

## GANDHIJI'S CONCEPTION ON WOMEN EDUCATION TO THE GRASSROOTS AND ITS RELEVANCE TODAY

FR.D.JOHN KENNEDY

*“Education enables women to uphold their natural rights. Men and women are complementary to each other. Man is supreme in the outward activities and therefore he should have a greater knowledge thereof. Home life is entirely the sphere of woman and therefore in domestic affairs, in the upbringing and education of children, women ought to have more knowledge. Unless courses of instruction are based on a discriminating appreciation of these basic principles, the fullest life of rural woman cannot be developed”--  
Harijan, 27th February, 1937.*

**Abstract:** Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation, has specific perspectives in every aspect of life such as socio-economic, political and educational scenario. His educational thought is holistic in nature. It leads to the development of all aspects of human personality. In his own words, by education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man. Body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Every school can be made self-supporting; the condition being the state takes over the manufactures of their schools.

**Introduction:** Highest development of the mind and the soul is possible under such a system of education. Only every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as is done today but scientifically, i.e., the child should know the why and the wherefore of every process. This method is being adopted more or less completely wherever spinning is being taught to workers. This method does not exclude a knowledge of history and geography. One imparts ten times as much in his manner as by reading and writing. The signs of the alphabet may be taught later when those pupil has learnt to distinguish wheat from chaff and when he has somewhat developed his or her tastes. This is a revolutionary proposal but it saves immense labour and enables a student to acquire in one year what he may take much longer to learn. This means all-round economy. Of course the pupil learns mathematics whilst he is learning his handicraft. Gandhiji thinks that education in India should have its priority in bringing about a sense of awareness among villagers. The rural people should be given the opportunities to exercise their physical, mental and spiritual power in the course of basic education propagated by him.

**Basic Educational Concepts of Gandhiji:** Gandhi's philosophy of basic education is comprehensive enough because he look upon education as an instrument of socio-economic progress material advancement, political evolution and moral development for individual in society. For him moral literacy did not mean education. He argues that education involves the development of mind and body. It should be a plan to inculcate scientific spirit in them, help them earn and learn, enable them to meet their basic needs, ensure them the use of local resources. Basic education stresses the four-fold development in human personality, namely body, mind, heart and spirit. True education stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical facilities of individual. He differed in his approach to basic education

from that of traditional education which was prevalent at that time.

**Concept of Basic Education:** Gandhi said that the prevailing system of education in India did not cater the needs of Indian society. The ordinary education system cared only for the mind and ignored the development of physical body and soul. In 1937, Gandhi developed a scheme of education based on his own ideas and this scheme is popularly known as National Programme in Basic Education. He presented the salient features of this scheme in the All India National Education Conference held on 22-23 October 1937 at Wardha. The conference was attended by education ministers. A committee was appointed to prepare the detailed syllabus of the basic education scheme under the Chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain. The committee's report contained detailed syllabus of basic education scheme and made valuable suggestions about several aspects, such as training of teachers, supervision, examination, administration etc. He acknowledged the importance of basic education and maintained that it should be free and compulsory to all children as it improves the quality of life. The basic education is ever-changing, ever-new and ever-fresh. While designing basic education for India, Gandhi's concern was for village children who were poor and did not have access to educational facilities. He said: "Basic education is meant to transform village children into model villagers. It is principally designed for them. The inspiration for it has come from the village.

He, however, maintained: Basic education links the children, whether of the cities or the villages, to all that is best and lasting in India. It develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future in the realization of which he or she begins to take his or her share from the very commencement of his or her career in school. The question arises why Gandhi's scheme of Education was called 'basic education'? The reason for

calling the scheme as basic education are the following: (i) It is based on the ancient Indian culture and it lays down the minimum education which every child is entitled to receive without the distinction of caste or creed. (ii) It is intimately related to the basic needs and interests of the child and makes use of his innate potentialities for creative and productive work. (iii) It is closely associated with basic occupation of the community, the child hails from.

