

PRESENT DAY RELEVANCE OF GANDHI'S NAI-TALIM FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: Mahatma Gandhi the father of the nation was a great educational thinker and his philosophy of education is still discoursed almost in all the countries. On 31st July 1937, he published an article in Harijan regarding his thought on Nai- Talim/Basic Education and on 22nd and 23rd October in the same year based upon his article Gandhi organized an All India National Education Conference. This conference is also known as Wardha Education Conference which highly focused on that education is incomplete if it does not have any input for the vocational development of the students. Gandhi said that knowledge and work should not be separated. Both are inter-linked and interdependent. Education is the most powerful tool to inculcate the value of dignity of labour among youths and to develop various skills. So, naturally educational institutions, either schools or universities have a great role to play towards the country by transforming all the children into skilled man power. In this background, emphasising the tremendous need of Mahatma Gandhi's thought on Nai-Talim or Basic Education this study has been undertaken. The objectives of the study are - to make introspection to the various skill development and value promoting principles in Gandhi's Nai-talim and to study the relevance of Gandhi's Nai-talim for rural development in present India.

Keywords: Nai-Talim, Youths, Skill, Present, India.

1. INTRODUCTION AND NEED OF THE STUDY:

"Where there is rural wellbeing, there is universal prosperity"- M.K.Gandhi

At present, Indian education has not been able to give right direction to our youths and it does not provide them opportunities for their all round development or make them self reliant. We have thousands and thousands of educated youths in our country, like engineering degree holders, MBA-MCA degree holders, MA, M.Sc., M.Com, etc. but sad to say that only 27% youths possess the employability skill (Report of ASSOCHAM Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry in India) . It means our education system is producing degree holder only, not skilled manpower. That's why India adopted National Skill Development Policy in 2009 for faster economic growth in the country. In this Policy, no newness is seen; it is just an extension of Gandhi's *Nai-talim* (basic education) which mostly addresses the vocational spirit of education. Now a days the students may pass and earn degrees with first class or higher division or may acquire the highest degree, but even though they do not become self reliant and unable to face the challenges. We all know that education is the most powerful tool to inculcate the value of dignity of labour among youths and to develop various skills. So, naturally educational institutions, either schools or universities have a great role to play towards the country by transforming all the children into skilled man power. For this purpose and to overcome the frustrated condition of

educated unemployed youths of India, there is the necessity of such education which was predicted by Mahatma Gandhi through 'Nai-Talim'. Basic education, if it is imparted properly makes students employable or skilled and sustainable in true sense. Gandhi's emphasis on decentralization, community based economics; self-sufficiency, handicrafts, rural development, and use of low capital intensive appropriate technology indicate his vision for a self-sufficient economy. As per Gandhi's philosophy of education, knowledge cannot be separated from work. Both are inter-linked and interdependent. Skill development should not be thought or provided in isolation since it is means for promoting productivity by generating employment growth, decent work and ultimately for the promotion of economic and social development of a country. Therefore, present study is undertaken considering very important and emphasis has been given on what can be incorporated to present day education system from the various skill development and value promoting principles of Nai-talim.

Statement of the Problem:

In Boramani village of Sholapur district in Maharashtra, "Mahatma Gandhi Global Village" endeavors to provide education according to the principles of Mahatma Gandhi, which shows effective and positive results among the children. So, if it is possible in one state, why Indian Government cannot adopt certain steps to introduce it again according to the changing demands of the society. In this regard, a study on the relevance of Gandhi's Nai-talim is considered to be important and the problem has been stated as – "*Present Day Relevance of Gandhi's Nai-Talim for Rural Development*"

Objectives of the Study:

Present study is purely conceptual and undertaken on the basis of the following objectives-

- (a) To make an introspection to the various skill developmental principles in Gandhi's Nai-talim.
- (b) To study the present day relevance of Gandhi's Nai-talim for skill development in rural India.

2. CONCEPT OF NAI-TALIM

Nai Talim, the concept literally means 'New Education'. It is a holistic one where all aspects of the individual—intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual—are cultivated in a curriculum.

