

**RESEARCH PAPER****Spiritual Education in Reference to Gandhian Philosophy: A Study****Kavita Sharma and Arun Kumar Singh**

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Email: [kavitavashista92@gmail.com](mailto:kavitavashista92@gmail.com), [aksingh03091980@gmail.com](mailto:aksingh03091980@gmail.com)Received: 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018, Revised: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018, Accepted: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2018**ABSTRACT**

*The paper deals with the spiritual education with special reference to the Gandhian Philosophy in which Gandhi's life and social philosophy influence spiritual education. The paper also deals his truth and non-violence which are the integral part of spiritual education. The paper concludes spiritual education as "it is education which enhances capabilities, capacities, competencies and skills of the individuals through faith in Universal Spirit, love and sympathy, truth, honesty, non-violence, social justice, patience, toleranence, and wisdom to solve the everyday problems creatively and constructively in the new situation of the socio-psycho-physical environment for attaining ultimate aim of education."*

**Key words:** *Spiritual Education, Gandhian Philosophy*

**INTRODUCTION**

Mohandas K. Gandhi was born in 1869 to a religious parents in the state of Gujarat in Western India. His marriage was arranged with Kasturbai Makanji when both were 13 years old. He went to London for his further study of law. In Southern Africa he worked ceaselessly to improve the rights of the immigrant Indians. It was there that he developed his creed of passive resistance against injustice, he started satyagraha and was frequently jailed as a result of the protests that he led. Mahatma Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 at Porbander in Kathiawad. His father was the Dewan at Rajkot. He matriculated in 1887 and was sent to England for studying law for four years. He returned back to India in 1891 and practiced law in Bombay. In 1893, he went to South Africa as a legal advisor for twenty years. He returned back from South Africa in 1925, he started a non-violent struggle against the British rule in India. In 1942, he started 'Quit India' Movement against British Government. Finally, the British Government left India on 15th August, 1947 and declared its independence.

His publications on education are; Autobiography (My Experiment with Truth), Basic Education, True Education, Towards New Education, To the Students, India of My Dreams, Medium of Instruction, Tasks before India, Tasks before Indian Students as well as 'Harijan' and 'Young India' are the papers founded by him.

**HIS LIFE PHILOSOPHY**

His philosophy of life is mainly based on 'Veda', 'Upanishad', Mahabharata of Ved Vyas, and 'Bhagwad Gita', 'Buddhism', 'Jainism', 'Patanjali's Yogasutra', and last but not least the teachings of Islam and Christianity as well saturated with idealistic and spiritualistic doctrines and assumptions.

Gandhi Ji was very much influenced by 'Gita'. He had always been keeping 'Holy Gita' in his hand and called it as 'Mother' who nourishes us smoothly, solves the difficult problems of everyday life and helps in decision making in unevenly and curvy circumstances after reading the same. Gandhi Ji was influenced by his mother, Putalibai, who taught him the lesson of simplicity and piety, and also by three great thinkers-firstly Rayachand Bhai Patel who taught him the first lesson in non-violence, secondly, Ruskin, through his book 'Unto the Last' drew his attention to the principle of dignity of labour, and thirdly, Leo Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of the God is within you' greatly influenced his spiritual outlook (Gupta (2007)). In addition to this, Gandhi Ji learnt concept of non-violence from the Upanishads, Buddhism, Jainism, and Christianity, concept to become a karmayogi

from the Bhagawad Gita, concept of Selfrealization from the 'Gita', concept of Brotherhood of Mankind from teaching of 'Islam' concept of 'Satyagraha' from the teachings of Christianity- in this connection, Gandhiji says, -It was the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount, which really awaken me to the rightness and value of Satyagraha.|| and the concept of Civil Disobedience from the Henry David Thoreau, an American philosopher anarchist.

### **SPIRITUAL EDUCATION REGARDING MAHATMA GANDHI**

His educational philosophy for spiritual regarding the spiritual educational aim, the spiritual curriculum, the method of spiritual teaching, the spiritual discipline, the spiritual teacher, the spiritual students and the spiritual environment are derived by his philosophy of life- both general and social philosophies

With respect to the spiritual education Gandhi ji gave more importance to self - preparation, selftraining, self - development, self-realization etc. for the development of the spirit. To be more specific in the role of strategies for education for spiritual development, Gandhi Ji (1926) writes, -I made the children memorize and recite hymns, and read to them from books on moral training. But that was far from satisfying me. As I came into close contact with them I saw that it was not through books that one could impart training of the spirit. Just as physical training was to be imparted through physical exercise, and intellectual through intellectual exercise, even so the training of the spirit was possible only through the exercise of the spirit. And the exercise of the spirit entirely depended on the life and characters of teacher. The teacher had always to be mindful of his Ps and Qs whether he was in the midst of his boys or not.