According to Gandhi, there are four components of basic education. These are craft, art, health and education. Instead of regarding craft and industry as different from education, he regarded the former as the medium for the latter and he emphasized the need for educating the child through manual work, not as a side activity, but as the prime means of intellectual training.' Giving importance to manual work Gandhi said: Useful manual labour, intelligently performed is the means par excellence for developing the intellect. A balanced intellect presupposes a harmonious growth of body, mind and soul.

An intellect that is developed through the medium of socially useful labour will be an instrument for service and will not easily be led astray or fall into devious paths. Ivan Illich goes a step further and envisages a schooling society where a traditional educational school of brick and mortar would be a thing of the past and the home, farm, the workshop and the factory would take its place "as focal points of life long and practical education". Gunnar Myrdal in his monumental publication, 'Asian Drama', has expressed his definite opinion that "basic oriented primary education could be the ideal solution to the much needed reform of the curriculum and teaching methods in Indian schools. Basic education or Nai Talim is based on the fundamental principle of "learning by doing." He is essentially a doer than a thinker and, therefore, his concept of basic education can be classified as activity method or practical method. It is primarily a method of correlation of book learning, craft and life situations. The teacher-student relationship is very intimate.

The scheme of basic education brings in radical changes in the content of education. The curricula are designed in such a manner as to produce self-reliant and good citizens. It is also formulated to centre around craft activity or productive work useful to the individual as well as the society. Various disciplinary like mathematics, social studies, general science, Hindustani, drawing and music are to be effectively co-ordinated with each other." The basic thrust of the curricula is to closely interlink the physical environment, social environment and craft work and the individual. The craft work is of basic significance because it provides a linkage between the physical environment and social environment. Basic education in India is closely allied to the Indian villages where the spirit of self-activity, self-service, self-knowledge and self-discipline should have through

learn by means of work pattern of education. Gandhi elucidates the point characteristically, it should be borne in mind that this basic education has grown out of the atmosphere surrounding as in the country is in response to it. It is, therefore, designed to cope with that atmosphere. This atmosphere pervades India's seven hundred thousand villages and its millions of inhabitants. Forget them, and you forget India. Lydia is not to be faint in her cities. India has innumerable villages. The cities rose in answer to the requirements of foreign domination. They exist as they were two months ago, far though the foreign rule has disappeared; its influence has not and cannot quite so suddenly.'

Gandhi's basic education is broad based. He wanted education to be free from the narrow limitations of the formal classrooms. He envisages universal and compulsory education for all boys and girls in the country. Education for him should cater to the needs of whole personality: head, heart and hand.

Respect for manual work is another important value that basic education develops on the individual: "Manual training must be given side by side with intellectual training, and that it should have a principal place in national education. The principal means of stimulating the intellect should be manual training." The Gandhi concept of human dignity is centred not on false assumptions on manual labour but on penetrating into the very depth of human life from whatever avenues available to man. He quotes Ruskin's saying: "A life of labour, the life of the tiller of the soil and handicraftsman, is the life worth living. This became a fundamental principle for Gandhi's later pursuits, especially in his Ashram life. Basic education is an education in which the dignity of manual labour is upheld. This is the training that would help the child to organise his own life: "It is to be emphasised that every minute of man's life is to be used in the productive manner." Basic education is in essence on obedience to the law of bread labour in order to bring about a revolution in society. He developed a powerful passion for self-help: 'My passion for self-help and simplicity ultimately expressed itself in extreme forms.' Basic education aims primarily at helping the individual develop this ability of self-reliance in all respects. For him this would mean economic self-reliance. One cannot find anything wrong with students meeting the cost of their education by means of some occupation even in the initial phases of their education. This self-reliance also means physical self-help as found expression in Gandhi's own personal life where he learned to carry out most of his personal work himself.

**Relevance of Basic Education today:** Gandhi's concept of basic education has great significance in the contemporary world. The theory and practice of basic education aims at the evolution of a society based on truth, non-violence, justice and equality. Self-reliant citizen with a well-balanced personality is one of the fundamental goals of basic education. This

also develops a positive attitude of mind through the concept of basic education Gandhi preaches the doctrine of "simple living and high thinking." Manual work and intellectual work on equal terms for the generation of a welfare balanced society. This is a very important aspect of basic education which seems to have a good deal of relevance to existing conditions and societal attitudes towards work in India.

