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Educational views of Mahatma Gandhi

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Abstract

Like many great thinkers, prophets and philosophers, Gandhiji was convinced that injustice, violence and oppression manifest from human heart and that education can play an effective role in developing a wholesome human personality capable of resisting war, violence, injustice and oppression and building a social order wherein man can live in peace and harmony with others. Since education is a potential instrument of man-making and social engineering, he concentrated on an education that could draw out the best in the child body, mind and spirit for developing a peace loving human personality. Gandhian philosophy is, indeed, rich in its educational and social values. It can transform the destiny of man and is capable of establishing an alternative social order if it is practised sincerely and honestly in its true perspective. Gandhiji's educational philosophy, which evolved during his lifetime in the form of Gandhian School of Educational Thought, has not received adequate attention in policy formulations during last five decades. Globally, it is being realized that his views were dynamic and futuristic in nature. Fully understanding inadequacies of our over-dependence on the alien model of education and the needs of the weakest, the poorest and the neglected, he evolved an indigenous strategy to provide equality of opportunity and success to each and every individual of this category.

Keywords: Brahmacharya, Swaraj, Mahavidyalaya, Nayee Taleem, Satyagraha

1. Introduction

Epoch-making ideas and ideologies emanate when prodigal human beings perceive problems of immense magnitude before humanity at a particular level of development in human history and try to solve them in their own typical way. Futuristic relevance of an idea or an ideology of such trailblazers depends on the clarity of vision of the coming events and their capacity to understand and internalize the forces of dissipation. Gandhiji with his 'Divya Chakshu' excelled in understanding the Indian people, the Indian nation and the Indian national heritage. The entire world accepts the clarity of his perception and his assessment of the shape of future trends so much so that with the passage of time the relevance of his thoughts and ideas is gaining greater significance globally. Gandhian philosophy is, indeed, rich in its educational and social values. It can transform the destiny of man and is capable of establishing an alternative social order if it is practised sincerely and honestly in its true perspective. Gandhiji's educational philosophy, which evolved during his lifetime in the form of Gandhian School of Educational Thought, has not received adequate attention in policy formulations during last five decades. Globally, it is being realized that his views were dynamic and futuristic in nature.

Gandhiji's innovative approach to political activism, passive resistance, belief in non-violence, firm faith in 'satyagraha' against oppressive regime came as the biggest surprise to one and all across the globe. People became curious and attentive when he not only preached but also practised his doctrine in action as part of his personal life as a staunch believer in personal example than in mere precept, that efforts have to be made to eliminate the misdeeds of the oppressor rather than the oppressor himself. Truth, non-violence and satyagraha were successfully used and their credibility as an effective instrument of the social and political transformation was established. Though the world saw the success of his faith, strategy and effort in achieving his goals yet the Mahatma himself was not fully satisfied.

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2. Meaning of Education

The English word 'education' etymologically means 'drawing out'. That means an endeavour to develop our latent talents. When we say that we develop a certain thing, it does not mean that we change its kind or quality, but that we bring out the qualities latent in it. Hence 'education' can also mean 'unfoldment'.

True education is something different. Man is made of three constituents, the body, mind and spirit. Of them, spirit is the one permanent element in man. The body and the mind function on account of it. Hence we can call that education which reveals the qualities of spirit. That is why the seal of the Vidyapith carries the dictum 'Education is that which leads to *moksha*'.

Education can also be understood in another sense; that is, whatever leads to a full or maximum development of all the three, the body, mind and spirit, may also be called education. The knowledge that is being imparted today may possibly develop the mind a little, but certainly it does not develop the body and spirit. I have a doubt about the development of the mind too, because it does not mean that the mind has developed if we have filled it with a lot of information. We cannot therefore say that we have educated our mind. A well-educated mind serves man in the desired manner

3. Aims of Education

3.1 Nationalism

Education is just a means. If it is not accompanied by truthfulness, firmness, patience and other virtues, it remains sterile, and sometimes does harm instead of good. The object of education is not to be able to earn money, but to improve oneself and to serve the country. If this object is not realized, it must be taken that the money spent on education has been wasted.

3.2 National Service

Pupils are to receive education which will incline them to do nothing but national service when their studies are over. If, on growing up, they leave the Ashram, the education will have failed to that extent. Should any occasion of the kind arise, the student will be free [to follow his inclination]. It is not the aim, however, that the students should return to their parents and get lost in the sea of practical affairs.