In his quest for the responsibility of the teachers to regulate spiritual sense in students, he observes that -It is impossible for a teacher situated miles away to affect the spirit of the pupils by his way of living. It would be idle for me, if I were a liar, to teach boys to tell the truth. A cowardly would never succeed in making his boys valiant, and a stranger to self-restraint could never teach his pupils the value of restraint. I saw, therefore, that I must be an eternal objectlesson to the boys and girls living with me. They thus become my teachers, and I learnt I must be good and live straight, if only for this sakes. I may say that the increasing discipline and restraint I imposed on myself at Tolstoy Farm was mostly due to those words of mine.

Gandhiji believed in the spiritual aims of education and emphasized all round development of mind, body and soul. In his own words, Gandhi Ji (1937) defines education as -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 nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the state takes over the manufactures of these schools. I hold that the 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. I am not writing this without some confidence, because it has the backing of experience. This method is being adopted more or less completely wherever spinning is being taught to workers. I have myself taught sandal-making and even spinning on these lines with good results. This method does not exclude knowledge of history and geography. But I find that this is best taught by transmitting such general information by word of mouth. One imparts ten times as much in this manner as by reading and writing.

Regarding a flexible curriculum for religious studies, As Gandhi ji (1928) significantly observes, -A curriculum of religious instruction should include a study of the tenets of faiths other than one's own. For this purpose the students should be trained to cultivate the habit of understanding and appreciating the doctrines of various great religions of the world in a spirit of reverence and broad-minded tolerance. This if properly done would help to give them a spiritual assurance and a better appreciation of their own religion. There is one rule, however, which should always be kept in mind while studying all great religions, and that is that one should study them only through the writings of known votaries of the respective religions. For instance, if one wants to study the

Bhagavata one should do so not through a translation of it made by hostile critic but one prepared by a lover of the Bhagavata. Similarly to study the Bible one should study it through the commentaries of devoted Christians. The study of other religions besides one's own will give one a grasp of the rock-bottom unity of all religions and afford a glimpse also of that absolute and universal truth which lies beyond the 'dust of creeds and faiths'. ||

## CONCLUSION

After reviewing the related literatures on Gandhian Philosophy, it is felt that there is a great deal has been done by Mahatma Gandhi to trace the development of philosophical and non-material thought and action with special reference to spiritual doctrines and assumptions, much has also been done to spiritualize education at Tolstoy Farm, and then at Sabarmati Ashram and Sewagram Ashram to draw in broad an outline of spiritual wealth and much has so far been also done to investigate the spiritual intelligence of children's work at Wardha Scheme of Education or best known as Basic Education for recreating and reconstructing a spiritual society in our country. Gandhi Ji introduced basic craft, as the centre of education, the correlation and coordination of curriculum of education related with everyday life, the methods of teaching such as learning by doing, correlation technique, and learning by experience, non-cognitive tasks viz-a sense of responsibility, initiative, love and sympathy, co-operation, social -justice and a great importance was given on experiment as the means of discovering truth. Greater emphasis is being paid to spiritual world and a great deal has also been done. Thus, the Gandhian Philosophy is itself, a knowledge-hub of spiritual education. All the books and writings of Mahatma Gandhi, of course, yield useful information regarding spiritual learning and training, and also give details of spiritual basis of education as well as help in progressive basis of education for the betterment of the pupils of the society as a whole. Although, the author has no much intelligence, competence and skill to evaluate the Gandhian Philosophy with special respect to spiritual wealth and essence and its subsequent doctrines and assumptions as well as its development, yet when he thinks of the Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of life (his both general and social philosophy), the feeling science arises in his mind that his religion based on virtues of love, truth and non-violence significantly remarks, of course, he was religious-spiritualist. Keeping in view the Gandhian Philosophy, the author concludes the 'spiritual education' as -it is education which enhances capabilities, capacities, competencies and skills of the individuals through faith in Universal Spirit, love and sympathy, truth, honesty, non-violence, social justice, patience, tolerance, and wisdom to solve the everyday problems creatively and constructively in the new situation of the socio-psychophysical environment for attaining ultimate aim of education. || That is why, therefore, it may be said that Mahatma Gandhi appears to have made a considerable progress and development with spiritual instruction, spiritual learning, spiritual training and spiritual teaching as well as spiritual education. So, therefore, he was a great spiritually intelligent and competent personality not only in India, but also in the world.

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