CHAPTER VI

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS: CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK BASED ON GANDHIAN PRINCIPLES – II

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6.1 Introduction

Gandhiji’s educational theory emerged as a protest against the system of education that existed in India during the British period. That system was not capable of meeting the needs, demands and aspirations of the people of India. The British system was not work-oriented. Such a system led to the stagnation of Indian thought, intellect and activity.

Gandhiji said, “by education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit.” Gandhiji’s educational theory is centred on the harmonious development of these three domains. To him, “man is neither more intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for making of the whole man and constitutes the true economies of education.”

Gandhiji used the phrase ‘all-round’ to imply the harmonious development of the body, intellect and character of an individual. By ‘drawing out’, he meant, recognising a great potentiality coiled up in the child which can be realised and developed to its perfection through education. The terms ‘body’, ‘mind’ and ‘spirit’ imply a vision of the ‘whole man’. Thus, Gandhi conceived that through education an all-round development of pupils’ personality becomes possible. They acquire knowledge, develop their psychomotor potentials, refine their character, learn ethical and moral values, acquire social skills and capabilities to earn their livelihood and live a decent corporate life in the society. People with these qualities are able to build a society which is stable, progressive, dynamic and peaceful. It is not possible

for the people to acquire these characteristics unless they are exposed to educational, social, economic and cultural experiences by the society. Maintaining a certain level of productivity and high level of economic growth, arranging favourable political and social conditions, creating employment opportunities for people, establishing an efficient administrative system, achieving national and social integration, making democracy safe for stability etc. are the ideals for which every society has to exist. The only relevant activity which makes all these possible for the people, the society and the state is education. It is in this context the Gandhian ideal of education proves to be quite relevant to the Indian society which is ever since encountered by a multitude of problems. These problems are to be tackled with a practical vision as conceived by Gandhi if the society is to sustain and progress at par with other developing and developed countries.

Gandhiji’s theory of education did not emerge all of a sudden, but was the outcome of his long years of sustained thoughts and experiences in social, economic and political fields. Further, the evolution of his philosophy of education has been greatly influenced by the great personalities who left an indelible impression on his life—Raychand Bhai by his living contact, Tolstoy and Ruskin by their books, ‘the Kingdom of God is within you’ and ‘Unto This Last’. Teachings of Tolstoy and Ruskin made Gandhi perceive that education without the use of one’s ‘hand’ and ‘feet’ would atrophy the brain.

Gandhi’s view on education have made a revolutionary contribution to the educational thought and practices. Being a man of action rather than a theorist, his theory of education is also by and large experimental and objective, rather than speculative and subjective. In fact, his theory of
education had no divergence in theory and practice. This made him to be known as the greatest educationist of the nation.

6.2 Gandhian Ideal of Character Development

Gandhi attached great importance to character building of students through education. He felt that students are the promise of the future and they would be called upon to enter the public life after their formal education. It is apparent that character of a person has considerable impact on the masses. Therefore, he wanted students as well as teachers to give considerable importance to character development. This point is of utmost importance for a country like India, having groaned under the heels of colonialism for about two centuries. He wanted schools and colleges to be factories for building character.

Bertrand Russel, the famous writer had referred to four virtues essential for an ideal character, viz. vitality, courage, sensitivity and intelligence. Agreeing with Russel, Gandhiji talked about these virtues in 1932, “I would try to develop courage, strength, virtue, the ability to forget oneself in working towards great aims. . . .”\textsuperscript{252} He believed that these virtues could be inculcated with the help of education. He translated this idea very emphatically in his scheme of basic education.

Gandhi considered the true goal of education on “the making of the whole man,” the man who eliminates all crude facts of life and enriches the broader visions and finer sensibilities within him. Therefore, every student should work towards harmonization of his body, mind and soul and uphold

the true, the good and the beautiful. To Gandhi, all education is self-realization which finally rewards one with the realization of the Supreme Being, the All Beautiful, All True or All Good. Therefore, education of the heart is of prime importance and such an education should be imparted to students right from beginning of childhood. This will enable the students to disseminate between the right and the wrong, the good and the evil, the moral and the immoral, truth and untruth.

6.2.1 It is true that the miasma of moral impurity is today spreading among our school-going children and like a hidden epidemic is working havoc among them. Gandhi recognised this danger sufficiently earlier and said, "the supreme need of the modern world is the maintenance of personal values." He held, human beings require human excellence in addition to their physical requirements and considered education as the best means for helping man to develop his superanimal qualities. By human excellence he meant cultivation of personal values which would develop not only intuition but also psycho-spiritual development of the child with its main focus on human life and happy living. Further, such an education with human values would transcend the limiting forces which divide human beings on grounds like colour, religion, caste, community etc. and would teach all the essence of all religions, sciences and philosophies.

"Education in human values should develop in every human being as it also helps other levels like the physical, the intellectual and the mental. It is useful for human beings of all ages but is all the more useful and has lasting effect on younger people. Ideals and ideas get a strong mental hold if taught
at the younger age, possible specially between 6-15 or even before." But the formal education has a target group and its concept and philosophy are valid for all.

In this context, it is quite relevant to consider the basic human values enunciated by early religious leaders and great philosophers. The important human values upheld by them are truth, righteousness and good conduct, peace, love and non-violence. These values correspond to the five basic characteristics of human nature: physical—good conduct and righteousness; intellectual—truth; emotional—peace; psychic—love and spiritual—non-violence. Gandhiji too considered these basic values as inseparable personal values and stressed the importance of their being inculcated by the pupils as supreme concerns of their education.

The core of Gandhian theory of education is related to the universal value of truth and *ahimsa* and directed towards the realisation of God and a new humanity. He believed that education should develop the highest truth possible in the mind, in the spirit and the body. Good education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of children. Giving importance to truth and character building in the lives of the students, Gandhi said, “if teachers impart all the knowledge in the world to their students but inculcate not truth and purity among them they (teachers) will have betrayed them (students) and instead of raising them set them on the downward road to perdition.”

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254 *YI*, 21-02-1929, p. 58.
truth, and lives in every human being. According to him, truth resides in every human heart and one has to search for it there, and to be guided by truth as one sees it.

Gandhi considered truth as the sovereign principle. Thus truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also. The Absolute Truth is God the quest for that truth is the *summum bonum*\(^{255}\) of life. Life is an aspiration. Its mission is to strive after perfection, which is self-realisation.

Righteous conduct is the expression of truth in human action. This is the outcome of right thinking. Therefore, Gandhi stressed much importance on education for right thinking. Right thinking to him, enables pupils to discriminate between right and wrong, the good and the evil, the moral and immoral, the truth and untruth, the relative and the absolute. When children develop this ability of discrimination, that will lead to righteous conduct. Righteous conduct not only contribute to the individual welfare but also to the social good, because society is nothing but the assemblage of individuals.

It is not possible for a human society to exist without peace. Gandhi was well aware of this concept and envisioned a social orientation in education which would nourish the emotional ideal of peace in children. For this Gandhi wanted children to live together as a community assimilating the spirit of co-operation, truth, *ahimsa* and non-violence. The whole human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment in terms of spirituality. Peace brings happiness into the human social structure, at the social and individual levels. Peace is not a mere static concept. It is dynamic, "a power packed

\(^{255}\) *Harijan*, 19-08-1942.
stiffness" a must for human existence. Peace provides harmony at home, in society, in the nation and in the whole world.

The psychic aspect of the human personality is the birth place of love. It is the expression of divine human soul. "Love is not merely an emotion, it is a form of energy which each individual transmits and receives." It affects all forms of life. Gandhi held, the cultivation of the heart, emotions and feelings, consisted in the refinement of human emotions and impulses. It promotes feelings of love, sympathy and fellowship. Love in man is, thus, the Divine Law or the God inherent in him. The path to the realization of the true self or God, therefore, lies through love of others and exercise of duties in a spirit of sacrifice to serve others.

To Gandhi, non-violence is the outcome of righteous conduct, truth, peace and love. The seeker after truth should be disciplined in non-violent values. _Ahimsa_ being the means to truth, education should be directed towards cultivating the non-violent spirit. Hence, education should enable pupils to recognise the essential oneness and unity and harmony in creation. From such an understanding, they will realise their obligation towards every object and components of the universe.

6.2.2 Gandhi's value-oriented education was based on the golden principle of simplicity and love. He took simplicity and love as the hallmarks of social service. In fact, simplicity was not only the corner-stone of educational thought but also was his lifestyle. Gandhi implored people to practice simplicity through a conscious effort in limiting their wants. In the simple life, he visualised he was particular about man's basic needs and his

256 Rao, _op. cit._
health—plenty of fresh, wholesome balanced diet; simple but artistic, durable cloths; sunny, airy, cozy dwellings and agreeable surroundings, proper sanitation and hygienic latrines. He held, ours should be a decent life, enriched with simplicity.