Fundamentals of Basic Education:

Basic education scheme of Mahatma Gandhi is deeply rooted to his eleven *Vows or* eleven principles which are – Truth, Non-violence, Non-stealing, Self-discipline, Non-possession, Bread labour, Control of the palate, Fearlessness, Use of locally made goods, Removing Untouchability and equality of all religions. So, these eleven vows lead his thought on Nai-talim and the fundamentals of Nai –Talim or Basic education are-

1. All kinds of education must be self supporting in nature so that it can meet the Tuition fees.
2. In this education system, the skill of fingers is utilized up to the final stage.
3. Every day during the school time, all the pupils skillfully work with objects for some period.
4. The education must be imparted through the medium of the regional language.
5. In this education, there is no room for giving sectional religious training. Fundamental universal ethics are given full scope.
6. This education, whether it is confined to children or adults or male or female will find its way to the homes of pupils.

The introduction of such manual training through basic education will serve a double purpose in India. It will pay for the educations of our children and teach them an occupation on which they can earn their bread. Such education system must make our children self reliant and inculcate the value of respect for manual labour.

3. RESEARCH APPROACH UNDERTAKEN

Qualitative research approach has been applied in the present study. Content analysis method has been undertaken to lead the study in proper direction.

Skill Development and Value Promotion Principles in Gandhi's *Nai-Talim*:

Gandhi stressed that bookish knowledge is not sufficient for personality development unless skills are promoted. This practice needs to be retained from the beginning of education that is at school stage. Gandhi's *takli* and *charkha* were symbols of rural/village economy which could be strengthened by Nai-talim. Not only because of production utility but also because of its value appealing skill generation attribute Gandhiji had given so much importance to the manual work in Basic Education. The various skill development and value based principles in Nai-talim/Basic Education are-

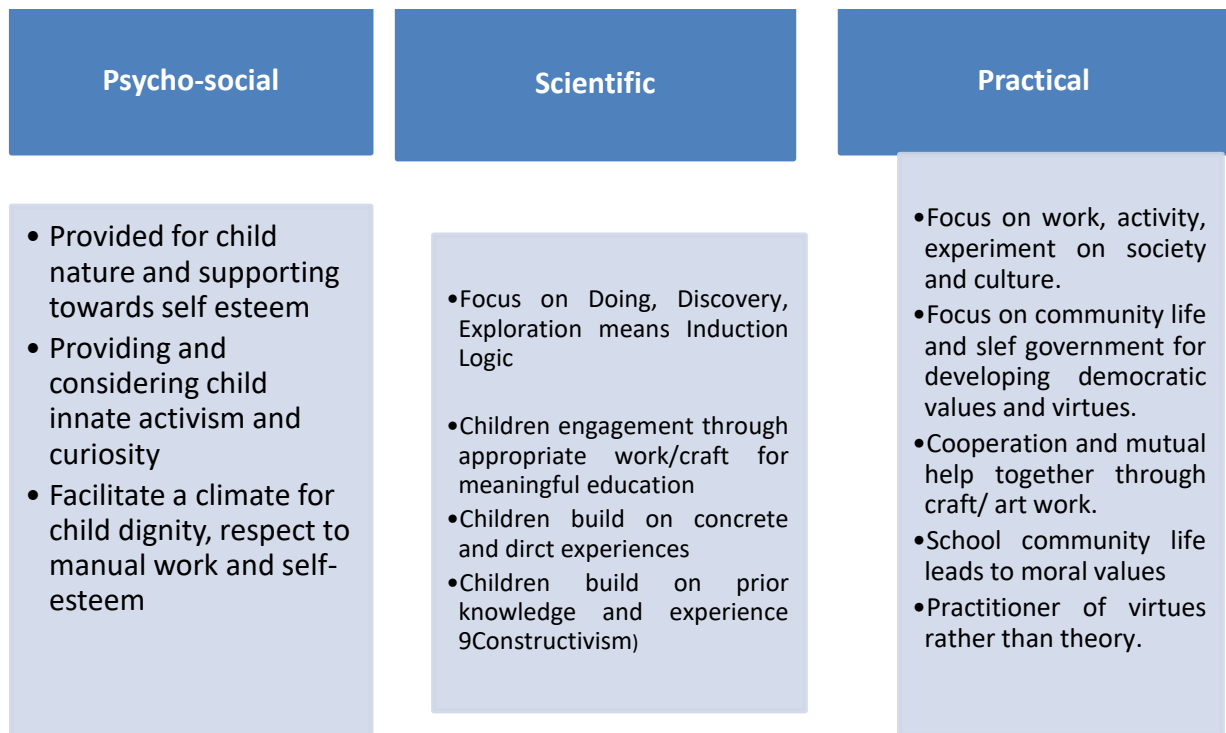
1. Manual work in Nai-talim follows the principle of hard work, patience, courage, self-confidence and self-dependence. So, through craft-centered education all these qualities are promoted in children.
2. Skill development is not separate from knowledge acquisition process, means education must be able to enhance skills to do various work or to enhance employability.
3. One of the prominent aims of Basic education is liberating individuals from economic and psychological dependence. It automatically leads the pupils to follow the principle of self sufficiency through craft-centered education.
4. Principle of social revolution by engaging students in community work, participation on rural Panchayati system and minimizing the unnatural division between haves and have-nots.
5. Principle of developing multiple-intelligence for skilled workforce. As for example, by *takli* –spinning a student will not only gain knowledge of varieties of cotton but also of different soil-types and of basic arithmetic.
6. Team spirit, sincerity, respect for manual labour, feeling of being mutually helpful- all these are essential values for skill development and Nai-talim is a complete education system from this angle also.

