

# **Relevance of Gandhian Education- Communal Harmony, Social and Religious Development**

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Human civilization is on brink of several crises and Progress. Tremendous progress has been made in the field of Science and Technology. The work of Social and Economic reconstruction has reached to a Zenith of considerable pitch. But all social, Political and economic reconstruction involves many complicated problems of high intense. The development of Science and Technology and rapid growth of populations have given a new dimension of problems in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The task of education is not merely turning out first- rate scientists, Engineers, Technicians and Doctors but making good human being with the help of planning to impart proper education that creates both technical efficiency and human efficiency. Robots can never take the place of human beings having the quality of truth, beauty and goodness.

A scientist or Engineer or Doctor who can manipulate his machines or apparatus and conduct his experiments successfully but becomes an unsuccessful poor human being if he fails to understand and empathize his fellow workers and fellow men associated with him. It is true education which makes a man responsive to decent emotion and structure of character and personality. Neglecting the value based education we are simply trying to make the wall of civilization on the base of sands. Human civilization will fall like a house of cards if our education fails to advocate and cherish practical efficiency and high technical skill, appreciation to dignity of labour, clarity of mind, community interests, and loyalties to fellow citizen, compassion and tolerance. The increasing trend of materialization, commercialization and cosumerization peril the base of an ideal society which is a great concern today. Gandhi wanted to reconstruct society on the stands of synthesis of cultures of all lands based on non-violence, peace, justice and freedom. Gandhi believed in God and to him Truth is God. There is no way of

finding truth except the way of serving humanity and cherishing Non-violence within. It is possible through secular type of education.

### **Critical Review of the view points:**

Gopal Krishna Sinha in his article *Gandhian Thought in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* has shown that In the twenty first century rapid progress in the field of science and Technology has given unlimited power to man. This has made a conviction in man that he can be happy by adopting materialistic attitude. This attitude has made man power hanger. The world today is in the midst of several deep rooted crises. Multidimensional crises like Nerve war, Intellectual confusions, mass unemployment, poverty, Environmental Pollution have made the world to face a new challenge. How human being will exist on this planet is a new question today. Gandhian view points on education and his ideology of awakening a sense of spirituality will provide salvage to the challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Education on Gandhian line is the true way of life which suggests that man should be free from tension, violence, hatred, frustration, ecological crises. Gandhi's new concept of *satyagraha* conceived as a new technique of Non-violence serves the need of brotherhood and harmony in the society in the midst of terrorism, communalism, groupism, regionalism, linguistic conflict.<sup>1</sup>

Bharati (1991) defines a comprehensive exposition of Gandhi as a social thinker and shows that his ideology has a rational philosophical validity for the reconstruction of society and economy of a country. According to Mahatma Gandhi 'man is the epitome of the universe'. Human nature may be called the state of transition from the animal into the divine. Animal nature gives priority to self attachment, desire for sense pleasure and enjoyment and clinging to earthly life. But every human being possesses the divine image and blessed qualities within. The *Vedanta* teaches that all human being are the image of God. The *Upanishadas* proclaim that spirituality is the prerogative of man and condemn man's pursuit of worldly wealth and power. Education is the only weapon that makes a man more divine and spiritual and gives privileges to overcome all adverse circumstances. 'Gandhiji believed in the ultimate goal of man or human birth i.e. *Self*

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<sup>1</sup> Sinha, G K. (1998). *Gandhian Thought in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Cited in Pandey J.(Ed.).*Gandhi and 21<sup>st</sup> Centry* . New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, p.94

*realization*<sup>2</sup> Self realization is possible if values are generated through moral and spiritual education.

Gandhiji gave importance on the self-purification to make a balanced blend between right thought and right action. Perception, observation and contemplation of truth are the way of realisation of the totality of reality. Gandhian constructive work aims at removing disparity at social, political, economic and spiritual level. He gave emphasis on reshaping education at grass root levels for bringing movement in constructive work. Gandhiji believes in absolute oneness of humanity and it is possible through self-realization and if 'Sarvodaya' is materialized. 'Sarvodaya stands for the emancipation, the uplift and the elevation of all.'<sup>3</sup>

Chakrabarti (1992) mentioned that Humanism is the real identity of man. It is the inner awakening of human consciousness and dedication to the welfare of mankind. It makes an introspective approach to Gandhian viewpoints on education as a purified process of self enrichment to forge ahead in the quest for true humanism. With the advancement of science and technology man has reached today at the zenith of Flourish and Perish.<sup>4</sup> Man has been dominated by manmade machines. Human imagination is ruthlessly toyed with automation, super computerization and mega machines. Society a composite mixture of nuclear families has become robotized.