Gandhi wanted students to lead a simple life and do all their work by themselves, viz. washing their clothes, cooking their food etc. His central focus on simplicity in education was training the children in self-help and self-reliance. He regarded life of a student as that of a sanyasi student who follows the dictum of ‘simple living and high thinking’. A student should derive pleasure from his studies not from the abundance of facilities. To Gandhi, the simple life didn’t mean a complete rejection of matter, materials are essentially for meeting needs and should not dominate the mind. As Fromm puts it, “after he (man) has satisfied his animal needs, he is driven by human needs. While his body tells him which needs to cultivate and satisfy, and which need to let wither and starve out.”257 If one is earnest, one can discard a lot of things, without much strain. Not only item-wise even quantity-wise one can reduce consumption by refusing to have anything beyond one’s real using capacity. Even such a reduction means relatively simple life. Thus, simplicity becomes the best means to fight against poverty, suffering, animosity, unemployment and injustice and proves to be the best tool for social service directed towards the welfare of humanity. Then only, everyone would be conscious of the dignity of man as man and Gandhi’s dream of sarvodaya would come to a reality.

To Gandhi, service of love is the highest service one could render to another. Service based on love is the means for one’s spiritual emancipation. This idea embraces “the greatest good of all.” This is the inherent spirit of sarvodaya. Love demands no consideration or return. Knowledge liberates love from the physical passion and enables one to realise the ultimate truth. Gandhiji held, truth is God and the only means to find truth as God is love. Gandhi believed that, “ultimately means and end are convertible terms, I should not hesitate to say that God is love.”

6.2.3 Gandhiji strongly held that education should be a means to cultivate the non-violent spirit. He considered satya (truth) as the supreme value, but gave equal importance to ahimsa (non-violence). Basically non-violence is a moral virtue. It is the fundamental principle of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism and is considered equivalent to dharma as the moral law.

The word ‘ahimsa’ literally means, non-injury, or more narrowly non-killing, and more widely harmlessness. It means the renunciation of the will to kill or the intention to hurt any living thing and the abstention from hostile thought, word and act. In it negative sense, ahimsa means the total avoidance of mental or physical injury to any living being.

Non-violence requires deliberate self-suffering, not a deliberate injury of the supposed wrong-doer. In a wider sense, it denotes the largest love, the greatest charity. Gandhi said, “if I am a follower of ahimsa, I must love my enemy or a stranger to me as I would my wrong-doing father or son. This active ahimsa necessarily includes truth and fearlessness.”

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258 Yf, 31-12-1931.

259 Modern Review, October 1916.
extended the meaning of non-violence beyond mere non-killing or even non-injury. The principle of \textit{ahimsa}, he held is, "hurt my evil thought, my undue haste, by living, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody and by holding on to what the world needs."\textsuperscript{260} To it he added, "one who can express \textit{ahimsa} in life, exercises a force superior to all the forces of brutality."\textsuperscript{261}

Gandhi regarded non-violence as a positive state of love, doing good even to the wrong-doer. He said, "it requires you to resist the wrong-doer by dissociating yourself from him even though it may offend him or injure him physically."\textsuperscript{262} He considered, practising non-violence as a \textit{tapasya} through self-suffering and fearlessness.

Gandhi distinguished between three kinds of \textit{himsa} (violence). The first one is \textit{krita himsa}, i.e., violence done by one's own self. The second one is \textit{karita himsa}, i.e., violence instigated and got done by somebody else. Lastly, the \textit{anumodita himsa}, i.e., watching passively some violence being done by someone else. Abstention from all of them is highly necessary to be non-violent.

To Gandhi, non-violence includes almost all the moral virtues like humility, forgiveness, love, charity, selflessness, fearlessness, strength, non-attachment, meekness, innocence etc. Therefore, it becomes vital to follow all these virtues for a person to develop the spirit of non-violence. One has to recognise the immortal essence in all beings. It is the recognition of this essence which gives man the willingness to die without any intention to kill.

\textsuperscript{260} \textit{YJ}, 07-08-1932, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{261} \textit{Harijan}, 14-3-1936.
\textsuperscript{262} \textit{YJ}, 25-08-1920.
This forms, to Gandhi, the creed of *ahimsa*. Thus *ahimsa* becomes a soul force, without which none can be truly non-violent. It was in this context Gandhi advocated that education should be a means to cultivate the non-violent spirit in the children.

6.2.4 Gandhiji firmly believed that it was through love that persons grew. He took love as a divine force which would link man to man and held it as the royal road to the cultivation of selfless spirit. True love leads one to selfless action to the service of mankind, tireless service of the poorest, the lowest and the hardest hit human beings. Gandhiji's theory of social orientation emphasized preparing citizens by teaching youth live together as a community on the basis of truth, co-operation and *ahimsa*.

Gandhi took *ahimsa* in the positive sense as love but preferred the word 'charity' to 'love'. He said, "*ahimsa* is love in the Paulonian sense and something more than the love defined by St. Paul, although I know St. Paul's beautiful definition is good enough for all practical purposes." He held, love as inclusive of non-violence among other virtues. He regarded love as the most fundamental way through which one could express his respect and concern for others. Thus, love becomes the most essential universal truth without which we would cease to be human.

The concept of *sarvodaya* probably emanated from his theory of truth and *ahimsa*. *Sarvodaya*, holds that all are equally valuable and equally true. Therefore, the welfare or the good of all should be our necessary concern.

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The accomplishment of this concept, requires, self-suffering, self-sacrifice for the welfare of humanity, firmly rooted on the fundamentals of universal love and brotherhood. Therefore, Gandhi believed that a votary of *ahimsa* cannot but pursue the ideal of *sarvodaya*, because his love for everyone as God’s manifestation would compel him to work for the good of all. Thus, a lover of truth will naturally be a lover of *ahimsa* and the joined result of the two pursuits would be the good of all—*sarvodaya*. *Ahimsa* or love, therefore, was the only means according to Gandhi, through which the ideal of *sarvodaya* could be followed and realised.

6.2.5 To Gandhiji, self-realisation or the realisation of God was our highest end and regarded ‘love of others’ as the means to this end. Philosophers of the world had so often spoken of *Atmadarshana* or *Atmabodha* (self-realisation or self-knowledge) as the ultimate aim or end of man’s life. But to Gandhi, self-realisation did not mean finding out some such unique reality within oneself which was separate from all else in the universe. To him, it was not to be founded in isolation from others by the path of *nivratti*. The self is one with God and God is one with the entire universe. Hence, Gandhian concept of self-realisation implied realization of all within one’s own being. Such a self-realisation, requires one’s perceiving the imaginary barrier between his self and the entire universe. When he has realized this, he has attained what is called *atmabodha*. Hence, *atmabodha* according to Gandhi, as agreed upon by Tagore and Vivekananda, meant, seeing oneself into others and others into oneself. This was the real ideal of *sarvodaya*. He considered *tapasya*, *ahimsa* and selfless love for others as the means to self-realisation.
Self-realisation is a spiritual and religious ideal. *Sarvodaya* becomes a means to this end through working for *sarvodaya* one's self is truly realised. Thus, self-realisation is nothing over and above the true working for the upliftment and good of all. Gandhi had shown that essentially the spiritual ideal of self-realisation or *moksha* was nothing different from the social ideal of *sarvodaya*. Therefore, he upheld, social service, mutual love and compassion as ways of realising the self. All religions advocate for mutual love and brotherhood. Gandhi's identification of *sarvodaya* with self-realisation was a result of all such elements present in Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

Gandhi brought the philosophy of *advaita* on a very practical level and interpreted its metaphysics in somewhat a practical and ethical manner. *Advaita*, implied for him that the basic truth was only one and the entire creation was the expression of the same truth. There was, therefore, no difference one being and another. All were basically one. Therefore, the best *sadhana* to realise God is to love the entire creation. It is in and through love that God or self could be realized. So, *brahma* or God realisation was nothing else than the realisation of the basic unity underlying all existence and that could be done only by realising oneself into thers and others into oneself. Gandhi held, what was necessary for *moksha* was not giving up of the material world, but giving up of selfish motives. To him, social service and love towards all were the only means of self-realisation, God realisation or *moksha*.

Love is the essence of morality; for it helps the finite individual to widen his narrow self and include in his life more and more of others, and thereby
progress towards the universal God. Gandhi wrote in Harijan, all religions agree that it is “in and through love that persons grow.”\textsuperscript{264} “It is love that creates freedom, and it is love alone that can redeem the misuse of freedom.”\textsuperscript{265} All our duties toward fellow-beings are an expression of love. Love in man is, thus, the Divine Law or the God inherent in him. The path to the realization of the true self or God, therefore, lies through love of others and the performance of duties in a spirit of sacrifice to benefit others.

6.2.6 According to Gandhiji, there can be no religion without morality; true religion consists in nothing but serving humanity with a sense of inner love and compassion. He held that any spiritual ideal can be realized only in and through the moral and social service, and not by a tapasya in the jungle. He wanted every man to accept certain moral values as absolute and try to realise them in his life to the best of his capacity.

