

Details of Module and its structure

Module Detail	
Subject Name	Education
Course Name	Contemporary Indian Education
Course Code	EDU501
Module Name/Title	<i>Educational thoughts and practices: critical reflections on educational thoughts and practices of Mahatma Gandhi with respect to the relevance in the present education system</i>
Module Code	CIE006
Pre-requisites	To study this module students, need to have previous knowledge about contributions of Mahatma Gandhi.
Learning Outcome	<p>After going through this lesson, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on different values according to Mahatma Gandhi’s Philosophy • Establish relationship between his diverse thoughts and practices with the present system of education • Critically analyse his educational ideals and their practical aspect
Keywords	Mahatma Gandhi, Basic Education, Nai Taleem

1. Development Team

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1. Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi

Born on 2nd October 1869, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who led India in its non-violent struggle for freedom from British rule, also known as Mahatma Gandhi is one of few philosophers of modern India that shaped the education aims and ideals for the nation. He started his education in a Gujrati school at the age of seven and afterwards studied in an English school at Rajkot from age of ten. In 1887 he completed his matriculation and went to England to complete further studies and returned to India in 1891 after becoming a barrister. He started practice of law at Rajkot and at Mumbai. He accepted a position as counsel for a shipping company to represent them in a case in South Africa and there he started his journey struggling for an equal treatment against apartheid policy of British government there.

There he constantly fought the unfair policies of the oppressive British rule and established Tolstoy Farm in South Africa during 1910 which proved to be an ideal laboratory to implement his educational ideals. The children living on the farm were given responsibilities of not only studying but also, to give their contribution in maintaining of farm. He included vocational training along with manual work along from the studies to ensure an overall development. Activities such as gardening, cooking, carpentry, messenger work, sandal making, general laboring etc. were encouraged and considered as helpful activities to maintain a healthy community life. Gandhiji's objective for this was that the children would learn social responsibilities as well as citizenship along with regular studies. He held co-educational classes on Tolstoy farm teaching girls and boys in the same class. His experiments at Tolstoy farm proved to be foundation for his educational philosophy later on.

1.1. Central Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi the Father of Indian nation is not a philosopher in a widely accepted sense of the term and still his ideas remain to be distinguished among the top leadership in the world today. Starting a career as a lawyer and spending 21 years at South Africa that proved vital in formation of his ideals, thoughts, devices and ethics. He returned to India on 9th January 1914 and joined the Indian freedom struggle against the British rule. During the freedom struggle he constantly advocated ethical guidelines for the society making Indian freedom struggle revered worldwide for its righteous character.

Talking about Gandhiji's philosophy, some of central ideas and principles that form an underlying theme of his thoughts in every area are Ahimsa, Satyagraha, Sarvodaya, Gram Swaraj and Swadeshi.

1.2. Ahimsa-

Gandhiji a devoted preacher on non-violence believed it to be pursued by body, mind and spirit. Merely practicing non-injury was considered a narrow interpretation of non-violence by him as he practiced and preached not causing harm anyone by thoughts, words and deeds and maintaining

limitless love and acceptance for everyone as Ahimsa. Hence, it can be said that practice of non-violence had a prohibitive aspect that insists to refrain from injury by thoughts action and deeds, that insisted on avoiding anger, hatred and evil in any form. And also, non-violence has an embracing aspect that demands accepting the truth, love, God and all of God's creations. Gandhiji said that whoever loves God in truest of all sense is able to practice non-violence. He considered Truth to be a means to attain non-violence and considered both to be most powerful tool of humanity. Non-Violence for him was an active energy that required strength of body and mind to practice both the prohibitive and accepting characters of non-violence even under extreme and dreadful situations leaving no place for cowardice and weakness. Following Ahimsa was an act of bravery. As published in Young India in September 1928 Gandhiji advised Ahimsa to be practiced in education through mutual relationship of respect and trust among students where everyone studies together irrespective of caste, religion or gender. Where the students would be compliant to their teachers with familial love. In such atmosphere students broaden their visions and develop feeling of compassion and service. Being brought in this environment the student would not distinguish on base of faith and class and would become a believer of Ahimsa.