It is Gandhi's belief that a rural fervour in basic education may inculcate in the minds of citizens appropriate work ethics. Mahatma Gandhi is against literary education with English as medium of instruction, which only produces white collar snobs without developing talent and expertise in production. Even after many years of independence rural poverty, hunger and degradation are the bane of Indian society.

Physiologically basic education provides education through a craft by maintaining a creative balance between intellectual development and practical activities." Pedagogically speaking it is more effective than the passive academic education imbibed through books. Basic education develops the faculties of the heart and mind by developing the habit of critical inquiry and judgement in an objective manner." Sociologically it can remove social conflicts and tensions in the society by inculcating a sense of dignity of labour. It can eradicate the social evil of untouchability. Economically it creates productive labour since the emphasis is on job-oriented education. It can also become an instrument for rapid improvement in the standard of living of the people through increased production of goods and services.'

Work experience and work centred education introduced from primary level is a necessary factor in a country like India. It is a welcome development that work experience is now accepted as an integral principle of sound educational system. The Kothari Commission rightly lays emphasis on community learning for community welfare in schools and colleges. This enables individuals to develop a spirit of mutual goodwill and harmony by developing healthy channels of significant participation in school and college community life. Gandhi advocates the creation of a balanced and harmonious social order in which the ethical values of truth and love and without the discrimination of rich and poor. Economic advancement, physical improvement, socio-cultural progress is possible only through reliance on the educational ideas of Gandhi.

**Orientation to the Mass Development:** Mass development means an all-round development of the people of a region. For Gandhi individual development and social progress are interdependent." Gandhi stood for the synthesis of two and wanted a society in which all individuals have to play their part for the good of the whole without losing their individual character. Education in the Gandhi and sense aims at the

development of society. The aim of education primarily adds a great responsibility on the individual who is being educated as well as on the one after educator. This requires great training for individual as part of education. His educational thoughts attach great importance to this goal of education. Gandhi an education focus on attitudinal change of masses. He also wants the education turn itself to the needs of the people at the grass-root level. Educational thus aims at creating in the individual a sincere love and concern for rural India. Gandhi says: If we wish to provide such an education as to become optimum beneficial to the needs of villages, then our educational institutions should be moved over to the villages. We should convert them into schools of training in order to provide teachers practical education according to the needs of villagers. It is not possible to give practical education to teachers based on the needs of the villagers from training schools in citizens

Education as imparted in most cases has become so sophisticated as to include no rural orientation. Education for mass development aims at thus creating in the education a number of socially oriented values. First, love and concern for society and they should identify themselves with the poor and the downtrodden in the country. Education in schools and colleges aims at developing in the individual, a willingness to spend a part of their time for social welfare of others. Gandhi says: "If your education is a substantial one, it should spread its odour in your surroundings. You should everyday utilize a portion of your time in the service of the people round this service can take different forms. It would primarily mean a constant awareness of the presence of the rest of the community and of the needs that the community usually experiences. Gandhi envisages several programmes of social service for mass development students will live in villages during their long vacations; they will organise adult education classes, they will teach the villagers principles of hygiene; ordinary ailments among the villages can be treated by them. They will spread among them the use of the spinning wheel and teach them how to make every minute of their day useful. The Role of Literacy in Mass Education In a country where the rate of illiteracy is very high, such illiteracy leads to ignorance. The only solution of which is free and universal primary education. This Gandhi an dream of free universal primary education has been realised in an independent India only in recent years. It is, therefore, absolutely meaningless to remark that Gandhi is disinterested in literacy or he is simply satisfied with mere attainment of literacy which is, according to him, neither a beginning nor an end of education but only a means to progress in education that again, necessitates advancement in practical training of the head as well as of the hand. Literacy is fundamental to social life. Generally education covered as only one aspect, i.e. Literacy. It

never attempted to harmonise the child's personality by achieving a proper integration of the training of the mind, body and spirit. Our villagers live in utter poverty and backwardness. General education system could not come down to their level and redeems them from the bondages to hard labour and poverty. Gandhi was aware of the condition of man emerging out of present-day education who have absolutely no capacity for suffering and self-denial or even physical forbearance.