3.3 Building Character

Education main is building character. I cannot see how this can be done except through religion. We are yet to realize that gradually we are being reduced to a state in which we shall have lost our own without having acquired the new. I cannot go more into this, but I have met hundreds of teachers and they sighed in pain as they told me of their experiences... If pupils in schools lose their character, everything will have been lost.

3.4 Purity of personal life

Purity of personal life is one of the indispensable condition for building a sound education. And my meetings with thousands of students and the correspondence which I continuously have with the students in which they pour out their innermost feelings and take me into their confidence show me quite clearly that there is much left to be desired. I am sure that all of you understand thoroughly what I mean. is, *brahmachari*. *Vidyarthi*. And I hope you know what the

word *brahmachari* means. It means searcher after God, one who conducts himself so as to bring himself nearest to God in the least possible time. And all the great religions of the world, however much they may differ, are absolutely one on this fundamental thing that no man or woman with an impure heart can possibly appear before the Great White Throne. All our learning or recitation of the Vedas, correct knowledge of Sanskrit, Latin, Greek and what not will avail us nothing if they do not enable us to cultivate absolute purity of heart.

3.5 Humility

With this introduction I would like to tell the students, boys and girls, that humility is the primary thing to be acquired. One who is not humble cannot put one's learning to proper use. What does it matter if he has obtained double first class or has stood first? One does not achieve everything by just passing an examination. It is possible that it may help in securing a good job or a good marriage alliance. But, if learning is to be put to proper use, if it is to be used only for the sake of service, one should acquire more and more humility every day. No service is possible without it.

4. Experiments on Education in India

4.1 Shantiniketan

From Rajkot I proceeded to Shantiniketan. The teachers and students overwhelmed me with affection.

The reception was a beautiful combination of simplicity, art and love.

The Phoenix family had been assigned separate quarters at Shantiniketan. Maganlal Gandhi was at their head, and he had made it his business to see that all the rules of the Phoenix Ashram should be scrupulously observed. I saw that, by dint of his love, knowledge and perseverance, he had made his fragrance felt in the whole of Shantiniketan.

Andrews was there, and also Pearson. Amongst the Bengali teachers with whom we came in fairly close contact were Jagadanandbabu, Nepalbabu, Santoshababu, Kshitimohanbabu, Nagenbabu, Sharadbabu and Kalibabu.

I quickly mixed with the teachers and students, and engaged them in a discussion on self-help. I put it to the teachers that, if they and the boys dispensed with the services of paid cooks and cooked their food themselves, it would enable the teachers to control the kitchen from the point of view the boys' physical and moral health, and it would afford to the students an object-lesson in self-help. Some of them strongly approved of the proposal. The boys welcomed it, if only because of their instinctive taste for novelty. So we launched the experiment. When I invited the Poet to express his opinion, he said that he did not mind it provided the teachers were favourable. To the boys he said, 'The experiment contains the key to Swaraj.'

Pearson began to wear away his body in making the experiment a success. He threw himself into it with zest. A batch was formed to cut vegetables, another to clean the grain, and so on. Nagenbabu and others undertook to see the sanitary cleaning of the kitchen and its surroundings. It was a delight to me to see them working spade in hand.

But it was too much to expect the hundred and twenty-five boys with their teachers to take to this work of physical labour like ducks to water. There used to be daily discussion. Some began early to show fatigue. But Pearson was not the man to be tired. He had taken upon himself the cleaning of the bigger utensils. A party of students played

on their *sitar* before this cleaning party in order to beguile the tedium of the operation. All alike took the thing up with zest and Shantiniketan became a busy hive.

Changes like these when once begun always develop. Not only was the Phoenix party's kitchen self-conducted, but the food cooked in it was of the simplest. Condiments were eschewed. Rice, *dal*, vegetables and even wheat flour were all cooked at one and the same time in a steam cooker. And Shantiniketan boys started a similar kitchen with a view to introducing reform in the Bengali kitchen. One or two teachers and some students ran this kitchen.

The experiment was, however, dropped after some time. I am of opinion that the famous institution lost nothing by having conducted the experiment for a brief interval, and some of the experiences gained could not but be of help to the teachers.

4.2 Satyagraha Ashram, Kochrab

The Ashram experiment in education was a trial for us as nothing else was.

