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GANDHI'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT AND ITS IMPACT

by

© SUCHETNA CHANNAN

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the relevance and importance of Mahatma Gandhi's contribution to the field of education and to the reform of Indian life and society through education.

Chapter one provides a general description of Gandhi's life, fundamental beliefs, social values and policies. Chapter two traces the development of Gandhi's educational thought. It then endeavours to formulate a theory of education. Chapters three and four are concerned with Gandhi's novel experiment, Basic Education in light of modern educational thought. In the final chapter a summary and assessment of Gandhi's educational thought is attempted.

Some important conclusions made in the study revolve around the fact that education represents one of the most important nation building activities. Education should therefore be given high priority in any program of national planning. The great mass of people in India need to become involved in an educational system which reflects their life, activities and basic needs. Gandhi believed that education is a social process, the primary and the most effective instrument of social political and economic reconstruction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Professor D.R. Pugh of the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Alberta and Chairman of my Examining Committee. Prof. Pugh's guidance, support and constructive criticisms throughout the development of the manuscript were invaluable.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A. Introductory Statement

The educational system of any country reflects its social, political, and economic situation. It endeavours to meet the special needs of the country, and to consciously reorganize life by preaching and practicing certain essential principles. After thirty-six years of independence, educationists in India are still struggling to formulate and regenerate an educational policy suitable for the Indian tradition and culture, since the framers of educational policy uncritically reproduced a Western educational system.[1]

Mahatma Gandhi, primarily known as a great politician and social reformer, was also a profound and eminent educationist. During the fifty years of his public career, Gandhi was essentially concerned with arousing the potentialities of the masses. He was one of the first men to think in terms of the education of the masses in India[2]. Through many years of experience and bold experiments in education, Gandhi designed a totally new system of education for India. It was dynamic, constructive, and aimed at meeting the social, economic, and political needs of the country. His educational goals were not fully realized during his lifetime; but, he succeeded in sowing the seeds for widespread reform of Indian life and society through education.

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Footnotes:-

1. Dhurjati Mukherjee, The Towering Spirit, Gandhian Relevance Assessed, p.84, 1978.

2. R.S. Mani, Educational Ideas and Ideals of Gandhi and Tagore, pp.10-11, 1964.

The objectives of this study are fourfold:

1. to expound Gandhi's fundamental beliefs and ideas in a coherent order of progression;
2. to develop Gandhi's educational theory and praxis;
3. to critically analyze Gandhi's novel experiment, Basic Education, in light of modern educational thought; and
4. to assess the relevance and importance of Gandhi's contribution to the field of education and to the reform of Indian life and society through education.

The study was prompted by the felt need of reinstating India's educational system on the basis of its cherished heritage and ancient culture. It endeavours to reflect India's traditional ideals, namely truth, justice, and non-violence,[1] by enunciating Gandhi's philosophy of life as it relates to education. The need for reorganizing education on democratic principles is stressed. Also, recognition is given to the fact that educational success can only be achieved through the fusion of theory and practice. Problems related to expenditure on education, examinations, student indiscipline, women and education, and teachers and their training are clarified and discussed.

Gandhi left us with no systematic presentation of his beliefs or ideas. He himself never formulated and developed a comprehensive philosophy of life, yet he did leave us with a multitude of documentation and direct evidence pertaining to almost everything he

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Footnotes:-

1. I.B. Verma, Basic Education, A Reinterpretation, p.V, 1969.

thought and did. There is a dearth of historical records concerning salient movements during Gandhi's lifetime and his involvement in some of these. I hope to work my way through such records, his extensive writings, and the editorial columns of his weekly publications, Young India, Harijan, and Indian Opinion, in search of an educational philosophy. The numerous abstractions, interpretations, expositions, and commentaries will, in addition, assist me in formulating Gandhi's educational theory and praxis carefully extracted from his thoughts, words, and actions. Although this study draws upon and utilizes considerable historical evidence, and may be regarded as an historical study of the educational system of India, I have not confined this undertaking to any specific dates in history. Gandhi's relevance, Louis Fischer explains, "is not only for our times but of all times".[1] Another and similar viewpoint is well expressed in the following quote:

> "In a time of deepening crisis in the under-developed world, of social malaise in the affluent societies, of the shadow of unbridled technology and the precarious peace of nuclear terror, it seems likely that Gandhi's ideas and techniques will become increasingly relevant."[2]

Our today was Gandhi's tomorrow. It is essential for the whole world, and humanity in general, to rediscover and to recover the past. The last three-and-a-half decades have seen widespread strife and altercation. A contemporary perspective of Gandhi's educational

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Footnotes:-

1. Louis Fischer, The Life of Mahatma Ghandi, p.?, 1955.

2. "Gandhi, Mahatma", Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 7, p.878, 1983.

philosophy based on the concepts of non-violence, truth, love, and justice will help in bringing into focus a constructive alternative urgently needed in our day.[1] Mukherjee aptly states:

> "Gandhi will never be antiquated, for his life and ideas were founded not on passing whims but on the bedrock of eternal verities."[2]

B. Mahatma Gandhi, (1869-1948) - His Life

> "A fragile man, barely five feet tall, he weighed 114 pounds; all arms and legs, like an adolescent whose trunk has yet to rival the growth of his limbs. Nature had meant (his) face to be uglv. His ears flared out from his oversized head like the handles of a sugar bowl. His nose buttressed by squat, flaring nostrils thrust its heavy beak over a sparse white mustache. Without his dentures, his lips collapsed over his toothless gums. Yet, (his) face radiated a peculiar beauty, because it was constantly animated, reflecting with the quickly shifting patterns of a lantern camera his changing moods and his impish humor."[3]

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born the youngest and fourth child of his father's fourth wife, on October 2, 1869, at Portbandar, a seacoast town of Gujarat in Western India under British suzerainty. His father and grandfather were the Prime Ministers (dewans) of the State of Porbandar, and later his father became Prime Minister of two other states, Rajkot and Vankaner. Neither one had much in the way of

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Footnotes:-

1. Anima Base, Mahatma Gandhi, A Contemporary Perspective, Preface, 1977.

2. Dhurjati Mukherjee, op. cit. p.10.

3. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, Freedom at Midnight, pp.31-32, 1975.

formal education, but were able administrators who knew how to deal with the capricious princes and managed hundreds of men.

Gandhi's mother, Putlibai, was a saintly woman, wholly absorbed in religion, not easily attracted by jewelry, fashion, and finery, who went daily to the Vaisnava temple, took numerous vows and frequently fasted. Putlibai was well-informed about all matters of State. She possessed a strong common-sense and was highly regarded for her intelligence. Putlibai left an outstanding impression on young Gandhi's mind and had a lasting influence upon his life.

Gandhi's family were traditional Vaisnava - worshipers of the Hindu God Vishnu - and firm believers in Jainism, the morally rigorous Indian religion. Non-violence and the belief in universal eternity are the two chief tenets of Jainism. His family recognized, honoured, and practiced the principles of ahimsa (non-injury, non-violence to all living beings), vegetarianism, fasting for self-purification, and mutual tolerance between adherents of various creeds and sects.[1]

During his youth, Gandhi was shy, aloof, not very healthy, and possessed a nervous temperament.[2] As a student, he occasionally won prizes and scholarships, but was generally a mediocre student. A terminal report rated him as:

> "good at English, fair in Arithmetic, and weak in Geography; conduct very good; bad handwriting."[3]

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Footnotes:-

1. Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit., p.874.

2. William Cenker, The Hindu Personality in Education, Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobindo, p.73, 1976.

3. Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit., p.874.

He showed no great capacities either within the classroom or on the playing fields. Whenever the opportunity arose, Gandhi went out on long solitary walks and he continued this habit throughout his life. Much of his youth was spent in nursing his ailing father and helping his mother with the daily household chores. Compulsory exercise and physical training at school conflicted with his obligation to serve his parents.

Gandhi was betrothed three times before he married Kasturbai at the age of thirteen. In his autobiography, Gandhi wrote about the event:

> "I do not think it meant to me anything more than the prospect of good clothes to wear, drum beating, marriage processions, rich dinners, and a strange girl to play with."[1]

During his high school years, Gandhi went through a stormy phase of adolescence. He violated family customs by secretly believing in atheism, resorting to stealing, furtive smoking, and meat eating. After each escapade, Gandhi promised to himself, "never again". He finally resolved to confess the violations to his father in writing, with a promise never to commit the sins again. In his autobiography, Gandhi wrote that his father was overwhelmingly forgiving. The incident left a permanent mark on Gandhi, as it was his first real lesson in receiving pure ahimsa.[2]

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Footnotes:-

1. C.F. Andrews, Mahatma Gandhi His Own Story, p.46, 1930.

2. Ahimsa: non-violence; practice of non-injury to any breathing thing by thought, word, or deed.

In 1887, Gandhi barely managed to pass the University of Bombay matriculation examination. He continued his studies by joining Samaldas College, where he found great difficulty in understanding the lectures because they were delivered in the English language and not in his native language, Gujarati. Gandhi's family, relatives, and close friends of the family expected Gandhi to succeed to his father's position as Dewan. But, without having a proper education, he would be unable to continue the succession. Mavji Dave, a shrewd and learned Brahmin [1], and an old friend and adviser of the family, suggested that Gandhi be sent to England. To maintain the family tradition of holding high office in one of the states in Gujarat, Gandhi would have to qualify as a barrister. Since it would take four or five years to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree and an additional three for a law degree, Mavji Dave advised that Gandhi be sent to England to become a barrister and return in three years time. Gandhi felt that nothing could be more welcome to him, as he was already fighting shy of his difficult studies. He would, however, have preferred to be sent to England to qualify for the medical profession. His brother explained to him that:

> "Father never liked it. He had you in mind when he said that we Vaishnavas should have nothing to do with the dissection of dead bodies. Father intended you for the Bar." [2]

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Footnotes:-

1. Brahmin: One belonging to the highest priestly caste.

2. C.F. Andrews, op. cit., p.76.

Gandhi began to build castles in the air but, before his visit to England could be realized, many hurdles had to be crossed. Sufficient money had to be raised. His mother had to be assured that her youngest son could be trusted in a distant land, that he would not succumb to unknown temptations and dangers. She made Gandhi take a solemn oath that he would live a celibate in England and never touch wine or meat. Gandhi was determined to go to England and one of his brothers raised the required amount of money for the three-year venture. The final obstacle which Gandhi had to face was the veto by the elders of his caste, who regarded the proposed visit to England as a violation of the Hindu religion. Gandhi ignored the prohibition and set sail in 1888.

The cosmopolitan life of London was a great transition from the semi-rural atmosphere of Rajkot.

> "Everything was strange - the people, their ways, and even their dwellings. I was a complete novice in the matter of English etiquette, and continually had to be on my guard. There was an additional inconvenience of the vegetarian vow ... I could not relish boiled vegetables cooked without condiments."[1]

Fortunately, during his wanderings in the city, Gandhi came across a vegetarian restaurant in Farringdon Street. There he purchased books on vegetarianism. At first, Gandhi abstained from eating meat in the interests of truth and his vegetarian vow, but, after eating at the vegetarian restaurant and reading books which provided a reasoned defense of vegetarianism, he developed a missionary zeal for it.

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Footnotes:-

1. Gandhi quoted by C.F. Andrews, op. cit., pp.81-82.

His endeavours to become an English gentleman led Gandhi to spend many pounds on clothes suitable for English society, and on lessons in dancing, French, and elocution. After three months, Gandhi realized that his infatuation with becoming an English gentleman was leading him astray. After all, he was not going to spend a lifetime in England; he could learn the violin even in India and, if he had difficulty in achieving anything like rhythmic motion, there was no reason for him to pursue dance and piano lessons. Gandhi went back to being himself. He took his studies seriously, significantly reduced his cost of living by cooking his own meals, moving to a suite nearby the major conveniences, walking for miles to save on horse-drawn carriage fares and to develop a healthy, strong body. Gandhi resorted to living simply and plainly; that way, he saved plenty of time and passed his examinations.

Towards the end of his second year in England, Gandhi had made many friends. His friends included Theosophists like Annie Besant, to whom he owed his introduction to the Bible and the Bhagavadgita[1], Fabians like George Bernard Shaw, Conservatives like Frederick Pincutt, and Humanitarians like Edward Carpenter. Most of these people were idealists; some denounced capitalism and the industrial society, while others preached the cult of simple living and the superiority of moral over material values.

In July 1891, Gandhi returned to India. Upon arrival, he was greeted by his brother with the sad hews of his mother's death. More

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Footnotes:-

1. Bhagavadgita: literally, song of God, also called Gita. Gita is generally considered as a Bible for Hindus.

stormy disappointments and troubles lay ahead of him. Gandhi was not a barrister who had passed his law examinations in India and he, therefore, found it difficult to start legal practice in Rajkot. Friends advised him to go to Bombay for some time to gain experience of the High Court, to acquaint himself with Indian law, and get what briefs he could. Gandhi accepted the suggestion and went. This venture lasted only four or five months, because Gandhi could not earn a sufficient income to meet his expenditures. The disappointment forced him to leave Bombay and return to Rajkot. There he set up his own office and made a modest living by drafting applications and memorials for litigants. Unfortunately, a quarrel with a British officer led to the curtailment of his legal business and Gandhi became thoroughly depressed. He wished that he could secure some post elsewhere and be free from the prevailing atmosphere of corruption and intrigue. At this juncture, Gandhi was offered a year's contract by an Indian firm in Natal, South Africa. The firm required Gandhi's assistance in dealing with an important court case, which had been going on for an overly long time. The opportunity was tempting and Gandhi already wanted to somehow leave India; thus, he accepted the none-too-attractive offer and got ready to leave for South Africa.

Painful surprises and challenging opportunities were in store for Gandhi when he reached South Africa. On the second day after his arrival, April 1893, Gandhi went to see the Durban Court. There he was asked by a European magistrate to take off his turban; Gandhi refused and left the court. He wrote to the press about the incident, defending the wearing of his turban in the court:

> "The question was much discussed in the papers which described me as an "unwelcome visitor". Thus the incident gave me an unexpected advertisement in South Africa within a few days of my arrival. Some supported me, while others severely criticized my temerity."[1]

On the seventh day after his arrival, Gandhi purchased a first-class train ticket to Pretoria. When the train reached Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal, he was thrown out of a first-class railway compartment and left shivering in the waiting room of the station. Later in the course of his journey, the conductor of a coach badly beat Gandhi for refusing to sit on the footboard at the conductor's feet. Hotels reserved for Europeans-only barred him from even entering. After a few more days in South Africa, Gandhi learned that his recent experiences were all common hardships of Indians in South Africa. Gandhi's personality underwent some transition during these tough times in South Africa; he was no loner a quiet and obliging man, but instead he was aggressive, outspoken, and more confident. He was determined to defend his dignity as an Indian and as a man. He was not going to pocket insults against his natural rights and his person. Truth and justice, he believed, would ultimately prove victorious.