Development of 3Hs-Head, Heart and Hands through education-the real essence of humanism has lost its importance. The principle of equality is one of the fundamental aspects of Humanism. Self-dependence through the use of spinning wheel (Charkha) accelerates true humanism. Self-purification is a great humanistic force is the end to reach the farthest limit of humility. Self-purification the observance of the law of 'Ahimsa' being highly infectious leads to the purification of one's surroundings.<sup>5</sup> Ideal humanism is soaked in the stream of love, affection, faith and empathy. Gandhian Humanism is the reflection of '*Basudhaibva Kutumbakam*' lies in

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<sup>2</sup> Bharati, K.S. (1991). *The social Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*. New Delhi: Concept publishing company, p.104

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.134

<sup>4</sup> Chakrabarti ,M.(1992). *Gandhian Humanism*. New Delhi: Concept publishing company, p.11

<sup>5</sup> *Gandhi, M.K. (1959). An Autobiogrhy*. Ahmedabad: Navajiban Publshing House, PP.370-371.

endearing all irrespective of caste, creed, colour, community, race and religion. Self less serving to humanity is the serving to God. In the ocean of lives life is where there is love, life without love is death.<sup>6</sup>

The quality of detachment, purity of thought and heart, loving sacrifice of one's little self interest are the strategies of Gandhian humanism. Right type of education on the Gandhian view points is the source of global humanism and welfare of the humanity. Gandhian humanistic approach, the source of human values, could be the guiding principle to impart right type of education (*sa vidya ya vimuktya*) to our future generation for saving mankind from the onslaught of global terrorism, violence and erosion of values of life. Gandhian humanism is to be empowered with the weapon of self-restraint.<sup>7</sup>

*Reading Gandhi* edited By Surjit Kaur Jolly Comprising of sixteen articles , among those 'Hind Swaraj' and 'Sarvodaya Philosophy' of Anil Datta mishra, 'The Critique of modernity with Special reference to Bhiku parekh of Jainarain Sharma, 'An alternative Modernity with reference to hardiman' of R. P. Mishra, 'Gandhi and Women' of S. K. Jolly, 'Gandhi's View of Swaraj' of Ashu Pasricha, 'Relevance of Gandhism' of Jita Mishra and 'Gandhi on Religion 'of Anju jhamb are related to the area of research.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the world is growing more and more corrupt and inhuman every day. Humanity is undergoing a phase of moral collapse and ethical Nihilism. Mahatma Gandhi, a multifaceted genius, served the humanity an unprecedented new blue print and alternative views to save the humanity in the era of mad rush for power and material gain.

Gandhian principle on education, religion, economy construction of society and politics provide a new ray of hope and it becomes a global necessity for peace, prosperity, security, freedom, harmony and above all the survival of humanity on this planet keeping pace with sustainable development. His philosophy of 'Swaraj', 'Satyagraha' 'Sarvodaya' is the source of unity of mankind. His thought of social and economic equality serves for the domestic and international harmony. He emancipated the Indian tradition of 'Bhakti', asceticism, self-sacrifice, self-less

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<sup>6</sup>Prabhu, R. K., parbhu U.R., & Rai, U.R. (1945). *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*.(compiled), London: Oxford University Press, P.71.

<sup>7</sup> Chakrabarti M. (1992).*Gandhian Humanism*, New Delhi, Concept publishing company, p.25.

service, truth and non-violence which is the guiding principle of human welfare and stability of mankind. All these are possible if value based education is arranged and imparted in school education.