4. PRESENT DAY RELEVANCE OF GANDHI'S NAI-TALIM FOR RURAL INDIA

Before discussing the present day relevance of Gandhi's educational thought, it will be better to make a comparison between the existing educational approach and the approach existed in Nai-Talim. So, it is shown with the help of the following table-

Existing Educational Approach	Nai-Talim Approach
1.It is textbook and abstract words dominated system	1. It was a craft or art based education system
2. knowledge through abstraction is mostly emphasized.	2. Concrete and active learning method is highly practised.
3. Children engaged in learning through reading books and listening to teachers.	3. Lab method and experimentation is primary condition of learning.
4. Learning is passive by nature for children	4. Learning of children is active since they participate in field work/ group work or community service
5. Individualistic learning rather than social which makes people selfish.	5. Sharing and supporting each other and emotional bondage is there.
6. completely materialistic	6. It is both materialistic as well as spiritual in means and end
	7. Knowledge through physical experience and craft inspires for cooperative labour resulting in the virtue of love, peace, discipline and truth.

The Psycho-Social, Scientific & Practical Values of Nai-talim is presented with the following chart-



Now a day the youths pass the graduate examination with first division or acquire the M.Phil. / Ph.D. degree, but still they do not become reliant and are not able to shape their future. In such a case, the education or degrees earned by them are meaningless or useless. Due to an increasing population and competition there is no prospect for the young graduates who acquire only degree or degrees. Many of them have no hope for a bright future. The present education without life skill produced only literate unemployed youth force without confidence, which could not face the challenges. It appears that education today has failed in giving any direction.

• **Case 1. L. Rajbongshi, who is a highly educated youth from Baska district. Recently he has completed his MA degree with 1st class. But he goes for wages with carpenter as a helper just at the Rs. 200/- per day. It is a heart-breaking example of rural educated youths.**

Again, Gandhiji said that it is crime or an offence in the name of education to make or produce merely a literary and unfit boys and girls for the society.

It is a fact that the present system of education has been defective for the last many decades. After independence, many committees & commissions have been formed, but how much improvement has been done in the name of reformation of education is a big question for all.

The youths who belong to agriculture back ground (received degree or not) they also want to work or serve in the cities on fewer salaries, which could not meet their day today needs. So, there is drainage of youths from rural villages towards cities. This situation affects not only on the economy of villages or rural areas but also hinders in the development of urban planning or urban economy.

In addition to this Gandhi said education should include moral, physical and mental development of a person. The present system of education is full of anomalies and that is why education has not been able to give right direction to our youth and does not provide opportunities for their all round development or to make them self reliant. So, if we do not awaken at the right time and take efforts to bring changes in our defective educational system according to the views of Mahatma Gandhi, the situation would become so serious that we would not be able to manage it forever.