1.3. *Satyagraha*- Translated literally as Insistence of truth, *Satyagraha* is non-violent or civil resistance has inspired many leaders worldwide like Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Dalai Lama etc. who were in pursuit for justice, equality and freedom against oppression. 'Insistence of the truth' or 'holding firmly to the truth' is an act of firmness to abide to the truth and not merely a simple act of passive resistance. It encompasses spiritual perusal of the truth as its practices non-violence under every circumstance that would include extending peace, love and goodwill for the oppressor along with refusal to agree with the wrong. The practitioners called '*Satyagrahi*' have to follow full extent of the ideal that would include correct rules of living, practice of non-violence, establishment of alternate political and economic institutions where the truth is sought via conversation hence leads to no vanquish or triumph but creates harmony. Prayers, fasting and boycotts were practices to insist upon the truth. Gandhiji insisted upon practice of prayer services and fasting to be an important part of a student's life.

1.4. *Sarvodaya*- Ideal of 'Universal Uplift' or 'Progress for All' translates to the idea of *Sarvodaya* the word that associates to the social moments led by Mahatma Gandhi that wanted equality for all and wanted equality to reach every strata of the society. Gandhiji imagined a society that is free from greed and sustained everyone's need through honest righteous work. He envisioned a society that did not insist on collection of wealth and limitless acquisition of material. The inequality in income would be met out by the use of surplus earning for good of the society. In a *Sarvodaya* society there was no place for class hatred, unhealthy competition, exploitation and tyranny of the majority.

This ideal denied private property as it led to social discrimination, hatred and struggle. The central archetypal of Sarvodaya is non-possession or 'Aparigrah' and non-stealing 'Asteya', where individual gain was small in measures and greed had no place. Emphasizing on character development and practice of values among students from early in education would develop self-introspection leading them practicing truth, non-possession and non-stealing by mind body and soul.

1.5. Gram Swaraj and Swadeshi – The economic thoughts of Gandhiji can be understood by his philosophy of Gram Swaraj and Swadeshi. Gram Swaraj or the Village self-rule was a self-sufficient village community that met its own basic needs rather than a group of individuals merely competing among themselves for resources, and Swadeshi is buying and using local products made by local artisans instead using machine made goods. Gandhiji's idea of 'craft-based education' where vocational training is an important part of school curriculum is an important means to achieve this, as training in school would establish a student's involvement in the economic processes from early on ensuring them to be part of self-sustaining community where they are stakeholder of production and users of locally produced goods and services. Gandhiji emphasized upon that any educational system is useless if it does not fulfil demands of the country, and curriculum should always include the requirements of home and village life also.

2. Mahatma Gandhi and Education

The foundation of British laid educational system was challenged by Gandhiji in his educational thoughts. At request on nationalist Jamnalal Bajaj in 1937 on occasion of silver jubilee celebration Nav Bharat Vidyalaya of Marwari Educational Society at Wardha, which wanted to organize a National Educational Conference to discuss Gandhiji's thoughts on education, Gandhiji agreed to lead the conference to convey and discuss ideas on education. And for that purpose, he started to write his ideas and thoughts on education in his newspaper Harijan, to gain momentum for the conference and that later proved to be the best source to understand his educational thoughts and practices. Dr. Zakir Hussain, Prof K T Shah, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Kaka Kalekar, Mahadev Desai etc. were among the various distinguished personalities that participated for the two-day conference on 22nd and 23rd of October 1937 at Wardha, Maharashtra. After every Gandhiji presented his thoughts on education and a considerable debate a comprehensive scheme of education was devised at end of the conference. The term Basic/Buniyaadi is used in context of this scheme as in this scheme those subjects would be taught that would prove to be foundation on basis of which the student learns anything and follow any vocation, as it proved to be fundamental to conduct oneself later in life.