We saw at once that the women and children in the Ashram should be taught to read and write, and a little later on that there should be similar facilities for even the illiterate men that came to the Ashram. Those who had already joined the Ashram could not undertake to teach. If capable teachers were to be attracted to the Ashram, the rule of *brahmacharya* had to be relaxed in their case. The Ashram was therefore divided into two sections, the 'teachers' quarters and the Ashram proper.

The Ashramites developed spiritual pride, which the teachers could not tolerate. This pride was an obstacle in the attainment of the Ashram ideal and therefore an aspect of untruth as well. If *brahmacharya* was to be observed in its perfection, the division was inevitable. But the *brahmacharis* had no reason to think too highly of themselves. It may be that the *brahmacharis* who sinned mentally in spite of themselves were retrogressing while those who did not claim to be *brahmacharis* but liked *brahmacharya* were making progress. This was clear to the intellect but it was not easy for all of us to put it into practice.

Then again there were differences of opinion as regards the method of education which gave rise to difficulties in administration. There were bitter discussions, but at last all calmed down and learned the lesson

of forbearance. This was in my view a triumph of truth, the goal of all Ashram endeavour. Those who held divergent views harboured no evil intentions in their minds, and were indeed grieved at the divergence. They wished to practise truth as they saw it. Their partiality for their own stand - point came in the way of their giving due weight to the arguments of their opponents. Hence the quarrels which put our charity to a severe test.

As for women's education I am not sure whether it should be different from men's and when it should begin. But I am strongly of opinion that women should have the same facilities as men and even special facilities where necessary. There should be night schools for illiterate adults. But I do not think that they must be taught the three R's; they must be helped to acquire general knowledge through lectures, etc., and if they wish, we should arrange to teach them the three R's also.

Experiments in the Ashram have convinced us of one thing, viz., that industry in general and spinning in particular

should have pride of place in education, which must be largely self-supporting for rural life. Girls are supposed to be in duty bound to marry and that too before menstruation commences, and widow re-marriage is not permitted. Women, therefore, when they join the Ashram, are told that these social customs are wrong and irreligious. But they are not shocked as they find the Ashram practising what it preaches.

The superstition that no education is possible without a teacher is an obstacle in the path of educational progress. A man's real teacher is himself. And nowadays there are numerous aids available for self - education. A diligent person can easily acquire knowledge about many things by himself and obtain the assistance of a teacher when it is needed. Experience is the biggest of all schools. Quite a number of crafts cannot be learnt at school but only in the workshop. Knowledge of these acquired at school is often only parrot-like. Other subjects can be learnt with the help of books. Therefore what adults need is not so much a school as a thirst for knowledge, diligence and self - confidence.

The education of children is primarily a duty to be discharged by the parents. Therefore the creation of a vital educational atmosphere is more important than the foundation of numerous schools. When once this atmosphere has been established on a firm footing the schools will come in due course.

4.3 National Higher Education

I have done a good many things in my life; some of them I feel proud of, though some others I regret. A few of them were very responsible undertakings. But I should like to state here—I am sure I am guilty of no exaggeration—that nothing I have done so far can stand comparison with what we are about to do today. I am aware of a great risk in this undertaking, but not because I fear that it may prove harmful to the nation; what pains me, or rather the incongruity I feel, is this that I am not fit for the task I have undertaken. I do not say this as a matter of formality, I speak from the heart. If I knew that the present undertaking related to education in the real sense of the term, this preface would not have been necessary. This Mahavidyalaya is not being established with the sole object of imparting education; its aims helping the student to acquire a means of livelihood and when, in this respect, I compare it with Gujarat College and other similar institutions, I simply shudder.

Today, not an inch of the ground is ours. Everything belongs to the Government. This land, these trees, everything belongs to Government, even this body, and I have now begun to doubt whether our soul also is ours. Placed in this pitiable condition, why go looking for good buildings to house our Mahavidyalaya? How can we afford to wait till we had found men of great learning? Even if the most ignorant of ignorant men, a mere simpleton, were to come forward and could succeed in convincing us that our *atman* had been starved, that this country had lost its light—its knowledge of things of the spirit—I would appoint him as the principal. I am not sure that you would be ready to appoint a shepherd as principal and so we have had to find Shri Gidwani¹. I have not been attracted by the position he occupied. Perhaps you do not know him apart from that position. I should, however, like you to adopt a different criterion, some another touchstone, for judging the worth of this Vidyalaya if you test it on the common touchstone, it

will seem to be brass but it will be found to be gold if you test it on the touchstone of character.