To Gandhiji, religion is a way of life and therefore it consists in the activities of every moment that one does in his daily life and not in special actions that he does at certain special moments. Religion is life orientation and such as life orientation for Gandhiji, consisted mainly in a life of love, sacrifice and suffering. Religion is individualistic too, when we think of the mystical side of religion as some kind of inner experience founded on some kind of vision. Here, Gandhi, quite in agreement with the great Indian scholar, Dr. Radhakrishnan seems to believe that ‘vision and action, mysticism

\textsuperscript{264} Harijan, 13-10-1940.

\textsuperscript{265} Jeffreys, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 116.
and ethics go together'. Accordingly, there can be no distinction between morality and religion.

In the vision, Gandhi held, we have a glimpse of the reality or truth which is absolute, but this glimpse by itself is always relative. The vision of one man, therefore, will be different from the other. To him, all the great religions of the world are the result of the original vision of some or other prophets or saints like Buddha, Mohammed or Jesus Christ. But any one’s vision of truth can only be relative. Hence, Gandhi inferred, all the religions in the world are relatively true, all of them express the same absolute truth in their own relative ways. All are, therefore, imperfect in one sense and true in another sense. None can claim superiority over the other. Religious tolerance, he firmly believed, is a must. We must have respect and regard for each other’s religion, because everyone’s religion reveals to him the nature of the absolute truth in his own relative or partial way.

To Gandhi, truth was ‘what the voice within’ (i.e. conscience) told us. But again, he pointed out that before one made such claims of knowing truth on the strength of his inner voice, he must have fully disciplined himself by cultivating the virtue of truthfulness, humility, purity etc. and above all the non-violence. He must also embrace the ideals of purity and non-possession and must be completely free from ideas of self-interest. He pointed out that to tread the path of truth was not an easy task. It was like moving on the edge of a sword; it was a tapasya. Thus, although truth was not the exclusive property of anyone, and everyone was capable of attaining the relative truth, the man who claimed to attain such truth would be a man of special moral qualities.

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Therefore, Gandhi advocated everyone to cultivate the moral virtues as basis of spiritual enlightenment and thought schools to be of granaries to the cultivation such moral values. Religion and morality, both built on truth, thus become supreme considerations in education.

6.2.7 Gandhiji, in tune with the idealist educators from Socrates have recognised that education must be directed towards the development of character and personality. In fact, Gandhi held that character development is more important than the culture of the mind. Therefore, Gandhi emphasised the training of the emotions and the feeling of life much more than of the intellect or the power of abstract thinking. He held, "culture of the mind must be subservient to the culture of the heart." In his autobiography, he wrote, "I had always given the first place to the culture of the heart or the building of character. . . . I regarded character-building as the proper formation for their education, and if the foundation was strongly laid, I was sure the children could learn all the other things themselves or with the assistance of friends." Addressing a group of students at Agra, he said, "all your scholarship, all your study of Shakespeare and Wordsworth would be in vain, if at the same time you do not build your character, and attain mastery over thoughts and actions." At the Zohira College, Colombo, he warned students, "all the education you are receiving in this college will be reduced to nothing, if it is not built on the foundation of pure character."

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267 Desai, op. cit., p. 144.
269 YI, 19-09-1929.
270 Desai, op. cit., p. 80.
Russel, had referred to four virtues essential for an ideal character, viz. vitality, courage, sensitivity and intelligence. Gandhi also agreed upon these virtues, when he said, "I would try to develop courage, strength, virtue, the ability to forget oneself in working towards great aims..." He believed that these virtues could be inculcated with the help of education. Gandhi's views on education were influenced by his general philosophy of life, viz. belief in God, truth, ahimsa, dignity of labour and a new social order having justice and quality. He laid equal stress on the development of character along with body and mind, i.e., reinforcement of emotions and awakening of deepest feelings of love, sympathy, fellowship and right ordering of loyalties. Since education is a life-long process it should help cultivating the spirit of co-operation, tolerative-public spirit and a sense of responsibility.

To quote Rao, "empty scholastic information builds up a volcanic content because of large amount of confusing and apparently unrelated information which not only misshapes the personality into a mental and emotional structure both bizarre and discordant, but also makes the child a misfit, unable to live upto the ever complex demands of life. For the fast-moving and atomic age we require children with strong capacity for imaginative and creative thinking, the well spring of which is the consciousness of childhood."271 Through this quotation he was illuminating the significance of character development of children highlighted by Gandhi. His norms of morality were deeply rooted on religion as well as practical ethics, so the character envisaged by him was deeper and more comprehensive and wanted to turn our children appreciative not merely of

271 Rao, op. cit., p. 61.
civic responsibilities, but sensitive of their membership of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, Gandhi upheld the ethical ideals of conduct such as loyalty, self-control, endurance, courage, prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude as components of good character and wanted children to develop those ideals through their education.

6.2.8 Gandhi was convinced that, a perfect purity of character nursed in a mind pure and serene was the touchstone of spiritualism and strongly held that it was that spiritual force which enabled one to learn from teachers and books. Gandhi was so convinced about the purity of means by his study of religions like Jainism, Buddhism and Christianity and held, purity of means as a necessary condition for the attainment of good end. He in the perfect spirit of the Gita, believed that we as human beings have our control only on the means and never on the end. The end is beyond our control. So, we should make every effort for maintaining the purity of means.

Gandhi attached a great deal of stress on the purity of mind to learn from teachers and books. To him, cleanliness of the mind and body was the first step in education. Addressing students in Madras, he said, “when your heart is not pure, and you cannot master your passions, you cease to be an educated man . . . And what is education without character, and what is character without elementary personal purity?”

He added, “a chivalrous boy, would always keep his mind pure, his eyes straight and his hands unpolluted.”

Purity of personal life, which is necessary to control lust and self, and purity of heart, which is necessary for purity in thought, word and

\[272\] Y, 15-09-1927.

deed, constituted according to Gandhi, the chief constituents of character. He held truth and non-violence as instrumental in keeping the heart pure. Inner purity, Gandhi believed, must show itself in outward acts and outward behaviour as well. Thus, a boy who wants to keep his mouth pure, will, not merely utter a bad word but he will not drink or smoke, or take to any other stimulants even coffee or tea. He would be “fearlessly truthful against heaviest odds under every circumstance imaginable. A truthful boy, a brave boy, will never think of hurting even a fly. He will defend all the weak boys in his own school and help whether inside the school or outside the school all those need his help.”

To Gandhi, a life of prayer and brahmacharya are the ideal means to keep one’s personal purity. He elucidated his view on prayer in the following way: “Prayer does for the purification of the mind, what the bucket and the broom do for the cleaning up of our physical surroundings. And that is why we always commence our proceedings with prayers. No matter, whether the prayer we recite is the Hindu prayer or the Muslim or the Parsi, its function is essentially the same, namely purification of the heart.”

Explaining to the pupils, the quest for truth by means of prayer as the “alpha and omega of all” be remarked, “there are several things in this prayer which are worthy of your note, but I want to draw your attention to that particular portion of it which pledged the reciter to adherence of truth in speech and action under all circumstances, and at all times. One mantra, lead

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me from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from death to immortality. Similarly, the Islamic prayer . . . is an outpouring of the soul, for light and for being guided on the straight path of truth and righteousness.\textsuperscript{276}

Gandhiji insisted \textit{brahmacharya} as of equal importance to prayer in the pursuit of knowledge. This to him, is essential to maintain the purity of heart. He maintained that \textit{brahamacharya} is a must even on the part of married students. He asserted, "... during your student days, you are expected not to dissipate energy but to conserve it."\textsuperscript{277} He adds, "the ancient word for a \textit{vidyarthi} is \textit{brahmachari}, because all his study and activity had as their objective the search of \textit{Brahman} and he built his life on a sure foundation of stoic simplicity and self-restraint, which every religion has enjoined on the student."\textsuperscript{278} The word \textit{‘brahmachari’} means, "searcher after God, one who conducts himself so as to bring himself nearest to God in the least possible time."\textsuperscript{279} In ancient India, the \textit{guru} enjoined his disciples a life of austere simplicity and strict celibacy; and in dispensing knowledge to them, he had subordinated the secular to the spiritual. \textit{Brahman} pervades every being and can, therefore, be searched by diving into and realizing the inner self. This realisation is impossible without control of the senses. \textit{Brahmacharya}, thus means control in thought, word and action, of all the senses at all times and in all places.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{276} Ibid., pp. 296-97.
\item \textsuperscript{277} \textit{YJ}, 19-09-1929.
\item \textsuperscript{278} \textit{YJ}, 21-07-1927.
\item \textsuperscript{279} \textit{YJ}, 08-09-1927.
\end{itemize}
Gandhiji held that modern education turns our eyes away from the spirit. In tune with the idealists of the past, Gandhi too, believed that the ultimate goal of education was self-realisation of the ultimate reality, knowledge of truth or God. He held, self-realisation as the *summun bonum* of life and education. Therefore, he laid stress on the spiritual development of children through education.