His stay in Pretoria enabled him to study closely the conditions of Indians in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Gandhi became familiar and friendly with almost all the Indians in Pretoria, by calling meetings and making public speeches. He stressed

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Footnotes:-

1. C.F. Andrews, op. cit., p.117.

that all Indians should totally disregard all racial and religious distinctions. The weekly gatherings enabled Indians to discuss certain problems and engage in a free exchange of ideas.

In June 1894, Gandhi's one-year contract drew to a close and he was ready to return to India. At a social gathering in his honour, Gandhi learned that the Natal Legislative Assembly was considering a bill which could deny Indians the right to vote. His hosts expressed their inability to fight against the bill and their ignorance about which political channels they had to approach and how; they begged Gandhi to oppose the bill on their behalf. Consequently, as a proficient political campaigner, barely twenty-five years old, Gandhi fought to prevent the passage of the bill. Although he lost the battle, he did, however, succeed in drawing the attention of the public and the press in Natal, India, and England to the Natal Indian grievances. Later that year, Gandhi founded the Natal Indian Congress. This political organization strengthened the Indian community in South Africa by infusing a spirit of solidarity and universal brotherhood. Meanwhile, Gandhi presented countless reasoned statements of Indian grievances to the legislature, the government, and to all available media. In no time, significant newspapers such as The Times of London, the Statesman, and The Englishman of Calcutta, devoted their editorials to the Natal Indians' grievances. In 1904, Gandhi founded the weekly newspaper Indian Opinion in an effort to eradicate the discrimination practiced against Indians in South Africa. In 1906, Gandhi organized his first civil disobedience campaign. This technique of non-violent resistence was derived by Gandhi from his readings of Leo Tolstoy, Henry Thoreau, John Ruskin,

the New Testament, and the Hindu Scriptures. Gandhi named this technique "Satyagraha", which means truth or soul-force[1]. Redress of wrongs took place through suffering and resisting the adversary and fighting him without violence. Most Indians chose to sacrifice their freedom and livelihood rather than submit to laws against their conscience and self-respect. Hundreds of Indians, including women, went to jail. Over two-thousand striking Natal miners faced imprisonment, flogging, and even shooting. The Governments of Britain and India pressured for a compromise between the two opposing forces. Eventually, a compromise was negotiated by Gandhi and the then Minister of Defense of the Union of South Africa, General Jan Christian Smuts. In July 1914, at age forty-five, Gandhi left South Africa and returned to India.

Soon after his arrival, Gandhi established an Ashram[2] near Ahmedabad. The Ashram aided the cause of those in need, such as the Indian peasants. Principles of self-help, universal brotherhood, truth, justice, and love were taught. Between 1915 and 1918, Gandhi closely followed Indian politics but declined to participate in any political event. He supported the British World War I effort and even helped to recruit soldiers for the British Indian Army. It was in February 1919 when Gandhi first experienced a feeling of estrangement towards the British Raj. The British insisted and pushed through the Rowlatt Act, which perpetuated the wartime curtailment of Indian civil

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Footnotes:-

1. Satyagraha: insistence on truth; it is Gandhi's philosophy of war without violence and strategy of non-violent direct action.

2. Ashram: a community settlement; a place of spiritual retirement.

liberties. It empowered the British to imprison without trial all suspected of sedition. Gandhi announced the first All-Indian Satyagraha campaign. Thousands of Indians throughout India protested non-violently, but some participated in mob violence. The event culminated in a massacre at Amritsar, where four-hundred Indians attending a meeting were killed by British soldiers. After twelve days, Gandhi ended the campaign, realizing that the Indians were not ready to practice satyagraha.

The following year, Gandhi urged a boycott of British cloth by encouraging Indians to produce their own cloth on hand looms.

> "... not only would the boycott of British goods 'fail of its purpose, but would, if adopted, make of them a laughing stock. There was hardly a man present at that assembly (the Amritsar Congress) but had some article of British manufacture on his person ..." [1]

> "The moment we can increase our production sufficiently to improve its quality to the necessary extent, the import of foreign cloth will automatically cease." [2]

By the autumn of 1920, Gandhi had reorganized the thirty-five year old Indian National Congress into an effective political instrument of Indian nationalism. Soon after, the Congress became a massive organization and focused on the core of small towns and villages of India, instead of on the principal cities.

Increasing numbers of Indians throughout the country began to practice non-violence and non-cooperation towards the British Govern-

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Footnotes:-

1. C.F. Andrews, op. cit., p.337.

2. C.F. Andrews, op. cit., p.347.

ment. Many participated in the boycotting of British manufactures and all institutions related to and influenced by the British in India: courts, legislatures, schools, businesses. Thousands of Satyagrahis were arrested and imprisoned for defying the law. In 1922, Gandhi was arrested, tried for sedition, and sentenced to six years in prison. He had no regrets. He wrote:

> "Freedom is often to be found inside a prison's walls, even on a gallows; never in council chambers, courts, and classrooms."[1]

In February 1924, after an appendicitis operation, he was released. Politically, many things had changed. The Congress Party had split into two factions, one favouring the entry of the party into legislatures and the other opposing it. The Hindus and Muslims were once again two divided communities. Gandhi tried desperately to unite the two and resolved all communal outbreaks. Finally, after endeavouring unsuccessfully to reason with the two warring communities, Gandhi began a fast to encourage non-violence. After three weeks, people were aroused and soon put Gandhi's message into action. The fast then ended.

During the mid-twenties, Gandhi alternated between Satyagraha campaigns and his "constructive program" of social and economic uplift. He encouraged Indians to abandon the curse of untouchability, to unite with Muslims, to better recognize women and their rights, to support basic education, prohibition, personal hygiene, and village

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Footnotes:-

1. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, op. cit., p.64.

and home industries. In December 1928, at the Calcutta Congress, Gandhi moved a resolution which demanded:

> "dominion status from the British government within a year under threat of a nationwide non-violent campaign for complete independence."[1]

The following year, the Party fixed January 26 as National Independence Day, and this day is still observed in India.

Gandhi's most spectacular and successful non-violent campaign against the British rule took place in March 1930, when he led the third All-India Satyagraha movement, more commonly known as the great Salt March. The movement represented a protest against the British tax on salt. Salt is an essential ingredient in every man's diet, especially in a climatically hot country like India. It was the exclusive monopoly of the state. The tax built into its selling price was small but, for a poor person, it represented two weeks of wages for each year. With thousands of his supporters, Gandhi marched for two-hundred and forty miles to the sea. After three-and-a-half weeks, on April 5, Gandhi and his party finally reached the banks of the Indian Ocean. After a night of prayer and a ritual bath, the next morning Gandhi waded ashore, reached down to scoop up a piece of caked salt, then, in front of thousands of spectators, exposed in his fist the white crystals.

> "The forbidden gift of the sea, the newest symbol in the struggle for Indian Independence."[2]

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Footnotes:-

1. Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit., p.87.

2. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, op. cit., p.65.

Within a week, the entire subcontinent was flooded with Gandhi's supporters collecting and distributing salt. More than sixty-thousand people were imprisoned, including Gandhi. Before returning to the Yeravda prison, Gandhi sent the following message to his followers:

> "The honour of India has been symbolized by a fistful of salt in the hand of a man of non-violence. The fist which held the salt may be broken, but it will not yield up its salt." [1]

A year later, Gandhi accepted a truce and called off civil disobedience. The British government, however, re-imprisoned Gandhi in an effort to isolate him from the outside world and lessen his influence on the people of India.

While in prison, Gandhi embarked on his "epic fast" of six days against the British government's decision to segregate the untouchables by constitutionally separating them from other Indians. In 1933, he fasted continuously for three weeks, again on behalf of the untouchables, whom Gandhi renamed Harijans, "the children of God". At the beginning of this fast, Gandhi was released from prison to relieve the British of responsibility if he should die[2].

During the crisis of World War II, Gandhi was willing to help Britain, but only if India self-government was assured.

> "He was prepared only to give moral support to the British against the Japanese and German invaders and was opposed to giving help in men and money in any circumstance as that would have gone against the very spirit of non-violence."[3]

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Footnotes:-

1. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, op. cit., p.65.

2. Homer A. Jack, Collier's Encyclopedia, Volume 10, p.565, 1982.

3. Bhim Sen Singh, The Cripps Mission, p.6, 1979.

On March 7, 1942, the Japanese troops entered Rangoon. People feared that soon the Japanese conquest would be sweeping into Bengal and Madras[1]. China's leader, Chiang Kai-Shek, appealed to Great Britain, his ally, to give India real political power as quickly as possible so that Indians may:

> "further develop their spiritual and material strength and thus realize that their participation in the war is not merely an aid to the anti-aggression nations for securing victory, but also a turning point in the struggle for Indian's freedom." [2]

U.S. President Roosevelt also tried to persuade British Prime Minister Churchill to adopt a more conciliatory view of the Indian claims[3]. He believed that India would cooperate better with Britain if it was assured of independence, at least after the war[4].

India was becoming restive and British fortunes were at a low ebb. Sir Stafford Cripps, a radical left-wing cabinet minister, was sent in March 1942 on a mission to India. The primary object of the Cripps Mission was to cushion the political unrest in India by making promises of post-war consitutional reforms[5]. The proposed British War Cabinet Declaration proved unsatisfactory and highly controversial. Official rejections of the Declaration by the Indian National Congress Working Committee, Muslim's League Working Committee, Sikh All-Parties

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Footnotes:-

1. Bhim Sen Singh, The Cripps Mission, p.25, 1979.
2. The Indian Annual Register, Calcutta, Volume 1, pp.121-122, 1942.
3. Bhim Sen Singh, op. cit., p.32.
4. Amba Prasad, The Indian Revolt of 1942, pp.12-20, 1958.
5. Bhim Sen Singh, op. cit., p.1.

Committee, and the Hindu Mahasabha marked the failure of the Mission. Gandhi perpetuated the nationalist struggle in India. He launched an individual civil disobedience campaign against Britain. He realized that the high British officials were promoting discord between the Hindus and Muslims, hence, he demanded, in the summer of 1942, an immediate British withdrawal from India. The failure of the mission

> "increased Indian hositility towards Britain which had not shown any genuine desire to part with power. The British misrepresentation of facts and their propaganda to malign the Congress and its leadership added fuel to the fire. Disillusioned with Sir Stafford Cripps and his Mission, the nationalist movement expressed its complete disenchantment with the Colonial power on 9 August 1942 where the Congress launched the "Quit Indian Movement" under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi." [1]

The entire Congress leadership was imprisoned and the British were determined to crush the Party once and for all. Violent outbreaks spread throughout the country and relations between India and Britain worsened. In February 1943, Gandhi embarked upon another twenty-one day fast. In 1944, his wife, Kasturbai, died in prison. That year, Gandhi's own health was rapidly declining, so he was released from prison. This was the last imprisonment he was subjected to. In his lifetime, he had spent 2,338 days[2] in prison.

Gandhi met in Bombay with Ali Jinnah of the Muslim League to discuss Hindu-Muslim relations. In August 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru,

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Footnotes:-

1. Bhim Sen Singh, op. cit., pp.101-102.

2. Homer. A. Jack, op. cit., p.565.

Gandhi's close friend and political successor, was asked by the British to form a government. Jinnah immediately reacted by proclaiming "Direct Action Day", which consequently led to violent Hindu-Muslim riots. Gandhi's efforts to quell the riots led to the Mountbatten Plan of June 3, 1947, and later, on August 15, 1947, to the formation of two new and separate dominions, India and Pakistan. Gandhi was desperately pained by the division of India. He believed that the terrible legacy of partition would trouble the subcontinent for years to come. India's Independence Day was a day of tragedy for Gandhi and millions like him. There was no joy in his heart, instead it was filled with questions of self-doubt. He wondered if he had led the country astray. To ease his pain and sorrow, he turned to the celestial song of the Bhagarad Gita, his infallible guide, and began reading.

For many, Independence Day symbolized a terrible dilemma, many were unable to decide to which country they wished to belong, the land of their birth or the Islamic nation created by Jinnah.

> "Villages whose Moslem inhabitants had exulted at the birth of Pakistan would find themselves in India; in others, Sikhs barely finished celebrating what they had mistakenly thought was their hamlets' attachment to India, before, they had to flee for their lives toward Radcliffe's border across the fields they had cultivated for years."[1]

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Footnotes:-

1. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, op. cit., p.322, Cyril Radcliffe was instructed to draw a boundary line dividing the Indian subcontinent into Pakistan and India.

Communal strife broke out among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs.

> "Radcliffe's line had left five million Sikhs and Hindus in Pakistan's half of the Punjab, over five million Moslems in India's half. Prodded by the demagoguery of Jinnah and the leaders of the Moslem league, the Punjab's exploited Moslems and convinced themselves that, somehow, in Pakistan, the land of the Pure Hindu would disappear. Yet, there they were on the aftermath of Independence, still ready to collect their rents, still occupying their shops and farms. Inevitably, a simple thought swept the Moslem masses: if Pakistan is ours, so too are shops, farms, houses and factories of the Hindus and Sikhs."[1]

Gandhi's appeals to reason, truth, justice, and tolerance stood no chance. He immersed himself heart and soul into the task of consoling the victims, rehabilitating the refugees, admonishing the bigots, and healing the scars of communal conflict.[2] Partisans of both communities believed that the vivisection of India and the calamity of millions of Indians condemned to horrid sufferings were the work of the Congress Party and, above all, its leader Gandhi[3]. Gandhi's efforts to quell the communal war ceased to be effective. He was left with only one weapon, a fast. Faced with insurmountable obstacles, Gandhi resorted to a fast. Ironically, this time he was fasting not against the British, but against his own countrymen. In September 1947, his fasting succeeded in stopping the rioting in Calcutta and,

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Footnotes:-

1. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, op. cit., pp.340-341, Cyril Radcliffe was instructed to draw a boundary line dividing the Indian subcontinent into Pakistan and India.

2. Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit., p.877.

3. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, op. cit., p.313.

in January 1948, his last fast, which lasted for five days, succeeded in stopping the renewed riots in the City of Delhi.

On January 30, a few days later, as he was walking to his daily prayer meeting in the garden outside Birla House in New Delhi, Gandhi was assassinated. The assassin was Nathuram Godse, a thirty-nine year old Hindu and an editor of a Hindu Mahasabha extremist weekly in Poona. The whole world mourned over Gandhi's death. Spontaneous tributes of love and praise for Gandhi poured into New Delhi from every corner of the world.

