

EDUCATIONAL VIEWS OF MAHATMA GANDHI AND SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATHI - A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: In this modern era education has a great influence on every aspects of human life. It is an essential human virtue. Without it, man is only a slave, reasoning savage. One of the major functions of education is to humanise the man and it enables to develop the total personality of him. The educational views of Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Dayananda Saraswadi have perennial value. Hence in this article I am extracting the common educational views between Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Dayananda Saraswathi.

Key Words: Personality, Curriculum, Virtue, Gurukulam

Introduction

Education is an activity, a process, which transforms the behaviour of a person from instinctive behaviour to human behaviour. It is the most essential instrument for bringing about the progress and prosperity of an individual. All of the advanced countries of the world owe their success to their sound system of education. But unfortunately in India, we are not able to understand properly the need and significance of the education. Now a days the education in India is being misguised by confused thinking and blurred vision. There is a means to get out of this chaos and confusion. It is to understand and practice the educational ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Dayananda Saraswathi. The educational views and ideas of both Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Dayananda have great educational implications in the present era. The philosophy of education of both Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Dayananda was naturalistic in its setting idealistic in its aim and pragmatic in its methods and programmes of work.

Important common factors in the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Dayananda Saraswathi.

1. Education is a Continuous Process

Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Dayananda holds the view that education begins in the mother's womb. Therefore, a conceived women must be aware of this fact. The parents should have a selective environment for themselves and remain in close contact with their ideas paving the way for the advent of a blissful life. According to Swami "No other person can equal a mother in her love for her children or in her anxiety for that welfare. The character of mother influences the character of the child in the womb. Therefore the up bringing of the child begins not at its birth but at the conception".ⁱ Mahatma Gandhi also advocates that Education is for life, through life and throughout life. Both of them agree that the education is unending process and it goes on throughout life and ends only with death.

2. Education Moulds the Character and Personality

Swami Dayananda and Mahatma Gandhi laid greatest emphasis on formation of character. Character training forms the basis of all education. Man is essentially a moral being and his education consists in the cultivation of certain human values, development of attitudes and formation of ethical conduct and habits. The man – making aspects of education reveal the underlying ideas of character formation.

Gandhiji gave top priority to character formation. According to him it is the prime most function of education. On being asked What is your goal in education? He replied, character building. "By character education Gandhi meant to develop courage, strength and virtue"ⁱⁱ. Dayanand also considered education as a means for character formation and for righteous living. According to him character or righteous living is the highest virtue. This is the be – all and end – all of all reading and reciting, teaching and preaching. He believed that "education must produce men and women whose minds are centred on the acquisition of knowledge who possess sweet and amiable tempers., who cultivate truthfulness and other similar virtues, who are engaged in altruistic work as prescribed by the vodes."ⁱⁱⁱ Thus both of them believed that a true and solid system of education should have character formation as its main objective.

3. On Moral and Spiritual Formation

Man is a combination of body and soul. The development of physical qualities alone will not make a full man. Hence education helps a person to discover the soul and develops it into the full swing. According to the ancient Indian sages the spiritual values is a must for internal peace, harmony and happiness in life.

Swami Dayananda Saraswathi and Mahatma Gandhi also laid emphasis on moral and spiritual formation. They advocated that religious and moral instruction should be made compulsory at every stage of education and it should be included in the school curriculum.

Gandhiji gave the prominent place for the building of character and he felt confident that moral training could be given to all people in the same manner. Because "the core of Gandhian theory of education is to raise man to a higher moral and spiritual order through the full development of the individual and the evolution of a new man, a satyagrahi, a non – violent personality"^{iv}. He believed that religious and spiritual formation can be achieved only through the cultivation of universal love and brotherhood.

Dayananda was also a great moral and spiritual teacher. According to him real moral training, consists not in foisting moral teachings like external decorations, but in making religion and morality an intimate part of life. True religiousness, is as natural as respiration. The need for religious education is felt in the sphere of character building, because character cannot be developed without it. And for this purpose, Dayananda founded Arya Samaj and started Gurukulas all over the country.

India is a secular democratic state where different religions are flourishing. So it is necessary to include the study of all major religions in the curriculum for the students in order to promote religious tolerance. We can conduct various programmes like discourses, discussions and seminars and symposiums on world religions. It helps the student to inculcate the values of tolerance spirit of love and universal brother hood.

4. **On Total Development**

Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education. Education develops educends individuality in all its aspects – physical mental, emotional and social, aesthetical, spiritual, moral etc. With this all round development, he becomes a responsible, dynamic, resourceful and enterprising citizen with strong good moral character.

In the basis of such a background Mahatma Gandhi gives the meaning of education . By education, he meant all - round drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and spirit. His concept on education stands for harmonious development of all the aspects of human personality – intellectual, physical, spiritual and so on. According to Gandhi, “True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of the children.”

Swami Dayananda also teaches that education should aim at the complete development of the personality. He states that education must make the individual to live and earn his daily bread, to be a means of his sustenance. His aim was to make the people of India physically, intellectually and spiritually strong and by lifting them to a higher moral and spiritual plane, enable them not only to achieve political independence but to take the torch of truth and freedom to every nook and corner of the world and to make all men realise their true relationship with one another as sons of the same father.

Hence, every democratic nation must provide enough facilities for the comprehensive development of its masses in order to become ideal citizen. Education should aim at the all round development of the child, his physical, mental, moral, spiritual development. They are expected to devote themselves to the task of serving their nation, of making an honest contribution to the nations economic and spiritual progress.

