



# **A RESEARCH STUDY OF MANUAL SKILL EDUCATION WITH GANDHIAN'S VIEWS AND CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPING INDIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Mahatma Gandhi's views on education have inspired and invigorated several discussions and decisions on educational policy and practice. Kothari Commission Report (1964 -66) was significantly inspired by Gandhian philosophy while recommending reforms in schooling and technical training that have stayed with us till today. However, somewhere down the line, we seem to have lost a balanced approach to promote, pursue and reward vocational aspects of learning by doing, dignity of labour and other values to be inculcated at an early age. These were the main tenets of Gandhiji's concept of craft-centric education that seems to find an echo in present initiatives at skill development and vocationalisation of school education in India. Today, we are at a critical juncture when it comes to reviving interest in skills and vocational training and making learning outcome-based and industry-relevant. Gandhiji was earliest proponent of technical education and linking curriculum with industry needs. Of course, the needs may be different today, but the essence of making education work-integrated is of prime value.*

**KEYWORDS : P-Philosophy, S-Skill, D-Development, V-Vocational, E-Education.****INTRODUCTION:**

Mahatma Gandhi had emphasized that handicrafts should be taught “not merely for production work but for developing intellect of the pupils.” And, this idea has been implemented in schools as Socially Useful and Productive Work (SUPW) as per reports of landmark commissions and policy. SUPW is mostly perceived as a hobby; it could be embroidery, clay modeling, bamboo crafts, leather work, pottery and many other socioculturally relevant creatively stimulating activities that have a potential for enabling livelihoods. When connected with skilling and vocational options, SUPW can transform the way children perceive manual work and impact their young minds positively towards dignity of work and labour. Craft-centered education creates a balance between theory and monotonous learning through creative stimulation and self-expression. It helps in reducing discrimination between manual and intellectual skills and overcoming prejudices through respect for socially meaningful work that meets the needs of urban and rural Indians. It makes one feel proud about earning a decent livelihood through sustainable sources of income and community initiatives that result in cooperative societies and micro enterprises. Gandhiji’s concept of basic education that included manual work as a means to make education inclusive. He strongly believed in holistic curriculum, even in primary education that introduces children to work-experience through agriculture, weaving, carpentry and several other skills. This would help in balancing the danger of making education over-academic or bookish and influence mindsets positively towards respect for work and dignity of skills and labour.

**The Gandhian link with Kothari Commission**

The commission began its work on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1964 and had followed many Gandhian principles and values on education as an instrument of social change. The recommendations of this commission have resounded in many national policies to follow that placed a premium on the need for industry relevant education for self-sufficiency, economic growth.

**Integrating general and vocational education**

The course correction and other efforts at making education balanced and inclusive has resulted in a dedicated Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. And, there are key interventions towards bringing MHRD and MSDE closer through equivalence and interoperability of qualifications and renewed interest in bringing much-needed respect for ITIs and similar technical institutions. This will facilitate horizontal movement from vocational to general education and vice-versa and contribute towards change in mindset and eliminate the elitist bias general education. Today, we are taking drastic measures and putting in huge efforts in reconstructing our education landscape to meet the demands of the industry and economy, at large. There was much clarity half a century ago on what should be our way forward. Somewhere this got blurred as education got equated with academic excellence and theoretical knowledge was not balanced with practical

exposure while designing, developing and delivering courses through major curricular reforms. **Skill education** or Vocational Education and Training, also called Career education and Technical Education & Training, prepares learners for jobs that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or *vocation*, hence the term, in which the learner participates. It is sometimes referred to as *technical education*, as the learner directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology.