> "His murder shows how dangerous it is to be good." George Bernard Shaw, London.
>
> "All those who believe in the brotherhood of men will mourn Gandhi's death." Premier Georges Bidault, Paris.
>
> "A prince among us has passed." Field Marshal Jan Smuts, South Africa.
>
> "An apostle of peace and a friend of Christianity." Pius XII, The Vatican.
>
> "The entire world mourns with India." President Harry Truman, Washington, D.C., United States of America.
>
> "There can be no controversy in the face of death, he was one of the greatest men produced by the Hindu community." Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Pakistan.
>
> "The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere. Our beloved leader Bapu, as we called him, the father of the nation is no more.
>
> "The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. In a thousand years that light will still be seen ... the world will see it and will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light represented something more than the immediate

> present; it represented the living, the eternal truths, reminding us of the right path, drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom." Jawaharlal Nehru, India.

In the center of a blank editorial page ringed by a black border, a single paragraph set in bold type read:

> "Gandhiji has been killed by his own people for whose redemption he lived. The second crucifixation in the history of the world has been enacted on a Friday - the same day Jesus was done to death one thousand nine-hundred and fifteen years ago. Father, forgive us." The Hindustan Standard, India.[1]

> "Mahatma Gandhi will go down in history on a par with Buddha and Jesus Christ." Viscount Louis Mountbatten, The Last British Viceroy of India, England.[2]

Gandhi's amazing versatile genius left its stamp on almost every aspect of India's national life - political, social, moral, and economic. In spite of the many years he spent in jail and his diligent struggle for the freedom of his country, Gandhi surprisingly managed to find the time and the energy to make a stable and far-reaching contribution in the field of education[3]. His incursion into this field marked a significant event. His understanding of the truths of the Indian situation provided him with an insight into the education problems confronting India. Gandhi, therefore, was not only

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Footnotes:-

1. These quotes were taken from Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, op. cit., pp.500-502.

2. William L. Shirer, Gandhi, A Memoir, p.9, 1979.

3. K.G. Saiyidain, Problems of Reconstruction, p.118, 1962.

a world-known figure politically, but was also an educationist. It is with this aspect of his career that this study will be concerned.

C. Gandhi's Philosophy of Life

Gandhi was an inerently religious person. Throughout his life, he endeavoured to understand the individual and society. He aimed at producing a "new" human being, one that is fearless, greedless, and hateless. Human nature, Gandhi claimed, is essentially good; it is opposed to oppression, injustice, and authoritarianism. He appealed to the hearts of men to root out evils such as guilt, suspicion, and fear. He attempted to make his religion an essential part of his life and applied it to the many problems he encountered. Gandhi was a devotee of the Hindu religious and moral tradition. Before becoming thoroughly acquainted with the Bhagavadgita, the Upanishads [1], and the Ramayana[2], Gandhi read widely the great works of Western philosophers. For example, John Ruskin's "Unto This Last", Henry Thoreau's essay, "On Civil Disobedience", and Leo Tolstoy's "The Kingdom of God is Within You". The Koran, the Zend Avesta, and various studies in Buddhism and Jainism were also among his readings.

> " ... but his staple spiritual food was the Gita, the Upanishads and the Ramayana, to all of which he came comparatively late, but from which he drank deeply." [3]

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Footnotes:-

1. Upanishads: the earliest religious philosophies found in sacred Sanskrit books.

2. Ramayana: the great sacred epic of North India wherein Rama is the divine hero.

3. Vishnu Dutt, Gandhi, Nehru and the Challenge, p.15, 1979.

Gandhi prized Hinduism above all other religions, but religion for him transcended Hinduism. His religion was that which changes one's very nature, which unites one permanently to the truth within. The "truth within" Gandhi equated with "God's Voice". The core of Gandhi's philosophy is based on his profound faith in God, and on the principles of Satya, Ahimsa, and Satyagraha. God, Gandhi believed, is the Ultimate Reality. While all other things are always in a state of flux and subject to change, he said, God is

> "changeless, . . . holds all together, . . .
> creates, dissolves and recreates." [1]

Gandhi believed in the absolute oneness of God and in the oneness of humanity. Although we have different bodies and appearances, he said, we all have but one soul, just as the rays of sun have the same source. To him God was an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything [2]. He regarded God as the source of light, life, love, and truth[3].

Satya means Truth. The title of Gandhi's autobiography is "The Story of My Experiments with Truth". He remarked that, while many people have readily expressed their denial of God, not many have readily denounced the supremacy of Truth. Gandhi found that words such as love have many meanings in any one language of the world, but he never found a double meaning in connection with the word Truth.

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, July 28, 1946.
2. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, October 11, 1928.
3. ibid., March 5, 1925.

Not even the atheists, he said, had demurred to the necessity of power of Truth[1].

> "But in their passion for discovering truth the atheists have not hesitated to deny the very existence of God - from their own point of view rightly. And it was because of this reasoning that I saw that rather than say God is Truth I should say Truth is God." [2]

During a conversation (autumn 1931), Gandhi told Romain Rolland, a gifted French writer and pacifist, that

> "God is not a person. God is an eternal principle. That is why I say that Truth is God."[3]

He explained that because Truth is God, Truth should be the object of worship[4].

Gandhi believed in the absoluteness of truth. He explained that the realization of this truth demands sustained experimentation. Whatever can be experimentally verified, he claimed, is true. However, he never claimed finality of absoluteness for such a truth. He affirmed that any Truth capable of verification is relative truth.

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid., December 31, 1931.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, December 31, 1931.

3. William L. Shirer, Gandhi A Memoir, p.202, 1979. Shirer writes: Gandhi stopped off in Switzerland to see Romain Rolland, who had been one of the first in the West to hail him. With this gifted French writer and pacifist, then at the height of his world fame (he had won the Nobel Prize for Literature for his ten volume novel, Jean-Christophe) he talked for hours on the subject they loved, pacifism, non-violence.

4. S.P. Chaube, Recent Educational Philosophies in India, p.119, 1967.

> " ... as long as I have not realized this Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by relative truth as I have conceived it. That relative truth must meanwhile, be my beacon, my shield and buckler ... Often in my progress I have had faint glimpses of the Absolute Truth, God, and daily the conviction is growing upon me that He alone is real and all else is unreal." [1]

Truth, Gandhi believed, is an inner voice, the call of our conscience. Satya in speech and writing, he held, is the dictate of conscience and he wanted everyone to be a seeker of Satya. He insisted that people should appear as they are. People should be natural and frank, he advised, in daily intercourse; any insincerities practiced in the name of politeness, he condemned and regarded as untruth. Secrecy, he held, implies fear[2] and suspicion, therefore, it is falsehood.

In the Gandhian sense, truth may, therefore, be viewed and understood from three different angles: the Absolute Truth which is the Eternal Principle - God; the relative Truth of our conceptions; and truthfulness in thought, word, and action. The Absolute Truth is never subject to change and decay, whereas the relative truth and truthfulness in thought, word, and action are both subject to variation and decay. That which withstands change and decay in the objective realm of reality corresponds to the inner voice, or conscience, and, according to Gandhi, is essentially the manifestation

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth, p.6, 1959 ed.

2. In a column of this weekly publication Young India (September 11, 1930) Gandhi wrote: "Fearlessness, for me implies freedom from all external fear - fear of disease, bodily injury or death, of dispossession, of losing reputation, or giving offence, of losing one's relative or friend."

of Satya. In his autobiography, Ganhi noted that any person who seeks Truth must be humbler than the dust.

> "The world crushes the dust under its feet, but the seeker after Truth should be so humble that even the dust could crush him."[1]

The realization of Truth implies the purification of the self and its immediate environment. Satya or Truth for Gandhi extends into the realm of Love; Dedication to it engenders the spirit and power of service.

> "I am endeavouring to see God through service of humanity, for I know that God is neither in heaven, nor down below, but in every one."[2]

Ahimsa, Gandhi's second principle, implies non-violence or Love. He declared that Ahimsa in its positive form enjoins

> "the largest love, the greatest charity."[3]

The only means for the realization of Truth, Gandhi believed, is Ahimsa. Both Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined, he explained, that it is almost impossible to disentangle and separate them. He viewed them as the two sides of a smooth metallic disk, where it is not possible to distinguish the obverse from the reverse[4]. Hence, he stated, because Truth is our ultimate goal, Ahimsa should be our supreme duty to achieve the goal[5]. Thus, according to Gandhi, Ahimsa

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, op. cit., p.XV.
2. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, August 4, 1927.
3. M.K. Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi: His Life, Writings and Speeches, p.218, no date.
4. V.R. Taneja, Educational Thought and Practice, p.175, 1965.
5. ibid.

is the means and Truth is the end. Truth he considered as the highest law and Ahimsa as the highest duty. Because Gandhi was a firm votary of Truth, he was prepared to sacrifice Ahimsa for the sake of Truth, but not Truth for anything on earth or heaven[1]. He explained that the essence of Ahimsa may be discovered during the search for and contemplation of Truth.

Ahimsa has functioned as a very active element in Indian culture since the Upanishadic period. Leys and Rao explain:

> "Ahimsa was recognized as a value in Indian thought as early as the Upsanishadic period (700-300 B.C.) when the seers condemned sacrifices which involved violence in order to propitiate the gods. But the conception, of course, became more explicit when Guatama, the Buddha, (around 560-480 B.C.) revolted against all forms of killing and the destruction of innocent animals in Vedic rituals. From this period onwards, ahimsa, as a moral value pervades the Indian tradition."[2]

Gandhi regarded Ahimsa as omnipotent, infinite, and essentially synonymous with God[3]. He believed that the universe is governed by non-violence or love and that we are all bound by a tie of love. He declared that where there is love there is life; hatred leads to destruction.

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, March 28, 1936.
2. Wayne A.R. Leys and P.S.S. Rama Rao, Gandhi and America's Educational Future, p.9, 1969.
3. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, May 1, 1937.

> "There is in everything a centripetal force without which nothing could have existed ... even as there is cohesive force in blind matter ... and the name of that cohesive force among animate being is love."[1]

Ahimsa is a weapon of the brave, Gandhi asserted, and not of the coward. He viewed Ahimsa as infinitely superior to violence; it requires a higher form of courage than does violence - the courage of dying without killing. Gandhi advised that those persons who do not possess the proposed courage should kill and be killed, and not run for protection in the name of non-violence. He explained that non-violence cannot be taught to a person who fears death and lacks the power to resist. If a person runs to seek shelter, Gandhi said, that person would be conforming to his cowardice[2]. Evidently, man's supreme duty is commitment to non-violence. However, Gandhi warned that all ill-will and hatred must be eliminated before a non-violence society could be achieved.

> "The hardest heart and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering without anger and without malice."[1]

Gandhi was concerned about the tensions that existed between group and group, class and class, and nation and nation. Non-violent factors, he expounded, must be introduced into society. He insisted that all individuals must first stop perpetuating violence within themselves in their everyday life. He warned that the tremendous

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, I. p.734.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, July 20, 1935.

3. M.K. Gandhi, All Men Are Brothers, p.93, 1958.

hatred accumulated within each individual would eventually spread and take a national form leading to war. Kumarappa[1], a long-standing President of the All-India Village Industries Association, explained that, like animals, people go about to satisfy their primary need by functioning in five different ways. The first and simplest is the parasitic stage, where the tiger goes after and takes the lives of other creatures in the jungle. The second is the predatory stage, where the monkey reaches out and takes an apple from the tree. In both the tiger and the monkey, there is consumption without contribution, although the violence in the monkey is less. The third is the enterprising stage, where a bird builds a nest. Here the bird not only produces but also consumes, the violence is further lessened. The fourth stage is represented by the life of the honey bees who produce primarily for the benefit of the whole group. Finally, the service stage is examplified when the mother bird collects food and feeds it to the newly-born chicks in the nest without expecting anything in return. In essence, Kumarappa's comment implies that when people reach the final stage the chances of war would be reduced, and less and less violence would exist in society. Ultimately, the economy would become "duty-centred"[2].

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Footnotes:-

1. J.C. Kumarappa, was on the Public Department Inquiry Committee appointed by the Congress: has been a long-standing Secretary and later President of the All-India Village Industries Association.

2. Ministry of Education, Government of India, Gandhian Outlooks and Techniques, pp.398-399, 1953.

> "Ahimsa, truly understood, is, in my humble opinion, a panacea for all evils mundane and extra-mundane. We can never overdo it. Just as at present we are not doing it at all. Ahimsa does not displace the practice of other virtues, but renders their practice imperatively necessary before it can be practiced even in its rudiments."[1]

Let us now turn to Gandhi's third principle, Satyagraha. Satyagraha may be viewed as a way of life and as a technique of social and political action. It may be used to bring about desired changes for the common good; Satyagraha is the subtle, potent, and all-pervasive power of Ahimsa and Satya. It is a self-propagating power and does not depend on any material medium. Unlike the many inert laws which govern the physical sciences, Satyagraha is governed by laws which are living and subject to evolution, growth, adaptation, and change. Gandhi's Satyagraha was not an abstract principle, but a principle in action.

Gandhi's striving for Truth and Satyagraha required him to strictly observe, with their full implications, the seven cardinal vows of Truth, Ahimsa, non-possession, non-stealing, chastity, control of the palate, and fearlessness. He explained that the courageous and loving self-suffering of an individual helps to purge the emotions of an opponent of anger, fear, and pride. The practice of Satyagraha, Gandhi held, makes individuals more receptive to new attitudes and values; it enables them to better understand and appreciate an

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi: His Life, Writings and Speeches, p.221, no date.

opponent's viewpoint, weaknesses, and redeeming virtues[1]. Gandhi affirmed every true Satyagrahi is principally guided by courage. Leys and Rao explained:

> "Not only is that courage to be used in facing one's own lower nature but also against the temptations which come from a world where lust is mistaken for love, or greed flourishes as a necessary force in the competition of life; where the fittest to survive are the successful competitors who use the force of wrath, however, subtly disguised, against their opponents. At every turn we need the courage of Soul that proceeds from our identification with the Spirit of the Universe."[2]

Satyagraha, Gandhi often warned, differs distinctly from passive resistance. He said, unlike passive resistance, Satyagraha precludes hatred, anger, deception, and untruth; it is an expression of the purest Ahimsa or love. Passive resisters, he claimed, often act with the intent of injuring or destroying the opponent, whereas Satyagrahis set out to convert the opponent and turn him into an 'ally'[3]. Satyagraha, Gandhi insisted, is not to be regarded as a passive attitude meant only for individuals aspiring to attain spiritual beatitude. Satyagraha may be effectively used as a method for the establishment of social justice and redress of wrongs[4]. Gandhi argued that any form of oppression and exploitation is often

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Footnotes:-

1. Pyarelal, Private Secretary of Gandhi, Gandhian Techniques In The Modern World, p.9, 1953.

2. Wayne A.R. Leys and P.S.S. Rama Rao, op. cit., p.15.

3. Pyarelal, op. cit., p.10.

4. Ministry of Education, Government of India, Gandhian Outlook, op. cit., p.384.

the result of the oppressed person's own cupidity, ignorance, or fear. Non-violent, non-cooperation, he believed, will eventually force the collapse of any unjust or tyrannous system.

