CHAPTER IV.

The Development of Basic Education and its Philosophy.

Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in the year 1916 with rich experience in leading the Indians there in their struggle for emancipation. The Indian National Congress asked him to give them the same sort of leadership in India also in their struggle for independence from the British yoke. When he took up the responsibility in due course, he had to face the mighty British Empire on the one hand and a large multilingual society in the Indian sub-continent with Himalayan problems and limitations within itself such as poverty, illiteracy, Hindu-Muslim antagonism, untouchability, castism, village insanitations and superstitions. He had to free not only the nation, but also had to plod through these problems and solve them. The story of Gandhi afterwards became the story of the efforts he made to solve these various problems. Side by side with his struggle with the British power, he wanted to remove the manifold shackles and diseases from the Indian society and evolve out an ideal society free from exploitation and evils.

Gandhi was an idealist. Like every great idealistic teachers in the past, he anticipated a social order
based on Truth and Non-Violence. "A social order based
upon these principles excludes all exploitation, economic,
social and political or even religious. To achieve
this end and to reconstruct the society he turned to
education as the means and motive power wherein his
philosophy took a dynamic shape in action. Education
is there not only for the sake of all the past culture
and the whole scheme of life but also to nurture the
growing child for the place he will occupy in the
future ideal society. According to him, "it is for the
formation of his character in the light of the
requirements of such a society. It is the coping_stone
of Gandhiji's socio political edifice" Gandhi, in his
life's struggle, managed to achieve this to a certain
extent which was well expressed in the words of
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Gandhiji "has been able to
mold the millions and change them" and "from a
demoralized, timid and hopeless mass, bullied and crushed
by every dominant interest and incapable of resistance,
into a people with self respect and self-reliance,
resisting tyranny and capable of united action and
sacrifice for a larger cause. He made them think of
political and economic issues and every village and
every bazar hummed with argument and debate on the

2. Ibid. p. 103.
new ideas and hopes that filled the people. That was an amazing psychological change... The only practical solution came from Gandhi."

The family background in which Gandhi was brought up along with the traditional and cultural aspects besides the general Indian Culture, the political and economic conditions of our country under foreign rule and the trend of the march of civilization as a whole so to form Gandhi's educational ideas apart from his experiments in the Tolstoy Farm.

In the year 1888, Gandhi organised the Tolstoy Farm and by force of sheer necessity tried to look after the education of the children with his own planning and formed his educational concepts out of his experiments. The working of the Tolstoy Farm was described as going on around craft and manual work which bore immense educational possibilities. Gandhi's educational theories are supported by his general philosophy of life which in turn confirmed by further consideration and confirmation. He wanted to apply the same to the Indian situation as a remedy for all its social and educational evils.

When he saw more and more the conditions in the society his idea of education and its resultant remedies became more and more specific and from the year 1937 he began to share his educational views through his magazines Young India and Harijan. His educational idea was not a bolt from the blue. It is further confirmed by his associate Barathan Kumarappa. He says that he had tested for full thirty years in actual practice in small groups and found worthwhile." "He sought years ago to put his ideas into effect in the education he gave to the children on the Tolstoy Farm which he established in South Africa," Gandhi himself says "The views on education that I am now going to set forth have been held by me right from the time of the founding of the Phoenix settlement in South Africa." Moreover Gandhi was motivated by the following conditions in India.

India is a country of villages. Take away the 700,000 villages from India and there will be no India. Its welfare depends upon the welfare of the villages. But the conditions of the villages are in every way far from satisfaction. Their agriculture and handicrafts were crushed under the foreign yoke and their social...

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life was degenerated into castes, superstitions and insanitary conditions. The average per capita income of an Indian farmer according to Mino Massani was Rs.76 per year which comes to Rs.6.50 per month. The finished textile goods from Lancashire and machine tools or factories aggravated situation. Cities with factories attracted the rural population and the lamentation of Oliver Goldsmith in a way came to truth in India also.

The lure of the city was further increased for the educated middle class for various employment and professions. As a result, village industry together with agriculture remained in the same antiquated form and the nation as a whole along with it. Hence he "looked forward a day when village life based on handicrafts and agriculture would be revived and people would work for each other for the good of all in the village in neighbourliness and peace."

When the educated youngsters left village life, the villagers were left to themselves in the same old backward conditions in every respects with droughts and famines and epidemics as frequent visitors and poverty, loan, disease and quarrels as invariable features. The only way of saving the nation at that juncture was to

revive village economic life and to relate education to it. Education accordingly was to be based on village occupation. The child was to be trained to be a producer. And yet, Gandhi was too much interested in the child for his own sake.

The Machine age and its consequences brought enslavement, exploitation and dependence together with rivalry and dangers and artificiality. So Gandhi felt that the only hope for the masses of our country was to avoid large-scale factory manufacture and to base the economic life in small-scale village production which would lead to peace and freedom, capacity and originality of the individual.

The human factor was another important motive power for Gandhi's educational thoughts. Education was limited to the upper class. The poor and rural folk could not be educated in the proper way. The percentage of literacy in India was 6 per cent in the year 1911 and hence around the twenties it ought to have been somewhere near 9 or 10 per cent only. With the lack of literacy came so many boycotts, social and individual, insanitary condition and ill health with an average age of 25 years only, superstitions and moral rigidity, tra-
traditional customs and festivals which sapped his poor economy together with the yoke of money lenders, insufficient agriculture with subdivisions and fragmentation and etc. Hence for Gandhi, 'the freedom and development of the individual however mean or humble was more important than a mere multiplications of goods and machines.'