Gandhi felt that, India a backward nation in education have great obligations to the nation in this regard. He therefore in all force recommended that education should be made self-supporting. In the July issue of *Hajji* (1937) Gandhi drew up his definition as all-round development. Literacy is not the end of education, not even the beginning. Gandhi could not accommodate the idea that literacy was essentially education. He wanted to begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and by enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus every school could be made self-supporting. Gandhi held that highest development of the mind and the soul was possible under such a system of education. Every handicraft had to be taught not merely mechanically, but in a scientific manner providing the necessary intellectual stimulation. At the same time fundamental literacy is also as important as functional literacy because the second part achieved through the first. Functional literacy reduces the gap between haves and have-nots and between the educated and uneducated.

**Rural Education on the basis of Craft:** Craft is the pivot and centre of Gandhi an education. But it includes literacy education also. HIS educational thought mainly focuses the rural masses. He writes: The hand will handle tools before it draws or traces the writing. The eyes will read the pictures of letters and words as they will know either things in life, the ears will catch the names and the meanings of things and sentences. The whole training will be natural, responsive and therefore the quickest and the cheapest in the land. The children of my school will, therefore, read much more quickly than they will write. They will trace correct figures of the objects they see. If the schools of my conception ever come into being, make bold to say that they will view with the most advanced schools in quickness so far as reading is concerned, and even writing, if it is common ground that the writing must be correct and not incorrect as now in the vast majority of cases.

Education is closely linked with socio-economic development of a nation. Any system of education that does not cater to the needs of a society is meaningless and useless, because of this, his basic education theory at the primary level visualises craft-centred education. He does not intend craft education to be a substitute for book education, but on the contrary, he wants to make it a crucial adjunct to it. Thus, the central

feature of the new scheme is education of the child though a useful productive craft without neglecting literary training. Gandhi holds that the highest development of the mind and the soul is possible under such a system of education. The only condition is that the handicraft should be taught not mechanically but scientifically, i.e. the child should know the why and the wherefore of every process. Things produced in the schools should be marketable articles and should, at least, yield the salary of the teachers. Thus both the teachers and the pupil produce in the very aid of the teaching and learning. In short, it is the scheme of learning through doing and earning while learning.

Gandhi bewailed the state of primary education as, he thought that it was 'positively harmful'. The boys were alienated from their parents and from their traditional occupations. The sole remedy lays in educating them by means of vocation or manual training. "The whole education should be imparted through some handicrafts or industry. Such occupational and craft-centred training of Middle Ages did not serve any concrete educational purpose. His scheme meant the teaching of the whole art and science as a craft and imparting the whole education as a practical training with orientations for adequate intellectual stimulation. Spinning becomes the starting point of a variety of subjects with elementary knowledge in them. He convinced that spinning was the only practical solution considering the grave economic situation in India. The impact of these training Gandhi explained, was enormous. "While the child will be encouraged to spin and help his parents with agricultural jobs, he will also be made to feel that he does not belong only to his parents, but also to the village and to the country, and that he must make some returns to them. Children would be made self-confident by paying for their own education by their own labour. Gandhi calls this his practical religion, the religion of self-help. Making education self-supporting was the true test of its efficiency.

**Education for Health and Hygiene:** India has seven lakh villages. Gandhi was aware of the poor sanitation facilities and health problems of rural people. According to him education means welfare of the people. It had to be integrated with health and sanitation. Education through village sanitation is a difficult affair. The children were given instructions about cleanliness and general sanitation in classes. But the problem lays with adults. They were not willing to do anything to improve their health and sanitation. Health and hygiene given the main thrust by Gandhi's ashrams and hence a number of programmes for the promotion of which. Health programmes in Champaran village in Bihar shows the real situation of rural India. Doctors did not like to work there. It was the time Gandhi's firm commitment raise them from that utter disregard for their own welfare. The medical relief given to them was a



simple affair. "Castor oil and sulphur ointment were the only drugs provided to the volunteers. The villagers were not willing to do anything by themselves and did not undertake to clean their surroundings. The volunteers therefore, concentrated on the village an ideal place to live in. "They swept the roads and the courtyards, cleaned out the wells, filled up the pools nearby, and lovingly persuaded the villagers to raise volunteers from among themselves. It was an effort to concentrate them and train a hygienic Life. Education and health are the two sides of the same coin for Gandhi. Health is the wealth of a society.