The most outstanding feature of Gandhi's Satyagraha, Pyarelal explained [1], was the fundamental simplicity of its plan. He observed Satyagraha best worked through apparently small and insignificant things. It depended for its potency on its capacity for repetition by large numbers of humble, simple, unsophisticated people. Pyarelal said that Gandhi proved that small "jobs" performed by millions of people together produced results significantly greater than what any individual could achieve or the sum of all individual efforts put together. With this in mind, Gandhi sought for an activity that could be understood and practiced by millions of children, women, illiterate, village folk, and others who are regarded as weak. Pyarelal concluded by noting that he well understood Gandhi's emphasis on the spinning wheel and the phenomenal use to which he put it as a symbol and instrument of non-violent political struggle[2].

In the fall of 1906, Gandhi was presented with the opportunity for putting into practice his newly-formulated principle, Satyagraha. The South African Government had furnished a law which intended to force all Indians over the age of eight to register with the government, be fingerprinted, and carry special identity cards. In

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Footnotes:-

1. This paragraph is based on Pyarelal's observations noted in his book, op. cit., p.14.

2. ibid.

the Empire Theatre of Johannesburg, September 11, 1906, Gandhi took the stand before a gathering of angry Indians to protest against the law. If the law is obeyed, Gandhi exclaimed, the Indian community will be destroyed.

> "There is only one course open to me ... to die but not to submit to the law."[1]

He solemnly vowed before God to resist the unjust law, regardless of the consequences. He had no clear idea of how he was going to resist the law, but one thing was evidently clear - that it would be resisted without violence. The general reaction of the South African Government was (although not specifically related to the above event, this example will suffice):

> "We had a skeleton in our cupboard in the form of what is called the Indian question in South Africa ... His (Gandhi's) method was to break the law ... large numbers of Indians had to be imprisoned for lawless behaviour ... For him (Gandhi) everything went according to plan. For me (General Smuts) the defender of the law and order - there was the usual trying situation, the odium of carrying out a law which had not strong public support, and finally discomfiture when the law had to be repealed."[2]

In its ultimate analysis, the principle of Satyagraha enjoins identification and involvement. The Satyagrahi suffers for truth and justice in his own person, with relish, and does not inflict suffering upon the opponent. Then spiritual identity is established between the Satyagrahi and the opponent. Awakened in the opponent is the feeling

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Footnotes:-

1. Calvin Kytle, Gandhi, Soldier of Nonviolence, p.89, 1969.

2. Ministry of Education, Government of India, Gandhian Outlook, op. cit., p.386.

that he cannot hurt the Satyagrahi without hurting his own personality.

Gandhi frequently practiced the most potent and dangerous form of Satyagraha - fasting. According to Gandhi, individuals may fast for penance or for self-purification, but a fast may also be undertaken to chastize and bring those who are cherished (by the faster) to repentence for wrongdoings. The faster, he warned, cannot address his fast to those who regard him as their enemy[1] since it then represents a form of coercion. A fast may also be used for protesting against obvious injustices or to challenge the conscience of society. The individual who intends to fast for the purpose of Satyagraha cannot be spiritually undisciplined or lazy. He must be earnest, sincere, self-disciplined, and spiritually wide-awake. Gandhi asserted that it is the spiritual content of the fast that gives it potency and not the physical act of fasting[2]. An effective fast, Gandhi held,

> "stirs sluggish consciences and fires loving hearts to action ... Those who have to bring about radical changes in human conditions and surroundings cannot do it except by raising ferment in society. There are only two methods of doing this - violence and non-violence. Non-violent pressure exerted through self-suffering by fasting ... touches and strengthens the moral fibre of those against whom it is directed."[3]

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Footnotes:-

1. Pyarelal, op. cit., p.13.

2. ibid.

3. ibid., pp.18-19.

Satyagraha excludes every form of violence, direct or indirect, veiled or unveiled, and whether in thought, word, or deed. To wish ill to an opponent or to say a harsh word to him or of him with the intention of harming him is breach of Satyagraha. Satyagraha as a technique for social change is worthwhile, as it is gentle and never wounds; it was conceived, by Gandhi, as a complete substitute for violence[1].

In light of these deeply-held convictions, let us now consider Gandhi's approach to the practical problems of India in his day.

D. Gandhi's Social Views and Policies

Gandhi's greatest dream was to establish a classless society. He wanted to recreate a new social order, based on moral and equitable principles. Divisions in society caused by caste, creed, colour, wealth, and power he abhorred. He believed that aims such as universal brotherhood, freedom, justice, and equality for all would help society to realize God.

The struggle for Untouchables, the oppressed of Hindu society, had rivalled the struggle for national independence in Gandhi's heart. The Untouchables were renamed by Gandhi as Harijans, meaning children of God. They were condemned by the caste Hindus for "polluting" society by their mere existence. Many privileges were denied to them - their children were not accepted at school, most Hindu temples were closed to them, they were prohibited from using common cremation

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Footnotes:-

1. R.K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao, The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.168, 1967.

grounds, many were allowed to use their shacks only at night so that, consequently, they became known as the Invisibles.

> "No Hindu could eat in the presence of an Untouchable, drink water drawn from a well by his hands, use utensils that had been soiled by his touch."[1]

To Gandhi, the Harijans represented the exploited and oppressed in Indian society. He was determined to make their cause his. He battled intensely to ameliorate the lowly lot of this depressed class. Eventually, his deep concern compelled him to begin a fast to thwart the political reform which he feared would institutionalize the Harijans' separateness from the rest of Indian society. The fast caused widespread interest. Jawaharlal Nehru, the natural successor of Gandhi, expounded:

> "At first I felt angry with him (Gandhi) at his religious and sentimental approach to a political question and his frequent references to God in connection with it. He even seemed to suggest that God had indicated the very date of the fast. What a terrible example to set! . . . then came the news of a tremendous upheaval all over the country, a magic wave of enthusiasm running through Indian society, and untouchability appeared to be doomed. What a magician, I thought, was this little man in Yervada Prison, and how well he knew to pull the strings that move people's hearts."[2]

Gandhi viewed women as another exploited and oppressed group in Indian society. He believed that evil customs such as purdah[3],

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Footnotes:-

1. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, op. cit., p.112.

2. Jawaharlal Nehru, Toward Freedom, The Autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru, p.237, 1942.

3. Purdah: veil, a custom of women being kept in seclusion.

child marriage, the dowry system, disapprobation of widow remarriages, and the view of a wife as her husband's chattel destroy the full development of womanhood. Gandhi maintained that a woman has as much right "to shape her own destiny[1]" as has a man; he held both men and women are characteristically one, because both live the same life, have the same feelings, and share the same soul. Due to the sheer force of an immoral custom, he remarked, many unworthy men are enjoying superiority over women, which they neither deserve nor should have been allowed by society. Gandhi strongly advocated the equality of men and women in educational, spiritual, and civic matters. During political movement for the liberation of India, he regarded women as highly supportive and excellent co-workers.

In spite of these deeply-held convictions, Gandhi's thought was characterized by a strong traditional streak. His ideal conception of a woman conformed to the traditional orthodox Hindu view that a woman was primarily a mother. Man and woman, he explained, complement each other. In terms of their inherent nature, he held, each should fulfill their obligation.

> "She is passive, he is active. She is essentially mistress of the house. He is the bread-winner. She is the keeper and distributor of the bread. She is the care-taker in every sense of the term. The art of bringing up the infants of the race is her special and sole prerogative." [2]

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Constructive Programme, p.17, 1945.

2. Nirmal Kumar Bose, Selections from Gandhi, p.271, 1959.

Gandhi stated that, whilst both men and women are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in their form there is a vital difference between the two. Hence the vocations of the two, he insisted, must also be different [1]. Yet, it must not be forgotten, he warned, that women are gifted with equal mental capacities and that they have the right to participate in minutest detail in the activities of men; in addition, they have the same right of freedom and liberty as do men [2]. Most movements aimed at raising the status of women were unsuccessful, primarily because of the suppressed condition of Indian women. Gandhi believed:

> "women-power and the source of its strength were neglected." [3]

Gandhi was also desperately anxious to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, and suggested that a state-regulated trusteeship system should be established. Trusteeship, he explained, enables all those endowed with talent to utilize it to earn not only for themselves but also for the good of society. Trustees would voluntarily surrender the bulk of their earnings to the State and the money would be regarded as a trust for the welfare of society. In recognition for services rendered to society, a reasonable rate of commission would be determined by each trustee in consultation with society. Trusteeship for Gandhi does not recognize any right of private ownership of

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid.
2. M.K. Gandhi, Women and Social Injustice, pp.4-5, 1942.
3. Anima Bose, Mahatma Gandhi - A Contemporary Perspective, p.78, 1977.

property except where it is intrinsically necessary for society. During the transitional period, all titles based on absolute ownership Gandhi expected to be willingly relinquished to the State on the basis of trust. He held he could not compel proprietors to part with their wealth or to use it for public benefit[1]. At heart he was unwilling to disturb the status quo with the help of any kind of coercion[2]. Gandhi gave this trusteeship idea religious shape by declaring that if the new basis of ownership was not voluntarily accepted the "weapon" of non-violent, non-cooperation would be brought into play.

Gandhi explains that trusteeship proposes to fix a decent minimum and maximum living wage and to obliterate the excessive income differential between rich and poor in India society. Another feature of trusteeship is the character of production. Under trusteeship, the nature of production, he held, would be determined by social necessity and not by personal whims or greed[3]. Nehru viewed Gandhi's trusteeship idea with antagonism and referred to it as being feudal. Though he himself had favourably embraced poverty and opposed the doctrine of private ownership of property, he declared:

> "I have always been wholly unable to understand how any person can reasonably expect this to happen, or imagine, that therein lies the solution of the social problem."[4]

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Footnotes:-

1. Vishnu Dutt, op. cit., pp.138-139.

2. ibid., p.139.

3. Pyarelal, op. cit., p.29.

4. Nehru in Vishnu Dutt, op. cit., p.137.

However, Gandhi remained basically an idealist. He was well aware of the utopian character of his trusteeship proposal. Even if his ideas appeared impractical, Gandhi wanted them to be regarded as directive principles or points of departure in restructuring the social order.

Gandhi believed that, because all land belongs to the community, all farming should be cooperatively worked.[1] He explained, land ought to be held, tilled, and cultivated collectively. Not only would the owners work in cooperation, he expounded, but also own capital, tools, animal seeds, and other similar needs, collectively.

> "Does it not stand to reason that it is far better for a hundred families in a village to cultivate their lands collectively and divide the income therefrom than to divide the land anyhow into a hundred portions?"[2]

Gandhi conceived cooperative farming would greatly alter the appearance and condition of the land. It would banish all signs of poverty and induce villagers to shed their laziness of body and mind. He believed the cooperative system would secure the availability of veterinary aid for cattle which individual owners could hardly afford. This would help improve the breed. The expense of fodder would also be reduced, as it would either be grown cooperatively or bought cooperatively. The availability of common grazing grounds, or land for exercising the animals, would be similarly advantageous. Both the cattle and the villagers would no longer be cramped for lack of space.

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Co-operative Farming, p.11, Edited by Shinan Farayan, 1959.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, February 15, 1942.

Collective farming, Gandhi claimed, would simplify operations and reduce expenses.

During the 1940s, India was suffering from grave food shortages. Gandhi firmly believed that the first lesson the people of India should learn is that of self-help and self-reliance. He held India is not a small country and does not need to depend for its food supply on outsiders' help. India, he said, is a sub-continent, a country of mighty rivers and a rich variety of agricultural land, with an inexhaustible cattle-wealth[1]. He argued that foodstuffs should be organized around a system of decentralization. Decentralization, he claimed, saves time and money, in transport for example, whereas the movement of grain from station to station makes it liable to be eaten by rodents.

> "This costs the country many millions and deprives it of tons of grain, every ounce of which we badly need."[2]

Gandhi strongly opposed the anarchic individualism of capitalist systems, and the overwhelming concentration of power of other political systems. He desired to create a socio-economic order based on decentralized agriculture and industry. Gandhi highly favoured decentralization and autonomous village communities lodged in natural and healthy surroundings. He believed in the value of simple living and communal harmony.

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, India's Food Problem, p.9, Compiled by R.K. Prabhu, 1960.

2. ibid., p.11.

The exploitation of nature for quick profits, Gandhi observed, has caused serious problems - soil erosion and impairment of soil fertility. He insisted on returning from an economy of exploitation to an economy of conservation[1]. In fact, he proposed a system whereby a large concentration of population could be maintained on the soil indefinitely. He was confident the population would live in health and reasonable comfort without impairing soil fertility[2]. The system encouraged intensive, small-scale, diversified farming and Gandhi believed that collective efforts would achieve the highest results. As ancillary to agriculture, he recommended the development of cottage crafts. An interesting feature of his system was the cattle-based economy. He explained that, by returning to the soil in organic form whatever has been taken out of it, the health and fertility of the soil would be fully maintained. The excreta of animals and human beings mixed with refuse, he held, could be turned into "golden" manure - a valuable commodity. Gandhi claimed even the urine passed by cattle is valuable manurial matter[3]. This organic manure, he declared, never impoverishes but ever enriches the soil. It increases the productivity of the soil; it increases manifold the total yield of grains and pulses, and enables India to save millions of rupees[4]. He

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Footnotes:-

1. Pyarelal, op. cit., p.39.

2. ibid.

3. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, August 17, 1935.

4. Rupee: the monetary unit of India; the exchange value of one dollar is seven to eight rupees.

added, the judicious use of waste would keep the surroundings clean. Cleanliness, he held, not only promotes health but is next to Godliness[1]. Essentially, in Gandhi's system, the economy of conservation enjoins the proper balance and relationship between animal, human, and plant life.

Gandhi regarded labour as superior to capital, but his intention was not to incite labour against capital. He wanted a healthy marriage to exist between the two. Gandhi had no qualms about industrialization or increasing mechanization. He opposed such technological advancements only if they contributed to the displacement of human labour and creation of rising unemployment. Eventually, he believed, this led to the exploitation of the have-nots by the haves and of one country by another. An ever-increasing dependence of man on machines[2], he believed, would then be inevitable. In addition, a growth of materialism and the multiplication of insatiable wants which turn human beings into brutes would result.

Gandhi feared the creation of a gulf between the cities and villages resulting in the exploitation of the latter[3]. In essence, Gandhi desired an Independent India with a limited number of machines manufacturing according to social necessity in the state-controlled factories.

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, December 28, 1947.