The question of Education in such a situation in India formed another major factor. It was imparted by a foreign Government in a foreign medium which was quite alien to Indian culture. It was carried on for the fulfillment of very narrow purposes such as filling clerical and allied post in the government machinery. It was bookish, impracticable, biased, and failed to develop the whole personality of the student. As a result, students became an easy prey to the lures of the city. Once they had an experience of city life, they were unwilling to return to the rural life. Lacking original thinking they were shifting fast the rural towards a civilization which was foreign to their own land and began to imitate the English people in every respect.

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On the background of these major considerations, it would be clear to note Gandhi was seeing the problem of education as a part of the national problem and more than that as the fundamental problem to be solved as a remedy for all the social and national evils and as an instrument of national regeneration.

Gandhi was not only an idealist; but also realistic in the most fundamental sense of the term. He wanted education to be religious. He says, "We should abandon the pretension of learning many sciences. Religious education that is ethical, will occupy the first place... the energy that we have derived from English education will have to be devoted to religious education. This is not very difficult."

He was not happy over the prevalent type of education through the English medium. "To give millions o

knowledge of English is to enslave them. The foundation that Macauley laid of education has enslaved us. " He noticed a rift between the knowledge acquired in the school from rote memory and actual life situation and a complete separation of the school from home, community, and society and hence he branded the traditional education as impractical. "... Whatever training is given to the child is given in isolated section. The mind is sought to be trained in the class apart from manual work, the hand and the eyes apart from mind, and the heart in art and religion apart from the mind and actions." Hence Gandhi wanted an integrated education through a craft or a vocation. This plea of Gandhi is really a noteworthy aspect of his education in the background of the age which stands for overspecialization and compartmentalism. To him education through vocational training seemed to be the only way to avoid the many evils of education. He says, "I had long been impressed with the necessity for a new departure as I knew the failure of modern education had brought through the numerous students who came to see me on my return from South Africa. So I started with the introduction of training in handicrafts in the ashram school ... "

12 Ibid.
14 Ibid. p.32.
Because of this experiment he found that children soon get tired of manual training and they were deprived of literacy training. Gandhi therefore came to the conclusion that his idea of education means not vocational cum literary training, but literary training through vocational training. In this way vocational training would have a new content which connects and correlates the various educational factors like the school, the home, the environment and society in actual life situation.

He started his experiments in education at the Tolstoy Farm in South Africa and continued it for a number of years in India also when he returned from South Africa. These educational experiments were carried on in his ashrams at Sabarmathi and Sevagram. "It actually emerged out of his desire to solve the problem that confronted the Congress when it took office for the first time in 1937 in various provinces. The problem was to improve the existing system and make it universal."

By education he meant "an all round drawing out of the best in child and man - body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education; not even the

beginning. It is one of the means where by man and
women can be educated. Literacy in itself is no edu­
cation." It is an indivisible process from birth to
death and so the whole of education of the body, mind
and soul should be imparted to the children through
a handicraft.

While Gandhi was thus full of the educational ideas
derived from his own experiments and deliberations, a
favourable circumstance came in which he could express
himself more effectively. According to the Government
of India Act of 1935 which provided for a limited
form of provincial self government, elected Congress
Ministers were entrusted with the administration of all
provincial subjects in 1937. The Congress ministers
in dealing with education, faced critical problems.
"The level of literacy in India was very low and a
considerable expenses of education was necessary to take
this problem. But the financial resources... were
limited and did not permit new expenditure on a scale
anywhere near the figure required for the expansion
of education." Gandhi found a favourable circumstance
and put forth his revolutionary ideas of education

17. Ramathanan G., "Education From Dewey To Gandhi," (Asia Pub.,Madras),
1962, p.3
in the form of a new scheme, otherwise called as Wardha Scheme or Basic Education or Nai Talim which took the public by surprise and invited strong criticism from the elite. They "demolished it completely either with a derisive smile or with the shrug of the shoulders." Yet, Gandhi got a few supporters.

An educational conference of the days was called at Wardha, restricted to those who were serious about the problem of education and limited in number together with the Congress Educational Ministers of the provinces. Under the chairmanship of Gandhi, the scheme and the following propositions were discussed in detail.

1. "The present system of education does not meet the requirements of the country in any shape or form. English having been made the medium of instruction in all the higher branches of learning has created a permanent bar between the highly educated few and uneducated many. It has prevented knowledge from percolating to the masses..."

2. The course of primary education should be extended at least to seven years and should include the general knowledge gained up to the matriculation standard, less English and plus a substantial vocation.

18 Acharya Kripalani, Latest Fad, op. cit. p. 8
19 Gandhi, Basic Education, op. cit. p. 17
3. For all round development of boys and girls all training should as far as possible be given through a profit yielding vocation.

As a result of the deliberations made in the conference the following resolutions were passed.

1. That in the opinion of this conference, free and compulsory education be provided for seven years on a nation wide scale.

2. That the medium of instruction be the mother tongue.

3. That the Conference endorses the proposal made by Mahatma Gandhi that the process of education throughout this period should centre around some form of manual and productive work, and that all the other abilities to be developed or training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child.

4. That the Conference expects that this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.

The conference then appointed a committee of learned persons under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain to formulate a scheme of Basic education on the lines suggested by the resolution of that conference. Dr. Zakir Hussain, the then Head of the Jamia Millia submitted a reasonable report called 'Basic National Education', in pedagogical terms that the educated could understand and appreciate. In the words of Gandhi the scheme was a revolution in the education of village children and it is in no sense an importation from the west.

The Congress was "persuaded to commit itself on the basis of this report which passed an inoffensive resolution endorsing the innocent looking principles enunciated by Gandhiji and accepted by the conference." And in a resolution 'the seal of Congress authority' was fixed on the new scheme.