It is true that we live in a world of fantastic scientific achievements. We have conquered time and distance, the sea and the sky. Technology in education covers every possible means by which knowledge and information can be presented interestingly and guarantee learning in the minimum time possible. “The new developments in psychology, social and behavioural sciences have shown us many innovative methods, techniques and strategies in maximising the learning outcomes. All these are promises to create a better education and a new civilization. But because of its essential materialistic character, indifferent to spiritual values, it has entered into a blind alley. Where everyone commits more and more and seeks to elbow out everyone else, the much needed fellow-feeling which is the basic sustainer of the society and which, more than laws, restrains from recourse to the law of jungle, suffers and we cannot but have an environment of greed and selfishness, envy and intolerance, violence, cruelty and strife. This is happening more and more beneath all the glitters of the civilization. We have before us, now a world where human life itself is becoming cheapest commodity, where ghastly crimes and brutal murders do not shake the human heart as if they are normal
things—when peace and spiritual development becomes matters of another planet."\textsuperscript{280}

King and Schneider observe, "the goal of material influence seems to generate greed and selfishness. Not that these features have ever been absent in individuals and societies, but they appear to be magnified by the shrinking of non-materialistic value."\textsuperscript{281} Thus a pursuit of materialistic gratification of the sole object, unmindful of the fundamental questions of life that Tolstoy had raised, leading to the state of spiritual emptiness is the greatest failure of civilization.

Since, modern education turns our eyes away from the spirit, Gandhi conceived that "the possibilities of spirit force or soul force do not appeal to us, and our eyes are consequently riveted on the evanescent, transitory material force."\textsuperscript{282} To him, no education can be real unless it caters to the spirit. To develop the spirit is to build character and to work towards a knowledge of God and self-realization. Therefore, he asserted, "spiritual education as an essential part of the training of the young, and that all training without culture of the spirit was of no use, and might even be harmful."\textsuperscript{283} He regarded the life of a student as spiritually similar to that of an ascetic as both must be devoted to the things of the spirit, 'eternal verities' and be the purest possible. Therefore, education besides it intellectual and utilitarian point of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{280} Pandey (ed.), \textit{op. cit.}, p. 275.
\item \textsuperscript{281} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{282} YI, 14-11-1929.
\item \textsuperscript{283} \textit{Autobiography}, Vol. II, p. 200f.
\end{itemize}
view should seek to emancipate the pupil beyond the physical and material and quicken his aspirations to the highest goal of self-realisation.

6.2.10 The end of all knowledge, according to Gandhi, must be the formation of character; for he realized that virtue consists not in the possession of ideas but ideals. The core of Gandhian theory of education was to raise man to a higher moral and spiritual order through the full development of the individual and the evolution of a new man, a satyagrahi, a non-violent personality. His theory was related to the universal value of truth and ahimsa and directed towards the realization of God and a new humanity. It was apparently meant for the creation of a new personality in the building of character, which became for him the end of all knowledge.

Gandhi said, “to awaken the heart is to awaken the dormant soul, to awaken reason and to inculcate discrimination between good and evil.”

Therefore, character building was the fundamental enterprise in the school he envisioned. On character building, he said, “I would try to develop courage, strength, virtue, the ability to forget oneself in working towards great aims. This is more important than literacy; academic learning is only a means to this great end.”

Gandhi held that, the development of personality was more significant than the accumulation of intellectual tools and academic knowledge. He believed that, education should develop the highest truth possible in the mind, the spirit and the body. In fact, Gandhi’s concept of personality was based on the ideal man of the Bhagavadgita, as was his notion of the satyagrahi, one

\[\text{Harijan, 21-11-1936.}\]
\[\text{Bose, op. cit., p. 254.}\]
standing firmly rooted in wisdom and truth, one fully developed. The attributes of the harmonious personality, likewise are of the same cast as those of the paradigm of the *Gita* and the non-violent personality, such as self-control, universally non-violent, selfless social activity, fearlessness, self-restraint, with all life-centred in truth. In this context, he held, schools and colleges should turn into factories for building up character of the children.

6.3 The Gandhian Theory of Skill Development

6.3.1 Gandhiji found that the British system of education introduced in India was not suitable for catering the needs and aspirations of the Indian society. The system cared only the development of the mind and did not take into account other human characteristics, development of the physical body and the soul. Therefore, he recommended that “education must be of a new type for the sake of the creation of a new world.”

The new system of education envisaged by Gandhi, took into consideration all the characteristics of a human being, his intellect, physical and emotional aspects and aimed at a harmonious development of these characteristics. Gandhi maintained that “man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for making of the whole man.” As such, the education of the intellect cannot be separated from educating the body and the soul. It has to be an integrated whole where all three—in tellect, physical body and the soul have to be activated to function together in order

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to achieve the full development of a harmonious man. Gandhi held that, education through 'craft' would ensure this harmonious growth of the intellect, body and soul. He was in favour of utilizing all faculties of mind and all parts of the body to develop them to a maximum possible extent by means of craft education.

Gandhi's conception of education through a 'craft' came to be a reality in 1937 and was popularly known as a 'National Programme in Basic Education' or *Nai Talim*. It was closely related to the basic needs and interests of the child with main focus on development of his inherent potentialities. Further, the system was intimately associated with basic occupation of the community, the child hailed from. Gandhi held, craft, art, health and education as the four important components of basic education. He regarded craft as the means for knowledge. Gandhi emphasized the need for educating the child through manual work, not on 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."288

Gandhi did not under rate the building up of the body in his scheme of education. Hence, in the *Tolstoy Farm*, he had enjoined that all manual labour from cooking down to scavenging was to be done by the inmates. Referring to *Nai Talim* he said, "I would, therefore, give compulsory physical

288 *Harijan*, 08-09-1946, p. 306.
training musical drill, though in fact, as in cases where students learn agriculture by going to the field to plough and weed, they would have sufficient physical exercise, and artificial exercise, therefore, would be unnecessary."  

The basic education was also called, 'education through handicrafts' because Gandhi believed that the education should be given through manual work or handicraft. He maintained that the true development of the mind and the heart can be achieved only through manual labour. It balances the intellectual and practical elements of experience, and may be made an instrument of educating the body and the mind in co-ordination. As against the compartmentalisation of knowledge, "a fragment of educator addressing itself to a fragment of a pupil about a fragment of a subject," which has reduced man to a factor and led to a neglect of his total personality, Gandhi, advocated an integration in the education of the child, of all knowledge, through the medium of craft activity.

6.3.2 Gandhi held that the whole of general education should come through the craft. The true goal of education is "the making of the whole man" the man who eliminates all crude facts of life and enriches the broader vision and fine sensibilities within him. As a student, it is the duty of everyone to endlessly strive towards harmonisation of body, mind and soul and uphold 'the true', 'the good' and 'the beautiful'. The whole pattern of education to Gandhi, should be directed towards spiritual realization, which is 'the true

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289 Educational Reconstruction, p. 133.

economics of education'. He held that all education is self-realization which ultimately rewards one with the realization of the Supreme Being, the All Beautiful, All True and All Good. For this end, he held, education through craft as the most ideal one. In this context, the observation made by Gandhi is very significant.

"Supposing he (the child) is set to some useful occupation like spinning, carpentry, agriculture etc., for his education, and in that connection is given a thorough comprehensive knowledge relating to the theory of various operations that he is to perform and use and construction of the tools that he would be wielding; he would not only develop a fine healthy body but also a sound vigorous intellect that is not merely academic but is firmly rooted in and is tested from day to day experiences. His intellectual education would include a knowledge of Mathematics and the various sciences that are useful for an intelligent and efficient exercise of his avocation. If to this is added literature by way of recreation, it would give him a perfect, well-balanced, all-round education in which the intellect, the body and the spirit have all full play and develop together into a natural, harmonious whole. Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for making of the 'whole man' and constitutes the true economics of education."

To Gandhi, "the head and heart and hand of man are a trinity in unity," and so, education of the whole man meant perfection of human nature by a harmonious development of all the powers—neglect of any one

291 Harijan, 08-05-1937.

292 Branford, op. cit., p. 129.
aspect would be incomplete, faulty education. All this development could be achieved best by an education *through* craft. The idea he held, "the whole of general education should come through the crafts and simultaneously with their progress,"\(^{293}\) that the "whole process of education" is to be "imparted through some handicraft or industry,"\(^{294}\) that all education should be imparted through practical training in the "art and science of a craft,"\(^{295}\) or that, "the whole education of the body and the mind and the soul is to be imparted," "through the handicraft that is taught to children,"\(^{296}\) was not merely new but revolutionary.

Gandhi’s aim was to impart general education through a *selected* craft, to develop the child’s intellect through the craft, and at the same time, to give sufficient practice in the craft itself with a view to making the child master its tricks sufficiently well to ply it as a trade if necessary in his future life.

6.3.3 Gandhi firmly believed that craft education makes one physically fit. According to him, "what goes by the name of education in our schools and colleges in the cities today is in reality only intellectual dissipation. Intellectual training is there looked upon as something altogether unrelated to manual or physical work. But since body must have some sort of physical exercise to keep it in health, they vainly try to attain that end by means of an artificial and otherwise barren system of physical culture which would be ridiculous beyond words. The young man who merges from this system can in no way compete

\(^{293}\) *Harijan*, 16-10-1937.

