

THE HUMAN EDUCATION PHILOSOPHICAL IDEOLOGICAL: M.K. GANDHI

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Abstract

True Education is always an on-going process. The beauty and adventure of this field are unique and there is no ultimate peak here. There is always a new valley to explore and a higher life to scale. The new voyage is ever there and new path are always inviting. The pilgrims on the way are endlessly enriched. Never the less, education is quite rewarding. It is an investment for the future of mankind. It is an experience of mind's flight to variegated destinations. It means a composite personality material and spiritual wisdom, as well as the negation of mental slums.

In this research paper discusses the educational philosophy of the great thinker Mahatama Gandhi aim and purpose of education, according to them. It highlights their respective educational experiments and finally strikes an en-lightning their educational philosophies on four elements of education-Humanism, idealism, realism and naturalism.

Humanism:

Gandhi's approach of the individual in his system of education is humanistic. He had great faith in the sun city of human worth and in his great potentialities, complete of mastering his own destiny. The system or order of society which Gandhi wanted to establishing through his system of education way gated on respect for human nature and also on the desirability of providing in an environment most favourable to its health and growth. His aim was to establish village which will be self sufficient and constitute the real basis of the future decentralized democratic state resting on truth and non-violence. He wanted man to be fall in the true sense of the term and therefore more freedom to vote without economic freedom in this opinion was an illusion and a misnomer incompatible with true democracy, hence, according to Gandhi, maximum decentralization of economy was essential to prevent exploitation of the common man by vested interest one of the common feelings that has gone is the Gandhis system

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based on cottage industries and decentralized economy, spelt, the destruction and all scientific progress that the age has made so far. The truth, however is that Gandhi was never against science. He had in fact the greatest admiration for the tremendous scientific progress that the west has made and he wanted every bit of it. But at the same time, he wanted to be the master of science and not its slave, to harness to the good of mankind not to allow it to become an instrument of human destruction. He was dissatisfied with the haphazard development of science unrelated to the social and economic structure of India. He has been a witness of the result of scientific development which has steel the masses in chaos. Therefore his desire was to solicit for this unscientific research in science a planned and humanized research which could take into account the social and economic factors, so that scientific research might subserve human progress instead of being its destroyer. His aim was to bring down science from that so-called mountain tops where it was monopolized by the few in the interests of the few and reduce it to the terms of the masses. In his speech at the science institute, Bangalore Gandhi observed. "I tell you, you can devise a greater wireless instrument which does not require external research, but internal and all research will be useless, if it is not allied to internal research which can link your hearts with those of the masses. Unless all the discoveries you make have the welfare of the poor as the end in view, all your workshop will be really no better than Satan's workshop as Raja Gopalchari said in a joke" The above is an instance of Gandhi's humanism in his educational philosophy.

In his autobiography one gets glimpses into the humanistic tendencies in his biography of education. It is evident in his opposition to corporal punishment. In his various educational experiments, he has never resorted to corporal punishment as one of the last means of maintaining discipline, excepting only once in his life but he used to repent for the violence of his deed in having once picked up a ruler lying at hand and for having delivered a blow on the arm of one of the inmates of the Tolstoy farm, who was always wild and unruly, given to being quarrelsome. Later he used to feel and realize that he had exhibited before the student that day, not the spirit, but the brute in him - Therefore he has always been opposed to corporal punishment and thus in his endeavour to impart spiritual training to the boys and girls under his charge, he came to understand better and better the power of the spirit. This is another example of Gandhi's humanism.

Idealism:

In the writings of Mahatma Gandhi the idealistic tendencies are quite perceptible. In fact they are dominant. In the Tolstoy form which Gandhi founded in 1910, the satyagraha is and their children used to parties a form of sport and a life.