Generally, vocation and career are used interchangeably. Vocational education might be classified as teaching procedural knowledge. This may be contrasted with declarative knowledge, as used in education in a usually broader scientific field, which might concentrate on theory and abstract conceptual knowledge, characteristic of tertiary education. Vocational education can be at the secondary or post-secondary level and can interact with the apprenticeship system. Increasingly, vocational education can be recognised in terms of recognition of prior learning and partial academic credit towards tertiary education (e.g., at a university) as credit; however, it is rarely considered in its own form to fall under the traditional definition of a higher education. Up until the end of the twentieth century, vocational education focused on specific trades such as for example, an automobile mechanic or welder, and was therefore associated with the activities of lower social classes. As a consequence, it attracted a level of stigma. Vocational education is related to the age-old apprenticeship system of learning. However, as the labor market becomes more specialized and economies demand higher levels of skill, governments and businesses are increasingly investing in the future of vocational education through publicly funded training organizations and subsidized apprenticeship or traineeship initiatives for businesses.

### **After reading this article you will learn about the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi towards education:-**

- Mahatma Gandhi's Educational Philosophy
- Mahatma Gandhi's Important Principles or Tenets
- Aims of Education 4. View on Curriculum
- Methods of Teaching and Other Details.

### **Mahatma Gandhi's Educational Philosophy:**

**The educational philosophy of Gandhiji was based upon the following:**

#### **(i) His Educational Experiments at Tolstoy Farm, at Sabarmati and Sewagram Ashrams:**

- He undertook the responsibility of educating his own sons and other children as he occupied the place of a father.

- He helped the children in all round development.
- Training of heart and building of character received his first attention. They were helped to build their physique through manual work.
- Learning by doing and co-operation were the means of gaining experiences for the children of age range from 6 to 16. In April, 1935, he founded the Sevagram Ashram, 11 miles away from Wardha where he conceived the idea of his new system of education. It was here he expounded the Wardha Scheme; a practical shape was given to it in 1937.

#### **(ii) His Philosophy of Life:**

- Since education is the dynamic side of philosophy, his own philosophy of life has its bearing upon his education philosophy.



#### **(iii) His Dissatisfaction with the Prevailing System of Education:**

- The then English system of education cut off the Indians from the main stream of their Indian blood veins; made them to be parasite upon others; and helped only one side of development. i.e. intellectual development. Besides, education to masses was a distant dream. Mother-tongue was not the medium of teaching.
- Education was given in a passive way. The child was a mere passive listener as some smattering, ready-made information, knowledge etc. were pumped into the child. Therefore, he was convinced that the prevailing system of education was not only harmful but also wasteful.
- He, thus, remarked, 'Most of the boys are lost to the parents and to the occupation to which they are born. They pick up evil habits and affect urban ways. Such education was neither responsive to the realistic elements of the present situation nor inspired by any life giving and creative ideal.'

#### **(iv) A New Social Order:**

- His own conviction that a new social order based on the solid pillar of truth and non-violence would be evolved by means of education. These orders would exclude every type of exploitation-economic, social, political or even religious. Therefore, he thought that education would help in the evolution of a new India having an emergent social order marked by equality, justice and fraternity.
- Therefore, keeping in view the aforesaid factors, Gandhiji evolved a new educational philosophy which revolutionized the prevailing system of education in its entirety. By education meant, "an all round

drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit.” Education real when it encompasses three aspects of personality-physical, mental and spiritual.

- As such, true education, according to him, is that which draws out and stimulates the physical, intellectual and spiritual faculties of children to their fullest. This education aims at producing whole man-who is a harmonious development of the faculties-body, heart, mind and spirit. Any scheme of education which emphasizes only one of these aspects is a lop-sided education.
- Further, he took education not in a parochial sense of only classroom teaching, but in its broad spectrum of a life-long process which begins at birth and ends with death. Therefore, education is a lifelong process: never ending process; a womb to tomb process.

## Mahatma Gandhi's Important Principles or Tenets:

### (i) Free and Compulsory Primary Education:

- Gandhiji envisaged seven years free, compulsory and universal primary education up to matriculation minus English. In other words, he wanted to combine the present primary and secondary education into one—called the English-less matriculation. It should be free because India is a poor country and all the parents cannot afford the cost of education.
- It should be compulsory because majority of people do not realize the central value of education in life and do not send their wards to the school. Therefore, he wanted to make education compulsory for all so that the children may attend the school regularly rather than attending some other duties assigned by their ignorant and illiterate parents.
- Moreover, nobody would be denied to receive education up to 14 years of age. As such, it is universal in nature.