The coming together of [talented] men for educational work here is like the holy confluence of rivers. We have men of character assembled here. Fine men from Sind, Maharashtra and Gujarat have banded together here. How could we have, ordinarily, secured this?

I shall first address my prayer to the sisters and brothers who have come here for the function. You are witnesses to the establishment of this Mahavidyalaya. If there are any among you who feel that what is taking place is a farce, I would ask them not to be so conscientious and sit through the function. They should remain only if they wish to give their blessings. With the blessings of you all, the Mahavidyalaya will earn a name as a great institution. But they should not be blessings merely uttered with the lips; bless it from your heart.

This you can do only by offering your sons and daughters to the institution. People in India have plenty of capacity to contribute money. In no field is progress held up for lack of funds. It is held up for want of men—of teachers or leaders, or if a leader is forthcoming, for want of pupils, i.e., soldiers. It is my belief that, if the leader is worthy, there will be no lack of soldiers. A carpenter will not quarrel with his tools, however bad they may be. He will handle the bluntest of them with the utmost ease. Likewise, if the leader is a real artisan, whatever the quality of the material, he will produce gold from it, will produce gold from the country's clay. This is my prayer to the principal.

We are establishing this Vidyalaya, not with an educational, but with a national aim in view. Advising that students be taught to cultivate strength and character, I have been saying everywhere that in the measure we succeed with them we shall make ourselves fit for Swaraj in the country. Swaraj cannot be secured in any other way. No amount of money we can spend or strength of character we can employ to ensure the success of such colleges will be enough.

This is a time not for words but for action. I have placed my thoughts before you as they came. I asked of you what you could give. Now I shall ask something of the students as well. There is no doubt at all that they have in them the courage which takes risks. I shall not look upon them—upon those who have already joined—as mere students and, therefore, I will not treat them as being free from responsibility. Those who have registered their names here are half teachers. It is they who have provided the foundation for the Mahavidyalaya. It is on them that the structure of the institution has been raised. Had they not joined, this Mahavidyalaya could not have been started. They also, therefore, share equal responsibility. You are equal partners in this and, if you do not play your part well, no efforts on the part of the teachers will succeed or, at any rate, succeed completely. Students who have left their colleges should understand why they have joined here and what they should expect to gain. May God grant them the strength to go on with their work, no matter how long this grim war continues. If they do, I am sure that, even if they are a mere handful, this Mahavidyalaya will shine forth and be a model institution for the whole country.

Leaves as yet. In a short while, they also will grow old and, perhaps, fall off. The students, however, are the branches of this beautiful tree and it is on them that principals and teachers will grow as leaves.

I request them to put the same faith in their teachers as they do in me. Should they, however, see that the principal or any of the teachers is weak, let them burn him to ashes with the fire which was Prahlad's and go ahead with their work. This is my prayer to God and my blessings to the students.

I shall end with a prayer to God and I want you all to say "amen" to it. Join me in my prayer, all of you, with a pure heart, "God! Make this Mahavidyalaya of such worth that through it we may win the freedom for which we offer prayers day and night and grant it that, through that freedom, not only India but the entire world, in which India is but a dot, may be happy."

4.4 Nayee Taleem

This work of basic education is the last work of my life. Hindustan will be totally transformed. The present system of education is useless. Those boys who get their education in schools and colleges, they get only literacy, but over and above literacy something more is needed. If that literacy renders our other parts of the body inactive, I would say I don't need such literacy. We need carpenters, black-smiths, oil millers, masons, spinners and labourers. In essence, we need persons ready to do all sorts of physical work and along with that literacy for all is also necessary. Knowledge that is confined to a handful of individuals is not useful to me.

My definition of *Nayee Taleem* is that if the person who has received *Nayee Taleem*, is enthroned, he would not feel vanity of power, on the other hand, if he is given a broom, he will not feel ashamed. For him both the jobs will be of equal importance. There would be no place to vain rejoicing in his life. None of his actions will be unproductive or useless. No student of *Nayee Taleem* shall be dull, because each part of his body would be active and he would have nice neuro-muscular co-ordination. My *Nayee Taleem* and the village industries are mutually complementary. When they both will be a success, we will attain true Swaraj.