\(^{294}\) *Harijan*, 30-10-1937.

\(^{295}\) Ibid.

\(^{296}\) *Harijan*, 11-06-1938.
in physical endurance with an ordinary labourer. The slightest physical exertion gives him headache; a mild exposure to the sun is enough to cause him giddiness. And what is more, all this is looked upon quite 'natural'.

Gandhi held, for true education, the education of the intellect cannot but be synchronised with the education of how to utilize the bodily organs in the best possible way. To Gandhi, "true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise any training of the bodily organs, e.g., hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose etc. In other words, an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of development of the intellect. But, unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lopsided affair. A proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds paripassu with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of child. They constitute an indivisible whole. According to this theory, therefore, it would be a gross fallacy to suppose that they can be developed piecemeal or independently of one another."298

Gandhi believed that the culture of the brain must thrive with the culture of hands and feet—the culture that makes a balance between intellect and spirit. In fact, the very concept of basic education was formulated and worked out for this end in view. In Phoenix, Gandhiji put into practice his theory of basic education and the system was found to be successful in educating thirty inmates of it. The children were to spend three hours at

297 Harijan, 08-05-1937.

298 Ibid.
school, two hours on agriculture and two hours in the printing press. They had discussion with Gandhiji on some important event, a great man or a great book while working in the garden or the kitchen. Thus, they got knowledge side by side with manual labour.

Gandhiji had great regard for what could be achieved with men’s hands and feet. He held, “there is no point in developing the brain only. One has to develop one’s brain through one’s hand.” He said, “if I were a poet, I would write a beautiful poem on the possibilities of the five fingers of one’s hand. Those who do not know how to use their hands get little profit out of education. They are like one who sings false notes without feeling the music. Books are never sufficiently interesting to hold the interest of the mind. The mind begins to wonder. Only manual work brings you back to reality.”

Further, Gandhi opined that education through a basic craft in the form of spinning, carpentry, agriculture etc. gives the child sufficient physical training. Craft activities help the child to develop his hands, feet and other bodily organs. The child is exposed to physical endurance and gets experience in neuro-muscular co-ordination. Therefore, to Gandhi, artificial physical training is unnecessary for the physical development of the child.

6.3.4 Gandhiji firmly believed that craft education would promote intellectual development of the child through his day to day experience. For this, Gandhi recommended the craft predominant in the locality like spinning, carpentry,

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gardening, agriculture etc. After fourteenth year, the craft should be made more sophisticated such as mechanics, electricity, medicine, commerce, printing and domestic arts. The selected craft must have relation to the child's life and to his day to day experiences. It must find the natural point of correlation with human activities and interests and extend to the whole curriculum. Establishing proper correlation is the technique to bind education to the child's life and beyond too. Such an education will surely, Gandhi held, would promote development of the intellect of the child along with his physical development. In fact, such a system proposed by him was to combine hand-culture and mind-culture in a fruitful manner.

Gandhiji's basic education is based on the maxim, "learning by doing." It claims two advantages; it makes the lesson interesting and enables the child to see the connection between the school and outside. Thus learning becomes more meaningful and the child realises that what he learns from books has a practical application in his future life. For this, he recommended 'role-playing' in the teaching of Mathematics and literature. History, geography and sciences could be taught taking the children to fields and farms. These are some of the strategies by which an imaginative and sensitive teacher can extend the child's world and mind to encompass things beyond the classroom pale. Such a strategy expands the child's mental horizon, motivating him to learn and explore, to think intelligently and creatively. Learning becomes the result of one's own effort and the knowledge acquired is retained in the mind.
6.3.5 Gandhiji held that there was no limit to the possibilities of knowledge that could be imparted through the medium of the craft. Subjects like Mathematics, sciences, social studies, literature etc. could be taught along with craft education. As an illustration he recommended education starting with *takli*. “Starting the education of the child with the *takli* would be starting with the ‘earliest experience of the race’.”\(^{300}\) He would teach them what place *takli* occupied in our life in the early days, and this would lead into a little history, the story of its decline. Then would follow a brief course in Indian history starting from the East India Company, or even earlier from the Muslim period, showing how a systematic process this main handicraft of the people was strangled and ultimately killed. This would be followed by a brief course in mechanics-construction of the *takli*. Next would be a few lectures on cotton, its, habitat, its varieties, the countries and the states of India where it is at present grown etc. The child would have to be given at this stage some knowledge of its cultivation, the soil best suited for it and the like that would lead them into a little ‘agriculture’. The whole of elementary arithmetic can be taught through the counting of yards of spinning, finding out the count of yarn, making up of banks, getting it ready for the weaver, the number of cross threads in the warp to put in for particular textures of cloth and so on. Every process from the growing of cotton to the manufacture of the finished product—cotton, picking, ginning, carding, spinning, sizing, weaving—all would have their mathematics, mechanics and history correlated to them.

Gandhiji held, disc of a *takli* as a good circle and geometry could be easily taught. To him, the commencement of training by teaching the

\(^{300}\) *Harijan*, 18-02-1939.
alphabet and reading and writing hampers the pupils' intellectual growth. The alphabets may be taught after they have had an elementary knowledge of history, geography, mental arithmetic and the art of spinning. After six month's preliminary training of this kind, they may given training in drawing. When he has learnt to draw geometrical figures and the figures of birds etc., he will draw not scrawl the alphabets. In Gandhi's scheme of teaching, the exercise of the smaller muscles come only after the exercise of the larger muscles. This approach is psychologically based in which learning becomes purposeful activity and schooling becomes a joy.

Saiyidain reported, "the curriculum, Gandhi envisaged has a unity, having been built round three integrally-related centres as the foci of the curriculum; the child's physical environment, the child's social environment and 'craft work' which is their natural meeting point; since it utilizes the resources of the former for the purposes of the latter." Thus, while general science interprets the physical environment, and social studies the social environment, work on the basic craft brings them together by utilizing the resources of the physical environment for purposes relating to the social environment. Subject matter within the syllabus, has also been organized as significant and comprehensive units of experiences, which will, when mastered, enable the child to understand his environment better and to react to it more intelligently because they throw helpful light on the problems and conditions of life around him. The child is able to see the relation between the various subjects in school among themselves and to life, as work in social studies and general sciences issues in experssional activities in language and

301 Basic National Education, p. 50.
drawing, and the study of history and geography helps the understanding and appreciation of his craft, and gardening and agriculture are done as an integral part of school activities; the school thus becomes "an active centre of experience and of abundant life."\textsuperscript{302}

Another important attribute that craft education claimed is that it enables the child to acquire and assimilate the relevant knowledge of history, geography, civics, general science and other important subjects. Further, it gives to the child's knowledge greater correctness and reality and saves it from the formal compartmentalization which makes it both dull and meaningless. Craft, thus becomes the pivotal point from which emerge many rich and progressive human interests, some historical, some geographical, some scientific, some sociological, all finding their satisfaction in due course in the specialised study of different disciplines of knowledge.

6.3.6 Being a developing country, Gandhiji wanted her youth to be workers of good character. Giving importance to character development in the lives of the students, Gandhi said, "if teachers impart all the knowledge in the world to their students but inculcate not truth and purity among them, they (teachers) will have betrayed them (students) and instead of raising them, set them on the downward road to perdition. Knowledge without character is a power of evil only, as seen in the instances of so many talented thieves and gentlemen rascals in the world."\textsuperscript{303}

Hence, in basic education, Gandhiji gave paramount importance to character development of the pupils. He regarded pupils as the promise of

\textsuperscript{302} Ibid., p. 54.

\textsuperscript{303} \textit{Y}, 21-02-1929, p. 58.
the future who were to enter public life after their education. Therefore, he wanted pupils to realise their responsibilities towards the country and should inculcate a sense of discipline in their lives. Gandhi recognised the role of teachers inculcating a sense of discipline and character among the children. At the same time, he held that they come from within the children themselves. To him, among other things a student should be humble and “his behaviour is to be a pattern of exemplary self-restraint.” Gandhi said, the students should serve the community. For this they should develop the courage to resist the wrong and own the correct attitude, fearlessness, humility, cooperation and the like which constitute true character.

Gandhiji wanted the craft to be “the pivot and centre of education and claimed that such education would promote the real disciplined development of the mind resulting in conservation of the intellectual energy and indirectly also the spiritual.” Gandhi pointed out that without the use of our hand and feet our brains would be atrophied. He asserted, “India needs her youth to be workers—workers whose character is such—developed through education that it naturally becomes translated into work, into practical capacity, into service.” He would naturally begin the child’s education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Gandhi said, “the highest development of the mind and the soul is possible under such a system of education.” The only condition is

304 Harijan, 07-09-1947, p. 314.
305 Harijan, 05-06-1937.
306 Harijan, 02-10-1937.
307 Harijan, 31-07-1937.
that the handicraft should be taught not mechanically but scientifically, making
the child know the why and wherefore of every process. In fact, the whole
person of the boys and girls has to be developed through a vocation which
automatically enables them to be workers of good character.