According to the resolution, Dr. Zakir Hussain and Shri Aryanayakan were asked to take steps under the guidance of Gandhi to bring into existence an Education Board 'to work out in a consolidated manner a programme of Basic National Education and to recommend it for the acceptance to those who are in control and shape public and private education.' The Board was empowered to

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frame its own constitutions.

The Educational Board was appointed under Gandhi's advice which met in April 1938 and appointed several useful sub-committees of experts. It sanctioned a modest budget and transacted other connected works.

The implications of the new scheme centered round two important principles viz. the principle that all education be woven round a craft and secondly the principle that the produce of such craft be made economically remunerative to cover the cost of education, at least the teachers' salary. In elaborating this two ideas one can see how Gandhi was making out a sound educational policy to his country men which is fitting to the prevalent condition in every respect and which is in consonance with the new trend in the educational milieu in the advanced countries. At the same time his educational ideas reflect his philosophy of life in general in the practical sense. While stressing this productive economic aspect at the first meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education, Dr. Zakir Hussain expressed strongly against critical quarrries in the following words. "If all the products of craft from all the schools in India were eventually to be drowned

23. Ibid. p.10.
in the ocean, even I would still insist that every single article should be prepared with the utmost efficiency and intellectual and practical integrity of which an individual is capable."

Gandhi wanted that his ideas on education should be based upon Truth and Non-Violence which will allow no exploitation of man by man in the socio-ethical and cultural planes and which will aim at the general good 'unto the last'. If it should fit to India, a land of villages in degenerated forms, education should aim at improving the villages and villagers. "If we want to impart education best suited to the needs of the villagers, says Gandhi, "we should take the Vidwanit to the villages. We should convert it into a training school in order that we might be able to give practical training to teacher in terms of the needs of the villagers."

Regarding village handicrafts Gandhi said that it was the pivot and centre of Basic education beyond any doubt and he could not call the method adopted in the institutions of India as education. To him it was nothing but debauchery of mind. It informs the mind anyhow, whereas the method of training the mind through

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24 Saiyidin, Progress of Education in India, Government pub. 1947-1948, p. 63
village handicrafts from the beginning as the central fact would promote the real, disciplined development of the mind resulting in conservation of the intellec-
tual energy and also the spiritual..." It was his deliberate opinion that the present system of primary education was not only wasteful but also harmful. Most of the boys were lost to the parents and to the occupations to which they were born. They picked up evil habits, affected urban ways and got a smattering of something which may be anything else but not education. The remedy, he thought lay in educating them by means of vocational or manual training.

The core of his emphasis was not the occupation but education through manual training. He mentioned Takli or the spindle because of its rich educational possibilities and contemplated a seven-years course around takli for the primary level which would culminate according to Gandhi in the practical knowledge of weaving. Teaching of Takli spinning presupposed imparting of different type of knowledge such as cotton, soils, regions, history of Indian Handicrafts, and other related part of knowledge in arithmetics and sciences. It is not the wish of Gandhi that Takli alone should form

26. Ibid. p.14
27. Ibid. p.20
the craft. Other crafts can also form the core around which the various subjects could be correlated.

After analysing the evils of the existing pattern of education Gandhi said in the following words: "I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training... I hold that the highest development of the mind and the soul is possible under such a system of education. Only every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as is done today but scientifically, that is the child should know the why and the wherefore of every process.

When the knowledge gained through the productive craft is linked with the various aspects of life or various subjects, it satisfies one of the most fundamental requisites of Progressive education as advocated by eminent educationists in the long line. Acharya Vinoba Bhave once in a conference expressed the idea thus: "I call the Wardha system of education the correlation method. Productive work should give warmth to education and education should give light to productive work." Thus the concept of correlation naturally occupies the central importance in Basic education in spite of its

29, Principles and Problems of Correlated Teaching, Govt. Pub., 1962, p. 73
many misunderstandings. It tries to correlate effectively the social, physical, vocational environment of the pupil through the craft. "Basic education has been defined as education for life and through life, attempting to make a child's life better, richer and fuller, thus making him serve the society in a better way. For this the process of learning should centre round the life experience of the child. Thus conceived, learning should be active, purposeful, effective and should satisfy the needs of the child in relation to the society. In order to realise the ideals of Basic education in school practice, correlation is used as the method of education. The concept of correlation pre-supposes that child's mind is an integral whole, welcoming experiences as unity and not as a collection of separate unconnected fragments. When applied to education, it implies that knowledge should not be given in the form of mechanical units, but should be imparted in response to the individual and social needs of the child while he is pursuing some purposeful and productive activity." As a Pedagogic principle recognizing education by doing, it strives to concentrate and correlate the entire curriculum around a single subject. Various subjects like

Geography and Scripture were tried. At last, it was the system of Basic education which recognized the craft as the centre of effective correlation and rich educational possibilities.

Accordingly, in Basic education, the medium of education is craft and craft is not merely another subject added to the curriculum, but it is regarded as a medium through which man utilizes the various physical and social environments. The term correlation attains a further depth when "the school programme is developed out of adult occupations and such adult occupations when transformed into school activities are called crafts which are the sources of educational possibilities. The operation of crafts is the main item in the school programme and at the same time there is an academic content in the school programme which functions as its central structure." Further, in Basic educational institutions, the teacher and the students "as a creed and an article of faith", participate in all activities such as spinning, cleaning, cooking, serving, decorating and celebrating festivals which will certainly open out large vistas of correlation with various subjects effectively.

Correlated teaching in the primary level is generally done under the following general principles:

1. Children are active by nature and learning in this stage is effectively acquired through actual life situation and experience utilizing the child’s interest and experience as motivating power of learning.

