

Vocationalization of education : Gandhian Views and the development of Life skills at Secondary level.

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Abstract:

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' 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 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. But it is unfortunate that general education can not fulfill these objectives. So education is to be vocationalized. To design the curriculum of Secondary education vocational components have been given more emphasis in our educational planning. 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. According to P. Drucker human beings become resources only when they are trained, developed and attracted to productive work. Personal development through productive work and vocation oriented education is ultimately the cause of social welfare and national development. The views of Mahatma Gandhi on Vocational education may be inculcated to make Secondary education of our country more effective for the all round development of the student keeping views of MDG.

Key Words: WBBSE(West Bengal Board of Secondary Education),WHO (World Health Organization), MDG(Millennium Development Goal)

Introduction: In a democratic country the main aim of education is to satisfy the need and demand of its vast bulk of citizens and to lead the country towards a sustainable progress. In this context, the aim of education of a democratic country is four folded-i) development of self-dependency and swadeshism ii) development of social, cultural and personal values iii) development of body and mind and economic development. Vocational education has been incorporated in school syllabus and has been dealing directly the forth aim in particular and all other aims in general. The present Indian education system owes its origin to Lord Macauley who simply wanted to produce an army of clerks for carrying out routine day-to-day administrative work for the British rulers. Now it has been realized that this 'single track' education is no more adequate for the coming generations. It should be multi-tracked to cope up the demand of the present generations and should be related to productivity. Basic education advocated by Mahatma Gandhi pronounced the same thing that education would lead a harmonious development of life. It is because the absence of productive work makes a student physically weak and virtually unfit for life. The Ishwarbhai Patel Committee (1978) strongly recommended Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW) which occupied the central place in school curriculum.

Vocationalisation of education argues for introducing practical subjects in Secondary schools to lead the general education related to productivity and to make attitudinal adjustments in students to enter into the world of work. UNESCO in its 1974 recommendation defined vocational education as "a comprehensive term embracing those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, undertaking and knowledge relating to occupations in the various in the various sectors of economic and social life. In West Bengal Vocational education has been introduced both in secondary and higher secondary level to reach the objectives by the WBBSE.

Objectives of Vocationalization:

Vocationalisation of education stands on a high pitch of education with the following objectives of education.

- i) To bring attitudinal change in students towards manual work
- ii) To make the children acquaint to the world of work
- iii) To make them aware of the social problems and community service
- iv) To enable them for creative self-expression

v) To bring a ray of hope for low intelligent students. Students of low intelligence if failed to continue education further, may at least find some productive work to do and acquire education integrated to it and thereby drop out may be controlled.

vi) To bridge the gulf existed in the society. Liberal education increases the social distance between the elite class and the rest classes whereas vocationalisation of education tries to minimize it.

vii) To make them aware of the social problems and community service

viii) To make students economically self-sufficient and self-reliant

Measures for Making Education Vocationalized:

The following measures can be taken to make education vocationalized.

1. Diversification of Secondary Curriculum: Students should get an opportunity to study subjects according to their own interest, aptitude, ability and capacity. Diversification of curriculum will facilitate the students to choose their subjects according to their own will.

2. Opening of Multi-purpose School: A multi-purpose school enables students of various talents and aptitudes to excel in their own fields. In this school various avenues are open for students and they are going to choose the one of their choice.

3. Guidance Movement: There should be a massive and wide spread guidance movement to enable the students to choose the vocation of their choice as per their interest, aptitude and capacity.

4. Introduction of work education in school curriculum: As work education is directly related to work experience and productivity, steps should be taken to make it essential element in secondary school curriculum.

5. Scanning of Manpower Needs: There should be a comprehensive search for man power shortage areas and accordingly courses are to be opened up to suffice the shortage.

Vocational Education at Secondary Level:

Vocational education and training is multi-sectoral in nature. Each ministry and department in central as well as State govt. is responsible for man power development in this particular sector. So the curricula of schools and colleges are designed accordingly. The vocationalization programme at Secondary level aims at developing skilled man power through diversified courses to meet the requirements of mainly the unorganized sector. The aim is to introduce a large number of self-employment oriented courses to reduce aimless pursuit of Secondary education and thereby reduce pressure from the tertiary education. In 1989-90 there were more than 150 courses in different states covering the areas of agricultural,

business and commerce, engineering and technology, health and paramedical, home science and humanities.