**Rural Development and Vocationalisation:** In Gandhi's scheme of basic education, vocational training or work experience is of utmost importance. Vocational training creates the psychology of dignity of manual labour. Gandhi's primary emphasis is on the three H's (Head, Heart and Hand) rather than the three R's (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic).', A harmonious blend of excellence arising out of the trinity of head, heart and hands brings about productive results. He argues for work because it stimulates the individual's mind to think creatively while formal Liberal education leaves him inert. The Kothari Commission also rightly emphasises work experience in education. "We recommend that work experience should be introduced as an integral part of all India general or vocational education. We define work experience as participation in productive work in school, in the home, in a workshop or a farm, in a factory or in any other productive situation. The Kothari Commission only re-emphasises the original position on vocational training and work experience as held by Gandhi. Vocationalization leads to economic self-sufficiency. He believes that the students must be trained to become an earning unit after the completion of his studies. Unemployment problem could be eradicated through need based education. Basic education develop a positive attitude to manual work and intellectual work on equal terms. He believes that a rural fervour in basic education may inculcate in the minds of citizens appropriate work ethics. Gandhiji visualizes this for Indian villages and bring about rural progress and prosperity. He says: "If we want to keep all the seven lakhs of our villages alive, and not only a fraction of them, we have to revive our village handicrafts. And you may be sure that if we can impart scholastic training through those crafts we can bring about a revolution . "The child at the age of 14, that is after finishing a seven years' course, should be discharged as an earning unit the state take charge of the child at seven and returns it to the family as an earning unit. You impart education and simultaneously cut at the root of Vocational education is concerned by Gandhi as the principal means of his most ambitious village reconstruction. The upliftment of the rural people was his primary concern.

He says: " I f our education should become

compulsory, considering from the viewpoint for the needs of Indian villages, we should begin from the belief that education will become self-supporting. Vocationalisation of education is a comprehensive phenomenon which enables him to provide solutions for most of the evils and pitfalls found in Indian villages. He promotes charka as the unique solution for all these problems which the rural India faced. By rural development, Gandhi means several specific things. He says: "My mind is living in the villages. They are calling me to bury myself in them. In spite of his most busy political schedules he found time to 'bury himself' in villages to experience their life and to feel one with them. Village reconstruction for him meant leading them to a healthy and hygienic life. He tells students: "Visit the dwelling place of Harijans and clean up these places. If the harijans are willing to help you in the process gladly accept their help. Economic liberation is also possible through vocationalism. Gandhi reminds us of the past glory of the Indian villages when villages were economically self-sufficient and independent. He alleges that the introduction of British economic system and consequent industrialisation destroyed the Indian village economy: The village economy of the time was based not on the rights of the people, but on doing their duties. Those who were involved in such occupations earned their livelihood. There was more light in the eyes of the people than now; their hands were much more lively. Life at that time was based on a well-accepted law of ahimsa." His village development aims at the economic liberation of villages through all forms of self-employment. All plans for vocationalisation for villages concretely aims at ultimately providing jobs for every individual. Gandhi says: "I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and by enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. His scheme of education liberates the individual from the bondage of economic dependency. Manual labour has great significance in Gandhian education. Manual labour is an expression of the individual's social attachment. It is the most concrete way an individual can contribute to the welfare of other persons in particular and of society at large. A number of attitudes require development in regard to the exercise of manual work. Gandhi considers these attitudes as essential elements of the individual's personality development: "Though the vocation in which the student receives training the personality hidden in him or her should receive full development. On completion of education Gandhi wants a perfect man in social-economic-psychological and spiritual sense. Vocational education accepts rural reconstruction as a principal objective. His thoughts on villages are far reaching. He says: "The problem is whether this basic scheme of education fulfils the genuine needs of the people living in villages. The village therefore will always be the most important unit of India. Vocationalisation will

be the chief means of the reconstruction of Indian villages.