Anil Dutta Mishra in Sarvodaya Philosophy mentioned that ‘Sarva’ means all and ‘Udaya’ means rising. ‘Sarvodaya’ means rising of all or the welfare of all. The word appeared in the form of the title for the Gujarati translation of John Ruskin’s book entitled ‘Unto the Last’.<sup>8</sup> Sarvodaya implies the participation of all kinds of people irrespective of class, caste, creed and religion. It stands for the blossoming of all faculties-physical, mental and spiritual of the human being. It is the full realization of the human faculties of the human soul.<sup>9</sup>

Janardan Pandey has shown in his book *Gandhi and 21<sup>st</sup> Century* the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi and all the articles of this book show that Twenty First century is concerned with environmental challenges and sustainable development on which Gandhi led stress in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. His ideals of Non-violence, Truth, Equality, Universal brotherhood, Decentralized Democracy, Socialism, and Secularism and above all his idea of education could guide the crises ridden world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. ‘The world as a whole has never been so challenged as it today’.<sup>10</sup> Intellectual confusion, Mass unemployment, Environmental pollution, poverty, violence, lawlessness all these multidimensional crises of the present century has caused man ceased to be exist. Spiritual nature of man is overlooked today having advance knowledge of science and technology. Sophisticated computer technology has brought material progress but spiritual perfection the gal of entire mankind can be realized only through the life of moral action. Gandhi rejects any religious doctrine that does appeal to reason and is in conflict with morality.<sup>11</sup> The articles ‘ Gandhian Human Civilization in the Twenty –First Century’, ‘ Role of women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century on Gandhian Lines’, ‘Gandhian Thought in the twenty first Century’, ‘ Man Machine dilemma and Gandhian View of Sustainable development’ open a new horizon in realizing the significance of Gandhian views in socio- economic and educational scenario.

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<sup>8</sup> Mahajan Mani, P. and Bharati, K. S. (1987). *Foundations of Gandhian thought*. Nagpur: Dattsons, p.68.

<sup>9</sup> Sharma, B.S. (1960). *The Philosophical Basis of Sarvodaya*. Gandhi Marg, Vol. 4. No.3, p.259

<sup>10</sup>Conro Dona, B. (1990). *The church Awakening to the Global environmental Crisis in America, February 17,P.149*

<sup>11</sup>Bose, N. K. (1948). (ed). *Selection from Gandhi* .Ahmedabad, Navajiban Publishing House, p.223

Dash and Dash (2009) mentioned that the immediate aims of education are character building thorough community centered education, self-supporting aspects of education. Social aims and cultural aims are also given importance. The most attractive aspect 'problem of sex-education' is shown as an integral part of education. The main features of Basic Education particularly the selection of curriculum is related to the research area. Stages of basic Education, causes of failure of basic Education and the details of Naitalim Education are reflected in this chapter. Naturalistic, Idealistic and pragmatic tendency in Gandhian Education is given emphasis in this book.<sup>12</sup>Dr. M. S. Patel stated in his article 'The Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi' that Gandhi's 'educational philosophy as naturalistic in setting, idealistic in aims and pragmatic in method' Dr. R. S. Pani mentioned in Educational ideas and Ideals of Gandhi and Tagore that Mahatma Gandhi synthesized these three important philosophies and brings a harmonious blend of these diverse called 'eclecticism'.

Gandhi's views on education were the outcome of his lifetime training, experience, and experimentation of the basic scheme of education at the Tolstoy Farm, the Sabarmati Ashram and the Satyagraha Ashram.<sup>13</sup>

K.D. Gangrade mentioned in his book *Gandhi's Autobiography: Moral lessons* that 'My Experiment with Truth' the autobiography of M. K. Gandhi has attracted worldwide attention for the progression of human soul. He tried to look at men and matters from an ethical, moral and spiritual point of view. Still we gloat over such endearing concepts such as 'global human family', 'global village', 'world without boundaries', 'warless World'. Though the physical boundaries are dismantled, mental and psychic boundaries prevent the rich nations from sharing their excess wealth for the welfare of the less privileged humanity. Here the author has shown in his paper that Gandhi, an uncompromising experimenter tested his ideas in the laboratory of his own life in order to gain insights and true knowledge keeping men as the prime concern and no amount of criticism, jealousy, ignorance could efface the importance of his experiments. Each line of his autobiography is a gem of infinite wisdom and his valuable lessons appear to be the

