

# **PEACE EDUCATION IN NATION BUILDING: A STUDY ON GANDHIAN EDUCATION**

**Piyali Singha Roy**

*M.ed Student, Dept. of Education, University of Kalyani, Nadia, West Bengal, India*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Both Education and Peace are two interrelated concepts. The primary urge of human being is to leave in a peaceful society and only true education can provide this. Education means to acquire knowledge concerning the living standard of human society. It develops intellectual as well as mental capacity of man. Education is a lifetime procedure and it open the windows of knowledge before man and, as a result, individual may aware about their good and bad. It helps individuals to increase their interest of knowing and make person dutiful and responsible. Education teaches people to investigate truth and reality. Furthermore, education is the backbone of a nation, without which a nation cannot develop her existence. It develops morality and virtue among the nation which are elementary for peace. By educating people, only, peace may come into being. Hence, existence of nation is immensely depends on education and peace. It was Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), the great Indian philosopher of peace, whose final aim was to establish a peaceful society and his concept of education is a silent way towards this. Gandhian meaning of education is not only to literate person, but it has a larger meaning.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the relevance of Gandhiji's concept of education in the contemporary Indian situation.
2. To examine the role of education for social, political and economic development of India from Gandhian perspective.
3. To study how Gandhiji's concept of education would unite the common people for peaceful co-existence.
4. How far it is truthful to say that Gandhiji's concept of education is a reliable way towards peace also subject to examine.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The method followed in the study will be chiefly historical and analytical. The study is based on secondary sources of data like Books, Published articles, Research papers, Research reports and relevant websites. It will also pay attention to the contextual and theoretical influences on shaping of Gandhiji's thinking and development of ideas about education and

peace and its importance to the contemporary globalised world on the basis of obtainable written material explored.

Mahatma Gandhi was one of the great philosopher-prophet of world peace. He was one of the distinguished humanists forever. His love for humanity has immensely stirred the atmosphere of India as well as of world during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His prime aim was to annihilate all kind of evil power from the world and he wanted to demolish inequality, injustice, untouchability and communal discord from the society. Truth (Satya) and Non-violence (Ahimsa) are the two methods through which Gandhi conducted his experiment for pull down these entire evil doers from society. His basic objectives were to establish a guilty free society in where a friendship among men, liberty of the individual and education for the dignity of the labour of man is necessarily present. Moreover, Gandhi felt himself as a world citizen. The politics of South Africa and the politics of India was his laboratory and in this laboratory he experiment the ways of truth and non-violence.

### **Meaning of Education**

The term 'education' is a very common useful word which means, in general, to enlarge knowledge, skills and attitudes of a person. Though, we are very similar with the word 'education' in our day-to-day life, but the problem is that very few of us only understand its true perception. Definition of education is not remaining same in all time. During the course of time the meaning and objectives of education have been changed. Different people define education in different ways. Some people define it as a perfect knowledge about certain subjects. Some people define it as 'schooling or lifelong learning'. Some say that 'education is nothing, but training of people's mind in a particular direction to bring about desired changes'-(Basic in Education, NCERT, (hereafter BE) 2014, p. 3). Therefore, it is very difficult to define education in a single word. To understand the appropriate meaning of education it is, however, necessary to examine its etymological meaning and some of the views of great thinkers (both Eastern and Western) that illustrate the concept and meaning of education.

'The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought' define education as "the the process whereby rational beings are instructed, and through which they acquire the beliefs, emotions and values pertaining to a culture. It is the more formal and structured part of socialisation". (R. Scruton, 2007, 200), Dictionary of Education (edited by C. V. Good, 1973), on the other hand, define education as "the aggregate of all the processes by which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of practical values in the society in which s/he lives; the social process by which people are subjected to the influence of selected and controlled environment (especially that of the school), so that they may obtain social competence and optimum individual development". (Quoted from BE, p. 3)

Beside the etymological and dictionary meaning of education some great educationists and thinkers are also define it from their own way and it is hereby necessary to discuss such definitions for a better understanding of it. One of the great Indian thinker and social reformer Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) gave an insightful definition of education. To him, "education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man". The word 'manifestation'

implies here that something already exists and is waiting to be expressed. The main focus in learning is to make the hidden ability of a learner manifest. The expression 'already in man' refers to a human being's potential, which is the range of the abilities and talents, known or unknown that he is born with. (My Idea of Education, 2008, p. 17).