2. S.P. Chaube, op. cit., pp.133-134.

3. D.S. Sethi, Gandhi Today, p.9, 1978.

> "'I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all, I want the concentration of wealth not in the hands of the few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the back of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might ... I am aiming, not at eradication of all machinery, but limitation ... The supreme consideration is man."[1]

Throughout his life, Gandhi encouraged the people of India to use home-made things to the exclusion of foreign commodities. He was determined to protect those home-industries without which India would become pauperized[2]. He explained that one should not serve one's distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. His attitude was not meant to be vindictive or punitive. One should buy, he expounded, from every part of the world whatever is needed for one's growth. However, he advised, anything that interferes with one's growth or injures any one of the millions of India inhabitants, whom Nature has made one's first care, must not be purchased from anywhere or anybody. He declared it would be sinful for one to refuse to buy cloth spun and woven by the needy millions of India and to buy foreign cloth even though it may be far superior in quality to the Indian hand-spun. Gandhi insisted that we must dedicate ourselves to the service of our immediate neighbours. This does not mean exclusion of, or even sacrifice of, the interests of the rest. He declared that it would not result in disservice to those far away in distant lands.

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, November 13, 1924.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, June 17, 1926.

> " ... a man who allows himself to be lured by the distant scene, and runs to the ends of the earth for service, is not only foiled in his ambition, but also fails in his duty towards his neighbour ..." [1]

Gandhi never advocated the rejection of foreign manufactured goods merely because they were alien. However, he was opposed to those who persist on needlessly wasting the country's time, money, and energy by manufacturing commodities not suited to India's strengths and weaknesses. He explained that any item which contributes to the interests of Indians, yet requires foreign capital and talent, is acceptable, if it is placed under effective Indian control. Gandhi stood for selfless service which he believed has its roots in the purest ahimsa or love.

Having thus considered Gandhi's philosophy of life and his social principles, let us now examine how education fitted into his general scheme for the regeneration of India.

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Footnotes:-

1. R.K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao, op. cit., pp.413-414.

CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATIONAL THEORY

A. Contributing Factors

(i) The European Style Of Education Developed Under The British

What urged Gandhi to formulate and announce his educational thoughts on a national scale? The answer lies in his abhorrence of the British system of education imposed upon India[1]. The alien educational system implanted in India by the British had numerous drawbacks and shortcomings. Before considering the fundamental features of British-India education, let us begin with a brief review of education in India before 1813.

Before the British arrived in India, vast numbers in society were dominated by medieval traditions, and religion was heavily laden with rituals, superstition, and idolatry. No elaborate organizational system existed. Indian society was highly stratified, inegalitarian, and hierarchical. The highest ranking group of the hierarchical order was represented by such persons as the feudal lords, their dependents, members of the higher castes, prosperous farmers, merchants, and moneylenders[2]. The masses were generally destitute and socially and economically deprived. No schools organized and supported by the

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Footnotes:-

1. William Cenker, op. cit., p.100.

2. J.P. Naik, Equality, Quality and Quantity, The Elusive Triangle Of Indian Education, p.1, 1975.

State existed and the entire educational effort was represented by a small formal sector and a large non-formal sector[1].

The small formal sector consisted of the "madrasahs"[2] and the "pathashalas"[3] (these were institutions of higher learning), as well as elementary schools. All elementary schools were attached to a holy place. Children could be admitted to these schools at any age, starting from four years, four months, or even four days[4]. The rote learning method was employed in these schools and religion was the basis of all instruction (reading, writing, and simple arithmetic). Students could enter the madrasahs and patashalas only after completing the course of study provided by the elementary schools[5]. These post-secondary institutions were also closely bound to religion and were considered an important means of propagating religion. Their curriculum included grammar, rhetoric, logic, theology, metaphysics, literature, and science. The lecture method was used for instruction[6]. All expenses incurred by these educational institutions were met by the rulers and the wealthy[7], and students of these instit-

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Footnotes:-

1. Non-Formal Sector: all education outside the formal sector.
2. Madrasahs: of the Muslims.
3. Pathashalas: of the Hindus.
4. T.M. Thomas, Indian Educational Reforms in Cultural Perspective, p.81, 1970.
5. ibid.
6. ibid.
7. B.P. Johari and P.D. Pathak, An Outline of Indian Education, pp.79-86, 1963.

utions enjoyed high social status, as they were primarily the sons of the upper and middle classes. In sum, the small formal sector was traditionally oriented and admitted about four percent of the total population[1].

The large non-formal sector provided education for the masses. Naik, an eminent Indian educator, explained that the large masses of people:

> " ... were socialized in the culture and value-system of the caste or the class to which they belonged by the family itself. THey also acquired the vocational education they needed through a non-formal apprenticeship in the family or under a relation or a friend. The girls learned home-making and child rearing ... by assisting their mothers or other elderly women of the family, both before and after marriage... The only liberal education the masses received was again of a non-formal character and consisted mostly of orientation to religion and culture through discourses built round temples, mosques, religious festivals and ceremonies." [2]

The objective of both sectors was to educate individuals to their pre-determined standing in society[3] and not to promote vertical mobility. Access to education, the type and extent of education were determined by an individual's social status. In short, a fairly effective indigenous educational system existed before the British

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Footnotes:-

1. J.P. Naik, op. cit., p.2.

2. J.P. Naik, op. cit., p.2.

3. This was based on caste, political or economic power, sex or occupation.

infiltration into India. In spite of its limited, unequal, and inegalitarian nature, very little social dissatisfaction was expressed or felt by the people, because those few who were respected for their learning, teachers for example, received meagre wages and had simple, natural, and unornate lifestyles. Moreover, privileges bestowed upon students who were the products of the formal educational sector were limited. The public invested only marginally in the small formal sector and, thus, no group (teachers or students) was large enough to become a powerful social entity.

Church missionaries (for example, Roman Catholics in Goa, 16th Century; the Protestant English Mission at Madras, 1727; the Baptist Mission at Serampore, 1793; the London Missionary Society in South India and Bengal, 1804)[1] represented the first European efforts to educate the idigenes. The Portuguese missionaries took the initiative for imparting elementary and higher education in certain parts of India. They taught a wide curriculum, which included Portuguese, local language, Latin, crafts, agriculture, arithmetic, music, and the Roman Catholic religion. They even introduced printing in India in 1556[2]. The chief purpose of the Dutch in India was strictly commercial. However, a sizable staff of Dutch missionaries wandered around the country attempting to convert Roman Catholics into Protestants. French missionaries succeeded in establishing numerous

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Footnotes:-

1. T.W.G. Miller, Education in South-East Asia, p.74, footnote No. 4, 1968.

2. S.N. Mukerji, History of Education in India, pp.14-16, 1951.

elementary and secondary schools in the places they ruled. The French went to India with the intent of building up an empire in India and of expelling their English rivals. The British, however, succeeded in overthrowing them. The missionaries from Denmark established charity schools in various parts of the country and imparted instruction in the local languages. In 1716, the Dane missionaries opened a teacher-training institution where they taught in English. In addition, these missionaries were responsible for the publication of many books, including a dictionary of Tamil, the language of Madras[1].

With the renewal of the East India Company's Charter[2] in 1813, education became a State responsibility. This was a turning point in the history of Indian education. A new clause was added to the Act:

> "that a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned native of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitant of the British territories in India."[3]

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Footnotes:-

1. This paragraph was based on T.M. Thomas, op. cit., pp.83-84.

2. The East India Company was established in 1600. Queen Elizabeth granted it a Charter to trade with India and the East. Trade was the Company's main objective. The Company became a strong political power in India because of its rivalry with other traders. Before 1813, it paid little attention to education or missionary work.

3. A.N. Basu, Indian Education in Parliamentary Paper, Part 1, p.148, 1952. N.B. Lakh - 100,000 rupees.

The Charter Act of 1813 empowered missionaries to go to India and spread education there[1]. Indians were impressed by their efforts, and, consequently, numerous State and private educational organizations began to rapidly increase throughout the country[2].

To enhance their colonial and imperialistic intentions, the British administrators provided India with a framework for a modern educational system. In addition, they eliminated certain inegalitarian features of the traditional educational system and made many major and positive contributions to advancing equality in education. They granted open access to all citizens, irrespective of caste, sex, or traditional taboos, to any educational institution supported by public funds. Consequently, all persons, including non-Brahmins and non-Hindus, now possessed the right to seek admission to any Sanskrit colleage to study Sanskrit[3] and the sacred texts. In 1882, the Indian Education Commission, under the presidentship of Sir William Hunter, recommended the spreading of education among girls in all possible ways. Furthermore, the children of Harijans were admitted and given access to the government school system. Education was thus launched upon a course by the British, from which India benefited greatly. Yet, at the same time, she suffered grievously in certain aspects[4]. Let us discuss the reasons for the latter.

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Footnotes:-

1. Shiv Kumar Saini, Development of Education in India, Socio-Economic and Political Perspectives, p.37, 1980.

2. ibid.

3. Sanskrit: the classical literary language of ancient India.

4. T.W.G. Miller, op. cit., p.75.

The Charter Act of 1813 was somewhat vague in places and gave rise to violent controversies. From the cultural point of view, there were three schools of thought. The first, the Orientalist view, favoured the promotion of the ancient Hindu and Muslim literatures - Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian. The second, the Occidentalist view, favoured the substitution of Western literature and culture in place of the Indian[1].

Lord Macaulay, President of the Committee of Public Instruction, 1835, professed an open contempt for everything oriental. He held:

> "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." [2]

He wanted to instill Western values in Indians and create

> "a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect." [3]

The third view advocated a fusion of the best in both the Oriental and Occidental cultures[4]. This school of thought wanted Western literature and culture imported through the modern Indian languages. From the political perspective, the British advocated the education of Indians for three specific purposes: to secure the

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Footnotes:-

1. I.B. Verma, op. cit., p.3.
2. Macaulay in K.S. Vakil, Education in India, p.101, 1940.
3. Macaulay in Percival Spear, India: A Modern History, p.257, 1961.
4. I.B. Verma, op. cit., p.3.

confidence and loyalty of the upper classes; to train Indians for the subservient chores of the East India Company; and, allied closely to the above two aims was the need of having honest servants, thus to raise their moral and ethical standards. The controversies were settled when Macaulay presented a lengthy minute to the Governor General's Executive Council on February 2, 1835. Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General, accepted the arguments advanced by Macaulay in support of his view. He agreed with Macaulay's conclusion that "literature" could only mean English literature and "knowledge" only Western knowledge[1].

In his Resolution of March 7, 1935, Bentinck issued the following orders:

1. "... That the great object of the British Government ought to be promotion of European literature and science amongst the natives of India." [2]

2. "That while the colleges of oriental learning were not to be abolished, the practice of supporting their students during their period of education was to be discontinued." [3]

3. "That Government Funds were not to be spent on the printing of oriental works." [4]

4. "... that all funds...at the disposal of the Committee be henceforth employed in importing to the Indians a knowledge of English litera-

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid.

2. B.D. Bhatt and J.C. Aggarwal, op. cit., "Resolution of 7th March, 1835", p.4.

3. ibid.

4. ibid., p.5.

> ture and science through the medium of the English language."[1]

The Resolution gave Indian educational policy a definite form. It determined the aim, means, and medium of education in India. The traditional Indian system of education suddenly became irrelevant. A new system was implanted without realizing:

> "if civilization is to be transplanted and raised in a foreign soil, it must be from seed rather than cuttings and in any case not by the importance of full-grown products."[2]

Macaulay and other British administrators felt education should be provided to only the higher strata of society[3]. The idea was based on the "Downward Filtration Theory of Education". This theory assumes that education eventually permeates the masses from above:

> "Drop by drop from the Himalayas of Indian life useful information was to trickle downwards, forming in time a broad and stately stream to irrigate the thirsty plains."[4]

The upper and educated classes showed no great desire or concern to pass on their learning to the poor classes. They were more concerned with sustaining and buttressing their own privileged status.

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Footnotes:-

1. B.D. Bhatt and J.C. Aggarwal, op. cit., p.5.

2. A. Mayhew, The Education of India, p.55, 1928.

3. On July 31, 1937, Macaulay wrote:
   "We do not at present aim at giving education directly to the lower classes of the people of this country. We aim at raising up an educated class who will thereafter, as we hope, by the means of diffusing among their countrymen detain some portion of the knowledge we have imparted to them."
   Macaulay's minute quoted by Shiv Kumar Saini, op. cit., p.43.

4. Arthur Mayhew, The Education in India, p.92, 1936.

This theory contributed to the creation of a class of people who began to feel strange in their own country. They began to regard themselves as aliens in their own motherland. However, Macaulay's plan to replace Indian culture with a Western cultural variety gained immense popularity, especially among the young men and women of India. The theory proved quite ineffectual and futile.

The overriding importance given to English education caused many serious problems in India. The ordinary student was often lost in a jungle of bewildering words, tricky phrases, and a variety of idioms. The government's failure to develop and enrich the Indian language made culture and education the monopoly of the microscopic English-educated minority[1]. In an attempt to create a counterpart of the public schools of England in India, the British not only organized but also encouraged the organization of private fee charging schools[2]. High standards and a link with privilege were maintained. In 1844, Lord Hardinge issued a proclamation that for employment in public offices, preference should be given primarily to those who were educated in English schools. Education, thus, had the limited objective of preparing pupils for government service, rather than for life. Knowledge imparted in these schools became a passport for salaried employment and entrance into government service[3].

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Footnotes:-

1. T.W.G. Miller, op. cit., p.76.

2. J.P. Naik, op. cit., p.10.

3. Ministry of Education, Government of India, Report of the Secondary Education Commission, p.10, 1952-1953.

The educational aims formulated by the British administrators were many and highly varied. Warren Hastings wanted political conciliation. The Charter Act of 1813 aimed at winning the confidence of the upper and learned classes. Sir Charles Wood's Education Despatch of 1854 aimed at bringing about the moral and intellectual development of Indians as envisaged by the British. The Indian Education Commission of 1882 was appointed to enquire into the working of the existing educational policy. Lord Curzon intended to correct some of the inherent defects of the Indian intellect[1]. The credit of an all-round development in education between the years 1913 and 1921 can largely be claimed by the Educational Resolution of 1913. All these educational aims were closely allied to the narrow utilitarian purposes of the British in India. Training for citizenship, self-government, or for vocational efficiency was never expressed, encouraged, or executed.