2. Knowledge is always received by the child as an integral whole coming out of different life situations. Hence unrelated fragments of knowledge divorced from life situations is not natural to the child’s process of learning.

3. This correlated technique helps the harmonious development of the child by imparting integrated knowledge and connecting it constructively with home, school, and community.

4. Activities related to vocational (craft), physical and social environments are utilised as media of learning and teaching.

5. Correlative technique involves careful planning, execution, and proper evaluation. Shri G. Ramanathan clarifies the principles of correlation under three heads viz. the theorem of fundamental correlation, the theorem of supplemental correlation and the theorem of environmental correlation. According to him correlation
must be understood as the correlation and integration of the academic content of the curriculum with the crafts.

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Correlation is not limited to the main craft. It extends to subsidiary crafts wherever such crafts exist. It includes even activities, such as washing and cleaning and which are essential for living and which must exist in every Basic school. The entire life of the locality, both in its natural and social aspects, comes within the scope of correlation. However, correlation with the main craft remains the central structure of the edifice of correlation, other means of correlation such as subsidiary craft activities and environment being only outhouses."

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Moreover, as living consists and reflects some activities connected with some occupations, we may hold that any segment of the operation of crafts contains in it segments of different subjects. Though the composition of different pieces of craft work in terms of the various subjects will be different, the successive performance of consecutive items of craft-work ensures continuity of development in each subject. Hence it should be thought of not as the perception of the conf-

32. Ibid. p.222,225.
33. Ibid. p.234
configuration of elements* of the various subjects in a particular item of craft work, but as the total perception of the relationship of different subjects to the entire craft work. Only such total correlation will give out the significance of various subjects in life. Therefore correlation in Basic education signifies the total correlation of a subject with life as a whole through the craft-medium.

Such total correlation around craft and activities again involves another major pedagogic principle viz. the Progressive Reconstruction of experience. This theory implies an already experienced experience which should be made to re-appear deliberately into the pupil's experience which has a constructive feature better than the former one. Life is one continuous whole for any individual with constant interplay of all the social factors such as home and school, community and customs, religious and other celebration and national factors. Hence in schools also such programmes and problematic activities should be so arranged as to provide and ensure the progressive reconstruction of experiences. This aspect of Basic education is well brought out in the words of Acharya Vinoba Bhave. "It is not merely

34. Ibid. p. 225, 226.
Nai Talim as it has been described from the very beginning, but NIT NAI TALIM, that is, education which is ever changing, ever new, ever fresh. This is the definition of Basic education. These considerations make it very clear that the fundamental principles involved in the recent educational theories such as learning by doing, or learning through experience, the problem method, the Dalton plan, the Heuristic Plan and the Activity method are naturally forming the basis of the Basic educational system. It tries to deal with the actual problems within the actual life of the child and to solve them progressively with rich educational potentialities.

Basic education further provides for the 'digital acquity', the use and development of the 'cunning of the hands and fingers' which has built up the magnificent superstructure of civilisations so far from the dawn of history. "The recognition of digital acquity as a factor in learning is the greatest achievement of Basic education in the field of psychology. It has emerged out of a new concept of the evolution of man." When his forelegs ceased to be legs at all and became his hands dangling idly on his flanks, he began to seek

35. Acharya Bhave, Problems of Correlated Teaching, op.cit.p.63
occupation for them and in that search, through the millennium, he built up the whole edifice of human civilization. "The heritage of mankind is the aggregate achievement of the human hand."

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Another psychological fact is explicit in the theory of Digital Acquity viz. the close connection of human intelligence with man's hands. "The body exists only in terms of activity and mind is nothing but directed activity. Body and mind do not for any practical purpose exist independent of each other. They are only postulates to facilitate logical analysis and philosophical discussions." Intelligence grows with every improvement in digital acquity according to some mathematical formula. And "if intelligence is the product of our heritage and if our heritage is mostly the work of our hands and fingers, it cannot be denied that there is a close relation between intelligence and manual skill." Basic education retrieved that digital acquity and placed it on the right path. It may be claimed that activity, manual training, and handicrafts do find a place already in the curriculum according to the earlier educational thinkers. But only in Basic education it has been organically knit together through

38. Ibid. p.205.
39. Ramanathan, 'Digital Correlate of Mental Functions', Journal of Education and Psychology (Baroda, Jan,&April,1966) vide
40. Ibid. op.cit. p.212
40. Ibid.
a central craft with productive, economic and educative value as a central structure of the whole of education. It is not possible under Basic educational system to ignore the academic aspect of curriculum at the expense of manual or craft activity or vice versa. The integration of the school with home and community is best achieved by the central craft activities. Craft work is organically connected with Basic education and it is nothing but a carcass when divorced from craft work. It is the corner stone of the whole structure of Basic education and pedagogic superstructure. Once Gandhi said "the brain must be educated through the hand. If I were a poet I could write poetry on the possibilities of the five fingers. In my scheme of things the hand will handle tools before it draws or traces the writing." From the very first day in a Basic school, the child begins to learn the use of his hands and fingers in a planned and systematic way progressively towards newer aims. Gandhi explained how the mind could be trained through the hands in the following words in a reply to a question of Shrimathi Asha Devi Ariyanayagam. "The old idea was to add a handicraft to the ordinary curriculum of education followed in the schools."

Ibid. p. 213.
That is to say, the craft was to be taken in hand wholly separately from education. To me that seems a fatal mistake. The teacher must learn the craft and correlate his knowledge to the craft, so that he will impart all that knowledge to his pupils through the medium of the particular craft that he chooses."