4.5 Education through Craft

Speaking about education through a craft Gandhiji said: "If such education is given, the direct result will be that it will be self-supporting. But the test of success is not its self-supporting character, but that the whole man has been drawn out through the teaching of the handicraft in a scientific manner. In fact I would reject a teacher who would promise to make it self-supporting under any circumstances. The self-supporting part will be the logical corollary of the fact that the pupil has learnt the use of every one of his faculties. If a boy who works at a handicraft for three hours a day will surely earn his keep, how much more a boy who adds to the work a development of his mind and soul!"

5. Education at Various Stages and Related Questions

5.1 Early Childhood Education

Children means young boys and girls not more than 10 years of age. Then, education does not mean simply the knowledge of letters—the capacity to read and write. The knowledge of letters is only one of the means to education. Really speaking, education consists in learning to use in the right way all one's sense-organs, including the mind. In other words, the child should know how to use his organs of action such as hands and feet etc. as also his organs of knowledge such as the nose, the eyes etc. A boy who knows that he should not use his hands in stealing things or killing

flies or beating the younger brothers, sisters and play-mates has already made a good beginning on his way to education. The same may be said of the boy who understands the need for keeping his teeth, tongue, ears, eyes, nails etc. clean and does so. A boy who does not indulge in pranks while eating or drinking, who has learnt to eat and drink in the right manner whether alone or in company, who knows the distinction between wholesome and unwholesome food and chooses the former, who does not overeat, who does not ask for every new thing that he sees and who, when he asks for it and does not get it, remains quiet, may be said to have progressed quite a great deal in his education. Whose pronunciation is good, who can tell the history and geography of his region—even though he may not know these terms,—who knows what is meant by the motherland, he has traversed a fairly good distance on the road to education. Similarly with him who has learnt to distinguish between truth and untruth, between good and evil, there is no need to further elaborate the point. The readers can fill in the picture themselves. Only I should make one thing clear: there is no need of the knowledge of reading and writing in order to learn the things I have spoken of above. To make the boys to learn the alphabet is to put an undue burden on their young minds and to misuse their eyes and hands. A rightly educated boy gets to learn reading and writing almost without any effort and, what is more, gladly at the proper time. At the present time, however, this thing becomes a heavy burden upon him. Much of the valuable time which could be put to better use goes to waste and in the end, instead of producing shapely letters or acquiring a finely articulated pronunciation, all that they succeed in doing is to produce mis-shapen letters and cultivate a bad handwriting. As for reading, they read much which had better been left unread and read it indifferently without any sense of pronunciation. To call it education is to abuse that august term. The boy must first get elementary knowledge before learning to read and write. If this is done our poor country would be saved from much unnecessary expense incurred on various readers and children's books and many other evils. If children's readers are at all thought necessary they should be written for use by the teachers and not for boys of my conception. But for our drifting with the current vogue this thing should be as clear to us as daylight.

The boys can get the education I have spoken of only at home and that too only through the mother. In a way, all boys do get some sort of an education from the mother. But seeing that the home has disintegrated, so to say, and seeing that most parents are not equal to the task, the boys should be placed in surroundings where they will get the same atmosphere as they do at home. Since of all persons the mother is the most competent to undertake the duty of educating the children, this particular task should be entrusted only to women. As a rule men are far behind women in respect of love and patience. If this is true the question of the education of children cannot be solved unless efforts are made simultaneously to solve the women's education. And I have no hesitation in saying that as long as we do not have real mother-teachers who can successfully impart true education to our children they will remain uneducated even though they may be going to schools.

Most of the text-books which we have today are useless for this purpose. The mother-teacher therefore will find out or produce new ones and her love for the children will help her in this task. Every village has its own history and

geography; naturally it will have its own history-book and geography-book. The arithmetical exercises too will be new. The mother-teacher will prepare the lessons she wants to teach the children herself everyday. She will produce new sums and will always have many new things to say to the boys—which she will note down in her note-book when she prepares the lesson. Her lesson in the class will thus be not a mechanical performance but something lively and creative.

The syllabus will vary according to the progress of the children. It should therefore be drawn up after every three months. The children constituting the class come from different homes—each has his own different background of nurture. We cannot therefore have the same syllabus for all of them. At times it may be

necessary even to induce them to unlearn what they have learnt. For example, if a six or seven year old child has learnt to trace letters in a slovenly way or has picked up the habit of reading without trying to understand what he reads, the mother-teacher will see that he unlearns all that. She must cast out the illusion that the child can acquire knowledge only through reading. It is easy enough to understand that even one who never had any training in reading can be wise.

