a constant state of development and evolution. He always felt like he was tinkering with the facts.

Review of Literature

Gandhian Basic Education was the first model of vocationalist in education, according to Shah, P.K. (2017) ^[3], in his research article "Gandhiji's Basic Education and its Present Significance." He concentrated on information that was practical and activity related knowledge. Gandhiji envisioned basic education combining school and community work in order to make it more employment-oriented and sustainable. In the current situation of rising unemployment among India's young people, Gandhi's basic education appears to be of increasing relevance.

In his paper "Gandhiji's Philosophy on Education and Its Relevance in the Present Day," V.N. R. Pillai discusses the significance of education. Gandhiji envisioned a method of education centered on human experience. He wanted to create a British colonial system alternative so that everyone could achieve self-reliance and the highest intellectual, science, moral, and ethical values. The main goal of his education was to help people grow their souls and minds to their full potential.

"Mahatma Gandhi and His Idea of Basic Education: An Historical Appraisal", Dey Sweta (2017) ^[5] considers and evaluates the Gandhian theory of primary education from a historical perspective. The objective of basic education, according to the author, would be to make people self-sufficient and employable. Gandhi's goal was to help people develop their character.

Shant Bala (2005) ^[4] writes in "Gandhian Conception of Education-Relevance in Modern Times" that Gandhian education was based on action and practical experience, and that he concentrated on school and community relations to help children become more social and cooperative. Gandhi's basic education provision for India in the current scenario is to make the education system employable.

Nai-Talim**Meaning of Nai-Talim**

Gandhiji gave his educational program the name Nai-Talim meaning new education, under which the education became life centred instead of textbook.

Definition

Nai-Talim was defined as education for life, through life and throughout life.

Division of Education in Nai-Talim

Nai-Talim was divided into four parts, as follows:

1. Pre-basic: - This was the nursery school part,
2. Basic education: Education for a period of 8 years between 7 and 15 years of age.
3. Post Basic Education: - This is higher school education.
4. Social Education: - It is the adult education in the widest and most relevant sense.

Gandhi first look up basic education for boys and girls between 7 and 15 years of age for a period of 8 years. According to Gandhiji, for a country to move forward basic education should be the birth right of every child in India. When basic education came into the picture and grew it grew downwards into pre-basic education or education of children from 2 to 7 years of age and upwards into post-basic education or education of boys and girls from 15 to 18 years of age.

Main Objectives of Nai-Talim

1. To earn its own living from the soil by its own labour, in which all its members, adults and children together, should participate. In this way it should respond to Gandhiji's challenge that self-support is the acid test of Nai-Talim.
2. To organise its own life as a community on the principle of non-violence, both in the management of its own affairs and in its relations with its neighbours and the outside world. To discover by experience the meaning of Gandhiji's saying that organisation is the test of non-violence.
3. To express in its own daily life and labour that respect for the living soil, and the whole living fabric of the world, which is an essential part of non-violent living. To express in its own organisation and interests an equal respect for the local and national cultural traditions which reflect the experience and wisdom of the centuries.

Gandhi's key points in basic education

- Mass education should be made free, universal, and compulsory.
- Mass education should not be cut short at the end of four to five years when the children have barely achieved literacy and their chances of acquiring any useful knowledge of social training are negligible.
- The minimum duration of this basic Nation education should be seven years covering the period of seven to fifteen years of age.
- The education should be given through the medium of mother tongue.
- Mass education should include village crafts like spinning and weaving and through work, the student should be able to produce articles that are marketable and can be sold.

- Gandhiji suggested that the state should not dedicate its resources to Secondary and Higher Education, which should either be left to private enterprises or should be provided by the professionals and industries like law, medicine, and Engineering.
- Gandhiji proper focus was not to present a complete educational picture but only to suggest certain broad and fruitful ideas to be scrutinized, modified, and implemented by educationalist.
- The distinction between play and work is well defined in basic education. Work and play cannot be alternatives play for boys and girls above 7 years of age, but rather play is to be addition to work.

According to Gandhiji, for a Sarvodaya Society, boys and girls should grow up acquiring as much of learning as possible through productive work, which for him included physical labour but also learning of marketable skills. They would not turn away from productive work and at the same time become educated. It should be kept in mind that productive work as an instrument of learning is imperative in basic education. Productive work is to be consumed more as an instrument of education than for productivity, it is only a necessary corollary. Every pupil teacher has to learn one major and one subsidiary craft and then there are certain broad standard set to evaluate productive capacity. Since the purpose of a craft or a productive work in a basic school is mainly to learn through it, it necessarily follows that:

1. The craft for productive work should be replete with possibilities for education.
2. It should be a multi-process craft or work involving different activities. Complete craft and not a truncated one, meaning a craft should be thought from the raw material stage to the finished stage.

Special worth of Gandhiji basic education comes from the fact that no attempt previously had been made to empathetically understand the Indian situation and set unambiguously as well as unrestrictedly to lay out the basic tenets to the entire process.

Basic teacher has to fulfil the following conditions:

- Of one major craft and or two subsidiary crafts.
- Complete knowledge of the subject content of the syllabus.
- Training of community living based on their own self Government and sharing in community work.
- Proper practice of teaching not only in Model School but in ordinary schools as well.
- Unremitting increase of general knowledge through discussion.

Conclusion

The academic tradition that has persisted in India for centuries has resulted in the educational culture that has become divorced from work, and manual labour is regarded as dishonourable. Gandhiji struck at the Citadel of this prejudice against physical work, other had been doing so but perhaps, so effectively and that every child whether rich or poor, high born or low born, should whole heartedly participate in actual manual work. The most controversial feature of the scheme is that this education through work should be made self-supporting, so far as recurring expenditure is concerned. Productive work thus become not

only a dominant part of the curriculum; its spirit begins to inspire the methods of teaching as well. It would be inaccurate to suggest that Gandhiji's concern was with acquiring skill in crafts and comparatively unconcerned about wider objective of education. In his introductory remarks to the report on Basic National Education, he make this observation that "education through village handicrafts means that teachers are expected to educate children in their village, so as to draw out all their faculties throw some selected village handicrafts in an atmosphere free of superimposed destruction and influence." His Nai-Talim provides a model which could solve numerous problems that today's India and it's youth faces.

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