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<sup>12</sup> Dash, B. N., & Dash, N. (2009). *Thoughts and Theories of Indian educational thinkers*. Delhi: South Anarkali, Dormant Publishers and Distributors, p 145

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147

guiding principles of contemporary society. Professor K.D. Gangrade narrates that Gandhi's experiment offer to each individual in the moral reconstruction of our society along Gandhian lines. Dinabandhu Dehury mentioned in the article *Mahatma Gandhi's contribution to Education* that the views of Gandhi on education allows the mind, health hand and eyes to work simultaneously resulting in harmonious well balance personality. Gandhian view points in this regard mentioned in this paper is related to the area of research.

Belo Mehra in his paper *Aims of True Education: Sri Aurobinda and Mahatma Gandhi* have shown the key similarities and differences between Sri Aurobindo's and Mahatma Gandhi's approaches to Education are critically examined to show their social relevance. This paper is an attempt to understand Gandhi's vision for education in the light of Sri Aurobindo's approach to education. According to Gandhi 'self realization' is the sunambonum of life and education. The real aims and objectives can be realized this paper. Social aim of education is clearly defined in this paper. The nature spiritual education is also highlighted in this paper. Psychic and spiritual education is categorically emphasized in this paper. This comparative study will reveal the effective nature of education for the humanity.

Dr. K. Rao in his paper *Educational Philosophy of Mahatma and Swami Vivekanand: A comparative study* mentioned that the educational philosophy of Swami Vivekanand and Mahatma Gandhi has shown that both thinkers were human lover. Moral and character building education according to them is the ideals of man making education. Both of them proposed activity oriented education and that could be the insurance of unemployment. Gandhiji believed in child centered education. The comparative study of this paper will help to realize the essence of Gandhian view points on education.

V. N. Rajshekharan Pillai in his paper *Gandhi's Concept of Education and its Relevance in the Present Day* discussed that the relevance of Gandhisim in the cyber age. To M. K. Gandhi education is for life, through life and throughout life. 'Naitalim' or the new education was expected to provide healthy relationship between the village and city for eradication poisoned relationship between the classes. This paper shows that Gandhiji wanted self-supported work oriented education to eliminate the socio-economic imbalances in Indian society. The highest development of mind and soul is needed to instill courage and self-reliance in the individual. The scholar shows in his paper that Gandhi's Scheme of education was nationalist in setting, idealist

in nature and pragmatic on one hand, social in purpose and spiritual in intent. Gandhi's view points and values are assessed in this paper.

### **Review by the Scholars abroad:**

Mahatma Gandhi advocated his educational thought that teaches to follow the Truth and Non-violence. He advocated 'Satyagraha' as a means of fighting against injustice of all kinds. His thought and philosophy had a global appeal when it was seen that non-violent resistance was used by Norwegians during the Second World War; by the people of Czechoslovakia in 1948 and the poles in the 1970s. Martin Luther King followed the Gandhian method when he fought for equal status for the blacks in the USA. He put down six principles of non-violence in his book *Stride towards Freedom*. King and his colleagues named the Education Fund as the Gandhian Society for human Rights. Inspired by King Luther an institute in Atlanta (Georgia, USA) where Non-violent method of policing is taught to police personnel.<sup>14</sup>

Nelson Mandela consciously adopted a policy of national conciliation in the spirit of Gandhi. The concept of *Shanti Sena* inspired the west for a Global International Peace Force and it came into existence when Hague appeal for peace in 1999. The Tian-An Men Square movement in China in 1989 was non-violent. Gene Sharp, an American professor specializing in Gandhian methods, has shown that in different parts of the world non-violent struggle has become popular to resist against foreign aggression.<sup>15</sup>

Aldous Huxley mentioned that Gandhi's idea on *Swaraj* stands for political freedom and freedom from economic deprivation. Gandhi's doctrine of Trusteeship was a novel idea to resolve the rich-poor classification. It encouraged the Bhoodan Movement by his disciple Vinoba Bhave. Swaraj also emphasized on self-control-the value based education for character building.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Paige, G.D., (2002). *Non-killing Global Political Science*. New Delhi: Gandhi Media Centre.