I have not used the word teacher in this article; I have throughout used the word 'mother-teacher' in its place. Because the teacher must really be a mother to the children she teaches. One who cannot take the place of a mother cannot be a teacher. The child should never feel that he is being taught. Let her simply

keep her eye upon him and guide him. A child who spends six hours in the school will possibly be wasting his time while the former will be learning something or the other all the time in terms of real education.

It is likely that we may not get good women-teachers in the existing conditions. That being so we may make use of men for the purpose. In that case these men-teachers will have to fill the place of the mother. But eventually it is the mother who will have to undertake the task. But if I am right any mother who has love for children can easily prepare herself for it. And she can also prepare the children at the same time that she is preparing herself.

5.2 Nursery Education

I saw the work done by teachers trained under Madame Montessori, and carefully observed the working of the Nursery School. Of course the things were foreign and the poor teacher had not digested what she had been taught. What to speak of the children? They could not even observe normal discipline. I am not criticising anyone. I have given the gist of my experience just for your information. Imbibe whatever you find useful and discard the rest. The conclusion I have drawn from this experience is that we shall be able to propagate scientific knowledge of child education only when our teachers are competent. They should have the will to become one with children. I am afraid I am not saying anything new in this. These things are certainly not beyond your range of experience but since I have come to know you and also love you I hope you will not find fault with me for saying the things you already know.

5.3 Primary Education

After a great deal of reflection and experimentation I have come to the conclusion that primary education should be

given for at least a year without books and even after that the use of books should be restricted to the minimum.

If books are introduced from the very start and the children made to master the alphabet, the development of their various abilities are arrested and their intelligence stunted, although this is the time when it should grow rapidly. A child begins to learn immediately after its birth, but mostly through the eyes and ears or through the senses. And, as soon as he has learnt to speak, i.e., to imitate the sound of words, he begins rapidly to acquire the use of language. Naturally he picks up the same language as that of his parents. If the parents have taste and refinement, he also develops those qualities. He pronounces the words correctly and copies their good manners and conduct. This is his real education. And if our culture and traditions had not fallen apart, children would still be receiving the best kind of education in their homes.

But looking at the deplorable conditions in which we are living at present this cannot be and there is no alternative save to send our boys to schools. But if the child has to go to a school, we must see that it looks like a home to him and the teachers like parents, and the education provided should be such as would be provided in a cultured home. This means that all preliminary teaching should be oral. A child educated in this way would learn in a year ten times more than the boy taught in the other way, i.e., through the alphabet.

Oral teaching would enable the children to know the usual rudiments of history and geography much in the same way as they get to know stories, quite easily, in the very first year. They would commit to memory a fairly good number of poems; and they would learn the counting of numbers almost automatically without any effort. And because they would not be subjected to the burden of recognizing and learning the alphabet, the growth of their minds would not be stopped and their eyes would not be misused.

They would use their hands not in tracing different letters—a practice which spoils their handwriting for good—but in drawing the figures of geometry and simple pictures. This would be good preliminary training for the hand, as it would develop both co-ordination and skill.

And if we want to provide education to the crores of children of Gujarat and of India, this is the only way in which primary education should be imparted to them.

Under the conditions existing in the country it is impossible to give books to children. I admit that if it is necessary to give books to children in the primary stage also, then attempts must be made to do so whatever the expenditure, but if they are considered unnecessary and even harmful then this plea for stopping the use of books in the initial years. The idea should be given a fair trial. A thing which is unnecessary from the moral point of view is always found to be impermissible also from the practical point of view. In an ideal civilization morality and what is called practical policy are not two contradictory things.

Lastly, it is clear that the present group of teachers cannot be expected to give effect to the scheme of education presented here. They may manage to teach the boys the alphabet and also simple arithmetic. But they themselves are ignorant of the type of knowledge which, according to the scheme I have sketched, should be made available to the boys in the very first year of the school. Since they themselves do not speak correctly, how can they then help the boys to form the habit of correct speech?

5.4 Secondary Education

A system of education has to be so conceived as to be an instrument of protection of the freedom of a nation.

