

# A Study on The Relevance of M. K. Gandhi's Educational Thoughts in NEP 2020: A Reflection

Durgaprasad Sahoo<sup>1</sup>, Aarsee Sahoo<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Former M.Ed. Student, University Department of Teacher Education, Utkal University, Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

## ABSTRACT:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India aims to transform the country's education system, emphasizing holistic development, innovation, and inclusivity. This abstract examines the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy to the goals and principles outlined in the NEP 2020. Gandhi's emphasis on moral and character education, experiential learning, and community engagement resonates with several key aspects of the NEP. His concept of 'Nai Talim' (Basic Education) aligns with the NEP's focus on skill development, vocational training, and a multidisciplinary approach to learning. Furthermore, Gandhi's advocacy for education rooted in local context and culture corresponds with the NEP's emphasis on promoting regional languages and indigenous knowledge systems. This abstract explores how Gandhi's principles of self-reliance, sustainability, and social responsibility can enrich the implementation of NEP 2020, fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and values-driven education system. By drawing parallels between Gandhi's educational vision and the objectives of NEP 2020, this abstract offers insights into how Gandhi's timeless wisdom can inform and inspire educational reform efforts in contemporary India.

**Keywords:** NEP 2020, Nai Talim, Self-Reliance, Experiential Learning, Inclusivity.

## INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi, a towering figure in India's struggle for independence, was not only a political leader but also a profound thinker on education. His educational philosophy, deeply rooted in principles of moral integrity, social justice, and holistic development, continues to inspire educators and policymakers around the world. In light of India's recent National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which seeks to revitalize the country's education system, there is a renewed interest in exploring the relevance of Gandhi's educational ideals to contemporary educational reforms. Gandhi's educational vision, encapsulated in his concept of 'Nai Talim' or 'Basic Education,' emphasized learning through practical experience, manual labour, and community engagement. This holistic approach aimed at nurturing individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also morally upright and socially responsible. NEP 2020, with its emphasis on holistic development, skill-building, and experiential learning, echoes many aspects of Gandhi's educational philosophy. In this context, it becomes imperative to examine how Gandhi's principles align with the objectives and aspirations of NEP 2020. By delving into the core tenets of Gandhi's educational philosophy and analyzing their relevance to the contemporary educational landscape envisaged by NEP 2020, we can gain valuable insights into how his timeless wisdom can enrich and guide the implementation of India's latest education policy. This introduction sets the stage

for a comprehensive exploration of the intersection between Gandhi's educational philosophy and the objectives of NEP 2020, shedding light on pathways to create a more inclusive, equitable, and values-driven education system for India's future generations. Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy holds significant relevance to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India, as it offers timeless principles and insights that align closely with the objectives and aspirations of the policy.

Gandhi's emphasised that learning formed a vital component of Education. According to him, the body, the mind and the spirit formed the base of an individual. He believed that the Education system laid stress on the mind and neglected the body, spirit that too were cornerstones of an individual. The NEP 2020 too lays stress on shifting the prevalent philosophy of rote learning as such a form of learning will never be able to facilitate development in the nation. The NEP now emphasises on a holistic, integrated and inclusive approach to education that would not only eliminate rote memorization and exclusion in our education but also encourage rational thought and creativity in the learner.

The NEP 2020 also proposes the remarkable concept of learning how to learn, but this too will be preceded by an array of educational reforms both in the curriculum and the pedagogy of the teaching-learning process. Gandhi thought that the system of education in our country that nurtures our population of future citizens does not cater to their body and spirit and is only limited to the mind. He thought that the prevalent education arrangement only showers information on the students which had no practical implementations in their daily lives, which made him feel concerned for his vision of holistic development of the mind. His views, however, it hold true even in the education of the 21st Century.

