

Gandhian Philosophical Thought and its Influence on Present Education System of India

Amar Upadhyaya*
Dr. Neeta Kalita Baruah**

Abstract

Education system is based on ideals derived from the philosophical principles. Education is the way through which philosophical ideas are imparted among the learners. These philosophical ideas are important aspects to lead human life. From this viewpoint it is said that both education and philosophy are the two sides of a same coin. Impact of philosophy is all pervasive in the individual and social life. The philosophical ideas are mainly categorized into two – idealistic and materialistic. The Indian philosophy is mainly idealistic which emphasized on the relation between the individual self and the supreme self. Gandhiji was the prime supporter of idealist philosophy. He analyzed the problems of morality of people from stand point of spirituality. Spiritual development is nothing but the cultivation of heart. So there exist a cordial relationship between idealist philosophy and Indian education system. The paper highlights on the Core thoughts found in Gandhian Philosophy and Values of Gandhian Thought. The paper also highlights the Relevance of Gandhian thought in present education system of India.

Key Words : *Gandhi, Philosophy, Gandhian thought.*

Introduction:

Education system is based on ideals derived from the philosophical principles. Education is the way through which philosophical ideas are imparted

*Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh.

**Associate Professor, Department of Education, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh.

among the learners. These philosophical ideas are important aspects to lead human life. From this viewpoint it is said that both education and philosophy are the two sides of a same coin. Education is the practicing ground of philosophy. Impact of philosophy is all pervasive in the individual and social life. The philosophical ideas are mainly categorized into two – idealistic and materialistic. The Indian philosophy is mainly idealistic which emphasized on the relation between the individual self and the supreme self. The path is spiritual leading to liberation of individual self by merging into supreme self. According to idealism the individual is the store of immense potentialities for development. The system of education only provides necessary scope to the fullest development of all round personality of the individuals. From the secular standpoint, education is the liberation of man from evil propensities, dogmas and superstitions. Gandhiji was the prime supporter of idealist philosophy. He analyzed the problems of morality of people from stand point of spirituality. If a deep faith in common brotherhood of god and universal brotherhood of men can be firmly developed there can be no question of injustice, hatred, violence, conflicts among them. After all, spiritual development is nothing but the cultivation of heart. So there exist a cordial relationship between idealist philosophy and Indian education system.

Meaning of Gandhian Philosophical Thought:

Gandhian philosophy refers to all ideas (both including religious and social) adopted and developed by Gandhi in his life time. These ideas have been further developed by Gandhians (followers of Gandhian philosophy). The spiritual or religious element i.e. god is the core concept of Gandhian philosophy. Gandhian philosophy is such a philosophy where theories are practiced in practical life situation. This is one of the exceptional characteristic of Gandhian thought. Gandhi was an idealist philosopher. But due to his practicality in idealism he is differentiated from other idealists.

Meaning of Education according to Gandhi:

There should be truth in thought, truth in speech and truth in action. To the man who has realized this truth in perfection nothing else remains to be

known because all knowledge is necessary included in it. According to Gandhi Education means “drawing out the best in man and child – body, mind and spirit.”

Core Thoughts found in Gandhian Philosophy :

- ❖ *Satya*: The word satya derived from “sat” means the truth. For Gandhi truth is the relative truth of truthfulness in world and deed and the absolute truth the ultimate reality. The ultimate truth is god.
- ❖ *Non-violence (Ahimsha)*: According to Gandhi the meaning of ahimsha is not only peacefulness or absence of overt violence but also active love in every sense. Gandhi said that violence not only disturb others but also damage the self. It is the basic principle of human-kind, which maintains universal justice and universal peace.
- ❖ *Practical idealism*: Gandhian thought is based on idealism but it is thoroughly practical in nature. According to Gandhi the idea without its practicality doesn't have any meaning. He gave less importance on intellectual doctrines. Gandhi was not an intellectual rather Gandhi's thought was conceived to a great extent, out of action and as a guide of action. He hesitated to write about anything of which he did not have personal firsthand experience.
- ❖ *Sarvodaya*: This is another important concept found in Gandhian philosophical thought. According to Gandhi the social goal of human struggle is called as sarvodaya, means welfare of all without exception. Gandhi was favoured in the equal opportunity for all without any discrimination. He gave importance on equity rather than equality. Sarvodaya also refers to the trusteeship. Its fundamental objective is to create non-violence and non-exploitative property relationship. Gandhi believed that the concept of possession and accumulation of private property were the sources of violence and in contradiction with the Divine reality that all wealth belongs to all people.
- ❖ *Concept of God*: Gandhian philosophy emphasised on god as the supreme

power which spread from physical world to metaphysical world. God is the ultimate reality of human life. In this way every human being tries to achieve god after death so that the soul would get Mukti means free from bondage. According to Gandhi god is the ultimate truth.

- ❖ **Human Ethics:** Gandhi also opined the ethics required for peaceful life in human society. Ethics means moral code of conduct that an individual have to perform in their behaviour.