The introduction of European cultures, therefore, led to results both constructive and destructive. While Western education was helpful and perhaps necessary for India, the process adopted did immeasurable harm. Partial assimilation did eventually take place with favourable results, but at a cumbersome cost. In a column of his weekly publication, Young India, under the heading "English Education", Gandhi wrote:

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Footnotes:-

1. Government of India, Government Resolution on Educational Policy, paragraph 20, 1904.

> "India today is poorer than fifty years ago, less able to defend herself, and her children have less stamina. I need not be told that this is due to the defect in the system of government. The system of education is its most defective part.
>
> It was conceived and born in error, for the English rulers honestly believed the indigenous system to be worse than useless. It has been nurtured in sin, for the tendency has been to dwarf the Indian body, mind, and soul."[1]

(ii) His Experiences and Experimentation in South Africa and India

Gandhi's educational ideas emerged from many years of experience and experimentation in South Africa and India. His utter dissatisfaction of the then prevailing system of British education led him to discover an authentic educational system by personal experience. He began by imposing his educational "fads" upon his wife, Kasturbai, and his four sons in his own home at Durban, 1897. Three of his four sons never attended a public school. They received their education solely from their father. The fourth and oldest son broke away from Gandhi's teachings and left home to attend high school in Ahmedabad. However, Gandhi's fundamental educational ideas first began to take shape with the founding of the Phoenix settlement[2] in November 1904. There he practiced an austere and egalitarian life-style. He began earnest ascetical training and experimentation in

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, April 4, 1921.

2. The Phoenix Settlement was established in a place fourteen miles away from Durban the capital of Natal.

fasting, chastity, and dietetics[1]. In the course of time, the Indians' struggle for civil rights in South Africa had stepped up. Large numbers of men and women courted imprisonment. Family members were removed or displaced. The whole life of the Indian community was dislocated. To restore order and to prepare the community for a regulated life, Gandhi found a suitable place to house a co-operative community[2]. On May 30, 1910, he founded the Tolstoy Farm of about 1,100 acres at a place named Lawley, twenty-one miles from Johannesburg. It was donated by Mr. Kallenbach, a German comrade of Gandhi. The farm had about one-thousand fruit-bearing trees on its land and, in addition, a small house which could accommodate about six persons. The water supply came from two wells and a nearby spring. Gandhi employed no servants of any kind for farming operations, building work, or household chores, and all work from cooking to scavenging was shared amongst the various members of the colony. Men and women resided separately in two separate rows each at some distance from the other[3]. Smoking and drinking were prohibited and strict rules on vegetarianism were imposed. Having provided the basic comforts, Gandhi erected a school house.

School was held only in the afternoons because of the large amount of work involved in maintaining the farm. Gandhi and Kallenbach were the principal teachers and Kallenbach assisted Gandhi

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Footnotes:-

1. William Cenker, op. cit., p.117.

2. Nirmal Kumar Bose, Gandhism and Modern India, p.30, 1970.

3. T.S. Avinashilmgan, Gandhiji's Experiments in Education, Ministry of Education, p.5, 1960.

in integrating manual work and education. He went to a Trappist monastery to observe the integration of work and prayer in the lives of the monks. During his stay with the monks, Kallenbach learned the craft of sandal-making. Gandhi learned this art from him and taught it to those on the Farm who were prepared to learn it. The students spoke three different languages, Gujarati, Telegu, and Tamil, and Gandhi considered making these languages the medium of instruction. The classes were largely heterogeneous, consisting of students of both sexes, and of all ages ranging from seven years to young men of twenty and young girls of twelve or thirteen. Gandhi brought all students into mutual contact and cultivated a spirit of friendship and service. Priority was given to the culture of the heart or the building of characters. Gandhi felt confident that moral training could be given to all alike no matter how different their ages and their upbringing. Students built up their physiques by engaging in the work on the farm digging pits, felling timber, cooking, lifting loads, and so on. Fresh air, clean water, regular hours for eating and sleeping, and physical work were responsible for the good health and scarce illness on the Farm.

Like the Phoenix Settlement, the Tolstoy Farm soon became an autonomous, self-sustaining community. It was at this time that Gandhi perceived that education should be the special task of parents with the minimum of outside help. He viewed himself as the father of the Tolstoy Farm and, in this role, he took upon himself the task of

education[1]. In his autobiography, he noted that his experience to this point[2] had firmly implanted in his mind the two principal tenets of his future educational theory, namely that education consisted in character building and imparting a useful manual vocation[3].

In 1914, when Gandhi was preparing to leave South Africa, he decided to invite any settler who wished to go to India to accompany him. He had the idea of founding a new institution in India for those who went there with him. He desired to continue in India the community life that commenced at Phoenix and Tolstoy Farms. On May 25, 1915, Gandhi founded the Sabramati Ashram in his home town of Gujarat. This Ashram was Gandhi's home for the next twenty years. From the very beginning of his Indian experience, Gandhi viewed the imparting of such education as is conducive to national welfare as an activity of the Ashram. The Ashram set out to remedy what Gandhi thought were defects in India's national life[4]. Principles such as character formation, teachers as examples of truth as ahimsa, education conducive to the welfare of the villages, the fusion of manual training with intellectual development were better articulated and advocated at the Sabaramati Ashram. The daily routine of the Ashram was as follows:

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Footnotes:-

1. William Cenker, op. cit., pp.118-119.

2. At Tolstoy Farm.

3. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, op. cit., pp.333-335.

4. For example, eradication of untouchability from Hindu society, emancipation of women from bonds of custom, elimination of caste systems.

4:00		a.m.	Rising from bed
4:15	to 4:45	a.m.	Morning prayer
5:00	to 6:10	a.m.	Bath, Exercise, Study
6:10	to 6:30	a.m.	Breakfast
6:30	to 7:00	a.m.	Women's prayer class
7:00	to 10:30	a.m.	Body labour, Education and Sanitation
10:45	to 11:15	a.m.	Dinner
11:15	to 12:00	a.m.	Rest
12:00	to 4:30	p.m.	Body labour, including classes
4:30	to 5:30	p.m.	Recreation
5:30	to 6:00	p.m.	Supper
6:00	to 7:00	p.m.	Recreation
7:00	to 7:30	p.m.	Common Worship
7:30	to 9:00	p.m.	Recreation
9:00		p.m.	Retiring Bell

Note: These hours were subject to change whenever necessary[1].

At the height of the non-cooperation movement in India, in 1921, thousands of students from all over the country left their colleges and schools. National schools and colleges were immediately established on the basis of Gandhi's perception of education. The Gujarat Vidyapith was established as a national university and stood out prominently because it was situated in Ahmedabad, where Gandhi could take considerable interest in it. Students were trained primarily in regard to character and ability to conduct Swaraj in the villages[2]. Gandhi identified education at this time with Swaraj:

> "We shall be fit for Swaraj to the extent that we are successful among our students. Work with students is the only instrument with which to fashion Swaraj."[3]

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Footnotes:-

1. Daily routine taken from M.K. Gandhi, Ashram Observances in Action, pp.123-124, 1955.

2. Swaraj: at first meant to Gandhi, Home Rule later self-rule.

3. M.K. Gandhi, To The Students, p.54, 1949.

Gandhi was convinced that, as long as India was not prepared to sacrifice the British style of education that it was receiving, it would be impossible to achieve freedom for India[1]. He wanted education to provide villagers with a sense of independence and identity,

> "a sense that their destiny was in their hands."[2]

The emphasis of the Gujarat Vidyapith was on service in the villages. Regardless of the higher emoluments which the students could get by working for the Government or other services in the cities, millions of villagers took to the spinning wheel, hand-weaving, and other cottage industries. In addition, they augmented their income, and thus led fuller lives. A form of adult education had taken place throughout the countryside; a new spirit, a new confidence and strength were instilled into the atmosphere of villages[3]. In short:

> "These institutions which sprang during the Non-cooperation Movement served a definite purpose in the national life of the country. Those who joined these schools were dedicated souls who were fired with the mission of service to the country. The difficult work of living and raising the level of life amongst the poor and downtrodden in the country, such as Khadi, village industries,

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, The Problem of Education, p.14, 1962.

2. William Cenker, op. cit., p.120.

3. T.S. Avinashilingam, op. cit., pp.44-45.

> and removal of untouchability found recruits in a large measure from the products of these schools." [1]

The Satyagraha Ashram at Sevagram near Wardha in Centra India was the last Ashram Gandhi established. It was founded in 1932. During his remaining years, Gandhi made this Ashram his home. All the principles and ideas that he had developed in his farms, ashrams, and education were further practiced at the Satyagraha Ashram. This Ashram became Gandhi's prime model of non-violent life in India. It was the fullest expression of his vision and praxis in education. He saw it as the place where his ideals could be worked out in a real and pragmatic manner[2]. The Gandhian Ashram signified a:

> "community of men in religion, where gradually evolved the concept of a spiritual community within ashram life." [3]

(iii) The Distinguished Writers: Rajachandra, Tolstoy, and Ruskin

The development of Gandhi's educational theory and praxis was greatly influenced by the great intellect and writings of three distinguished personalities: Rajachandra, the Gujarati poet and philosopher; Leo Tolstoy, Russian author of the epic novel War and Peace and remarkable book The Kingdom of God is Within You; and

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid., p.44.

2. William Cenker, op. cit., pp.120-121.

3. M.K. Gandhi, Ashram Observance In Action, p.3, 1955.

John Ruskin, the Newdigate Prize Winner, Professor of Art, Economics and Morals and author of the famous book Unto this Last.

Rajachandra, in Gandhi's mind, was "a man of great character and learning"[1], apostle of truth and non-violence. Gandhi's philosophy of truth and non-violence, and his educational theory which springs out of non-violence, were essentially based on and shaped by the teaching of Rajachandra[2]. Gandhi confessed that no one else had ever made such an impression on him as Rajachandra had.

> "His intellect compelled as great a regard from me as his moral earnestness, and deep down in me was the conviction that he would never willingly lead me astray and would always confide to me his innermost thoughts. In my moments of spiritual crisis, therefore, he was my refuge."[3]

The liberal and profound thoughts of Tolstoy also made a deep impression on Gandhi[4]. Having read Tolstoy's The Kingdom of God Is Within You, The Gospels In Brief, and What Then Shall We Do?, Gandhi acknowledged that he:

> "began to realize more and more the infinite possibilities of universal love."[5]

Long before Tolstoy wrote his novel War and Peace, he expressed his disapproval of war in his stories, The Raid, and

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, op. cit., p.112.
2. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.65, 1939.
3. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, op. cit., p.113.
4. ibid., p.172.
5. ibid., p.198.

Sevastopole. Further, Tolstoy devoted himself, between 1878 and 1884, to a study of religions. Jesus Christ's motto, "Resist not him that is evil", left a deep impression upon Tolstoy's mind. Eventually, "resist not evil" and non-violence became a permanent part of Gandhi's vocabulary. The Gospel of Love was assigned to a high place of honour in his educational theory. The teachings of Tolstoy led Gandhi to the genesis of his educational thesis that education should be imparted through some craftwork or industry, and that:

> "education without the use of one's hands and feet would atrophy the brains." [1]

Gandhi was also profoundly influenced by Ruskin's Unto This Last. About this book Gandhi observed:

> "This was the first book of Ruskin's I had ever read..... It brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life.... I translated it later into Gujarati entitling it "Sarvadaya" (the welfare of all). The teaching of Unto This Last I understood to be:
>
> (a) That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
>
> (b) That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
>
> (c) That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicrafts-man, is the life worth living.
>
> (d) The first of these I know. The second I had dimly realized. The third had never occurred to me. Unto This Last made it as clear as daylight for me that the second and

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Footnotes:-

1. R.S. Maini, op. cit., p.51, 1964.

> third were contained in the first. I arose with the dawn, ready to reduce these principles to practice."[1]

Mahadev Desai comments on Ruskin's Unto This Last and its influence on Gandhi's educational theory as follows:

> "Ruskin's Unto This Last, ... contained the germ of ..... Gandhiji's proposition..... He talks of training schools for boys, which should be connected with "manufactories and workshops", and suggests that any man or woman or boy or girl out of employment should be at once received at the nearest school and set to such work as it appeared, on trial, they were fit for a fixed rate of wages determinable every year, ...Their (the schools) economy of labour would be pure gain and that too large to be presently calculated." [2]

A multitude of factors, therefore, contributed to the evolution and development of Gandhi's educational theory and praxis. Those that exerted the greatest influence upon his mind were: the alien educational system imposed upon India; the many years of experience and experimentation in the field of education in South Africa and India; and the formative influences of Rajachandra, Tolstoy, and Ruskin in the matter of religion, manual labour, and the self-supporting aspect of education. In the light of these influences and of Gandhi's basic philosophy of life, social view, and policies, let us now proceed to a detailed examination of his educational concepts.

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, op. cit., p.365.

2. M.S. Patel, The Educational Philosophy of Mahatama Gandhi, p.86, 1953.

B. Educational Concepts

(i) True Education

Gandhi believed that the basis for a true education rests on the culture of the heart, ethical training, and the building of character.

By education, he meant:

> "an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man - body, mind, and spirit."[1]

The true education of the intellect, he held, could only come through the power, exercise, and training of all the bodily organs. He declared that, unless the mind and body developed simultaneously with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would be an unbalanced occurrence[2]. The all-round development of the mind thus proceeds in accordance with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the individual. A proper and harmonious combination of all three components constitutes an indivisible whole or the true economics of education:

> "Man is neither mere intellect nor the gross animal body nor the heart soul alone."[3]

(ii) Rejection of Literary Education

From the dawn of civilization to modern times, Gandhi believed, all the ills of India's educational system could be traced

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, July 31, 1937.
2. M.K. Gandhi, True Education, p.59, 1962.
3. M.K. Gandhi, Basic Education, p.14; 1951.

to the unjust emphasis on one or more aspects of education and neglect of others. He noticed that the education during his time promoted intellectual training to the neglect of other faculties of the student. He believed that greater emphasis ought to be placed on the three H's (Hand, Head, and Heart) than on the three R's (Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic)[1]. According to him, literacy should never be considered the end of education, nor even the beginning. He explained it is merely one of the means by which man and woman could be educated:

> "Literacy in itself is no education." [2]

Gandhi regarded unsophisticated peasants who understand and observe the rules of morality as better citizens than the literate person attending western-type schools[3]. By "literary training at a modern school", Gandhi meant the possession of information on various matters attained through th eprocess of reading and writing, and the capacity to follow logical or pseudological controversy. He, therefore, considered literacy:

> "only as a symbolical representation both of knowledge and of accomplished ignorance."[4]

As we observed earlier, an important aim of the British system of education was to prepare young men and women for government

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Footnotes:-

1. M.S. Patel, op. cit., p.32.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, July 31, 1937.

3. M.K. Gandhi, Towards New Education, p.3, 1953.

4. M.S. Patel, op. cit., p.17.

clerical service. Western education, thus, laid almost exclusive emphasis upon literary education. Unfortunately, Gandhi remarked, science, technology, and practical education were overlooked[1]. Furthermore, he stated, India found itself economically handicapped for want of professional, industrial, and vocational education. A "Report On Indian Constitutional Reforms" stated:

> "her colleges turn out numbers of young men qualified for government clerkships while the real interests of the country require, for example, doctors and engineers in excess of the existing supply."[2]

For the cultivator and the craftsman, literary education was unpractical, since it tended to alienate their children from their work and surroundings. In addition, Gandhi held, it did not necessarily educate them for anything better[3]. He believed education is for life and through life and he did not want it to be viewed in the parochial sense of a formal classroom setting. He wanted it to be viewed in the broad and true sense of a life-long process which commences with the beginning and terminates with the end of the life going on continually and eternally[4].