<sup>15</sup> Gene Sharp, 'The Political Development of Non-violent Struggle: Past and Future', paper presented at workshop at Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, New Delhi, September 18-19, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Huxley, A. (1946). *Science, Liberty and Peace*, New York: Harper&Row,

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century modern world is facing unprecedented crises and violence has replaced the force of love. So the question arises whether Gandhian thought is relevant today. Education on Gandhian line enhances self-restraint against materialization. But in the process of modernization, some traditions persist and some undergo changes. Tradition may become the instrument of modernization. There is no complete divorce between tradition and modernity. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi India's traditions were re-furnished and mobilized. He did not reject rational and scientific approaches to problems 'so long as they accorded with his moral principles' admitted David Hardiman.<sup>17</sup> A few years ago more than 60 Nobel Prize winners expressed concern over the world crises and considered Gandhian thought as the ray of hope of humanity. Albert Einstein the greatest scientist of the last century told about it is irrelevant particularly in the present scenario. V. S. Naipal in his classic work 'India: A wounded civilization' mentioned, 'No Government can survive on Gandhian fantasy; and the spirituality.....has soured more obviously into the nihilism that it always was,' Anthony Parel opined, 'his theory is also closely tied to such modern '<sup>18</sup>

Ronald Terchek, J. mentioned in *Gandhi Struggle for Autonomy* that his reconceptualization of autonomy and equality, allied as they are with community, duty, and cohesion, are oppositional to modern ones. 'Gandhi seeks to complicate modernity and rob it of its certainty.'<sup>19</sup>

According to E. M Forster Gandhiji would be considered the greatest man of our century. Dr.J.H. holms described Gandhiji as 'the greatest Indian since Gautama the Budha and the greatest man since Jesus Christ.' His greatness lay in his thought, achievement and in his character for his self-less devotion to the mankind. 'Truth' and 'non-violence' which he had preached and practiced in his life was a new philosophy. He rejected material progress as it leads to self-annihilation and accepted moral forces for the liberation of mind. This book is the source of Gandhi's views on moral, social, political, and spiritual affairs.. This book helps to understand his religion of humanity and purity of thought that reflected in his educational views. This book is a systematic collection of Gandhiji's thought on truth, non-violence, *satyagraha*, love, faith, Non-violence, labour, *Naitalim* education and so on. Gandhi's opinion on '*Naitalim*' education, female

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<sup>17</sup> Hardiman, D. (2003). *Gandhi in His Time and Ours*, New Delhi, Permanent Black, 203 p.77

<sup>18</sup> Parel, Anthony J. (1997). (ed). *Hind Swaraj and other writings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>19</sup> Ronald Terchek, J. (2000). *Gandhi Struggle for Autonomy*. New Delhi: Visitor Publications,p. 78

education and sex education are described in this book and it is shown that mere literacy is not education. True education can come only through proper exercise and training of bodily organs. To Gandhiji a harmonious development of body, mind and soul is true education. 'Naitalim' is a new training- a blend and integration of craft, art, health and education. These views reflected in this book will show a new dimension to the area of research.

**Conclusion:** In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the world is growing more and more corrupt and inhuman every day. Humanity is undergoing a phase of moral collapse and ethical Nihilism.<sup>20</sup> Mahatma Gandhi, a multifaceted genius, served the humanity an unprecedented new blue print and alternative views to save the humanity in the era of mad rush for power and material gain. Gandhian principle on education, religion, economy construction of society and politics provides a new ray of hope and it becomes a global necessity for peace, prosperity, security, freedom, harmony and above all the survival of humanity on this planet keeping pace with sustainable development. His philosophy of 'Swaraj', 'Satyagraha' 'Sarvodaya' is the source of unity of mankind. His thought of social and economic equality serves for the domestic and international harmony. He emancipated the Indian tradition of 'Bhakti', asceticism. Self-sacrifice, self-less service, truth and non-violence are the guiding principle of human welfare and stability of mankind. All these are possible if value based education is arranged and imparted in school education.

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<sup>20</sup> Jolly, S.K. (2006).(ed.).*Reading Gadhi*.New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company

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