**Gandhi's Experiments in Education:** Ruskin's book *Unto this Last* leads to his first experiment in South Africa called Phoenix Settlement. Gandhi was determined to change his life according to the ideas contained in the book. This book *Unto this Last* becomes the basis of Gandhi's *'Hind Swaraj'*. Gandhi was greatly captured by the following ideas of great significance that he taught was fundamental to several of his own experiments with truth: (1) That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all. (2) That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's in as much as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work. (3) That a life of labour, i.e. the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is the life worth living. (4) He drew up a clear analysis and became ready to be translated into practice. Phoenix Settlement was finally started in 1904 with a small group of Indian and European idealists.

In course of time Phoenix Settlement became a little village. The basic idea was to experiment as to what extent simplicity of life, harmonious living of people together can be successfully and joyfully practised. His concept of self-supporting education for rural India received ground for development from Phoenix itself. Tolstoy Farm became the next arena of Gandhi's work. His friendship with a German called Hermann Kallenback leads to the establishment of Tolstoy Farm. The land for new settlement was donated by Kallenback in 1910, to be used by the passive resisters and their families in South Africa. That land was named after Tolstoy and was called Tolstoy Farm. The settlers came from all parts of India. Gandhi and Kallenback lived with the Indian families called Satyagrahi families, which included young people and children.

There were Muslim, Christian and Parsi youngsters whom Gandhi encouraged to follow their respective religious observances. It was considered a privilege to join others on the occasions of their religious fasts. Gandhi writes: "I explained to them that, it was always a good thing to join with others in any matter of self-denial." The inmates of the Farm welcomed Gandhi's work in Tolstoy Farm includes comprehensive experiments. "To make settlers self-supporting small industries were started in Tolstoy Farm." For Gandhi there was the genuine opportunity for experimenting his new ideas, as he was thoroughly disappointed with the existing system of education. There was his chance to try a hand on something new and what he was convinced as the true way of education. Under ideal circumstances the parents had the duty of imparting true education. Tolstoy Farm was a family and Gandhi its head, the father and that he had to as far as possible shoulder the responsibility for training the yogi. Gandhi planned his own system with the

available resources, what constituted the foundations his basic education to be later tried out the developed in his *Swaraj*. The entire process in the farm was based on character formation. His basic conception was that character formation was all in all in education and everything else could be achieved as a corollary of that by individuals themselves or with the help of others. He tried to drive home the concept of respect for all religions in theory and practice and taught them how to live together like blood brothers. Classes were constituted with pupils of all ages, boys and girls from the age of seven to men of twenty and girls of twelve. Classes were engaged in two sections with the medium of Gujarati and English. Gandhi himself taught Tamil and Urdu. The curriculum included also the general knowledge of history, arithmetic and geography. In addition, Sanskrit was taught to Hindu students as a necessity to introduce to them the great language which embodied the vast domination of Indian culture and literature. Emphasis was given to writing and the recitation of prayer songs: "No textbook was used in this schools.

Experiments in Champaran schools was one of the prominent contributions of Mahatma Gandhi. Champaran was a land of indigo plantations situated in Bihar. It was a difficult task to educate the villagers because of ignorance, poverty and disease. It was necessary, therefore to approach the problem of education from a larger viewpoint and involve themselves with the life of the villagers in its totality. With the help of a doctor from the Servants of India Society Gandhi started his work among villagers. The work in Champaran was an example as to how problems in typical rural India could be dealt with. Gujarat Vidyapeeth was a committed aim of Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders to evolve a system of education that would produce students who were not mere administrators and clerks but real servants of the people of the country. It was founded by Gandhiji at Ahmadabad in November 1920. All aspects of education embodied in the curriculum and the syllabus of the Vidyapeeth finally aimed at the unique ideal of achieving a united India. It also aimed at building a new culture based on the tradition of past. Greater importance to study Sanskrit, Persian, Pali and Arabi. All knowledge taught and learned in the Vidyapeeth and other institutions should lead to such freedom. He wanted the vidyalaya to make people workers who would give themselves up for the villages. Gandhi gave weekly lectures at the Vidyapeeth and he ensured personal attention to them. The students discussed various topics with him. During the Dandi march in 1930 the Vidyapeeth suspended all academic activities. The staff and the students offered their services as volunteers for the forthcoming satyagraha struggle. Gandhi wanted other national institutions to copy the example of the Vidyapeeth in its example of sacrifice. It was the source of strength in Gandhi's fight against