2.1. Wardha Scheme of Education (Buniyadi Shiksha / Nai Taleem)

The percepts of Buniyaadi Shiksha/Nai Taleem is that knowledge and work are not separate. It came into origin as a resistance towards British laid colonial education system that was merely creating workforce for the British empire. This scheme was also called Nai Talim as it was seen as a tool to evolve a new social structure and medium of dissolving the colonial domination in India. Some main features of this scheme were:

- a. Primary education to include all subjects ranging in seven-year span except English.
- b. A vocation of choice to be included to draw out the best within the child and give an experiential and self-reliant essence to the learning.
- c. Medium of education should be mother tongue.
- d. Free and compulsory education from seven to 14 years of age throughout the nation.
- e. A specific craft is to be selected to develop learning experience where future possibilities in a vocation can be explored.
- f. The craft or productive work that is to be centered for all educative experiences should be followed throughout the education period.
- g. Proposed 288 teaching days in an academic year.
- h. The time allotted for basic craft skills to be taught in a day was three hours and twenty minutes.
- i. The teachers should get a sufficient training of one year and the urban and rural teachers should be trained together in collaboration.
- j. A teacher should be paid sufficient to carry their basic needs and students through their craft-based orientation should also contribute in their teacher's salary.
- k. The education should be child centered and students should have a choice in selecting subjects they want to study.
- l. A very important aim of education is attaining self-reliance and hence vocational training and students stake in material development of the society is also emphasized.
- m. Basic education also foresaw the educational institutions to get self-reliant and not depend on government grants and aids for education.
- n. Develop ideal citizenship in harmony to Indian ethos and culture where social welfare and moral growth were emphasized.
- o. Inculcation of manual work and social service among students leading to development of dignity of labor and ultimately aiding in creating a classless society.
- p. Same education for girls and boys.
- q. Students should pay in any part, how negligible it may be, for their education through their own labor making them brave and self-reliant.
- r. Religious education of all religions should be taught to all leading them understanding and respect for all religions creating a harmony and coexistence among students.

Acharya J B Kriplani said that mother tongue was merely means of communication in this scheme and the real medium of instruction was actually the craft that was central theme of education. Gandhiji insisted that state should take care of education from seven years of age and return the student back as an earning unit to their society.

2.2.Thoughts on Education

Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts on education can be grasped in more comprehensive manner by understanding in detail how his scheme of education reflected as a process in everyday teaching learning situation.

2.3.Meaning of Education:

Education for Gandhiji is developing an individual's capacities to the best possible potential. Literacy according to him was neither beginning or end of education but just a medium through which man and woman could be educated. Gandhiji stated that true education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of the children. Thus, emphasizing meaning of education to be a child developed to its full potential.

2.4.Aims of Education:

Gandhiji always differentiated between a) immediate aim, and b) ultimate aim of education. While former were the ones that could instantly benefit the students and the latter, he considered to be realization of reality, self and God.

2.5.Curriculum:

Gandhiji being an avid critic of British laid educational system questioned lack of learning by experiencing making them passive learners. He advocated on curriculum to be imparted in mother tongue that catered to physical, mental and spiritual needs of a student. Emphasizing on freedom to students while choosing subjects of their interest he said the students would learn more efficiently if they were taught subjects of their interest. The curriculum taught and its utility in life should be correlated. Since he made students practice being part of material development of the society craft based vocational education came to be centralized theme of his curriculum. He also stressed upon importance of arts, music, physical fitness and sports hold important place within the curriculum. He considered value education, social service and prayer to be part of daily routine within the school.

2.6.Teaching Methods:

The teaching methods advocated by him were first and foremost Craft-based method as it provided experiential learning. The traditional rote method was only good for mental development whereas providing learning experience through craft ensured physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual development of a child. This method also ensured capturing the learner's interest in the learning process.