The National Education policy 2020 emphasises on a holistic approach towards education by integrating physical education, vocational education along with academics in the classroom. Gandhi thought that vocational education was a significant aspect of education as it was capable of making an individual self-reliant and independent. He had the opinion that only this kind of education can be not only self-sustaining but also sustainable. His views on incorporating skills like handicraft and cattle rearing, though not totally relevant in the 21st Century represent his ideas which are now being replaced by contemporary alternatives like digital skills and technology. Gandhi ji believes that literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means by which man and woman can be educated. Literacy itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. As far as the current system of education in the nation is concerned, it lays undue importance on the format in which content is presented and the delivery of knowledge and curriculum.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

1. Are there any relevance of Gandhi's Educational thoughts in National Education Policy 2020?

## **METHODOLOGY**

For this proposed study the investigator was used historical and meta analysis approach. For this primary and secondary resources were used. Primary sources such as collected government original documents related to M K Gandhi's books, speech etc. In addition to secondary sources available from different journals published in public domain were analyzed in the research process.

## **NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY-2020**

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on

29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system.[1] The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. Dr K. Kasturirangan was chairman of this committee. This policy is comprised in four parts, part 01 covers school education, part 02 higher education, part 03 Other Key Areas of Focus (such as adult education, promoting Indian Languages and online education etc.), and part 04 covers 'Making it Happen' which discusses the policy's implementation. The main aim of NEP 2020 is at making India as a "global knowledge superpower". There are some recommendation as well as implementation strategies are given by NEP 2020

1. Universalization of elementary education for all the children of age group 6-14 years.
2. Universal access of basic elementary education.
3. To achieve Gross enrolment ration up to 100%.
4. Replace the 10+2 schooling system with new system 5+3+3+4
5. School governance system is to change with new accreditation framework and an independent authority. To regulate both public and private school.
6. Vocational Education is to start from class 6 with internship.
7. Mother tongue is the medium of instruction up to class 5.
8. No language will be imposed on any students.
9. It encourages the child centred education.
10. 360 degree holistic progressive card in both curricular as well as co- curricular activities.
11. To Recognize, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non academic spheres.
12. To achieve Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) by all students by Grade 3.
13. To achieve gross enrolment ratio in higher education to be raised to 50% by 2035.
14. M.Phil course has discontinued.
15. To establish Academic Bank Credit for transfer of credits.
16. To set gender inclusion fund , special education zone for disadvantage regions or groups.
17. Emphasis on conceptual understanding rather than rote learning.
18. To introduce flexible curriculum means a science student can not only take science subjects but also he/ she can choose any humanities, social science subjects as per their interests.
19. Multidisciplinary as well as holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world in order to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge.
20. Admission process and curriculum should be made more inclusive to cater the diverse needs of the learner.
21. Special focus on ECCE (Early childhood care and education)
22. Promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning.
23. Focus on regular formative assessment for learning rather than the summative assessment that encourages today's coaching culture.
24. To established National assessment centre like PARAKH.
25. Extensive use of technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for Divyang students, and educational planning and management.
26. Respect for diversity and respect for the local context in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject.

27. Synergy in curriculum across all levels of education from early childhood care and education to school education to higher education.
28. Teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process- their recruitment, continuous professional development, positive working environments and service conditions. Multidisciplinary and a holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world in order to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge.

### **BASIC EDUCATION OF M.K.GANDHI**

Basic Education is a principle which states that knowledge and work are not separate. Mahatma Gandhi promoted an educational curriculum with the same name based on this pedagogical principle. It can be translated with the phrase 'Basic Education for all'. However, the concept has several layers of meaning. Basic education can be very important in helping people to get jobs and gainful employment. This economic connection, while always present, is particularly critical in a rapidly globalizing world in which quality control and production according to strict specification can be crucial. A love for manual work will be injected in the mind of children. "Earning while learning" was the motto of this education. This will increase the creativity in a student. As Gandhi wanted to make Indian village self-sufficient unit, he emphasized that vocational education should increase the efficiency within the students who will make the village a self-sufficient unit.