Gandhiji did not want the school to be a place of passive absorption of
second hand information, but a workshop for experimentation and discovery,
learning by doing. He held education through craft is true education for social
service. Craft launches him dignity of labour and respect for man irrespective
of his status and calling, promotes a feeling of equality and calls forth
sympathy and understanding. The net products of such a system of education
would be the emergence of good *artisans* with noble character who would
contribute towards the betterment of the society in a spirit of understanding,
sympathy, tolerance, fellow-feeling and co-operation.

6.3.7 Gandhiji firmly believed that education through craft promotes the
highest development of the mind and the soul. It was he who ennobled
manual work as the highest spiritual endeavour in education. He held that
culture of the brain must grow with the culture of the hands and feet—the
culture that makes a balance between intellect and the spirit. In fact, the very
concept of basic education was worked out for this goal in view.

The objective of *Nai Talim* was the balance and harmonious
development of all the faculties—physical, intellectual and spiritual—of the
individual and the evolution of a new social order based on co-operative
work. To Gandhi, emergence of new social order required re-making of the
souls of pupils. For this, he wanted the pupils to be *satyagrahi* individuals.
He held "the *satyagrahi* individuals is the brick to raise the new social
order—the non-violent co-operative society, which is the nearest approximation to the community of free fellowship” as envisaged by Christian thinkers and which Gandhi called the Ramaraj. Ramaraj is the heaven on earth and naturally the pursuit of its citizens would be glorification of God by doing His work.

By satyagrahis, Gandhi meant fully-developed personalities, disciplined in the values of truth and non-violence who would seek beauty in a life of simplicity and love and would find God in devoted and selfless social service. It was with this view in mind he thought of basic education to bring about this silent social revolution. To Gandhi, the first requisite for self-realization is self-purification. Therefore, the moral discipline of the satyagrahi is of paramount importance. The seeker after truth should be disciplined in non-violent values as truth can be discerned only through non-violence—a pure heart, devoid of all cobwebs of ignorance, alone can hear the voice of God within and live upto it. He held strongly, “ahimsa being the means to truth education should be directed towards cultivating the non-violent spirit and education in truth will follow from it as its natural end.”308 Ahimsa is a quality of the heart and soul. Gandhi asserted truth, non-violence and ahimsa are to be cultivated in their relation to God. In this context, religion and morality, both built on truth, thus become supreme consideration in education and become means to realise God.

Gandhi agreed with Herbart in stating that a strong intellect is necessary to cultivate the virtues. A sharp intellect leads to right thinking, right thoughts lead to right feelings which in turn promote development of desired virtues.

308 Harijan, 23-06-1946.
Referring to the education of the children in the *Tolstoy Farm*, he said, “I regarded character-building as the proper foundation for their children, and if the foundation was strongly laid, I was sure the children could learn all the other things themselves or with the assistance of friends.”

Addressing a group of college students in Agra, he said, “all your scholarship, all your study of Shakespeare and Wordsworth would be in vain, if at the same time you do not build your character, and attain mastery over thoughts and actions.”

Without rule over self there can be no Swaraj or Ramaraj, was the firm conviction of Gandhi. Great causes and social issues call forth not only intellectual equipment but also spiritual effort or soul force. Therefore, both intellect and soul-force should develop simultaneously through education. To Gandhi, the best means for this is, educating children through a basic craft. Through which children inculcate virtues of equality, brotherhood, social justice, co-operation and universal love. Only such individuals can bring about the social revolution and pave way for Ramaraj.

6.3.8 According to Gandhi, teaching through a hand work all other subjects in an integrated manner is highly economical. Such an approach will save time and duplication of effort. Therefore, Gandhi wanted the handicraft to be “the pivot and centre of education.” His aim was to impart general education through a craft. Accordingly teaching of other subjects like sciences, history, geography, literature, languages etc. should happen in correlation with the handwork. Secondary Education Commission observed that, in the curriculum “subjects should be inter-related and within each subject, the

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310 *YI*, 19-09-1929.
contents should as far as possible be envisaged as ‘broad fields’, units which can be correlated better with life rather than narrow items of information.”

This observation was a legacy of Gandhian thinking of basic education rather than a copy of Western ideas on curriculum.

In imparting basic education, Gandhi’s emphasis was an all-round development of a child. Therefore, the curriculum he envisaged for the primary school included, “drawing, geography, general science, handicraft, health and hygiene, history, mathematics, mother-tongue, music and physical drill.” The subjects were to be taught in an integrated manner. For example, teaching of history and geography should help to know the child, where the raw materials for a particular craft is produced and what kind of climate is necessary for the production of that raw material.

Gandhiji was of the opinion that the success of correlational approach in teaching was dependent much on the unity of the craft itself, as an integrative element and upon its comprehensiveness, whereby, it could naturally be extended to other areas of knowledge. To him, there were three stages in correlation: (1) the re-collection of an element of knowledge already assimilated from the craft; (2) the forming of a relationship from the element of knowledge to an academic subject; (3) the drawing out of a new element of knowledge bound to the previous one by the newly-established relationships. Thus, the entire academic context was correlated with the craft.

Similarly, it was Gandhi’s opinion that all parts of the body were to function in a co-ordinated manner in the process of acquiring knowledge. He

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311 Mudaliar Report, p. 81.

312 Harijan, 31-07-1937.
said, "in my scheme of things 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 other things in life and ears will catch the names and meanings of things and sentences." In addition to the use of all parts of the body, Gandhi emphasized, creating and sustaining an interest among the students for learning. For instance, he asserted that teaching of a handicraft should be accompanied by an explanation, why it should be done and where the materials come from. In case of spinning using takli, the mechanism of takli has to be explained. The child should be told the history of cotton in connection with the evolved civilization. The children are to be taken to the village field where cotton is grown. Thus, the child learns not only spinning, but also learns about the cotton, and the place it is grown, the method of cultivation, the processing of cotton and the nature of soil suitable for cultivation of cotton and the like. The child is also made aware of the significance of spinning in order to sustain his interest in learning. Gandhi said, "every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically, but scientifically." The whole teaching, he maintained would be natural, responsive and integrated, hence inexpensive to learn.

6.3.9 It was Gandhi's firm conviction that education through craft will promote a healthy relationship between the city and the village. He did not clarify whether basic education was meant for village children only or it was intended for the entire community including the city children. It appears that

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313 Harijan, 28-08-1937.
314 Harijan, 31-07-1937.
the concept of basic education was originally planned for village children, but it was later to be extended to all children of the country.

Gandhi, in his scheme of basic education included some vocations like spinning, sandal making etc. At the same time he held that the choice of a handicraft would depend on the needs and resources of a particular village. A rural environment is markedly rich with its natural resources like crops, fields, ponds, rivers, streams, hills and valleys. A handicraft emerging from such a natural environment would be highly-suitable for village schools whereas an urban area with its thick population, huge buildings, monuments, factories, institutions and public parks offer crafts of different nature. As such ‘crafts’ suitable for the urban environment should form the ‘pivot’ of education in the case of city schools. In both the cases children ought to be given real experiences of the resources and mode of life of the people. For that children of rural areas are to be taken to the urban areas and given opportunities to study about the life in the city. Similarly, children belonging to urban areas may be taken to the village areas and should be allowed to explore the village resources. This will give urban children to have a direct exposure to the nature and life in the village. Further, such an approach would bridge the gap between the village life and rural life.

Gandhi held that education through handicrafts can promote co-operation between the village and cities and the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’, as the value of manual work would be realized by city and village dwellers alike. To him villages are not merely appendages to cities, rather, both depend on each other for their development and progress. As an example Gandhi stated, “the cotton is grown in villages and is ginned, spun and converted into cloth in
the cities.” In turn, it is the duty of city people and the government take steps to ensure the development of villages by constructing roads and by providing other necessary facilities to village.

Further, it is expected that education through a basic craft would fill the cultural gap that exist between village and urban life. Such an educational system would enhance the interpersonal relationships resulting in the development of new value systems. The incessant flow of cultural traits from one area to another would ensure a harmonious blending of the traits for the benefit of people in both the habitats. Children belonging to both the areas realize the aim of education and as grown up individuals they would contribute towards the welfare of the community strongly backed by the virtues of understanding, sympathy, tolerance, love and fellow-feeling. This would help, Gandhi’s dream of ‘Ramaraj’ to come to be a reality.

Socially considered, education through ‘craft’, Gandhi hoped, would break-down the existing barriers between the villages and cities. It would provide a healthy moral basis of relationship between them. Such an educational system would go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes. Further, it is envisaged that craft-based education will check the progressive decay of the villages and lay the foundation of a juster social order, in which everybody is assured a living wage and the right to freedom.

6.3.10 The Secondary Education Commission observed, “the aim of Secondary Education is to train the youth of the country to be good citizens, who will be competent to play their part effectively in the social reconstruction
and economic development of the country."  