Various Vocational Training Programmes:

At present the key approach of the Govt. had been to offer accreditation to a variety of existing training institutions throughout the country to run various vocational courses. In West Bengal most of the following vocational courses are included in school curriculum

Secondary Level

- a) Typewriting
- b) Stenography
- c) Secretarial Practices
- d) Electronics
- e) Refrigeration
- f) Plumbing
- g) Computer operating
- h) Architectural Draftsmanship
- i) Publishing
- j) Dress making
- k) Hair and Skin Care
- l) Fruit & Vegetable Preservation

National Education Policy-1979&1986 and Vocational Education:

It was the recommendation of NPE-1979 that streams in secondary education should have strong vocational component in the curricula and should be diversified to satisfy the needs of students. Vocationalization of secondary education will have to be laid through socially useful productive work with accent on practical work as an integral component of elementary school curriculum. The vocational education spectrum will consist of a range of knowledge and skills, training in technologies and other practical work for building the capacity self-employment. Vocationalization for self-employment should be reckoned with the need for supplementary inputs like credit, market, etc. and should also aim at extending the scope of possibilities of effective tie-up with the district industrial centers and other institutions being set up in the country. Health related vocational courses should be introduced to ensure the commitment of the individual to family and community health. Similar vocational courses based on Agriculture, Marketing and Social sciences are to be introduced to develop attitudes, knowledge and skills

for entrepreneurship and self-employment. Non-formal, flexible and need based vocational programmes will also be made available to neoliterates, youth who have completed primary education, school drop-outs and persons engaged in work and unemployed.

Gandhian Views of development through Vocational Education:

In the year 1937 Mahatma Gandhi brought forth an argument for making education craft based and it was supported by Dr. Jakir Hussain Committee in Wardha Scheme. His Basic education was the process of man making and character building as it was craft centric in the form of manual and productive work integrally related to general streams of education. It has the specific goal of village development and making the learners self-sufficient. 'Gandhiji believed in the ultimate goal of man or human birth i.e. *Self realization*'¹ Self realization is possible if values are generated through moral and spiritual education. 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.'² His Basic education based on the development of 3Hs (Head, Hand and Heart) had these values within. Self-dependence through the use of spinning wheel (Charkha) accelerates true humanism. Self-purification is a great humanistic force achieved through manual work or Hands on activities 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.³ Ideal humanism is soaked in the stream of work, self-less service to others through Socially Useful Productive works, real love, affection, faith and empathy. Gandhian Humanism is the reflection of '*Basudhaibva Kutumbakam*' lies in 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 work and love, life without work and love is death.⁴ The man making and character building education is possible if education is vocationalized and harmonized with the blend of work. The objective of education as Gandhi proposed is not to create mere employment opportunity but for self-dependence. His views were not limited

¹ Bharati, K.S. (1991). *The social Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi Concept* publishing company, New Delhi: p.104

² Ibid. p.134

³ Gandhi, M.K. (1959). *An Autobiography*. Ahmedabad: Navajiban Publishing House, PP.370-371

⁴ Prabhu, R. K., Parbhu U.R., & Rai, U.R. (1945). *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, (compiled), London: Oxford University Press, , P.71

within the boundary of economic goal. His plan of education was to make the child a complete human being developing all life skills. So he told that students should not set the economic goal. The goal of education is to make a good human being who will be self dependent. 'Is the goal of the education that you are receiving that of mere employment whether in the Govt. departments or other departments? If that be the goal of your education, if that is the goal that you have set before yourselves, I feel and I fear that the vision which the poets pictured for himself is far being realized.'⁵

5 Speech at YMCA., Madras, 27 April 1915 (CW13, P 65)

Life skills Through Vocational Education: Life skills include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner. 'Learning by doing' is the principle of making students to gain skills of problem solving, decision making, creative thinking, critical thinking, communication, social awareness, empathy and managing stress. All these life skills are recommended by WHO. Essentially, Vocationalization involves the process of Participatory learning using 4 basic components:

1. Practical activities
2. Feedback and reflections
3. Consolidation and reinforcement
4. Practical application to day to day life challenges

Comments: Vocational education is meant to develop a healthy attitude amongst students towards work and life, to enhance individual employability. It was proposed that vocational courses cover 25 percent of higher secondary students by 2000. The number has been increased tremendously by 2015. Vocational education creates a healthy cooperative atmosphere, national as well as international understanding. Mahatma Gandhi considered craft centric education as an effective agency to develop International understanding. He pleaded that school has a special environment that attributes the highest Truth, Beauty and Goodness. It is through education that the mind of the younger generation will work for the lasting peace in the world. The preamble of the constitution of UNESCO reflected Gandhi's views for world peace and harmony. The preamble says, "equal opportunities for education for all, in the

unrestricted pursuit of objective truth and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between people and employ these means for the purpose of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other lives." Vocational education has such characteristics of its own. He was fully aware of the problems of Indians and promoted education on job-orientation, character formation, social development and values generation. At the same time he was aware of the global problems. Vocationalization of education is the way of creating a self-sufficient new world order based on self-reliance, Truth, tolerance, peace, non-violence and global harmony. He says, 'Education must be of a new type for the sake of the creation of a new world.' A new world based on mutual cooperation, mutual understanding can be created through the introduction of production oriented education. Students while engaged in productive work will be able to learn self-sufficiency, dignity of labour, mutual co-operation, social awareness, mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence of all living beings. So the curriculum of Secondary education of all Boards of our country may be designed to make the secondary education vocationalized.

"We are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the foundation of life. Many of the things we need, can wait. The children cannot. Right now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made and his senses are being developed to him we cannot answer "Tomorrow". His name is "Today"

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