During this period he had to undertake some responsibility in connection with education of the young boys and girls in his charge. There he always tried to impress upon the student the need of practising the art of self control, since morality was one of the keynotes of his life. Idealistic tendencies are present in his gospel of Brahmacharya which he has never been tried to preaching without which he thought no man could really turn himself into an efficient servant of mankind. It was his insistence on continence which frequently brought Gandhi in conflict with those who held a different view on the subject. His frequent emphasis on the building up of the sound character in education is another instance of the idealistic tendency in his educational philosophy.

He had the view that a purely literary education would not lead one to the realism of result. Therefore he stressed the necessity of a cultural education. He cared more for moral values in education than for mere knowledge of letters. His outlook on life was intensely idealistic. He realized that the training of the spirit was a thing by itself and to develop the spirit was to build character and to enable one to work towards the knowledge of good and self realization. He held the culture of the heart to be an essential part of the training of the young and that all training without culture of the spirit was of no use to him and might be even harmful.

Idealism does form the core of Gandhi's philosophy of education. It is not found reflected in his ultimate aim of education which is nothing but self realization? When he says that education is that which liberates he means by that, the liberation of man from all kinds of bondage so that it might lead him to a higher life - a life of the spirit. Since self realization was his ultimate aim of education, he would never defer preparation for a life of renunciation to the fourth stage of life. According to him, true education should enable a man to lead a life of renunciation, dedicated to the service of humanity throughout one's life and preparation for such an invaluable experience should by no means be deferred to the last stage of one's life, when, not self-realization, but old age amounting to a second and pitiable childhood would creep in he held those views even while he was teaching in 1911-12, though he might not then have

expressed them in educational language. The very fact that he held the balanced and harmonious development of the body, mind and spirit as one of the important aims of education itself testifies to the idealism in his educational philosophy. It shows that he does not ignore the training of either the body or the intellect on the spirit but considers the training of them all to be very essential for a higher life.

He restores the child, in his education to the proper place and accords him the human dignity that is legitimate. He looks upon the child as a spark of the divine, possessing immense potentialities of development. Therefore, in his philosophy of education, the child is the centre of education progress and not the subject matter or the mere acquisition of knowledge. He holds education to be the birth-right of each and all and in his opinion, the aim of education is the natural, progressive and harmonious development of the powers and capacities, a human being is capable of. That was why it became his educational ideal, that universal compulsory primary education should be introduced in India.

By stressing the value of religious education for each individual, his claim as an idealist in education becomes a reasonable one. He wanted every child to be familiar with the fundamental tenets of all faiths, so that they might get a broad outlook and have a tolerant attitude towards other religions, besides a good appreciation of one's own religions. Religion was a way of life for Gandhi, and therefore, true religion was not divorced from any aspect of life.

Similarly his idealism finds expression in his ideas on freedom. He always emphasized self-discipline and according to him, the highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measure of discipline and humility. Unbridled license is a sign of vulgarity, injurious alike to self and one's neighbors and freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied.

The fact that he is an idealist to the core becomes obvious when he says, that his creed is not a narrow one but that of realizing the essential brotherhood of man. Therefore, real education, according to Gandhiji should bring about unity of all life, by cultivating absolute purity of heart. In his opinion, true education brings a man nearer to God in the least possible time.

By stressing the importance of atmosphere in education, he becomes a true idealist. He never fails to emphasize the value of proper environment for enabling each child to develop his latent powers stimulate them to their fullest development. The very fact that he has chosen the term 'Ashrama' for the

various centres in which he conducted his educational experiments is a proof of the high regard he had for a proper environment-physical and social in shaping a man's nature.

Realism:

Gandhiji had a been sense of realism. His principle of education was the education of the whole personality of man and it was based on his discovery that it was not what was powered into a person's mind through written or spoken word, but the way in which he tackled the basic urges of his life, conditioning his thinking and his individual and social behaviour. In spite of his being an idealist in education, he always insisted that education must be self-supporting, activity-centred and that it should lead to the harmonious development of personality. He was a realist to the core in the sense that he had no faith in preaching things which could not be practised, whether it be importing spiritual training, administrating discipline or importing sex education.