On the other hand the term 'education' is also differently used in West. Western thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Froehle, Pestalozzi, and John Dewey and so on define education in their own way. Plato, a Greek philosopher, used it as 'the purification of soul or mind' and, to him, the successful development of education depends on appropriate and healthy environment. (N. Pramanik, 2012, p. 47). According to Aristotle, "Education is the creation of a sound mind in a sound body. It develops man's faculty, especially his mind so that he may be able to enjoy the contemplation of supreme truth, goodness and beauty of which perfect happiness essentially consists of". (Quoted from BE, p. 17). According to John Dewey (1916), "Education is reconstruction or reorganisation of experience which adds to the meaning of experience and which increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experiences". (Quoted from Ibid., p. 19).

### **Meaning of Peace**

The dictionary meaning of the term 'peace' is the 'absence of war'. (R. Scruton, 2007, 515). The basic principle of peace is to avoid violence and it is the peaceful alternative to force. Peace is the ultimate goal of humankind. The basic urge of human organism is to live their life in a peaceful society. For building up of a new and better tomorrow the value of peace is greatly crucial. In today's globalised and interdependent world values of the words like peace, non-violence, tolerance, human right and democracy is much higher than any other object. Peace, however, is a collective approach which can only develop through trust and co-operation with each other. In the preface of his book 'Peace, Love and Liberty' Tom G. Palmer said, "The existence of a peaceful society depends on faith and collaboration. Peace allows people to love. To change enemies into friends. To replace conflict into cooperation. To replace hatred with love and friendship". Peace is related with prosperity, progress and freedom. In fact, to Palmer, 'peace, freedom, prosperity and progress go hand-in-hand'. (T. G. Palmer, Preface, 2014). The principles of peace are applicable in all social circumstances. The cause of peace is concern with the intercourse of governments, and aims merely to prevent war between nations. (The American Peace Society, 1845, p. 2).

### **Gandhiji on Education and Peace**

**On Education:** Amongst the various constructive works of Gandhiji to serve the humanity education was the most important one. Gandhiji's concept of education was a result of his socio-political thought and his life philosophy. By education Gandhiji means 'an all-round development of man'. According to Gandhiji education is the development of physical, mental and spiritual power which develops friendly cooperation and integration among men. (Bandyopadhyaya & Chattopadhyaya, 2012, p. 142). In 'Harijan' he writes "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit". (Quoted from India of My Dreams, 1947, p. 156). To him education is not merely to literate person, but it is something more and he holds that, "literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning.

It is only of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education” (Ibid). For Gandhiji, therefore, “child’s education should begin by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training” and he also hold the view that “the highest development of mind and the soul is possible under such a system of education”. (Ibid.).

Gandhiji’s plan of education was very much related with his spiritual philosophy. To him an all round development of human soul is the ultimate goal of humanity. Gandhiji advocates that kind of society in where every individual has the liberty of thought and speech. (S. K. Bhattacharya, 2011, p. 91). And for this he suggests that kind of education by which individuals may become able to think freely and frankly ‘Learning by doing’ and ‘self-development’ are the two key principles of Gandhiji’s education. Gandhiji had a firm believe that fulfillment of education depends only on after a practical surveillance.