5. THE MODEL FOR INCULCATION OF GANDHI'S SKILLS AND VALUES IN PRESENT DAY CHILDREN

Present educational institutions in India are suffering with challenges of value crisis. In order to rescue our education system by overcoming the challenges of values crisis researchers, academicians and educators suggest re-implementing basic education system of Gandhiji. In connection with those suggestions of researchers, following points are added to improve the present day education system by skill development and value promoting activities-

1. Education of Handicraft and training of Co-curricular activities should be given to students scientifically based on ability, interest, social needs scenario and utility rather than artificiality.
2. There is also a need to reorient the teachers, curriculum developers and teacher education institutions in the following directions-
3. *Nai Talim* is to be again designed to produce responsible, empathetic citizens who will look upon all kinds of useful work including manual labour as honorable and dignified in the present society.
4. Re-planning of Education is the urgent need to be undertaken by MHRD keeping in mind the rural Indian population.
5. Visits to village, spending time listening to agriculturists and educating them about the latest agricultural practices should be an integral part of modern education.
6. Another necessity is to invest significant amount of resources (Teacher Educators with Right Attitude) in training all the teachers to make them highly competent and responsive.
7. We have to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitude and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, the educational institution and wider community.
8. Another emphasis that is now needed is a good knowledge of mother tongue. In fact, I feel that we should have primary education in the mother tongue of the children. This will ensure that the concept formation is sound, expression of ideas is refined and a strong foundation for further learning is laid.
9. Handicraft activities must be promoted as per present day need of 21st century society and provision of full training for skill development in teachers and students must be done. Because, only handicraft can bring a harmonious development of hand, head and heart.
10. Vocational Guidance and Career Counselling Programme, Skill Development Programme and courses should be conducted at the post-secondary and higher education level only so that students can become self-reliant, self-sufficient and economically independent in future.
11. By making provision of works like gardening, cleaning, woodwork we must teach our children a respect for manual labour and at the same time for a good exercise of intellectual activities and it will also bring a revolutionary change to our society by developing healthy work culture.
12. Music, craftwork, painting, weaving and driving car etc. should be common subjects irrespective of Gender so that it can reduce gender biasness.
13. Leadership skills can be developed in students by involving them in the activities like team-work, cleaning of public places, use of locally made goods, health & hygiene education and cultural programmes.
14. Learning by Doing, Learning by Experiments and Learning by own experiences should be adopted as the tactics of teaching learning process in schools and colleges for the very purpose of developing innovative/original ideas of children.
15. In order to enlighten mind and to promote spiritual values Mass Prayer Programme should regularly be organized in all schools and colleges.

6. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Following are the major educational implications of the study-

- 1) It will impact on school curriculum and will also develop a positive attitude on youths towards manual labour.
- 2) Second implication of the study is in bringing quality in education in rural areas by adopting learning by doing method.

- 3) Its mandate is to bridge the rural-urban gap and take forward the Gandhian ideal of Gram Swaraj since education is a key element in the rural transformation.
- 4) The rural areas of the world have unharnessed the human resources and potential, hardworking youth and traditional skills. So, with the help of this study an awareness raised for nurturing and creating value-adding enterprises that will in turn create an environment of empowerment.
- 5) In this study, emphasis is given on Nai-Talim's amalgamation aspect of technology, people, traditions, skills and entrepreneurial spirit aimed at achieving sustainable development that is financially viable, socially equitable and eco-friendly component relevant for the present day society.

7. CONCLUSION

Through any kind of activity based education, students learn with joy and in addition to literary knowledge they acquire moral, physical, mental development. It helps them to become self reliant and think to realize the dignity of labour. They not only able to earn their bread but also able to fulfill the obligations of their family and in carving the path of their progress, ultimately they become able to achieve their goal in life. For a democratic society which makes promise to flourish peace, schools and colleges must nurture values of work culture, humanity, righteousness, inclusion, integrity, and empathy. So, there is a need to reintroduce various aspects of the *Nai Talim* scheme of education in all schools in the country.

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