### **PRINCIPLES OF BASIC EDUCATION ARE**

- From 7 to 14 years of age, education of each child should be free, compulsory, and universal.
- Education should make a child self-reliant.
- There should be no place for English in the education of a child.
- To develop the child's personality
- Character building is the utmost aim of education.
- Education should develop human values in the child.
- He emphasized on activity-based curriculum.
- He emphasized on "Learning by doing" method
- Education should achieve the harmonious development of the child's body, mind, heart, and soul.
- He is against corporal punishment.
- Education should be craft-centered so that the child gains economic self-reliance for their life..
- Further, education of all subjects should be taught through some local crafts of productive work.
- He said that "The true textbook for a pupil is his teacher"
- The industry should be such that the child is able to achieve gainful work experience through practical work.
- Education should lead to economic independence and self-reliance for livelihood.
- School should be a place of activity where the child gets busy in various experiments and gains newer and newer experiences bringing forth new researches.
- Education should create useful, responsible, and dynamic citizens.
- The medium of teaching the students should be in mother-tongue.
- Mere literacy cannot be equal to education

- Education should develop all the powers of the child according to the community of which he is an integral part.
- Education should be made self-supporting through some productive work.
- All education should be imparted through some productive craft or industry and useful correlation should be established with that industry.

## **RELEVANCE OF GANDHI'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS IN NEP 2020**

In Below There are comprehensive analysis of the relevance of Gandhi's educational philosophy in NEP 2020:

### **A. HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT**

Gandhi emphasized the importance of holistic development, which encompasses intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual growth. NEP 2020 shares this vision by prioritizing the holistic development of students through a multidisciplinary approach to education, co-curricular activities, and the integration of values education into the curriculum

### **B. NAI TALIM (BASIC EDUCATION)**

Gandhi's concept of Nai Talim advocated for education that integrates learning with productive work, emphasizing practical skills and experiential learning. NEP 2020 echoes this by promoting vocational education, skill development, and hands-on learning experiences to prepare students for real-world challenges and opportunities.

### **C. CHARACTER AND VALUES**

Gandhi underscored the importance of character-building and the cultivation of ethical values such as truth, nonviolence, and social responsibility. NEP 2020 recognizes the pivotal role of values education in nurturing responsible citizenship and ethical leadership, aiming to integrate value-based education across all levels of schooling.

### **D. SIMPLICITY AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Gandhi advocated for a simple and sustainable way of life, promoting environmental consciousness and self-reliance. NEP 2020 aligns with this vision by incorporating sustainability education, environmental awareness, and efforts to minimize educational disparities and promote inclusivity. Local and Indigenous Knowledge: Gandhi believed in the importance of education rooted in local context and culture, respecting and preserving indigenous knowledge systems. NEP 2020 emphasizes the promotion of regional languages, cultural diversity, and the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the curriculum to ensure education is relevant and inclusive.

### **E. INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESS**

Gandhi advocated for inclusive education accessible to all, irrespective of socio-economic background. NEP 2020 aligns with this by prioritizing inclusive education and equitable access to quality education for all learners, including those from marginalized and disadvantaged communities. By integrating Gandhi's educational principles into the implementation of NEP 2020, India can strive towards a transformative education system that not only imparts knowledge and skills but also fosters values, ethical leadership, and social responsibility. This comprehensive alignment between Gandhi's educational philosophy and NEP 2020 underscores the enduring relevance of Gandhi's vision in shaping India's educational landscape for the 21st century and beyond.

### **F. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Gandhi emphasized the role of education in fostering community engagement and social responsibility.

NEP 2020 encourages collaboration between educational institutions and local communities, promoting active citizenship, social cohesion, and community-driven initiatives in education.

#### **G. EMPHASIS ON DEMOCRATIC VALUES**

Gandhi's idea of education emphasized the development of democratic values in the child. According to Gandhi, the development of adequate citizenship and adaptation to the environment would make children worthy citizens of the country. Gandhiji's thoughts on education seem very relevant in the present social conditions. Gandhiji's view on education is really important in the present situation. The Kothari Commission stated: "The present system of education, designed to meet the needs of imperial power within the limits imposed by feudal and traditional society, requires radical changes to meet the goals of a modernizing democratic and socialist society. In fact, it is reevaluation. Education is needed, which in turn ushers in the long-awaited social, economic and cultural revolution.