## Craft-centred Manual Skill Education:

Craft-centred education is not education plus crafts but it is education through craft. Craft is the nucleus of education. It is the centre of the entire teaching-learning process. Education in a sense should be centred around some productive craft. It is this education through which all-round development of the child can be possible. He said, **“It was his wish that, the whole process of education should be imparted through some handicraft or industry.”** Further he added that the handicraft should not be taught mechanically but scientifically which implies that the child should know the why and wherefore of every process. For example, by teaching Takli-Spinning, knowledge of different varieties of cotton, the different soils in different pockets of India, the history



of the decay of handicraft, a knowledge of Arithmetic etc. should be imparted. The craft should not be taught merely for production work but for developing the intellect of the pupils.

His object was not to produce craftsmen but he wanted to exploit it for educative purposes. He wanted that stress should be laid on the principles of co-operative activity, planning, accuracy, initiative and individual responsibility in learning.

**He outlined the following factors as regards to the selection of Manual Skill Education:**

- It should be the centre around which the different subjects can be clubbed,
- It should find natural point? of correlation with important activities and interests,
- It must be according to the natural and social environment
- It should be tied with the life of the children,
- It should meet the vocational needs of the child in the changing social order.

**Craft-centred manual skill education is significant on the following scores:**

- It is psychologically sound as it relieves the child from the tyranny of a purely academic, theoretical and monotonous instruction. It is a means of fostering the power of imagination and sharpening the intellect. It gives wide scope to children for self-expression by sublimation of their instincts. Moreover, the psychological needs of the children i.e. need for affection, self-respect, creativeness are fulfilled through craft-centred education.
- It is sociologically sound as the introduction of practical productive work can break down the hiatus between urban and rural life when it tends to infuse a sense of dignity of labour in the children. It breaks the existing wall of prejudice between manual and intellectual work. It brings a sense of co-operation, discipline, belongingness, tolerance and self-government in children.
- Economically, it is considered as sound as it increases the productive capacity of our workers and also enables them to utilize their leisure advantageously. It also helps in attaining the aim of self-supporting aspect of education.
- It is pedagogically sound since it gives reality to knowledge. It helps to bring correlation of knowledge with life and its various aspects.
- From the biological stand-point, it is sound as it provides opportunities for earning while learning.

**(iii) Self-Sufficiency:**

It implies that the child should be able to cover some part of his educational expenses by engaging himself in some productive works which would give him earning along with learning. It also enables the child to earn a living after completing his course of education—preparing the child for future life.

Secondly, education imparted in itself should be self-supporting to an extent that the productive work of the pupils would meet the expenses of the school viz, salaries of the teachers, expenditure on raw-materials and maintenance of equipment and furniture.

Gandhiji realized that a poor nation like India that cannot provide education to all the pupils free of cost which necessitates education to be self-supporting and self-sufficient.

**His self-sufficiency aspects was criticised on the grounds of the following:**

- Critics thought that by indulging children in productive works, school would exploit them. It was nothing but exploitation of the child labour. Therefore, the tender age of children is grossly exploited and spoiled.
- Some develops fear that if children are left free in making goods, they would mishandle the machinery which would cause irreparable loss. Thus, there would be enormous waste at the hands of small children.
- It was thought that child would use all his energy and power for earning money and in the process of earning child would neglect his study. Thus, learning of the child would be atrophied.
- Critics argue that parents would reap the advantage of child labour by propelling the child to do some works in the hope of shunning their onus.
- Lastly, it was thought that children might produce articles which could not compete with the marketable articles produced in factories because their products were very rough and crude.
- In-spite of its drawbacks, craft-centred education is unique for its self-sufficiency aspect which brings about economic prosperity.