This observation by the Commission was to be thought of as a legacy of the Gandhian perception of basic education as revealed by him that education through productive manual work is the best education for citizenship and education for self-sufficiency.

Citizenship in a democracy is a very exacting responsibility, for which pupils ought to be carefully prepared. A citizen must be capable of independent judgement hence, education should develop his "capacity for clear thinking and receptivity to new ideas." The need to save him from the danger of being misled by political demagogues and their propaganda is very important. Among the qualities to be developed for social living are "discipline, co-operation, social sensitiveness and tolerance." Education should seek to develop true patriotism. Further, it must increase their "productive or technical and vocational efficiency," and release the sources of creative energy in the students so that they would grow to appreciate they cultural heritage and enjoy leisure. Lastly, it must promote leadership. The above observations are exclusively Gandhian ideals, conceived in his basic education. The only exception is that the Commission didn't highlight spiritual aspect of education and the selfless service to the community upheld by Gandhiji.

Basic education envisaged by Gandhi, aimed at producing self-reliant and good citizens. It was centred round craft activity and production work in

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315 Mudaliar Report, p. 5.
316 Ibid., p. 24.
317 Ibid., p. 27.
318 Ibid., p. 28.
order to be useful for individual and society. It also meant at interlinking the physical environment, social environment and craft work with the individual. Moreover, craft work and manual labour in basic education could also inculcate in youth appropriate work culture and true citizenship. Basic education was student-centred by training students in right direction from their formative years in order to make them meaningful and socially useful citizens. It was also co-operative since the system focused attention on integrating the individual with the society in a spirit of co-operation.

Gandhi called his educational scheme ‘basic’, “because it stood for the art of living.” He told that human labour and material should never be used in a wasteful and unproductive way. The principle of spending every minute of one’s life usefully, he held, as the best education for citizenship and self-sufficiency. He said, “the child at the age of fourteen, that is after finishing a seven years’ course, should be discharged as a earning unit . . . the state takes charge of the child at seven and returns it to the family as a earning unit. You impart education and simultaneously cut at the root of unemployment. You have to train the boys in one occupation or another . . . He will be master of the craft he learns.”

Gandhi said, “a student who works at a handicraft for three hours a day will surely earn something, but 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.” Gandhi suggested that, “schools and colleges should not become

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319 *Harijan*, 06-04-1940.
320 *Harijan*, 14-09-1937.
self-supporting by taking donations, state aid and excessive fees from students, but should become self-supporting through remunerative work done by the students themselves." 322 This can be done by making industrial training compulsory.

The education based on craft has a definite bread and butter aim included in it. Gandhi opined that if in the early years at school each boy could earn say two pice a day, he would be able to earn more as he goes into higher classes, and the power of production would go on increasing, till he would be able to earn his livelihood in later life. From the point of view of mass education, this idea is of great importance, in that the child’s earning at school would make education pay its way, at least to some extent. Indeed, Gandhi held that if the state purchased all that the children produced, the proceeds should go a long way towards meeting the running costs of education.

Gandhi firmly believed that especially in education, we are the makers of our destiny and the builders of a non-violent society. For this schools ought to be made self-sufficient and self-supporting. This is the crux of Gandhi’s emphasis on the social orientation in education. Thus, education through a craft would make education self-supporting together with making the individuals self-supporting in future. Wrote Gandhi, “self-sufficiency is not a priori condition, but to me, it is the acid test. Hence, thegenesis of the new social order would be the schools.” 323

322 YI, 02-08-1928.
323 Harijan, 06-04-1940.
'select' and 'purchase' the type of education they want. The outcomes of this approach are supposed to include the prime tenets of making the 'producers' (professional educators in schools) more directly accountable to their consumers and hence of improving the quality of educational 'product'. Other countries, Denmark for instance show a tendency to shift from the traditional system to the new market-oriented approach under heavy economic pressures.\footnote{324}

It is in this context the Gandhian ideal of self-sufficiency becomes quite pertinent to a country like India, which has been and is still confronted with evermounting problems; the greatest of which being the unemployment and the consequent economic crisis. Gandhiji, a true visionary had truly anticipated this problem sufficiently earlier, when he conceived the idea of basic education. He regarded, basic education as the only means to overcome the problems consequent of overpopulation, unemployment and economic crisis. Gandhi's ideal of basic education was truly consistent with the individualistic aim of education conceived by the eminent educationists of the past and the progressive educators of the present.

\section*{6.4.2 The individual aims of education emphasize that education should unfold what is there within the child, should make the child self-reliant.} Nunn said, "nothing good enters into the human world except in and through the free activities of individual men and women, and that educational practice must be shaped to accord with that truth."\footnote{325} Gandhiji said that education's


\footnote{325} Nunn, \textit{op. cit.}, n.p.
most basic function is the “all-round drawing out of the best in child and man, body, mind and spirit.” The philosopher Kant emphasized this individual aim of education in every crisp words saying, “education is the development in the individual of all the perfection of which he is capable.” According to Thompson, “education is for the individual, its function being to enable the individual to survive and live at its complete life.” Autonomous development of the individual is the aim of education, held Nunn and Rousseau. They held that education should be in accordance with the nature of the individual. All psychologists agree that the all important function of education is to develop the innate powers of the individual to the maximum. The progressive educators also, believe that education should secure conditions for the complete development of individuality so that each individual may make his original contribution to human life.

6.4.3 The sociologists in tune with educators hold that the basic unit of the society is the individual and the progress and good of the society depend very much on the progress and good of the individual. If the individual is strong and self-sufficient, the society also be strong. Therefore, development and growth of the individuals should form the focal point of all education. From this perspective, development of the individual along with making him vocationally well settled should be the aim of education.

Hence, education is to be conceived as a social activity directed towards the welfare and progress of the society as a whole. In order to maintain good health, peace, stability and order in the society, it is necessary that children should be properly educated and necessary skills should be
developed in them. Hence, it is the responsibility and true concern of education to contribute to these purposes of society.

The purposes of a society are closely linked to the important needs of the society, viz. its economic growth, scientific and technical advancement, consistent increase in the productivity, peace and harmony in the society, national integration, consistent increase and diversification in employment opportunities, political education, secularism of the people, development of socially desirable attitudes such as the sense of social service, consideration for others, sacrifice for the nation etc. These needs cannot be achieved until the individuals who form the society become self-sufficient through an education which caters to the individual needs. Gandhiji well aware of this reciprocal relationship and inter-dependence of the individuals and society conceived an ideal system of education that would cater to the individual and societal needs. This system advocated by Gandhiji, re-oriented approach to education. It replaces bookish knowledge with productive and creative activity, for “learning by doing” and “earning by learning” was the maxim inherent in his scheme of education.

6.4.4 Gandhiji felt that education, in order to be effective must cater to the varying abilities, attitudes and interest of the children. Basic education caters more effectively to the varied talents of children by offering them different kinds of work suited to their taste and environment. Thus, manual training becomes the core of basic education. Gandhi meant by manual training, training in a “craft,” a craft, that was not merely of educational value but of social and economic value. It is because of these attributes that his scheme of education is fundamentally different from other educational systems. He
regarded, "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. The latter can well be a scourge."326

Gandhiji was highlighting the significant social effects of basic craft, when he said, "my plan to impart primary education through the medium of village handicraft like spinning and carding etc., is conceived as the spearhead of a silent social revolution fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes. It will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a juster social order in which there is no natural division between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right to freedom. And all this would be accomplished without the horrors of a bloody class war or a colossal capital expenditure such as would be involved in the mechanization of a vast continent like India. Nor would it entail a helpless dependence on foreign imported machinery or technical skill. Lastly, by obviating the necessity for highly specialized talent, it would place the destiny of the masses, as it were, in their own hands."327

6.4.5 Gandhiji gave manual labour the central place in the curriculum he envisaged, for he thought, apart from developing a balanced intellect, it would also serve to instil in the minds of students a sense of the dignity of labour. He said, "socially considered, the introduction of such practical productive work

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326 Harijan, 08-09-1946.
327 Harijan, 09-10-1937.
in education to be participated in by all the children of the nation, will tend to break-down the existing barriers of prejudices between manual and intellectual workers, harmful alike for both. It will also cultivate in the only possible way, a true sense of the dignity of labour and of human solidarity—an ethical and moral gain of incalculable significance.\textsuperscript{328} Gandhi's new scheme would raise the crafts to the status of 'callings' having an independent status of their own, equal to the status that learning enjoyed.

\textbf{6.4.6} Gandhiji, also gave an economic justification to craft education for he considered, craft education should result in producing marketable articles, though children will do them not as factory hands do, under the whip. Gandhi was too particular that human labour and material should never be used in a wasteful or unproductive way the stress on this moral principle of spending every minute of one's life usefully, he considered, as the best education for citizenship, and that would make basic education self-sufficient. He called his educational scheme \textit{basic} because it stood for the art of living. According to Gandhi, "the child at the age of fourteen, that is after finishing a seven years' course, should be discharged as a earning unit . . . the state takes charge of the child at seven and returns it to the family as a earning unit. You impart education and simultaneously cut at the root of unemployment. You have to train the boys in one occupation or another . . . He will be \textit{master} of the craft he learns."\textsuperscript{329}

Through craft education, Gandhiji aimed at development of the child's intellect through the craft, and at the same time impart sufficient practice in the

\textsuperscript{328} \textit{Basic National Education}, p. 91.

