

EDUCATION: NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MODERNIZATION AND GANDHIAN THOUGHT

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Man is a rational being. His ability to speak language and thinking is quite different from all other animals. Naturally he has the aspiration to achieve progress and all round positive development. It is Education that helps man to achieve a dominant position on this planet. Pestalozzi has rightly says, 'Education is the natural, harmonious and progressive development of man's innate powers'. Education includes all the process that develops human ability and behaviour. Education is the manifestation of divinity already existed in man. It is mentioned in the Rig Veda that education is something 'which makes a man self-reliant and selfless'. Education is not just the mere acquisition of knowledge and skills but changes of human behavior to provide him the opportunity to lead a complete healthy social life.

It refines the child's behavior, knowledge, skills, character and it is responsible for all round development of child. Education is the process by which knowledge, character and behaviour of the young are shaped and moulded. It is therefore, assumed that education is the acquisition of knowledge and experience, development of skills, habits and attitudes of the learners. Education helps a person to lead a full and worthwhile life in this world. It develops total personality to become a complete human being. It is the only weapon which makes human being as resource for the development of a nation. Man making and character building education develop scientific outlook, experimental attitude and moral spirit as well as social, economic and political understanding in our children those enable them to share the responsibility in building an ideal nation. So an ideal foundation or philosophical base of education is needed to make the nation developed. Educational planning in India is, therefore, termed as the development planning which intends to promote a rapid rise in the standard of living, increasing production, opportunity to employment in the service of the community and fulfillment of national objectives. Education becomes the instrument of national development when it helps people

acquire and develop the capabilities to perform various tasks and functions exploiting their inner potentialities. According to P. Drucker human beings become resources only when they are trained, developed and attracted to productive work. After the attainment of freedom in 1947, the main perspective of our national development was education. Education was given more emphasis because education is the most important means of national and emotional integration. Education should not only aim at imparting knowledge but should develop all aspects of students' personality. It broadens the outlook, foster the feeling of oneness, nationalism, spirit of sacrifice, tolerance and in this way self interest is submerged in the large interest of the country. Personal development through education is ultimately the cause of social welfare and national development. National system of education irrespective of caste, creed, colour religion and language help in the development of nation. Educational process involving the development of a feeling of unity, solidarity and cohesion, a sense of common citizenship and human resources makes the nation united and developed. Mahatma Gandhi rightly considered education as the instrument of development. Gandhi never neglected the aspect of economy. According to him a strengthened and sound rural economy through the education of productive work would revitalize Indian economy. A class less society or *Sarvodaya* could introduce a system of Production that does not fail to make use of science and Technology for creating a sound economy in modern civilization.

Gandhi's seminal work *Hind Swaraj* is a critique of modern civilization. He wrote 'Hind Swaraj' in 1908 and categorically mentioned that Human progress is not the same thing as material progress. It is because moral progress leads humans to higher level of consciousness and material progress is essential only so long as it enhances moral progress. 'Swaraj' of individuals, communities, societies and nation will be considered as goal to achieve human progress and survival of humanity. 'Swaraj' could be achieved only through *Sarvodaya* -the holistic development of all.

Gandhi appreciates some aspects of modern civilization such as modern concept of human rights, fundamental equality, the right of democratic representation etc. and firmly criticizes materialism, rationalism, consumerism, modern medicine, immoral Governmental Institutions and so on. According to David Hardiman Gandhi had put forward an ingenious concept of 'alternative Modernity' and shown a constructive critique of modernity accepting its good

features. Hardiman mentioned that Gandhi gave an alternative to the concept of development in the form of constructive programme included as spinning, development of handicrafts, propagating communal harmony, movement against untouchability village uplift and so on .6 Nicholas F. Gier believes that Gandhi is a ‘constructive’ post modernist since he places virtue at the centre of his writings against the deconstructionist rejection of any central concept.7 In Rudolph’s book Gandhi was entitled post modernist as he challenged epistemology in the spirit of science and described his pursuit of truth as ‘experiment’.8 Gandhi’s idea of truth was ‘truth in action’ in the facts and circumstances of the particular situation.

His views on education and machinery are equally unconventional, radical and relevant today. Gandhiji says, “ Character building has the first place in it (education and that is primary education). A building erected on that foundation will last.”

In his book ‘Hind swaraj’ Gandhiji approvingly quotes the definition of liberal education as given by Aldous Huxley.

He says, “That man I think has had liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is ready servant of his will and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of ; whose intellect is clear, cold, logic engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order.....whose mind is stored with knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature....whose passion are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience... who has learnt to hate all vileness and to respect others as himself. Such a one and no other , I conceive, has had liberal education, for he is in harmony with nature. He will make the best of her and she the best of him”.

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