**(iv) Emphasis on Mother-tongue:**

He realized that the greatest handicap of the prevailing system of education was that learning was being imparted through the medium of English. This affected the development of understanding, precision of thought and clarity of ideas. Mother tongue, on the contrary, would enable the children to understand clearly the rich

heritage of people's ideas, emotions and aspirations, to express freely, clearly and lucidly in speaking and writing, to use the list of contents and the indices, and to consult dictionaries and reference books.

**(v) Correlation as a Method of Teachings:**

It was envisaged that correlation should be the guiding principle of teaching all subjects. Different subjects are to be taught making craft as the focal point of teaching-learning process. Gandhiji wanted an effective and natural correlation between the craft and other subjects and the co-ordination of various subjects. For example, in Geography teaching, it can be correlated with spinning through a thread-bare discussion on the nature of soil required for plantation of cotton, climatic condition, period of vegetation etc. In language teaching, it can be done by stimulating pupils to write an essay on cotton. His scheme of manual skill education wanted to establish a society free from communal hatred and all forms of exploitation. His plan of education was based upon the pillar of non-violence (Ahimsa). His aim was to evolve a non-violent society based on love, mutual respect, sympathy and co-operation through education.

**(vi) Ideal of citizenship:**

Gandhiji wanted to make children right type of citizens endowed with civic sense, conscious of one's own duties and rights, responsibilities and opportunities. This would be possible by his new indigenous system of education. Education should, therefore, be directed to conform to this standard of citizenship.

## **Mahatma Gandhi's Aims of Education:**

**All-round Development of Personality:**

By all-round development, he means, development of body, mind and spirit. All-round development implies harmonious development of human personality in a balanced manner-hand, head and heart. This emphasizes 3 R's instead of 3 R's-Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. Development of either two neglecting the one aspect of personality leads to lop-sided education or incomplete education. Harmonious development of all powers and faculties was the chief goal of his scheme of education. He emphasized this type of development as the child could adjust himself to self, his occupation and his environment adequately.

**The Utilitarian Aim:**

- Education that will help one to be self-supporting in later life which implies that the child of tomorrow's adult would not be a drag on the society. This type of education will turn him into a self-sufficient entity and this education will be a kind of insurance against unemployment.
- In the second, he wanted that teacher's salaries should be met out of the productive work of the children provided that the state takes over the manufacture of the school.



- **Cultural Aim:**
- Gandhiji attached greater importance to the cultural aspect of education than to the literacy. Culture is a quality of mind which may be reflected in his daily conduct.

He said, “it should show itself in smallest details of your conduct and personal behaviour, how you sit, how you walk, how you dress etc. Inner culture must be reflected in your speech, the way in which you treat visitors and guests, and behave towards one another and your teachers and elders.”According to him culture is not the product of intellectual work, but the quality of the soul, permeating all aspects of human behaviour. It is, therefore, an important function of education that children must be taught to have winsome conduct and the career and our pupils must not remain alien in their native lands with rich cultural tradition and ethos.

### **Character-Building:**

He made character building as the central purpose of education. Character development, for him, implies the cultivation of such moral virtues as courage, strength of conviction, purity of heart and personal life, righteousness, self-restraint, inner discipline, subordination of one's interest to the greater interest of society and service of mankind. This character is too built up in terms of universal love and non-violence. He said that character as the expression of the whole personality including its ethical and spiritual aspect. Thus if character is well built, the society would evolve itself in a new form and fashion without dependence upon others.

### **Preparation for Complete Living:**

Like Herbert Spencer, he stressed preparation for complete living as one of the aims of education. Since life is very complex and beset with a plethora of problems and difficulties, education should aim at preparing the future citizens to face the problems of life here and there. A child was considered prepared for complete living if he could adjust himself to self, his occupation and his society.

### **Training for Citizenship:**

He aimed at producing useful citizens for a democracy by means of education. The future citizens should understand their problems, rights and duties in proper perspectives and know the democratic institutions that work for the good of all. Education should aim at building citizens imbued with all cardinal qualities of good citizen. Therefore, he spearheaded a silent revolution by education to cover all the sections and segments of people by eliminating all sorts of discriminations. He believed that for a success of democracy, it was the need of training the pupils-the budding citizens-in citizenship qualities. Therefore, he made a slogan, “Educate your masters.”