the evils of untouchability and communal disharmony. Education for him could not be isolated from all these evils that ransacked society. For this reason Gandhi attached great significance to the Vidyapeeth as well as organised national institutions that stood for the nationalist ideals.

**The Notion of Personal Sara in Education:** Literally Sara means self-rule, but in education which means self-reliance and self-supporting. He believes that the student must be trained to become an earning unit after the completion of his studies. He very rightly says that, "you have to start with conviction that looking to needs of the villages of India our rural education ought to be made self-supporting if it is to be made compulsory. Basic education brings the personal worth, dignity and sufficiency to the individual. It aims an all-round development of human personality.

**Spiritual and Moral Education :** Morality is fundamental to all of Gandhi's philosophies. For him it is the essence of all socio-cultural and community life. Moral principles are the maxims of human life at all levels. Morality and education are intimately associated. Education in its broad sense consists of all aspects of our socio-communal life. Thus education of morality is a very basic duty of the community on the one hand and family in particular as both these are informal agencies of education. In our Vedic system education was meant primarily the inculcation of dharma, the principles of a righteous life. Education is the principal vehicle for the training of moral values in the individual. Morality provides to

the directions for the right kind of education while education becomes the most efficient vehicle for the inculcation of moral principles. Moral values control the entire spectrum of socio-economic and political life of people. The concept of morality is founded on the principles of truth and non-violence. Gandhian morality is the essence of his spirituality. For him truth is the beginning and the end. Truth is God Himself. Morality is synonymous with non-violence in Gandhism. The concept of God is the very foundation of Gandhi and spirituality. It is the essence of all his religious beliefs and attitudes as well as the culmination of his religious sense. Self-realisation constitutes the goal of all Gandhi and spirituality. In order to attain self-realisation Gandhi practised the three ways of Hinduism: the path of knowledge, the path of devotion and the path of action.

**Conclusion:** Gandhi's idea of education is not only a new method and technique of education but also a new way of life. He advocates the creation of a balanced and harmonious social order with ethical value of truth, love and non-violence. It covers the total development of both the individual and society. The ultimate aim of self-reliance and self-realisation is the essential outcome of this method of education. Gandhi's concept of basic education is an integrated whole, consisting of all aspects of education, such as spiritual, physical, intellectual and vocational. Religious education is an integral part of basic education. He believed that the purpose of education should be an all-round development of an individual.

#### References:

1. M. K. Gandhi. Constructive Programmed (New Delhi: Navajivan Publishing House. 1961) p. 18
2. M. K. Gandhi. Harijan, 31-7-1937, p. 19.
3. R. B. L. Soni, Mahatma Gandhi: Satyagraha and Basic Education (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 1998) p. 100.
4. V. T. Patil, Studies on Gandhi (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, ) p. 185.
5. T. G. Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol. 8 (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1960) p. 166.
6. M. K. Gandhi, An Autobiography and the Story - My Experiments with Truth (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing, 1966) p. 224.
7. M. K. Gandhi, To the Students (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, ) p. 54 M. K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, p. 27.
8. M. K. Gandhi, Towards New Education (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House )
9. M. K. Gandhi, Basic Education (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, ) p. 79.
10. M. K. Gandhi. Harijan, 28-08-1937.
11. M. K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, p. 318.
12. Report of the Educational Commission 1964-66 (Kothari) (New Delhi: Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, 1966), p. 7
13. J. C. Mukalel, Gandhian Education (New Delhi: Discovery Publishers, 1997) p. 219.

\*\*\*

Assistant Professor, John D Britto College of Education