\textsuperscript{329} \textit{Harijan}, 18-09-1937.
craft itself. That would enable the child to master its tricks sufficiently to ply it a trade if necessary in life. Such an education would help to revive the ancient village crafts in India and the child would be returned to the village as a perfect artisan. Thus, the child could earn his bread by himself and would become a socially efficient individual and not a burden to the society.

6.4.7 One of the main reasons for unemployment is not lack of job opportunities but lack of dignity of labour. Once a person is educated he feels it below his dignity to do something that doesn’t call for his expertise. Education of the present day, gives him a false sense of pride instead of making him aware of the practical side of life. Gandhiji held, if basic education was given to the child from the primary school level, there would have been a change in the positive direction.

According to Gandhiji, “education ought to be for them a kind of insurance against unemployment.”330 Only then they could rise above the cares of material life and devote themselves to the pursuit of soul. He held, food, cloth, and shelter being the basic needs of human life, are to be worked out by all, and there is nothing base or materialistic in making education a means for earning them. Such an education is truly liberating and should be part of any true liberal education. Education here doesn’t mean mere spiritual knowledge nor does liberation connote liberation after death. To him, “knowledge included all training that was useful for service of mankind and liberation meant freedom from all manner of servitude even in the present life.”331 Ross observed, “an education that fails to produce a man capable of

330 Harijan, 11-09-1937.
331 Harijan, 10-03-1946.
earning his living and pulling his weight as a member of society can hardly be called liberal. A man who is dependent on the efforts of others without making an equivalent contribution of his own is not free.\textsuperscript{332} Gandhi too, wanted each boy and girl to be ‘self-supporting’ after leaving school by finding an occupation—unlike the product of the prevalent system of aimless education—and, “. . . the handicraft feature of the new education provides a solution to the problem of unemployment by training pupils to earn their bread and thus enabling them to be self-supporting after they finish their school course.”\textsuperscript{333} It was aimed at “giving the right kind of education to village children—education to fit them for life, education suited to their environment and hereditary occupations.”\textsuperscript{334} He believed that would bring about in the child “at as early an age as possible, the determination of the future career that should expect to pursue and would arm him with at least one occupation, which would give him a wage sufficient for a healthy subsistence.”\textsuperscript{335} Mashruwala pointed out that “industry will not be the only means and medium of instruction; but to the extent it is an inevitable condition of human life, it will also be an end of instruction. So that the aim will be to inculcate in the pupils a sense of the dignity of all manual labour—even scavenging, and the duty of earning an honest livelihood by labour.”\textsuperscript{336}

\textsuperscript{332} Ross, op. cit., p. 225.


\textsuperscript{334} Desai, op. cit., p. 449.

\textsuperscript{335} Harijan, 04-12-1937.

\textsuperscript{336} Ibid.
Gandhiji's *Nai Talim* based on a craft had a definite bread and butter aim included in it. He held that if in the early years at school each boy is able to earn, say, two *pice* a day, he would be able to earn more as he goes into higher classes, and the power of production would go on increasing, till he shall be able to earn his livelihood in later life. From the mass education perspective, this is of great importance in that the child's earning at school would make education pay its way, at least to some extent. He held that if the state purchased all that the children produced, the proceeds should go a long way towards meeting the running cost of education. He said, "if the state takes charge of the children between seven and fourteen and trains their bodies and minds through productive labour, the public schools must be frauds and teachers idiots, if they cannot became self-supporting."337

Gandhiji, again asserted, "my *Nai Talim* is not dependent on money. The running expenses should come from the educational process itself. Whatever the criticism may be, I know that the only education is that which is self-supporting."338 The self-supporting aspect of education was also conceived by John Dewey, when he said, "the continually increasing importance of economic factors in contemporary life makes it the more needed that education should reveal their scientific content and their social value. That an education pays its way is not educational crime unless it is pursued merely for that end."339 The economic advantage of such an education must be incidental, but all the same it must be taken note of as an

337 *Harijan*, 11-09-1937.

338 Ibid.

advantage and must be properly utilized. In this context, Gandhiji opined, "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 to be 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." To this he added, "self-sufficiency is not an apriori condition, but... an acid test." He held, taking the entire period of seven years, if the income and expenditure of the school cannot balance each other, it would be a sad reminder to the students that even at the end of their training, they are not satisfactorily equipped for life.

6.4.9 Gandhiji's scheme of education was quite revolutionary in the sense it opposed the ideals held by ancient thinkers and philosophers from Socrates to Aristotle, regarding the aim of education. In fact, it was a compromise between the ancient liberal education proposed by idealists and the progressive education advocated by modern thinkers. Now, it is widely recognised that there is no real antithesis between a technical education and a liberal education. In the words of Whitehead, "there can be no technical education which is not liberal, and no liberal education which is not technical;
that is, no education which does not impart both technique and vision." He added, "all education in the broad sense is vocational, as people cannot be educated in perfectly general terms but only in relation to some particular kind of society and some particular function in the society."

6.4.10 The relationship between education and society is better recognized today than in the past. Education, now is being looked upon as a means of community mobilisation. Hence, it is imperative that education should undertake the responsibility of explaining the world in which we live, we may have to bring the world into the school and take the school out into the world. Thus, the relationship becomes more and more meaningful, when the work done in the school is of direct value to the community.

The maxim, earning while learning incorporated in basic education had tremendous possibilities of universal education and should be thought of as the right type of education. Apart from the remunerative aspect, children handling with the village tools, instead of slates and pencils, meant a big revolution in the educational methodology. *Nai Talim* was a blend of all the disciplines and covered the whole education of the individual from the time of conception to the moment of death. To Gandhiji, craft and industry were not different from education. He regarded craft as the medium for the latter. He firmly believed that the knowledge of the three R's, imparted formally in the schools would be easily forgotten by the child. On the other hand, if vocational training was given to the children, they would not only repay the expenses incurred in the schools but would turn their training to be of use in

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342 Whitehead, *op. cit.*

343 Ibid.
their future lives. Thus, the whole of education would turn out to be a joyous, purposive activity.

6.4.11 Students today are not self-sufficient, neither individually nor socially. They expect the state to meet their educational expenses in spite of what the state is doing for each individual. There are students who cannot pursue higher studies because of financial problems. There are educational institutions which have the initiative to implement innovations in many fields, but are held back due to lack of funds. The Indian scene towards AD 2001 appears to be quite alarming. The present trend in the growth of population would make it reach 945 million as against 548 million in 1971. The number of children between the ages of 6 and 14, i.e., the elementary school-going population would have increased from 117 millions of 1971 to 200 millions in 2001. If the existing pattern of formal schooling continues, we would need 45 lakhs of teachers in 2001 in place of 25.3 lakhs in 1971, to provide education for all children between the age group 6-14. The cost of such schooling will be Rs. 3500 crores against Rs. 1350 crores in 1971. Scientific and technological advancement would be followed by serious problems like famine, dwindling resources, pollution of water and air. Consequently, there would be severe competitions among human beings for space, air, water, food, employment and the like, which in turn would cause physical and psychological stresses. It is to be recognised that children of today would be the people who would be faced with crisis in the preservation of self, society and their physical environment. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of educators to prepare and equip the youth to confront the crisis that would emerge and enable them lead a life of comfort and grace on this planet.
A serious analysis of the situations cited above make us again think in tune with the educational system proposed by Gandhiji. Its self-supporting aspect and the employment provisions would pave a long way in solving most of the anticipated problems that would emerge with the dawn of twenty first century. Gandhiji insisted on the self-supporting aspect because he felt that the introduction of manual labour, in a poor country like India will serve a dual purpose. It would pay for the education of our children and also would teach them an occupation to which they could fall back in life, if they wanted it for earning a life. He also wanted students to develop a sense of dignity of labour. He felt that if students learnt a craft, if then education was vocation-oriented right from the school stage, not only would that be of great saving of public fund, but a generation of young people would grow up who would believe in the dignity of labour and who at the college level would continue to combine the excellence of hand, head and heart. He hoped, children who are lead through such a scheme of education would emerge out of the educational institutions as well developed, efficient personalities who would contribute towards the welfare of the community and state.

6.4.12 In conclusion, it may be suggested that Gandhiji’s basic education is deeply wedded to the application of truth and love in every variety of human activity, whether in individual life or a corporate one. Love requires that true education should be of use to every villager in his daily life. Such education is not derived from, nor does it depend upon books. It has no relation with any religion. It has emerged from the ‘book of life’ which costs nothing and which cannot be taken away from one by any force on earth.344

344 Harijan, 21-12-1947.