It may be supposed that craft centred activities with economic values would create drudgery and boredom. But experiences in Basic education centres proved quite the contrary. As naturally busy, restless, and curious in these primary stage, pupils took to activity centred education most willingly and joyfully. As the activities are going on in actual, realistic environment, they provide for real concentration, curiosity, imitation, efficiency and for the creative urge that are in the children. It is under this creative drive and the interest therein that the child seeks to reconstruct his experience. The community life with other activities like cooking, cleaning, celebrations, projects, assembly, prayer and debates together with self government incalculate social and civic qualities and understanding.

It is the claim of Basic education to have substituted co-operation for competition through the whole...
range of the school programme and the foundation of Basic education are also the foundation of democracy. The democratic principles in any society, if applied to the theory of education, will yield certain fundamental educational principles such as the confirmation of educational programme and organization with the democratic pattern, satisfying all the participants, discouraging social stratifications and encouraging co-operative spirit and other positive traits.

This aspect of education through a craft leads to another important aspect of Gandhian education viz. the aspect of self sufficiency. The boy must pull his economic weight from the very moment of the beginning of its school career through its produce. The cost of such produce should defray the cost of education or atleast the salary of the teachers. Gandhi was convinced strongly that "there was no other way to carry education to crores of our children, we could not wait until we had the necessary revenue to meet the educational expenditure of the country. This is the self supporting aspect of Gandhi's education which he thought would remedy the financial problem to defray the cost of education for the millions of the Indian

children, and at the same time would remedy the social
and national problems. He stresses this point in his
own words thus: "... if we want to eliminate communal
strife and international strife, we must start
with foundation pure and strong by rearing our younger
generation in the education I have adumbrated. The
plan springs out of non-violence..." Shri Mahadev
Desai expresses this in the following way. "The idea
of self-supporting education cannot be divorced from the
ideological background of non-violence and unless we bear
in mind that the new scheme is intended to bring into
being a new age from which class and communal hatred
is eliminated and exploitation is eschewed, we cannot
make a success of it. We should, therefore, approach
the task with firm faith in non-violence..."

The self supporting aspect of basic education is
used in two senses: the self supporting nature of educa-
tion in an individual's later life and the self support-
ing nature of education itself. Education must be taken
as an insurance against unemployment. The child after
completing a seven years course in primary education
should be discharged as an earning unit. The poor chil-
dren naturally give an helping hand to their parents.
That itself is an education. In the same line the state

\[45\] Gandhi, *Basic Education*, op.cit. p.24
\[46\] Educational Reconstruction p.94 vide *Philosophy of Education*,
op.cit. p.22
\[47\] Harijan, 11.9.37.
In the same line, the state returns the children after seven years of primary education to the family as an earning unit, thereby cutting the root of unemployment.

The implication of Gāndhian term 'self-sufficiency' denotes not only the meeting of the expenses of the teachers' salaries through manual and productive labour, not only the guarding against unemployment in later life, but also the creation of such attitude in one's life which is more important than any other aspects. When an individual's attitude is so shaped that he willingly does all the work by himself, private or public, where is the need for exploitation of any kind? Gandhi did so all through his life. He was his own cook, servant, dhobi, and scavenger. He expected that the attitude created by this concept of self-sufficiency should so permeate in every aspect of socio-economic and natural life.

Gandhi further indicates that the mere self-supporting aspect alone is not the 'acid test' of the Wardha scheme. There is another test also. In his own words, "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 the
whole man has been drawn out through the teaching of the handicraft in a scientific manner. In fact I would reject a teacher who would promise to make it self-supporting under any circumstances. The self-supporting part will be the logical corollary of the fact that the pupil has learnt the use of every one of his faculties. If a boy who works at a handicraft for three hours a day will surely earn his keep, how much more a boy who adds to the work a development of his mind and soul."

The concept of self-sufficiency in the school, again leads to a suitable craft, productive in nature, rich in educational possibilities around which all the aspects of education should be woven. While attempting towards self realization, the labour thus accorded will ensure in the pupil, self-reliance, industrial nature, discipline, digital acquity, character development and citizenship traits, dignity of labour, curiosity of the procedure and thirst for knowledge. Thus labour does not stand for its own sake, and neither attaching economic value for educational purposes in the school premises is baneful. Great educators from ancient and recent times have accepted this ideal.

Harijan, 11. 6. '38. (48)
The idea of imparting primary education through the medium of village handicrafts was conceived by Gandhi as the 'spear-head 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 toward 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 just social order in which there is no unnatural division between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right of 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. . . . "

Besides the idea of social revolution, Basic education contemplates to revolutionize the mode of education by emphasizing the training of hands. "Our education has got to be revolutionized. The brain must be educated through the hand. . . . Why should you think the mind is everything and the hands and feet nothing?"

Ibid. 9. 10. '37.
Those who do not train their hands, who go through the ordinary rut of education lack 'music' in their life. All their faculties are not trained. Mere book knowledge does not interest the child so as to hold his attention fully. The brain gets weary of mere words and the child's mind begins to wander. The hand does the things it ought not to do, the eyes see the things it ought not to see, the ear hears the things it ought not to hear, and they do not do, see, or hear respectively what they ought to. They are not taught to make the right choice and so their education often proves their ruin. An education which does not teach us to discriminate between good and bad, to assimilate the one and eschew the other is a misnomer."

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Basic education is thus calculated contribute to the economic and political advancement of the country unlike the present system of primary education which was devised without any thought of the economic advancement of the country. "The state gets no return whatsoever for the money it is spending in primary education" says Gandhi while advocating the cause of Basic education in a conference. He pointed out to

50. Harijan, 18. 7. '39.
51. Gandhi, Basis Education, op. cit. p. 79.
the data collected by Shrimathi Asha Devi Ariyanayagam to prove the soundness of economic results of Basic education in schools.