Gandhiji advocates free and compulsory education for all because, to him, “it will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a juster social order in which there is no unnatural division between the ‘haves’ and the ‘havenots’ and everybody is assured of a living wage and the rights to freedom”. (Ibid., p. 157). The primary objective of his ‘Basic Education’ (NaiTalim) was to establish ‘Village-Swaraj’. By basic education Gandhiji means “to transform village children into model villagers. It is principally designed for them. The inspiration for it has come from the villages”. To him “basic education links the children to all that is best and lasting in India. It develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future in the realization of which he or she begins to take his or her share from the very commencement of his or her career in school”. (Ibid., p. 158). The objective of basic education, in Gandhiji’s words, ‘is the physical, intellectual and moral development of the children through the medium of a handicraft’. (Harijan, 6-4-’ 40). Gandhiji wanted to organise a silent social revolution by conveying primary education through the medium of village handicrafts and to him, “it will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way to eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes”. (India of My Dreams, 1947, p. 157). If a student learn by a foreign language, to Gandhiji, he/she did not express his/her thought properly and there is a probability to forget and to neglect indigenous culture. This is another minus point of foreign language. Considering his theory ‘NaiTalim’ (New Education) we find that Gandhiji ardently try to develop an education system which must depends on India’s culture and environment. Equal development of body, mind and soul is the fundamental objective of his ‘NaiTalim’ and Gandhiji was of the hope that only education by mother tongue can make this possible.

**On Peace:** Mahatma Gandhi was one of the great philosophers of peace and prosperity. His entire political philosophy was based on non-violence and peace. Non-violence was the guiding principle of Gandhian philosophy. In Gandhiji’s own word: ‘Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed’. (Quoted from A. K. Mahapatra (Bengali Book), p.243. He rejects any kind of violence from his life and wanted to develop a

non-violent society in where every individual may spend their life in peaceful way. Concepts of *Sarvodaya Society*, *Ramayana* and Trusteeship were standing on his thinking of non-violence as well as on peace. Therefore it is no longer wrong to say that peace is the ultimate goal of Gandhian philosophy.

### **Gandhian concept of Education as a silent revolution towards Peace**

Gandhian concept of education was not static: rather dynamic, it is an unending exercise. Activeness and continuity was its main feature. Gandhiji viewed education as a man making process which started from the birth and continue till death of a person. His concept of education is a close pathway to peace. To Gandhiji man is neither a physical existence; nor only a combination of heart and soul; and in addition, intelligence is not the final aim of man. There is a necessity, according to Gandhiji, of exact and righteous combination among body, mind and soul to build up a perfect man and only education may provide this. Therefore the foremost aim of education, according to Gandhiji, is to create a concert among body, mind and soul. As man's relation with the society is inevitable, more particularly man is a 'social animal', and then an all-round development of man is very much necessary for the development of society. Gandhian concept of *NaiTalim* (Basic Education) had a vision to establish a 'good society' by giving a true education to all. As Kanakmal Gandhi wrote: "His (Gandhiji's) basic national education of 1937 was planned as the basic preparation of Indian children for sharing in a national society which itself aims at basing every aspect of its life, social, economic, political, cultural, on truth and on non-violence – in other words, at a new social order totally different from the existing one". (K. Gandhi, 3.11.1987 in *The Story of NaiTalim*).

### **Conclusion**

From the above discussion we can easily conclude that Gandhiji's concept of education is not only to make people literally; it is not only a concept bound only on knowledge practice; but to a certain extent it is the pathway of 'all-round development of man' and its most important aim was to make a man perfect. The fundamental urge of Gandhiji's concept of education is to relate individuals with their social needs and social service which is a very good essential deal for peace. If we consider the present scenario of our education system what we find that it (education) is not rightly given to our youth. What we learn is not able develop our thinking power. It is only a career centric education which has no role to develop our physical, mental, spiritual and social potentialities to extend our society towards peace. Present education did not inspire our youth to develop an over-all thinking power; rather it develops a self-centric thinking power and if we look at in our surroundings we find lots of example of this. By educating people, only, peace may come into being. Therefore, education and peace are equally related with each other and it has been no longer wrong to say that Gandhiji's concept of education is rightly a silent revolution towards peace.

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