**Individual and Social Aim:**

He synthesized the individual and social aims of education. He wanted a society in which all individuals will have to play their part for the good of the whole without losing their individual characters and identities. He does not want to damp down the individuality. He strikes a balance between the ideals of social service and individual d The means to achieve the knowledge of God and Self-realization are self-control, abstinence and character. Self-realization is the summum bonum of life and education. Development of the whole man and moral character all are directed towards the realization of the ultimate reality-the merger of the finite being into the infinite-the fusion of 'Atma' with 'Paramatma'.

**Mahatma Gandhi's View on Discipline:**

He was critical of free discipline and strongly favoured inner discipline through self-control and not by being free to follow stray impulses. He thought that freedom embedded in self-discipline or inner discipline that arises spontaneously from the inner springs of life rather than that which is clamped from without is called true freedom. This self-discipline is voluntary discipline which emanates from the following-pure life, self-restraint, fearlessness, sacrifice, usefulness and practice of non-violent conduct. Further, he favoured social discipline through some productive works based upon co-operation, initiative, accuracy and individual responsibility. This form of social discipline can emerge out of the living mutually in the society by cultivating ideals of citizenship necessary for a vibrant and living democracy.

**Mahatma Gandhi's Views on Teacher:**

He thought that only the right type of teachers could help in achieving the objectives of education. He should be a lover of truth and non-violence and he should possess a sound base of knowledge, skill, enthusiasm, patriotism, dedication, love for children and labour, respect for the dignity of individuals and special training in the basic education. He should be a man of action, not a man of slogan and should have a good moral character and a social bent of mind. He should lead a pure and simple life and be a man of ideals and a saga of examples.

**Mahatma Gandhi's Views on Religious and Moral Education:**

According to Gandhiji, religion paves the way for development of personality and character. True religion means an abiding faith in the absolute values of Truth, Love, Ahimsa and Justice. He recommended instruction in the universal essentials of religion and a training in the fundamental virtues of truth and non-violence as the very basis of religious education.

**Mahatma Gandhi's Views on Women's Education:**

Gandhiji thought that education should be provided to mothers, for they could provide education to children effectively. He stressed upon the education of women, for the development of nation depends upon women. He, therefore, advocated equal facilities of education for them like men and even special facilities, where

necessary. Along with 3R's, women must receive education in domestic affairs, up-bringing of children, nursing, cleanliness and hygiene.

### **Estimate of Gandhiji's Educational Philosophy:**

Gandhiji's educational philosophy is sound psychologically, sociologically, pedagogically and biologically.

- Mahatma Gandhi revolutionized the whole gamut of education by devising a scheme of education popularly known as 'Basic education' which was based upon Indian culture and ways of life of people. His educational scheme sought to draw out the best in both the child and man to develop in an integrated manner-body, mind and spirit.
- His basic education is psychologically sound as it provided an effective outlet for the creative urges to find their true expression. The scheme satisfied some of the psychological needs of children- love and affection, self-esteem, security, and creativeness. Manual work would satisfy his need for creativeness and would develop self-reliance and self-confidence leading to self-respect and security.
- Sociologically, his scheme of education is sound as education helps in establishing a new social order popularly known as 'Sarvodaya Samaj' where there would not be any cleavages and clashes, and any discrimination among people. Education will help pupils in cultivating values of co-operation, discipline, self-help, toleration, mutual respect and good neighborliness.
- Education would also cultivate in children a true sense of the dignity of labour and of human solidarity-sine-qua-non for social unification. He regards his plan through the modicum of handicrafts as the spearhead of a silent revolution having the most far reaching consequences.
- It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social order and poisoned relationship between the classes. It will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a just social order in which there is no unnatural division between the haves and have-not's and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right to freedom."

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