Basic education, at least in the period of its innovation in the various centres and schools of the country proved a source of great national awakening. In a country where the per capita income in some province is Rs. 70 per year and in some province like C.P. villages Rs. 12 per year villagers were idling away the time during the offseason before the inception of Basic education. With the advent of Basic education institutions in various centres under enthusiasts, the village folks learnt to spin and talk about its implication with great awakening. Gandhi was more than enough convinced that "Basic education is sure to promote economic and political advancement of the country."

Pointing out the artificiality of the traditional type of education, he stressed that education should be carried on in the actual life situation, through a craft so that the child may assimilate whatever it learns. This artificiality in the class rooms when analysed naturally focus to the 'education through foreign medium.' Gandhi was of strong opinion that children should be

53. Ibid. p. 81.
taught through mother-tongue in the primary level. "Among the many evils of foreign rule" says Gandhi, "this blighting imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of the country will be counted by History as one of the greatest." "It is doing violence to manhood and especially the womenhood of India to encourage our boys and girls to think that an entry into the best society is impossible without a knowledge of English. English education has emasculated us, constrained our intellect and the manner of imparting this education has rendered us effeminate."

Education for democracy and citizenship training is inherent in the Wardha Scheme. The organization of the school, its activities, routine, are all based upon an inherently democratic set up and community life on the basis of self-government which would not only inculcate democratic and citizenship traits in the pupils but also will form the basis of an active life of discipline and health education.

Later Gandhi announced that Basic Education is Life Centred Education affecting the whole life of the individual. The various stages of Basic education namely

55. Ibid., p. 24.
pre-Basic (equivalent to Kindergarten), Junior Basic - (lower primary stage), Senior Basic (upper primary stage), Post-Basic (secondary level), Rural Universities (College level) and Adult Education for the grown ups cover the whole span of life leaving no stage unaffected.

Gandhi's educational principles, when analysed, are rooted in the most recent educational views of eminent educators and educational psychologists which will be discussed in a different context. Dr. Zakir Hussain trenchantly puts it "Psychologically it is desirable because it relieves the child from the tyranny of a purely academic and theoretic instruction against which its active nature is always making a healthy protest. 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. The child acquires not the superficial literacy which implies often without warrent, a capacity to read the printed page, but the far more important capacity of using hand and intelligence for some constructive purpose. This, if we may be permitted to use the expression, is 'the literacy of the whole personality.'

56 Educational Reconstruction p.121 vide The Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, M.S.Patel, op.cit. p.186.
In India, if not in other countries, we may say that Basic education restored the human hand to its legitimate place in the scheme of education and thus connected the brain with the hand or thought with action, bringing the fact to light that without the hand the human brain could never have been developed. Mr. Ramanathan in his book Education from Dewey to Gandhi, and Dr. Verma in his book Basic Education brought out this factor more eloquently. The same idea is also expressed by Kaka Kalelkar that the whole personality of the student has to be developed through manual work. He says, "so far we have used the tongue and the ear for the evolution of the mind and the heart. Eyes also have been used more for cramming than observation. But now we should realize that the true development of the mind and the heart can only be through manual labour."

In the educational field a large volume of opinion had been created in favour of craft centred education and even the Sarient Report approved of its validity. After a cessation of its progress due to the second world war, it demanded the redoubled attention of the

58. Patel M. S., Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, op. cit., p. 78.
leaders of the Congress and the public. The scope of Basic education was extended to cover the ages of six to fourteen and an eight year syllabus was drawn up. The Hindustani Talimi Sangh with its Head Quarters at Wardha became the chief interpreter and executer of Basic education. With the advent of political independence and Congress power, Basic Education was declared as the official policy of all Governments in India and steps were taken to implement the policy at different paces in different states.

Basic schools, and Basic Training schools were started by the various State Governments on the basis of a basic craft and correlated subjects centering round the basic and routine activities. Self-discipline, Self-supporting, Self-government, Community life were the dominant features developed in these institutions. Basic Training Colleges and Post Graduate Basic Training Colleges were also started at various centres for the training of the teachers at higher levels. Seminars and Conferences were held and Refresher Courses and Re-training courses were organized for teachers and departmental staff. The first annual report of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh was very enthusiastic over the progress of the schools. 

"Without any detriment to the objectives of academic
education, the produce of the children's craft-work at the Segaen School has been actually in excess of the expectation formed at the outset."

The above discussion of the Basic education envisaged by Gandhi brought forward so many truths educationally valuable. Even though the concept of Basic education in some form and with the same name was observed by the American school endeavour during the Civil War time and afterwards, Gandhi struck at it out of his own experiments and intuition in concrete situations. "So far as Gandhiji is concerned, education through manual work or a craft is an original idea" says J. B. Kirpalani. "This Basic education has grown out of the atmosphere surrounding us in the country and is in response to it. It is therefore designed to cope with that atmosphere" says Gandhi.

Though not an educationist in the strict sense of the term, his views on education such as activity or craft centered education and life centered education or practical education come very near to the views of the advanced thinkers on the line. He might have heard or might not have heard about the progressive educational

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59, Ibid, p.196
60, Kripalani, Latest Fad, op.cit. p.21.
61, Harijan, 2, 11. '47.
trend in the world. He himself professed that he arrived at his educational views by himself. Perhaps the social milieu in the world at large, the happenings in Russia and other countries or his experiences in self-help abroad together with the influence of books and personalities, or his contemplative religious and practical nature and concrete circumstances or through his co-workers like Kellenbalgh and others and later through the situation in India might have helped him to arrive at his educational conclusions. Whatever might be the truth, "he lived a full life, in the widest possible meaning of the term. There was no aspect of life, public or private, which he did not touch. There was no problem which he was not called upon to tackle... As a result, very often he came out with fascinatingly original and daringly revolutionary suggestion. The educational problem too he dealt with in his characteristic way and there by dropped a bombshell."