#### **H. MOTHER TONGUE**

Mahatma Gandhi was one of the biggest proponents of "mother tongue" as compulsory teaching in primary education. Children learn better and faster in a language they understand. Through their mother tongue, they enjoy going to school more and increase their self-esteem. The National Education Policy 2020 pushed that "the medium of instruction at least up to Class 5 but preferably up to Class 8 should be home language / mother tongue / local language / regional language" for both audiences. Public and private schools.

#### **I. WORK ORIENTED**

He thought that through education you could bring out the best child in body, mind and spirit. He also said that literacy in itself is not education. According to him, education should be a kind of insurance against unemployment. For this, he focused on crafts and training in the field. If you look at the current scenario, we all feel that there is a need for such training because if we look around, we see many unemployed and underemployed youths moving here and there. Therefore, the filling of dissatisfaction and depression among young people is increasing.

#### **J. WOMEN'S EDUCATION**

Gandhi ji advocated women's education. Gandhiji strongly emphasized the emancipation of women. He opposed boarding, child marriage, Untouchability and extreme repression of Hindu counts and sati. The same was recommended by the Kothari Commission and the new education policy. The Government of India is working in this direction and the state of women's education is on a better platform than before. Today the government is trying to make reservations in jobs, politics etc for the betterment of women. In the 2020 National Education Policy, special attention has been given to women. NEP 2020 aims to address gender inequality in the recruitment of teachers in rural areas. It is hoped that new methods will be introduced into policy to ensure that merit and qualifications are taken into account and that women teachers are given appropriate forums for recruitment.

#### **K. CHILD-CENTERED EDUCATION**

Gandhi ji focuses on child-centred education which is specially focused by NEP 2020. He believed that the child brings his own experience to school and they have to be reconstructed. There is plenty of room for the child to display her creative abilities and develop originality. He wanted children to cultivate purity in thought, word, and deed along with the pursuit of knowledge. This concept is the central point of the modern educational system throughout the world.

#### **L. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

The NEP 2020 is focusing on vocational education and letting students be the master of how and what

they wish to study. From class 6 vocational course is introduced according to NEP 2020. The multiple entry and exit options for higher education and variety of choice of subjects all cater to the development of a workforce that is not only employable but also capable of generating employment. These too are the guiding principles of Gandhiji's thoughts on education. Gandhi believed that education should not consist of merely making the student remember a certain number of facts and figures which intends lethargy and inaction. There is really no relation between what a student learns at school or college and what he practices at home. These two things are on opposite ends of the scale. Instead, he proposed that education should be such as to enable the student to fight the battle of life successfully. He should also be able to think over the problems of life and world in a clear and critical way and be able to evolve solutions. "Earning while learning" was the motto of this education.

### **M. FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

NEP 2020 has introduced the foundational literacy and numeracy up to class 3 as from ECCE to class 3 i.e. from Age 3-8 years. For this initiative, students' foundational i.e. basic mathematical skills as well as literacy proficiency will be strong which is a reflection of Gandhian educational thoughts that is based on *Buniyadi Shiksha*.

### **CONCLUSION**

Thus, after analysis of the relevance of Gandhian educational thought to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is evident in its alignment with the policy's overarching goals and objectives. Gandhian principles emphasize holistic development, values education, community engagement, inclusivity, sustainability, and cultural preservation, all of which resonate strongly with the vision outlined in NEP 2020. By incorporating Gandhian educational ideals into the implementation of NEP 2020, India has the opportunity to create a transformative education system that not only imparts knowledge and skills but also fosters moral integrity, social responsibility, and a deep sense of citizenship. The principles of *Nai Talim*, community-driven initiatives, promotion of local languages and culture, and emphasis on sustainability can enrich the educational experience for learners and empower them to become compassionate, ethical, and resilient individuals. Furthermore, by embracing Gandhian educational thought, NEP 2020 can bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and modern educational practices, creating a harmonious blend of timeless values and contemporary innovations. Ultimately, the integration of Gandhian principles into NEP 2020 can pave the way for a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable education system that honours India's rich cultural heritage while preparing students to thrive in an ever-changing global landscape.

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