His idea of establishing correlation between various subjects and teaching with interdisciplinary approach using craft as a medium ascertained overall growth

of a student. He also contended the learning process to be collaborative process irrespective of caste, class, religion and gender hence guaranteeing development of cooperation, empathy and socialization. He also extenuated education to be a reflective process and hence highlighted reflective method to be important to make the learning permanent in nature.

2.7. Discipline:

Being an extremely self-disciplined personality Gandhiji highlighted role of self-discipline as an integral part of a student's personality. He ideated both the teacher and the student to be a self-disciplined unit as self-discipline has an individual's agreement to it whereas, in contrast when strict discipline is enforced without agreement it is mere an act. Self-discipline leads to a better control of senses, deletion of unhealthy competition and self-regulation leading to evolved moral personalities.

2.8. Child Centered Education:

Gandhiji was a great advocate of educating the children with accordance of their needs, interest and capabilities. He was against bookish knowledge and always emphasized on keeping the student-centered approach that actually aided in realizing the true meaning of education, that is physical, intellectual and spiritual development to its best potential.

2.9. Education and Self Sufficiency:

Craft based education was a means to achieve self-sufficiency among the students. Gandhiji envisaged that a student during the course of his education should involve themselves in learning a craft-based skill. He advocated that while the students would gain their school education they would also be learning and earning and by the time they completed their education they would not be dependent on anyone to find a job or source of income as they would be already an independently earning entities.

2.10. Education and Politics:

Gandhiji termed the word 'Lokneeti' instead of 'Rajneeti' for politics. He considered construction of a successful democracy as an aim of education. It aided in creating future citizens and hence he considered education to be a part of 'Lokneeti'. An ideal state according to him is where all citizens are educated and complementary to each other. He wanted to remove the class difference within the society, as it secured functioning of a successful democracy, and education was the medium to achieve it.

2.11. Women and Education:

Gandhiji considered the two-gender male and female as two wheels of a cart, one does not function without the other and one cannot replace the other. He visualized role of a women as complimenting their male counterparts in every sphere capable and self-dependent. He was a critique of women limiting their role and attention merely on household duties and dressing up thus defining themselves to be a consumable product, whereas their actual role in society is of equal responsibilities, duties and power. He encouraged educating girls to

realize their best potential. He wanted girls to be self-reliant and brave. He said that freedom will always be incomplete if women are burdened with evil customs and traditions.

2.12. Co-Education

Practiced coeducation on his ashram campus schools. He from time to time reviewed his thoughts on the matter and was of view that till age of 8 the girls and boys should study in the same class and if the environment remains favorable only the should the co-education continue till 16 years. He says afterwards if education has to be continued in co-educational setting, is a decision to be taken by the society in accordance to their sentiments and judgement as they seem fit. He said that co-education should start from the house itself where every household should provide every opportunity to girls and boys equally to develop themselves. He encouraged the curriculum to be same for girls as well as boys.

2.13. Craft Centered Education:

As perceived by Mahatma Gandhi, education was also aimed to transform a student in an independent earning unit, he called for a specific craft to be choose by the students for a central theme of their education. He asked the students to work along with their studies and become an earning unit as soon as possible. In this way they could contribute in bearing the cost of their education making themselves and their institutions self-reliant and thus by the time a student graduated from schooling he would be an earning and contributing member of the society.

2.14. Character Building:

As a highly ethical and spiritual person he highly emphasized on importance of moral and ethical development of children. He proposed studies of all religions, moral science and ideal role modelling by elders and teachers to inculcate values of truth, compassion, empathy, equality, brotherhood, cooperation, welfare, harmony non-stealing, non-possession and non-violence etc. among the students from a very early age. He insisted on keeping mind, heart and soul spotless so that character development takes place with agreement to oneself.

2.15. Role of a Teacher:

Gandhiji conceived a teacher to be all embodiment of personality that is to be exhibited by their students. A teacher should be well trained, disciplined, highly ethical and moral role model that is not only concerned with the immediate aims of education that leads to worldly achievements but also concerned with ultimate aim of education that is realization of truth and God.