His educational views are nothing new to the world. "It would be presumptuous even for the most ardent admirer of Gandhi,ji to claim that Gandhi,ji evolved a philosophy entirely new in its content and formulations." Every great thinker has to draw on the thoughts of his

62, Ramanathan, Education From Dewey to Gandhi, op.cit. p.4
63. Patel M.S., Educational Phy. of Mahatma Gandhi, op.cit. p.70
predecessors before there is full flowering of his genius. This is further authenticated by Shri J.B. Kripalani and Dr. Zakir Hussain. Yet, strangely enough it is said that Gandhi "without studying" them propounded his educational theories out of his own experiments originally. More than others, he himself very often spoke of himself as one who had not really discovered any new thing but had only translated or redefined the hoary truths for the modern age and had chiefly tried to apply them to the group life of man in society. Whatever may be the case, 'the idea' is neither new nor revolutionary... The idea has been advocated often enough and notable efforts have been made in the past to work it out." But at the same time, some learned disciples of Gandhi like Shri Kripalani and Dr. Zakir Hussain express in vehement terms that his educational ideas are original. "The way in which Mahatmaji has placed his present scheme is certainly original" says Dr. Zakir Hussain. It may not be a new thing, but it has been "presented in a new light" observes Acharya Vinoba Bhave. This aspect is owned by Gandhiji himself. My "scheme is absolutely different, because it is a rural one."

66 Ibid.
The outstanding contribution of Basic education to the evolution of educational theory is the revolt against the existing artificial methods of education and taking the child back to its rightful place from the paedocentric, rote and passive educational system. He preached activity which is innate and necessary and which is backed by earlier psychologists and educationists. 'Drawing up' and 'developing the whole personality of the pupil' according to him must be through craft which was a novel idea. "He is perhaps the first educationist to preach and practise on such a larger scale the idea." The idea of craft, activity, productivity in the real context, and thereby intellectual development or integrated personality. It is not only a revolt against the existing impractical educational system, but also a revolt against the existant social and economic conditions. He combines at one stroke all the three revolutions. We can find the principle of activity centred education or learning by doing in the teachings of earlier thinkers of both east and west. The Vedic conception of students and the Gurukul system of education, Socrates, Comenius and the renaissance thinkers were all talking against formalism. *From Bacon, Montaigne, John Locke,

67.Ibid. p.57.
the Encyclopaedists, up to the present day philosophers and educationists, it has been one long protest against scholasticism and its divorce from nature and reality. . . . " Rabelais and Luther, Rousseau and his followers like Pestolozzi and others, Froebel, Herbart and Montessori, Parker, William James and Dewey were all doing the same work in diverse form by raising their voice against traditionalism and formalism in education and realizing the real value of childhood and redeeming it.

The idea has been aptly put by Dr. William Mulder in one of his articles in the following words: "The connection between life and knowledge, thought and action is of special concern in an age when the advancement of learning at times seems a mixed blessing, an age of paradox which sees learning advance only to have civilization retreat, an age of great scientific conquest and appalling cultural lag. The behavioural sciences thrive but behaviour worsens. Shakespearean scholarship ripens but literacy declines. Medicine triumphs over pain and diseases but the race is sickly. Physics splits atoms for peace and the nations prepare for war. Technology produces abundance and unemployment. The gap between intellectual promise and social performance is

68. Ibid. p. 60
greater than the missile gap." Gandhi's views in education go with one accord with all the progressive line of thinking. The important aspect of activity in education was stressed by Rousseau and Gandhi in the same way. Rousseau said, "the bodily activity which seeks an outlet for its energies is succeeded by the mental activity which seeks for knowledge." Dewey later stressed the same idea. Gandhi also emphasized the same idea independently in the following words: "Physical drill, handicrafts, drawing and music should go hand in hand to draw the best out of boys and girls and create in them a real interest in their tuition." So also we can see points of similarities in their views of using the children's limbs and training in hands in the writings of both the scholars. Both of them were against passive learning, storing up the mind with undigested mass, rote memory and bookish knowledge. Rousseau said "if instead of making a child stick to his books, I employ him in a work shop, his hands work for the development of his mind. While he fancies himself a work man, he is becoming a philosopher." Gandhi also emphasizes the same view in more than one occasion. But while the approach of Rousseau is negative, that is, 

70. Emile, p. 130 vide M.S. Patel op. cit. p. 60.
71. Harijan, 11, 9, '37.
guarding the children from vices, Gandhi's approach is positive in saying that the whole education should be imparted through some productive craft.

In the same way his educational ideas coincide with the ideas of Pestalozzi, the ardent disciple of Rousseau, who became a beggar so that beggars may live like men. The orphan school of Pestalozzi and his other experimental centres of education with their activity, simplicity and community living have their close resemblances of Gandhi's ashram living and educational experiments at Phoenix Settlement, Sabarmati Ashram and Sevagram. The later educational methods like Montessori Method, Dalton plan, The Project Method, The Gary System and the Heuristic Method also emphasise activity in some way or other as an integral part of education.

It is noteworthy here that Karl Marx and the Russian educational system in the elementary level have some central idea common to the Gandhian concept of education, as evident from the following passage: "Although the education clauses of the Factory Act go a very little way, atleast they embodied a proclamation that the giving of elementary instruction is a necessary accompaniment of child labour. The success of the Act in this respect gave the first proof that it
is possible to combine education and physical culture with manual labour and on the other hand to combine manual labour with education and physical culture. By questioning the school masters, the Factory Inspectors discovered that the factory children, although they receive only half as much instruction as the regular day scholars, learn quite as much as often more. This can be accounted for by the fact that with only being at school for one half of the day, they are always fresh and nearly always ready and willing to receive instruction. The system on which they work, half manual and half school, renders each employment a rest and a relief to the other. Consequently both are far more congenial to the child than would be the case where he constantly kept at one." Pinkwitch, the official chronicler of Soviet Education placed the labour of the pupil at the centre of their education. Every school in Russia must be attached to a production unit of some sort.