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Footnotes:-

1. Kalulal Shrimali agreed with Gandhi in his book, The Wardha Scheme, The Gandhian Plan of Education For Rural India, p.19, 1949.

2. Report On Indian Constitutional Reforms (presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of His Majesty), p.150, 1918.

3. Visvesrarya, expresses this view in his book, Reconstructing India, p.258, 1920.

4. V.R. Taneja, op. cit., p.178.

Like most educators, regardless of their educational philosophy, Gandhi attached great importance to knowledge as the indispensable means for achieving educational goals. He believed knowledge is associated with the culture and the head or thinking and not with that which is attained through books - "bookish knowledge". Gandhi was against making a fetish of literary training as the only means of training the intellect and character. He said:

> "..... literary training, by itself, does not add an inch to one's moral height and that character building is independent of literary training." [1]

Knowledge for the sake of knowledge, he explained, merely makes education academic and bookish. It becomes unnatural and inanimate. Soon it becomes dominated by examinations, textbooks, recitation, and cramming[2]. Gandhi claimed that by packing illassorted and unwanted bookish knowledge into the heads of students, all their originality is eventually crushed by the dead weight[3] and that a student's understanding cannot be enhanced by making his brain a storehouse for crammed facts. Rousseau rightly remarked:

> "Give your scholar no verbal lessons: he should be taught by experience alone."[4]

Kripalani, another supporter of this viewpoint, said:

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, June 1, 1921.

2. I.B. Verma, op. cit., p.102.

3. M.K. Gandhi, Towards New Education, p.50, 1953.

4. J.J. Rousseau, Emile and Education, p.56, 1925.

> "From Bacon, Montaignue, John Locke, 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."[1]

(iii) The Role of Vocational Education

Gandhi's personal philosophy, coupled with the prevailing condition of human beings in a rapidly industrializing civilization, and the folly of bookish knowledge, inspired him to recommend manual and vocational training as the basis of education. He desired creative and constructive manual labour to be the content of education and also the technique of teaching. For Gandhi, the word "craft" was symbolic of creative manual labour. Through craftwork, he hoped to synthesize the social and physical environments of the students[2]. He reckoned that, by learning an artisan's work in a scientific manner, the student's intellect would develop more rapidly. In his Ashrams, Gandhi experimented with training in handicrafts and concluded:

> ". . . . not vocation cum literary training, but literary training through vocational training was the thing."[3]

Essentially, Gandhi was referring to the synthesis between vocation and education.

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Footnotes:-

1. J.B. Kripalani, The Latest Fad, p.31, 1948.

2. A.B. Solanki, The Technique of Correlation in Basic Education, p.36, 1958.

3. M.K. Gandhi, Basic Education, p.9, 1951.

To attain the highest development of the body, mind, and soul, Gandhi advised that the chosen handicraft must possess rich educative possibilities. The handicraft, thus, had to suit his educational goals and the aims of his personal philosophy. He was opposed to teaching the craft as only one of the many subjects of instruction. Gandhi wished to impart the whole process of education through some craft or industry.

Out of the numerous available handicrafts, Gandhi gave first preference to the Takli[1]. One of the reasons for why he chose this particular craft was because it was one of the first crafts Indians had discovered and it had subsisted through the ages. The Indian man's inventive genius reached a height that had never been reached before when the takli was devised and invented. Gandhi perceived takli spinning as an industry which could employ an unlimited number of people with a minimum of outlay. In addition, it was endowed with all the natural advantages of raw material. Also, it could be used as a powerful defence to protect the villagers from economic exploitation by foreign countries and big industrialists. Through this handicraft, Gandhi was certain that he could impart to his students, and eventually to the entire society, a cosmos of knowledge beginning with a brief course in Indian history, specifically referring to the decline and decay of the takli:

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Footnotes:-

1. Takli: spindle used in spinning with the fingers without use of the spinning wheels.

> ".....starting from the East India Company, or even earlier from the Muslim period, giving them a detailed account of the exploitation that was stock-in-trade of the East India Company, how by a systematic process our main handicraft was strangled and ultimately killed."[1]

A brief course on mechanics, focusing on the construction of the takli, would find:

> "It must have originally consisted of a small ball of clay or even wet flour dried on a bamboo splinter running through its centre. This has still survived in some parts of Bihar and Bengal. Then a brick disk took the place of the clay ball, and then in our times iron, or steel and brass have taken the place of the brick disk and a steel wire the place of the splinter. Even here one might expatiate with profit on the size of the disk, and the wire, why it is of a particular size and why not more or less."[2]

Furthermore, Gandhi believed some lectures on cotton could be added to the curriculum, concentrating on features such as its habitat, its varieties, the provinces of India in which it is or was grown, how it is cultivated, and in which type of soil. Gandhi explained:

> "The whole of elementary arithmetic can be taught through the counting of yards of spinning, finding out the count of yarn, making up hunks, getting it ready for the weavers, the number of cross threads in the warp to be put in particular textures of cloth . . . Every process from the growing of cotton to the manufacture of the finished product - cotton picking, ginning, carding,

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Basic Education, p.10, 1951.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Basic Education, p.11, 1951.

> spinning, sizing, weaving - all would have their mechanics and history and mathematics correlated to them."[1]

The major reason for teaching the handicraft, Gandhi expounded, is for developing the students' intellect and not for mechanical production. Also, the vocational and manual training is not meant for producing items to be placed in a school museum and which have no value. On the contrary, marketable items, he said, should be produced and manufactured. Students were expected to indulge in this exercise or educational process only because it stimulated their intellect and supposedly excited them[2]. However, Gandhi insisted, students must not be compelled to indulge in the manufacture and production of marketable articles. Commenting on this aspect of Gandhi's theory, Patel explains the vocation is not to be regarded as another subject merely added to the existing plethora of subjects. The vocation is an instrument through which all subjects are to be taught. Education revolves around the vocational activity and all syllabuses should be woven around vocational training. Thus, it should not be inferred from this that the school is expected to gradually convert itself into a factory in which students engage in the manufacture of productive crafts[3]. Gandhi affirmed the fact that the:

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid.
2. For further clarification, refer to V.R. Taneja, op. cit., p.179.
3. Patel's explanation is further discussed in his book, op. cit., pp.18-19.

"all-round drawing out of the best in child and man - body, mind, and spirit."[1]

has to be developed through a vocation automatically saves the school from degenerating into a factory. He said students will have to show equal proficiency in all other subjects that they will be expected to learn. His objective was not to produce craftsmen by teaching a craft, but to exploit the craft for educative purposes. He explained that the principles of cooperative activity, planning, accuracy, initiative, and individual responsibility in learning were to be stressed. Moreover, Gandhi desired that the craft be learned in a systematic and scientific manner, so that it would serve effectively as a means for intellectual work and economic self-sufficiency.

(iv) Self-Supporting Education

Another chief tenet of Gandhi's educational thought is that education should be self-supporting. He desired the handicraft chosen to be so taught that its end product may produce revenues sufficient to defray the educational expenditures of students. He believed the people of India were so underdeveloped in regard to education that they would perhaps never receive any educational instruction if educational institutions were to rely heavy upon money. He, therefore, suggested that education should be made self-supporting[2].

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, July 31, 1937.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Basic Education, p.38, 1951.

Gandhi intended this self-supporting aspect of education to be thought of in two ways. Firstly, education would help one to become self-supporting after one finishes one's formal education. This education, he said, ought to be for each student a form of insurance against unemployment[1]. Secondly, education should itself be self-supporting. Gandhi explained the state takes charge of a child and returns him to the family as an earning unit[2].

> "You impart education and simultaneously cut at the root of unemployment. You have to train the boys in one occupation or another. Round this special occupation will train up his mind, his body, his handwriting, his artistic sense, and so on. He will be the master of the craft he learns."[3]

Gandhi hoped that a self-supporting education would encourage students to take pleasure in and appreciate the value of manual training. He affirmed:

> "Nothing will demoralize the nation so much as that we should learn to despise labour."[4]

He wished to accord dignity to labour, which has been so absent in the educated youth of the country, and to ensure modest and honest livelihood. His views at this point were not far from those of Dewey. Dewey believed that in schools work is not sustained for pecuinary gains but for its own content:

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, September 11, 1937.
2. ibid.
3. ibid.
4. M. Gandhi, Twards New Education, pp.49-50, 1953.

> "Freed from extraneous associations and from the pressure of wage-earning, they supply modes of experience which are intrinsically valuable, they are truly liberalizing in quality."[1]

Via the students' productive and manual work, Gandhi envisaged meeting expenses such as teachers' salaries and students' tuitions. He believed every school could become self-supporting if the State took charge of or bought at fixed prices the manufactured items of the schools. In addition, Gandhi desired the State to provide expenses for all apparatus and tools required for craft work, including the school buildings, furniture, and books. Gandhi expounded that self-supporting education allows students to earn their livelihood and the State helps by guaranteeing employment in the vocations learned.

Education, Gandhi believed, could be made self-supporting with the aid of spinning as a craft:

> "Supposing a boy works at the wheel for four hours daily, he will produce every day 10 tolas[2] of yarn and thus earn for his school one anna[3] per day. Suppose further that he manufactures very little during the first month, and that the school works only twenty-six days in the month. He can earn after the first month Re. 1-10-0[4] per month."[5]

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Footnotes:-

1. John Dewey, Democracy and Education, p.235, 1916.

2. Tolas: Indian weight equivalent to 3/8 ounce.

3. Anna: One-sixth of a rupee.

4. Re. 1-10-0: 1 rupee and 10 annas.

5. M.K. Gandhi, Towards New Education, p.44, 1953.

Gandhi insisted education should not be financed out of excise revenue, or out of land revenues. Under Swaraj[1], the spinning wheel should be the main prop for education. Gandhi was convinced that, with the introduction of the spinning wheel and the loom in every school and college, India's education would easily pay its way. He remarked that any other profession may be taught to the students, but spinning had to be compulsory. He added that the spinning wheel ought to be the solace of the miserable:

> "Nothing else has its virtues, for it alone can supplement agriculture. All cannot be carpenters, nor Smiths, but all must be spinners and must spin for their country to supplement their earnings. Because the need of clothing is universal, the spinning wheel must be universal."[2]

In sum, by introducing spinning in the eductional institutions of India, Gandhi hoped to fulfill three purposes: (a) to make education self-supporting, (b) to train students physically, mentally, and spiritually for their livelihood, and (c) to pave the way for a complete boycott of foreign cloth and yarn.

(v) The Medium of Instruction

The mother tongue, both as a subject of study and medium of instruction, is another fundamental aspect of Gandhi's educational thought:

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Footnotes:-

1. Swaraj: Self-rule.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, March 30, 1921.

> "I must cling to my mother tongue as to my mother's breast, in spite of the shortcomings. It alone can give me the life-giving milk."[1]

The greatest handicap of the prevailing system of education, Gandhi believed, was the imparting of education through the English medium. As a consequence of this, the development of understanding and precision of thought was greatly impeded. Gandhi believed that students would be able to creatively appreciate and enjoy literature through their mother tongue. Furthermore, through their mother tongue, students would not only express themselves lucidly and effectively, but would also understand and appreciate the rich cultural heritage, aspirations, and emotions of Indian civilization. Gandhi believed that the mother tongue is a valuable means of imparting social education and of instilling ethical values. He regarded the mother tongue as a natural outlet for students' aesthetic sense and experience. Commenting on this aspect of Gandhi's education thought, Shrimali asserted:

> "Language is one of the important cultural institutions which contain all the accumulated wisdom, hopes, and aspirations of the people and the educational system can afford to neglect it only at the risk of social collapse."[2]

During his school days, Gandhi experienced the difficulty of English as a medium of instruction. In his fourth year of high school education, everything had to be learned via English - Geometry,

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, August 25, 1946.

2. K.L. Shrimali, op. cit., p.99.

Algebra, Chemistry, Astronomy, History, Geography, even Sanskrit and Persian. If any student happened to speak in his mother tongue in the class he was punished. For Gandhi, geometry was a new subject in which he was not particularly strong; the English medium made it still more difficult for him [1]. He deeply regretted not being able to acquire a more thorough knowledge of Sanskrit and the sacred books. Soon after, he realized that every Hindu student should possess a sound knowledge of Sanskrit. It was Gandhi's firm conviction that all those Indian parents who trained their children to think and talk in English from their infancy betrayed their children and their country. In his autobiography, he wrote that such parents deprive their children of the spiritual and social heritage of the nation:

> "And render them to that extent unfit for the service of the country ..." [2]

Gandhi regarded the language question as one on which the whole edifice of education rested. In a presidential address at the "Second Gujarat Educational Conference", held at Broach, on October 20, 1917, Gandhi made the following point. Bengal, he stated, during the excitement of "partition" days, tried to impart instruction in Bengali. Schools were established, funds poured in, but the experiment failed because the organizers and teachers lacked sufficient faith in their own experiment. More importantly, Gandhi exclaimed, the educated Bengali found difficulty in getting away

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, op. cit., p.29.

2. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, op. cit., p.386.

from the fascination of the English language. He concluded by declaring that a language is but a reflection of the people's character that speak it. Language depends upon the peculiar genius and occupation of a people. Gandhi urged the immediate replacement of the English medium of instruction, regardless of cost, with the provincial and/or regional languages. He preferred to entertain the idea of temporary chaos within education rather than the idea of daily accumulation of criminal waste. In a column of his weekly publication, Harijan[1], Gandhi expressed the need for quick action. He explained that, if the medium were changed immediately, then in a very short time textbooks and teachers would come into being to supply the want within a year. He believed that continuous effort could eliminate the waste of the nation's time and energy in trying to learn the essentials of culture through a foreign medium. However, he asserted that only if the people of India believed in the necessity of reform could it be achieved quickly[2].

It must certainly be acknowledged that the predominance of English in India not only did harm to India but also good. It was through the liberal writings of English men of letters that Indian nationalism drew its aspiration. New ideas of liberty and self-determination were first implanted in Indian soil through this language. The English language made a distinct contribution to modern Indian thought by opening up new fields of intellectual and cultural

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, July 30, 1938.