2.16. Critique of Gandhiji's Thoughts:

Gandhiji's educational thoughts have been put up for criticism from time to time from various scholar on following grounds:

- a. It totally negates English education and that is very restrictive in global perspective.

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- b. It is completely craft centered instead ignoring the development of mental faculties in the process.
 - c. The emphasis on labor from early age might lead to child labor and exploitation.
 - d. Education would be perceived only as a medium to develop earning capabilities and schools would become units of making profit.
 - e. Number of working days in a year is more and teaching hours of the subject in a day is very less giving emphasis on craft skill development making the process tiresome and ignoring the importance of school subjects.

3. Mahatma Gandhi and Education in Today's Context

Thoughts and practices of Mahatma Gandhi still considered to be major contributor of the millennium that keep on shaping up the world for the better. The relevance of his philosophy remains unchallenged and in field of education we can still see how much it still contributes among learning community.

- a. Gandhiji spoke of learning with collaboration and cooperation, with the emergence of Education 3.0 the learning environment and mechanism it would be impossible to educate oneself without collaborating and cooperating among the peers.
- b. Importance of experiential learning is unchallenged and every hands-on activity can not be an experience as for that reflection is required. The teaching methods as proposed by Gandhiji calls for hands-on skill-based activities and reflections on both learning and activities making it a comprehensive experiential learning process leading to lasting learning outcomes.
- c. Reflective process in learning as advised by him to create critical rationality among students and its relevance in education process ion unquestioned as researches from time and again prove its importance.
- d. Importance of development of vocational skills while schooling is being emphasized by modern schooling systems. India has even launched Skill India Programme in 2015 aimed to train citizens of India in different vocational skills by 2022. This emphasized on relevance of craft-based scheme of education as centralized in Gandhiji's reflections.
- e. Gandhiji's ideal of Gram Swaraj or village self-sufficiency is most relevant as nation cannot progress if there is no progress among its rural community. Most of the development takes place in the urban area and rural area remain underdeveloped and marginalized in the development process. India witnesses' phenomena of farmer suicide and great unrest among the farming rural community. If Gram Swaraj is established and the rural community becomes self-sustaining, this would lead to a better developed nation. Of schools and higher education

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- f. Gandhiji's proposed values of dignity of labor among students along with social service and manual labor and that is a need of the hour among student's community.
 - g. His ideal of students, teacher and all community members contributing for cleanliness of schools and community reflects in Swachh Bharat Abhiyan that was launched in 2014 reflecting upon measures yet to be taken up for a clean-living environment for everyone.

As discussed above we can understand how Mahatma Gandhi's Thoughts and Practices are vividly entwined with each other and their relevance is still persistent in the present context.

Books, articles, research papers, journals, case studies etc.:

- Gandhi, M. K. *Basic Education*. Bharatan Kumarappa, ed. Ahmedabad: Navjivan, 1951.
- *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*. 1909; Ahmedabad: Navjivan, 1984.
- *Towards New Education*. Bharatan Kumarappa, ed. Ahmedabad: Navjivan, 1953.
- Varkey, C.J. *The Wardha Scheme of Education: An Exposition and Examination*. Madras: Oxford University Press, 1940.

Links to web sites giving additional readings, Wikipedia, blogs, open source content etc.:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nai_Talim
- <http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/naitalimmarjoriesykes.htm>
- <https://www.mkgandhi.org/edugandhi/basic.htm>
- gandhiashramsevagram.org/pdf-books/constructive-programme.pdf
- <https://www.scribd.com/document/394659673/Contributions-of-Gandhi-in-Rural-Development>
- <http://management.nrjp.co.in/index.php/JSSMMS/article/view/155>
- <http://spijebhu.in/SPIJ-January-17.pdf#page=7>

Glossary:

- <https://www.merriam-webster.com>
- apartheid- a system of discrimination based on race
- manual work- labour intensive work
- pursued- follow
- distinguished- notable
- prohibitive- forbidding
- embracing- accepting
- self-sustaining- supporting itself without external support
- ensuring- guaranteeing
- comprehensive- wide ranging
- archetypal- typical to certain kind
- percept- rule to regulate thoughts or behaviour
- span- period
- inculcation- instil idea or behaviour
- collaborative- collective
- ideate- form an idea
- embodiment- visible form of a quality

Description: In self-assessment Question No. 1 to 15 consist of multiple choice questions in which learners are required to select the correct one out of the four alternatives

Q1) Mahatma Gandhi first started his experiments with his ideas in education at:

- A) Sabarmati Ashram
- B) Tolstoy Farm
- C) Sewagram Ashram
- D) Anand Niketan

Q2) In which context does Mahatma Gandhi leave decision to be taken up in accordance to societal norms?

- A) Co-Education at primary level
- B) Education in Mother Tongue
- C) Co-Education after 16 years of age
- D) Vocational Skills

Q3) How can Ahimsa be inculcated in a school student?

- A) By practicing harmonious relationship within the school among peers and student-teachers
- B) By incorporating military training at school
- C) Both A and B
- D) Neither A nor B

Q4) Wardha Scheme of education was planned for which level of education?

- A) Primary Level
- B) Higher Education
- C) Research Studies
- D) All of the above

Q5) To become a 'Satyagrahi' Mahatma Gandhi advices student to follow what habit in their formative student years?

- A) Revolutionary activities
- B) Vocational training
- C) Cleanliness
- D) Truth, Prayer services and Fasting

Q6) Ideal of welfare for all or Sarvodaya can be achieved by practicing:

- A) Satya and Ahimsa
- B) Brahmcharya
- C) Aparigrah and Asteya
- D) All of the above

Q7) A village self-sufficient in resolving its basic needs can be achieved through:

- A) Swadeshi
- B) Craft based education
- C) self-dependent students
- D) All of the above

Q8) Prior to Wardha conference Gandhiji presented his educational ideas in which publication?

- A) Harijan
- B) Punjab Kesari
- C) Young India

D) Anand Bazar Patrika

Q9) The term 'Basic' is associated in Mahatma Gandhiji's Educational Scheme because:

- A) it was meant for primary level of education
- B) the subjects taught would be foundation to follow any vocation later
- C) The scheme was the first to be formulated
- D) All of the above

Q10) Wardha Scheme was termed as 'Nai Taleem' for the reason:

- A) it was a new scheme
- B) it was a scheme formulated for the first time
- C) it was a scheme was a tool to establish a new social structure
- D) it needed to establish new schools

Q11) Gandhiji considered character development complete in which condition?

- A) when it is done since childhood
- B) when it is granted a certificate
- C) when it is in agreement and alinement with oneself
- D) when it is done in supervision of a teacher

Q12) Gandhiji's philosophy come under critique in present context because of which reason?

- A) they exclude English education in the age of globalization
- B) ignores intellectual development
- C) only concerns with earning money
- D) all of the above

Q13) Gandhiji's method of teaching is relevant in this digital age as he:

- A) emphasized on craft-based education
- B) emphasized on collaborative and cooperative learning among peers
- C) wanted students to earn while they learned
- D) advocated education in mother tongue

Q14) Gandhiji's craft-based education is excellent example of experiential learning because:

- A) hands on activities were also complimented along with reflections on learning and activities
- B) students could learn a skill and get to earn too in the process
- C) students were made to maintain cleanliness of their schools
- D) students were taught a craft or a skill too

Q15) Gandhiji advocated:

- A) Students and teachers to be responsible for cleanliness of schools
- B) students to earn from craft learned at school and pay a part of the teacher's salary
- C) teachers should be an ideal of values and habits they want to inculcate among students
- D) All of the above

Answer: - 1(B), 2(C), 3(A), 4(A), 5(D), 6(C), 7(D), 8(A), 9(B), 10(C), 11(C), 12(D), 13(B), 14(A), 15(D)