Thus Gandhi is said to have created a revolution in all the aspects of individual and social, national and educational spheres in India. As he himself loudly proclaimed, he never made any novel contribution in any

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74. Ibid, p. 69.
of the spheres above mentioned. Educationally, the idea is well expressed in the following excerpt. "Gandhiji himself never put forward any such claims. He frankly acknowledged his debt to the missionary Kellenbalg who appears to have first introduced him to the idea although in a different form. The idea itself was, however, not new. Educational thinkers, since the time of Rousseau at least had been loudly proclaiming the slogans of 'learning by doing', 'from the heart and the senses to the brain'. In more recent times, it has been emphasised more than once and especially by John Dewey, that the aim of education should be to prepare children for the life they are to lead in the world on leaving school." These theories are seen in various form among the discourses of various thinkers of the line. What Gandhi tried to do was to apply the old theories in a new context like a Lenin who applied the old theory of communism which was already expressed as a utopian theory in the early religious works like the Bible and later given a scientific form in the works of Karl Marx, to the new social context of Russia in 1917; like a Rousseau and a Voltaire who caused the French Revolution by trying

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75. Mathur, V. S., ed., Gandhiji As an Educationist, (Metropolitan, Delhi, 1951) p. 72.
to apply the old teaching of Justice, Equality, and Fraternity in the new context of the 17th century and like an Oliver Cromwel and a Milton who tried to do the same thing in the 16th century England. In India, Gandhi's application of educational concepts was on similar line which tried to evolve a complete individual and effect an integration of the biological, physiological, psychological, social, ethical and spiritual aspects of human personality. Gandhi thereby created a stir which might be called a revolution in a country facing its worst challenges ever made in its long recorded history of more than six thousand years and which is still in the 'Cow Dung Era' according to Nehru. Hence, "it is no exaggeration to say that Gandhi has revolutionized the concept of education and at no distant date the educational practice all over the world will be influenced by his teaching." 

The aspect of vocational training and self supporting as given by Gandhi is unique in the annals of educational history in India and strike a marked contrast with any of the educational thinkers in connecting them with village uplife. "My scheme is absolutely different, because it is a rural one" says Gandhi.

76, Naik J.P., Educational Planning in India, (Allied Pub., Cal. 1965) 77
77, Patel M.S., op.cit. p.75.
78, Ibid.
"Our schools and Colleges should become almost if not wholly, self-supporting, not through donation or State aid or fees exacted from the students, but through remunerative work done by the students themselves" with the object of rejuvenating the villages and thereby India, for the benefit of village and urban children.

His application "of the law of non-violence in the training of the child as a prospective citizen of the world" adds flavour and colour to his educational theories which goes in accord with the fundamental aims of the United Nation Organisation incorporated in its constitution. "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed." "If we want to eliminate communal strife and international strife, we must start with foundations pure and strong by rearing our younger generation on the education I have adumbrated," says Gandhi. Therefore he emphasised the positive doctrines like love, forgiveness, community living and self-sufficiency or in one word Ahimsa in education. For, as already surveyed the doctrine of self-sufficiency is not only towards economic wellbeing, but also serves as a spiritual practice and safeguards against any

79. *Young India*, 1, 9, 1929.
schism or division in the classroom and society.

"Ahimsa in education must have an obvious bearing on the mutual relations of the students. Where the whole atmosphere is redolent with the pure fragrance of ahimsa, boys and girls studying together will live like brothers and sisters in freedom and yet in self-imposed restraint. The students will be bound to the teachers in ties of filial love, mutual respect and mutual trust. In the hands of the educationist, therefore, it ought to take the form of the purest love, ever fresh, an evergushing spring of life expressing itself in every act... One may be sure that when the vidyapith is filled with the atmosphere of this Ahimsa, its students will no more be troubled by puzzling conundrums."

If we take up the ideas of Gandhi on education as constituting the philosophy of Basic education in India, we can see that he pronounced his original ideas on some of the crucial problems of education such as Sex education. He felt it necessary to impart the young pupils a knowledge about the use and functions of the generative organs to a certain extent, so that they might not be misled into abusive practices. "I am strongly in favour of teaching young boys and girls

83. Young India, 6, 9, 1928.
the significance and right use of their generative organs. And in my own way I have tried to impart this knowledge to young children of both sexes for whose training I was responsible. "Such education should automatically serve to bring home to children the essential distinction between man and beast to make them realise that it is man's special privilege and pride to be gifted with the faculties of head and heart both; that he is a thinking no less than a feeling animal." He also emphasised the aspect of self-control and sublimation in sex-education and his views on it are not contradictory to the most recent views on it by psychologists and educationists.

Later on, he shifted his emphasis from handicraft to Takli (spindle) and prescribed it as the most suitable handicraft for our country which is rural and backward, as the only practical solution to our problems, making manual training the means of literacy training, a centre round which a culture of peace can be built up. This constitutes the pivot of Gandhiji's educational theory and may be regarded as his unique and lasting contribution to the educational thought and hence it is given the central place in all stages of education.

84. Harijan, 21.11.1936.
85. Ibid, 21.11.1938
86. Patel M.S., op.cit. p.103.
These considerations of his educational views are enough to go to prove the fact of Gandhi's place among the world's educationists.