Hence, we must make our own experiments in education. It may well be that in the course of these experiments we get to know the experiences which Europe has had; but we should never give credence to the idea that everything European is good, or that what is good for Europe under the conditions obtaining there will also be good for us here in India. Granting that this line of reasoning is correct, one of the conclusions it leads us to is that we should evaluate what goes on in the Government schools critically. Knowing as we do that Government education is detrimental to Swaraj and destructive of our civilization, we are likely to get at the right solution for us if we do just the opposite of what is done in the Government schools.

There they leave out the teaching of religion—I mean the basic principles common to all religions and not any particular creed. We know that this has the effect of nullifying the good that the rest of the education might ordinarily do to students. History, as taught in Government schools, if not wholly untrue, is presented essentially from the point of view of the British Government. German, French and American historians would treat and interpret the same material in a different way. Even recent events, as for example, the Punjab Massacre is presented by Government writers in one way and by nationalist writers in quite another light.

Economics, as taught in Government schools, approves of the policies of the Government, while we look at them from a totally different point of view.

While in Government primary schools, the teachers are appointed without any consideration of their character, in our schools they must be men of the highest character. The former have only the minimum qualifications for the work they are expected to do and are paid the lowest salaries. The latter, on the other hand, should be highly qualified men and though they will also be paid low salaries, the reason would be their selflessness and not their helplessness.

5.5 College Education

I would revolutionize college education and relate it to national necessities. There would be degrees for mechanical and other engineers. They would be attached to the different industries which should pay for the training of the graduates they need. Thus the Tatas would be expected to run a college for training engineers under the supervision of the State, the mill associations would run among them a college for training graduates whom they need.

Similarly for the other industries that may be named. Commerce will have its college. There remain arts, medicine and agriculture. Several private arts colleges are today self-supporting. The State would, therefore, cease to run its own. Medical colleges would be attached to certified hospitals. As they are popular among moneyed men they may be expected by voluntary contributions to support medical colleges. And agricultural colleges to be worthy of the name must be self-supporting. I have a painful experience of some agricultural graduates. Their knowledge is superficial. They lack practical experience. But if they had their apprenticeship on farms which are self-sustained and answer the requirements of the country, they would not have to gain experience after getting their degrees and at the expense of their employers.

5.6 Higher Education

I am not opposed to education even of the highest type attainable in the world.

1. The State must pay for it wherever it has definite use for it.
2. I am opposed to all higher education being paid for from the general revenue.
3. It is my firm conviction that the vast amount of the so-called education in arts, given in our colleges, is sheer waste and has resulted in unemployment among the educated classes. What is more, it has destroyed the health, both mental and physical, of the boys and girls who have the misfortune to go through the grind in our colleges.

The medium of a foreign language through which higher education has been imparted in India has caused incalculable intellectual and moral injury to the nation. We are too near our own times to judge the enormity of the damage done. And we who have received such education have both to be victims and judges—an almost impossible feat.

Thus I claim that I am not an enemy of Higher Education. But I am an enemy of Higher Education as it is given in this country. Under my scheme there will be more and better libraries, more and better laboratories, more and better research institutes. Under it we should have an army of chemists, engineers and other experts who will be real servants of the nation, and answer the varied and growing requirements of a people who are becoming increasingly conscious of their rights and wants. And all these experts will speak, not a foreign language, but the language of the people. The knowledge gained by them will be the common property of the people. There will be truly original work instead of mere imitation. And the cost will be evenly and justly distributed. Thus I claim that I am not an enemy of Higher Education. But I am an enemy of Higher Education as it is given in this country. Under my scheme there will be more and better libraries, more and better laboratories, more and better research institutes. Under it we should have an army of chemists, engineers and other experts who will be real servants of the nation, and answer the varied and growing requirements of a people who are becoming increasingly conscious of their rights and wants. And all these experts will speak, not a foreign language, but the language of the people. The knowledge gained by them will be the common property of the people. There will be truly original work instead of mere imitation. And the cost will be evenly and justly distributed.

6. Conclusion

Gandhian philosophy is, indeed, rich in its educational and social values. It can transform the destiny of man and is capable of establishing an alternative social order if it is practised sincerely and honestly in its true perspective. Gandhiji's educational philosophy, which evolved during his lifetime in the form of Gandhian School of Educational Thought, has not received adequate attention in policy formulations during last five decades. Globally, it is being realized that his views were dynamic and futuristic in nature.

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