Values of Gandhian Thought:

- **Political decentralization**, to prevent massive concentrations of political power in the hands of too few; rather, to distribute it in the hands of many. The Gandhian political order takes the form of a direct, participatory democracy, operating in a tier structure from the base village-level tier upward through the district and state levels to the national (and international) level.
- **Economic decentralization**, to prevent massive concentrations of economic power in the hands of too few, and again, to distribute it in the hands of many. Therefore villages, which are anyway geographically decentralized, become the basic economic units. However, where unavoidable, certain industries may be organized on a more centralized basis, and their ownership and control come under the umbrella of the State.
- The **minimization of competition and exploitation** in the economic sphere, and instead, the encouragement of cooperation.
- **Production** on the basis of need rather than greed, concentrating where India is concerned first on the eradication of poverty (and on the worst extreme of poverty).
- **Recognition of the dignity of labour** and the greater purity of rural life.
- The practice of **extensive self-reliance** by individuals, villages, regions and the nation.
- **Absence of oppression** on the basis of race, caste, class, language, gender or religion.
- **A deep respect for Mother Nature**, necessitating an economic system based

upon the preservation rather than destruction of the natural environment.

Relevance of Gandhian Thought in Present Education :

- a) **Truth and Untruth:** The main aim of all educational institutions is to prepare the child to face truth and untruth in their life. The students must be prepared to accept the truth and discard the untruth in their life. Gandhian philosophy has emphasized on the means to achieving truth.
- b) **Violence and Non-violence:** To achieve something individually or collectively the human being can proceed both violently or nonviolently, but the later one is more useful as it is harmless for the society. To create a peaceful society our students must be taught, the nonviolent ways of protest.
- c) **Self Criticism and Self Evaluation:** Gandhi was the prime supporter of self criticism and self evaluation. It is the utmost important part of education. It helps the learners to identify his weaknesses and strength. It also provides an opportunity to rectify one's mistakes. From this viewpoint also there is a relevance of Gandhian thought in present education.
- d) **Vocationalisation of Education:** Gandhi believed that without developing the productive capacity of the country it is not possible to remove the social evils like poverty, unemployment etc. The Basic Education model introduced in 1937 revealed the total vocationalisation of the school education and prepared a healthy and productive workforce for the country. Gandhi believed that education is than only meaningful when knowledge is imparted along with skills. He basically gave importance on manual work. Because the labour intensive technique is more effective then capital intensive technique where a large number of peoples are already in the problems of unemployment. The concept of vocationalisation of education has a long term impact on Indian education system.

- e) **All Round Development of Child:** Gandhi was the pioneer of the concept of all round development of child. In his view it was the perfect human-being who possess all basic qualities of an individual. He was the strong supporter of the development of all qualities such as physical, moral, mental, spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual etc. among the children.
- f) **Dignity of Labour:** This is the important concept of Gandhian philosophy which doesn't discriminate the services on the basis of its nature. All services are equally important for the progress of the society. In our education system also we try to develop a positive attitude towards the work culture. In all stages of education it is realized among the students that work is such an essential aspect without which human progress is not possible.
- g) **Universal and Compulsory Education:** This is one of the salient feature Gandhi's Basic Education model, in which he mentioned the 7-8 years of integrated universal and compulsory education for all the children belongs to the age group of 7-14 years. Only to achieve the objective of Universal and Compulsory Education the govt. of India has introduced the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and most recently the Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan in Indian education system.
- h) **Individual Differences:** Gandhi emphasized that the education must be provided only in consideration of the individual ability of the child and it can be achieved only in free atmosphere. The children must be treated on the basis of their mental physical, social, emotional and intellectual ability. The present education system has also emphasized on the development of individual ability by learner centered approach.
- i) **Aims of Education:** As like the present education system, Gandhi also emphasized on the development of qualities of good citizenship such as honesty, love, friendship, co-operation democratic citizen etc., should be

the aim of education. Besides this the education must aim to develop the productive skills of individuals.

- j) **Equality in Opportunity:** Gandhi was the prime supporter of 'equal opportunity' to be provided to all the members of the society irrespective of caste, creed, gender, religions etc. In Gandhi's view point social divisions create social gaps. In his freedom struggle he openly raise the unification of the Indian society by inclusion of all social groups both lower caste and higher caste.

- k) **Other Implications:** Gandhi was the strong supporter of self dependency in economy, activity based method of teaching, equal distribution of resources among the members of the society, productive society etc. From Gandhian philosophy, we can draw the principle of 'simple living high thinking' which is very much applicable in our practical life.

7. Conclusion:

To sum up, Gandhian philosophy is not only simultaneously political, moral and religious; it is also traditional and modern, simple and complex. It embodies numerous Western influences to which Gandhi was exposed, but being rooted in ancient Indian culture and harnessing eternal and universal moral and religious principles, there is much in it that is not at all new. This is why Gandhi could say: "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills." Gandhi is concerned even more with the spirit than with the form. If the spirit is consistent with truth and nonviolence, the truthful and nonviolent form will automatically result. Despite its anti-Westernism, many hold its outlook to be ultra-modern, in fact ahead of its time - even far ahead. Perhaps the philosophy is best seen as a harmonious blend of the traditional and modern. The multifaceted nature of Gandhi's thought also can easily lead to the view that it is extremely complex. Perhaps in one sense it is. One could easily write volumes in describing it! Yet Gandhi described much of his thought as mere common sense. Dr Diwakar sums up Gandhi's thought in a few words: "The four

words, truth, nonviolence, Sarvodaya and Satyagraha and their significance constitute Gandhi and his teaching." These are indeed the four pillars of Gandhian thought. Due to all these matters Gandhian philosophy is exceptional than other.

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