Gandhi had not much use for things which the masses could not practice. He realized the cruelest many of western education, which was purely literary and academic, not suiting the genius of the people of the country. According to him, good ethics must also be good economics and true economics never militates against the highest ethical standard. His plan of self-supporting education through a rural craft, which has since been accepted, at least partially by the country is only one among several instances of his realistic tendency in education.

There is much in common between the realism of Gandhi and the pragmatist is approach. A pragmatist wants the child to acure everything for himself, be it knowledge or skills, necessary to deal effectively with life situations. When Gandhi defines education as education for life, through life, than it is definitely a preparation for life for future, through situations of real life. Similarly, quite in common with pragmatism Gandhis scheme of education is purposive, experimental and activity centered. Just like the pragmatist, Gandhi emphasizes bearing by doing, and distrusts mere bookishness believes that the child bears for more from his own activity than from mere repeated instructions. By makings bearing craft-centred and all other bearing being made possible through proper correlation, he tried to integrate school studies with the world outside so that the school might become a miniature society.

According to a pragmatist a truth must be capable of being experimentally verified. Gandhi also similarly believed that whatever truth was capable of verification was relative truth. Just like the scientist he claimed no finality or absoluteness for such a truth. Only one claim he made for his conclusions and it was, that whatever seemed to be absolutely correct, seemed to be for the time being final. For, if they were not, he should base no action on them. His keen sense of realism is obvious at every step of experiments that he has carried out the process of acceptance or rejection, and he acted accordingly. But he ceases to be a pragmatist when he talks about absolute Truth, for which he needs no verification.

Just as he did not tolerate social injustice in any form, similarly he objected to any divorce taking place between thinking and doing. In the schools of his conception, no divorce of such a nature was to take place. His school must be a doing school as well as thinking school. He thought of education as a whole process in which effort and interest are not opposed to each other but inter-related. He believes that proper interest could be secured in bearing a craft when it is taught scientifically and not mechanical and learnt with sincerity.

Like the pragmatist he injures a purpose in all becoming without which, it is useless to him. He seeks in his scheme of education, to relate all knowledge quite significantly to the life of the people. In fact he injures, a social purpose in education. Gandhi's keen sense of realism is distinct through his introduction of a basic craft at the centre of education, the correlation and co-ordination of which is absolutely necessary for effective learning a method based on life situations.

Naturalism:

Gandhi is not an outright naturalist but. Yet his writing do contain gems of thought which entitle him to an honorable place among the naturalistic philosophers in education. Quite like Russian he protests against on artificial system of education. Dissatisfied with the hostile atmosphere around the students which they had to light, he rightly observed : "Instead of the sacred surroundings of a Rishi Guru's ashrama and his paternal care, he has the atmosphere of a broken home and artificial surrounding created by the modern system of education. The his taught the without books. They only gave them a few mantraj which the pupils transferred in their memories and translated in practical life. Thus Gandhi

deprecates the artificiality in education and makes a strong plan for restoring the child to his natural and rightful place.

Like Russian Gandhi believes that nature and rural environment, are great potential agents in education. That was the reason why he accorded to place of greater honour to the life of a villager than that of an industrial worker. He held nature in such high honour that he wanted to rid the villages of the evils of urbanization. He wanted to persuade too students to make village life their goal rather than city life. His education is calculated to wean him from his traditional culture. And the mass of educational youths are not denationalized it is because the ancient culture is too deeply included in them to be altogether uprooted even by an education adverse to its growth . It I had any way, I would certainly destroy the majority of the present text-books and cause to be written text books which have a bearing an and correspondence with the home life, so that a boy as he barns may react upon his immediate surroundings. Does not the above observation illustrate a strong under current of naturalistic tendency running through his educational philosophy?

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