5. **Education Should be Rooted in Cultural Tradition**

Mahatma Gandhi believed that education suited to the peculiar genius of India should be deeply rooted in Indian cultural tradition. He wanted to establish a close relationship between individual and his culture. The system of education which the British introduced was a foreign one, completely unrelated to the cultural ethos of its people. The people who were produced by such a system of education were doubly cut off; cut off from their own cultural mainsprings and, from the foreign culture to which they were introduced and in which they had no roots. Mahatma Gandhi could see the disadvantages of such a system as it taught to turn his back to his own culture to the individual. He could see that the nature of the education given is not relevant to the needs and the ideals of the Indian society. His system of education, on the contrary, was “Grown out of the atmosphere surrounding us in the country and in response to it.”^{vi}

Swami Dayananda also teaches that an educational system of a country should be rooted in the native soil and should draw inspiration from the genius and traditions of the land with regard to its aim, content, method and organisations. The atmosphere and activities of the educational institutions should reflect the cultural heritage of the nation. Any blind imitation either of any foreign cultural pattern or even of one’s own dead past however, will destroy the dynamic character of education and will impart to it an artificiality of unreality which will take away its vital force, and effectiveness. Dayanand was the first to teach Indians that they are of a great nation, in-heritance of the highest human culture and thought, and descendants of great men of action.

6. **On Free and Compulsory Universal Education**

Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Dayananda Saraswathi believed that education is the birth – right of all the human beings. Mahatma Gandhi teaches that free and compulsory education should be given to all boys and girls between the age of seven and fourteen. During this period, Gandhi planned to include primary, middle and high school education because that was only the so-called education, available to some people in the Indian village. Gandhi wanted to combine the primary and secondary education. It was the only alternative for rural uplift and rural reconstruction. According to Gandhi, Primary Education should be given to all the masses.

Dayananda also was infavour of universal and compulsory education in the country. He favoured the education of every man, woman and child, irrespective of the caste, sex or creed. He held the state responsible for ensuring that every parent sent his or her child for education. He even insisted that the state must punish those who deprived their children of education. In his Satyarthha Prakash, Dayanandha has pointed out that parents must give the best possible education to their children so that they may progress to the path of civilisation.

7. **On Education of the Masses**

Swami Dayananda and Mahatma Gandhi advocated that all persons of all classes should be given good and sound education. When all the classes are well educated and cultured, no one can set up any false, fraudulent and irreligious practices.

Like Mahatma Gandhi, Dayananda was also in favour of the education of every man, woman and child, irrespective of the caste, sex or creed. In Swami Dayananda’s system of education, like Gandhiji’s basic education, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the prince and the peasant, the high caste and the low caste, all read together, eat together, live the same life, undergo the same discipline. And the result of this system of education was, that when princes left their Gurus Ashrams, they were mainly men of character, fit to rule the state; the lowest had opportunities to rise to the highest scale in society.

Both of them were in favour of universal education, including even the most backward sections of Hindu society, even those traditionally prevented from receiving education, for religious reasons. They believed that the educated individual is a successful and useful member of the society.

8. **On teacher – Pupil Relationship**

Swami Dayananda and Mahatma Gandhi laid great stress on the intimacy of relationship between the teacher and the pupil. Mahatma Gandhi believed that both teacher and the educend should observe the vow of celibacy and lead a virtuous life. The

relationship between the teacher and taught, should be that of father and son. He should accept the pupil as a member of his family. He says that the success of Basic Education depends up on the selfless teacher.

Swami Dayananda also believed that both teacher and taught should observe the vow of celibacy and lead a virtuous life. Both should lead a noble, simple and virtuous life. They should practice truthful living. A teacher should be an embodiment of knowledge and a man of strong character. He should also endeavour to make the pupil in to a spiritual entity. For this Dayananda recommended the Gurukala system of education.

Educational Implication

The educational views of both Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Dayananda have great educational implication in the school management and class room settings. The aim of education is to give true knowledge to the individual and it enables him in the personality development had in the character formation. Both of them gave more stress on the practical aspects of the human life. They favoured the education of every man, women and child irrespective of the caste, creed or community.

Swami Dayananda and Mahatma Gandhi gave much importance to the vocationalisation and multi – faced diversified curriculum combining general education with religious as well as professional training. They gave great emphasis upon the traditional Indian values such as truth, tolerance, practice of virtue etc. They devised elaborate educational plans and programmes for the upliftment of the socially and economically backward classes especially to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It promoted natural unity and integration without the distinction of caste, language, religion or community. Their educational schemes are meant for all the sections of the society. They gave a serious, sincere and practical outlook to pattern of education suited for the Indian soil. Both of their educational ideas have great significance on the educational philosophy.

Conclusion

To be concluded, we can say that a close student of Mahatma Gandhi 's teachings will however find that they are mostly the same as Dayananda's teachings. They agree on many points. Both of them stood for the harmonious development of human personality. Both Gandhi and Dayanand preached and practiced the ideal of plain living and high thinking; both enjoined Brahmacharya as an essential condition of student life; both preached the Gospel of love and service and both laid down self realisation as the ultimate goal of life and education. Education to them was not mere gathering up of items of knowledge but it was life making leading to the self – realisation and integrated growth of the individual personality. Hence their educational ideas have a perennial value in this modern era.

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