2. M.K. Gandhi quoted by M.P. Desai, Language Study in Indian Education, p.52, 1957.

activity. English, being an international language, has allowed India to retain and cultivate important relations with other countries. Undoubtedly, for India to participate in world affairs today, its citizens should have a command and knowledge of the English language[1]. The Report of the University Education Commission, 1948-1949,[2] gave specific reasons for not abolishing English altogether from India. It was considered to be a language rich in Literature - humanistic, scientific, and technical. If India should give up English for sentimental or nationalistic reasons, it would cut itself off from the living stream of ever-growing knowledge. The Commission stated that without access to this knowledge Indian's standards of scholarship would fast deteriorate and its participation in the world movement of thought would be negligible. According to the Commission, such an effect would be disastrous for India's practical life, because living nations must move with the times and must respond quickly to the challenge of their surroundings. It held that English is the only means of preventing India's isolation from the world, and Indians

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Footnotes:-

1. This paragraph was based on M.S. Patel, op. cit., pp.218-219.

2. B.D. Bhatt and J.C. Aggarwal, op. cit., "University Education Commission (1948-1949)", pp.96-128. The Commission consisted of highly esteemed and eminent persons. For example:

   - Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Chairman, M.A.D. Litt., LL.D., F.B.A.
   - Dr. Tara Chand, M.A., D. Phil., Secretary and Educational Advisor to the Government of India.
   - Dr. Zakir Hussain, M.A., Ph.D., D. Litt.
   - Dr. James F. Duff, M.A. .. Ed., LL.D., Vice-Chancellor, University of Durham.
   - Dr. Arthur E. Morgan, D.Sc., D.Eng., LL.D., Former President, Antioch College.
   - Dr. John J. Tigert, M.A., LL.D., Ed.D., D.Litt., Formerly Commissioner of Education of the United States.

would act unwisely if they allowed themselves to be enveloped in the folds of a dark curtain of ignorance. The Commission urged that no student should be allowed to take a degree who does not have the ability to read with facility and understanding the works of English authors.

The question of the medium of instruction is closely linked with that of the national language and this question must now be considered.

(vi) The National Language

In his presidential address at the Second Gujarat Education Conference, held at Broach, on October 20, 1917, Gandhi declared that the test of a national language rests upon the five following conditions:

1. It should be easy to learn for the official class.
2. It should be a vehicle for all religious, commercial, political, and social intercourse.
3. It should be spoken by the majority of the inhabitants of India.
4. It should be easy for the masses to learn and acquire.
5. It should not be considered as a temporary makeshift arrangement.[1]

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Footnotes:-

1. The Report of the University Education Commision, 1948-49, cited in B.D. Bhatt and J.C. Aggarwal, op. cit., pp.96-128. The recommendations related to the medium of instruction were progressive enough though three languages - Federal, Regional, and English - were made compulsory at the secondary and university stages.

Hindu, Gandhi was obliged to admit, is the only language which satisfies all the above five conditions:

> "Twenty-two crores [1] of Indians know Hindustani - they do not know any other language. And if you want to steal into their hearts, Hindustani is the only language open to you." [2]

Hindi was in fact India's national language even under the Mohammedan rulers who thought it improper to replace if with Persian or Arabic.

The vast majority of Hindus and Indians speak the Hindi language. When it is written in the Devanagari script, it is called Hindi, but, when it is written in the Arabic script, it is called Urdu. However, to convey a sense of Hindu and Urdu, and a sense of Hindu-Muslim unity, Gandhi preferred to use the word Hindustani. Gandhi emphasized that a national language must contain words and phrases that can be used and understood by the large masses of common people, otherwise a great disservice to the country would be rendered. Furthermore, an ever-widening gap will continue to create greater and greater distance between the Hindus and Muslims, if the former insist upon using Sanskrit words and the latter insist upon using Arabic or Persian words.

After advocating and then adopting Hindustani as the national language of India, Gandhi wished to maintain the regional languages of

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Footnotes:-

1. Note: One crore = ten million.

2. M.K. Ghandi, Young India, February 2, 1921.

India and not to eventually replace them with the national language. He wished to foster and not hinder the development of the regional languages.

While considering the need to move towards a new educational system, Gandhi briefly discussed the question of a common script. He began with these words:

> "If we are to make good claim as one nation, we must have several things in common. We have a common culture running through a variety of creeds and sub-creeds. We have common disabilities. I am endeavouring to show that a common material for our dress is not only desirable but necessary. We need also a common language not a supersession of the vernaculars, but in addition to them. It is generally agreed that that medium should be Hindustani - a resultant of Hindu and Urdu, neither highly Sanskritized, nor highly Persianized or Arabianized. The greatest obstacle in the way are the numerous scripts we have for the vernaculars. If it is possible to adopt a common script, we should remove a great hindrance in the way of realizing the dream, which at present it is, of having a common language." [1]

Both Nehru and Gandhi subscribed to the view that the regional languages should be used in their respective regional administrations, as well as in education; and that Hindustani written in both the Devanagari and Arabic scripts should be the national language of India. To quote Gandhi's own words:

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Towards New Education, pp.70-71, 1953.

> "If I could have my way, I would make the learning of Devanagari script and Urdu script, in addition to the established provincial script, compulsory in all the provinces and I would print Devanagari chief books in the different vernaculars with a literal translation in Hindustani." [1]

(vii) The Concept of The Teacher

In Gandhi's scheme of education, the concept of the teacher is of great importance.

Gandhi was greatly dissatisfied with the entire pattern of Indian education in the last century, which was to imitate the best of European Liberal education. To meet this dissatisfaction, Gandhi, along with other Indian educators such as Swami Vivekanada, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, and Acarya Vinoba, began to experiment persisently in education. Their experiments differed in terms of aims, objectives, and form; hence, each educator was forced to become deeply involved in teaching. Cenker explains that in their teaching the particularity of their thought emerged[2]. The teacher's task in Tagore's mind was to increase the sensitivity of the student. Sri Aurobindo recognized the teacher in unison with the environment, which he believed elicited psychic awareness. Vinoba and Vivekanada regarded the teacher as an instrument for the cultural growth of the student and for social action, respectively. However, for Gandhi, the

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid., p.74.

2. William Cenker, op. cit., p.198.

development of moral will and strength were the teacher's primary objectives[1].

The teacher, according to Gandhi, should be analagous to:

> "a lamp-post, a sign-board, a dissolvent, a processor, and one who saves the pupil from a tyranny of words."[2]

The teacher should be an inspiring friend, philosopher, and guide to the student. In the words of Solanki:

> "Gandhiji gave prominence to the teacher and believed that the teacher who was full of life, character, insight and love could mould the life and learning of the educant. He did not believe that only costly teaching aids, materials, and buildings created an atmosphere conducive to education. He laid special stress on the character of the teacher which created the educational environment. Thus in his scheme the teacher is given a dignified and exalted position along with the child." [3]

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid., p.198.

2. ibid., p.112.

3. A.B. Solanki, op.cit., p.41.

Gandhi's ideal teacher[1] consistently follows and practices the principles of truth, love, non-violence, and justice. He urged teachers, including prospective teachers, to cultivate non-violent virtues and to express non-violence every day whenever in contact with their students. Both the teacher and the school, Gandhi said, would miserably fail if the teacher proves to be a violent person and if the teacher is unable to communicate non-violence to the students:

> "Woe to the teacher who teaches one thing with his lips and carries another in his breast."[2]

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Footnotes:-

1. Though I am not certain whether Gandhi read Froebel, perhaps a clear description of Gandhi's ideal teacher is contained in Froebel's metaphor of the kindergarten:

> "The school is a garden, the educant a tender plant, and the educator the careful gardener . . . a plant will grow and achieve its own proper form unaided. But while each plant must develop according to the laws of its own nature, while it is impossible, for example, for a cabbage to develop into a rose, there is yet room for a gardener. The good gardener, by his art, sees to it that both his cabbage and his roses achieve the finest form possible. His efforts produce a finer result than would be achieved by the plant without him, yet, it is the nature of the plant to achieve that result under suitable conditions. The naturalist may be content with briars but the idealist want fine roses. So the educator by his efforts assists the educant, who is developing according to the laws of nature, to attain levels that would be otherwise denied to him."

   Froebel here is very close to his mentor Pestalozzi. Cited from J.M. Ross, Groundwork of Educational Theory, p.121.

2. Mahadev Desai, With Gandhiji in Ceylon, p.109, no date.

As Gandhi came into closer contact with students, he began to realize that it was not through books that one could successfully impart training of the spirit[1]. He learned that just as physical training can be imparted through physical exercise, and intellectual training through intellectual exercise, so spiritual training can only be possible through the exercise of the spirit. And the exercise of the spirit, he held, entirely depends on the life and character of the teacher[2]. Gandhi explained that a teacher must be an eternal object-lesson to the students living with him. The students, therefore, become the teachers of the teacher, who ultimately learns to be good, to live a straightforward and truthful life, if only for the sake of his students. Gandhi acknowledged that the increasing discipline and restraint he imposed on himself at Tolstoy Farm was mostly due to those "watchguards" of his. He believed it to be possible for a teacher living miles away to affect the spirit of his pupils merely by his way of living. Gandhi declared to be a real teacher and guardian, the teacher must have an impact on the students' hearts; he must share their joys and sorrows; he must help them solve the problems that face them. Further, he must take the right channel to the surging aspirations of their adolescence:

> "It would be idle for me, if I were a liar, to teach boys to tell the truth. A cowardly teacher would never succeed in making his

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Footnotes:-

1. By training of the spirit, Gandhi meant the spiritual development and the exercise of the spirit or education of the heart.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Towards New Education, p.22, 1953.

> boys valiant, and a stranger to self-restraint." [1]

Gandhi regarded the work of a teacher as sacred. He believed that every human being has good inherent in the soul and that it is the task of the teacher to draw it out. However, Gandhi asserted this sacred function can only be performed by those teachers whose own character is unsullied, and who are always ready to learn and to grow from perfection to perfection[2]. He encouraged students to become involved in the practice of "guru - bhakti" - devotion to the teacher. The guru (or the spiritual teacher) in Gandhi's estimation should be an example of devotion in order to elicit devotion from the student. Without this devotion to the teacher, Gandhi felt that it would be difficult to build up the character of a student. The most prevalent traits of a teacher, Gandhi said, are the teacher's devotion to students, devotion to service, and to God.

In the primary stages of a student's education, the teacher, Gandhi professed, takes on the role of a mother:

> "whereby he is fully present to the student, nurtures him, lives with him and brings him to levels of greater maturity."[3]

No individual, in Gandhi's view, is capable of being a teacher if he cannot take the place of mother:

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, November 7, 1936.

3. William Cenker, op. cit., pp.112-113.

> "I have not used the word teacher in this article: I throughout used the word 'mother-teacher' in its place. Because the teacher must really be a mother to the children . . . The child should never feel that he is being taught. Let her simply keep her eye upon him and guide him."[1]

Only with a heart-to-heart contact both within and without the classroom, between the teacher and the students, can the teacher influence the life of the students. Gandhi felt that the work of a teacher perhaps lies more outside than inside the lecture room. He believed, when teachers and professors work for wages based on an eight-hour working day, they become the greatest stumbling block in the development of the life and character of the students[2], as they have very little or no time to devote to the students outside the classroom.

Indoctrination and blind obedience from the students were two factors which greatly agitated Gandhi. He favoured giving students the right to full freedom of opinion and speech. The teacher, Gandhi claimed, may at best give his opinion about a certain matter, but he must never force anything on the students. Implicit obedience without even waiting for the reasoning, Gandhi said, should be a rare occurrence in any well-ordered society. He explained:

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Footnotes:-

1. T.S. Avinashilingam, Gandhi's Thoughts on Education, p.8, 1958.

2. S.P. Chaube, op. cit., pp.144-145.

> ". . . If the teachers are to stimulate the reasoning faculty of boys and girls under their care they would continuously tax their reasons and make them think for themselves ... teachers of national schools will take note of the warning I have uttered and prevent their pupils from lazily basing their actions upon statements, without testing, of men reputed to be great."[1]

Gandhi maintained that a teacher's role should not be regarded as that of a classroom instructor but that of a teacher-educator. The teacher's work should be oriented around and for the community. The teacher should be regarded as the educational guide of the community. He insisted that all teachers should reassume their original and fundamental mission of educating which involved something more than just a transmission of facts. Gandhi declared that teachers must step down from the rostrum, work wherever possible in small groups, encourage students to cite their own experiences, initiate dialogue, and create and atmosphere conducive to mutual trust and independent expression. He desired teachers to act as catalysts in learning processes, continually nourishing the student's growth and development through the culture of the heart, the head, and the hands.

(viii) Education for Women

As we observed earlier, man and woman, for Gandhi, are of equal rank but they are not identical. Each one, he believed, is supplementary to the other, without the existence of one the other's

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, June 24, 1926.

status is impaired[1]. When planning and developing any scheme of education for women, this cardinal truth, Gandhi insisted, must be constantly kept in mind[2]. He, therefore, wished to impart an education that would fit the differing tasks of both man and woman, as determined by each one's distinct nature. Women's education, according to Gandhi, must be comprised of domestic subjects such as laundry work, homecrafts, cookery, needlework, first aid, and the upbringing and education of their children.

When Gandhi returned from South Africa, he observed that the status and condition of Indian women was pitiable. He remarked only a few women enjoyed the attributes of sufficient education and opportunities for the full development of their body, mind, and spirit. In agreement with Gandhi, Patel commented:

> "their individuality was crushed under the burdens of customs and conventions."[3]

The potent cause of illiteracy among the women of India, Gandhi affirmed,

> "is the status of inferiority with which an immemorial tradition has unjustly branded her. Man has converted her into a domestic drudge and an instrument of his pleasure, instead of regarding her as his helpmate and "better half". The result is a semi-paralysis of our society."[4]

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, pp.425-426, 1933.

2. ibid.

3. M.S. Patel, op. cit., p.235.

4. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, December 18, 1939.

Gandhi regarded the woman as the noblest creation of God and acclaimed her as,

> "the mother, maker, and silent leader of man." [1]

If women realized their inner strength, Gandhi confidently said, any subservience on their part to man or to any other power on earth would cease. He believed that women have consented to be referred to as the weaker sex; they have accepted, and now probably believe, that without a man's protection they are unable to stand. Further, he believed, they have convinced themselves that intellectually they are unable to compete with men. Women have lowered their own status and standard by becoming flattered whenever men have given tribute to their physical beauty and power of attraction.

Women can have the utmost freedom from their shackles, Gandhi acknowledged, by following the path of Ahimsa. In a plan of life based on non-violence, Gandhi held, every woman has as much right to shape her own destiny as man has to shape his[2]. In a non-violent society, the rules of social conduct must be framed by mutual consultation and cooperation; and they can never be forced upon any individual from outside. Gandhi observed that, instead of considering women as their friends and co-workers, men have believed themselves to be lords and masters of women. He held that, for India to achieve any progress, moral, material, or spiritual, women must be emancipated

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Footnotes:-

1. M.S. Patel, op. cit., p.229.
2. M.K. Gandhi, Constructive Programme, Its Meaning and Place, p.21, 1941.

from bonds created by ignorance, superstition, and evil social customs. According to Gandhi, education was the most potent instrument for the regeneration of women. He expected the enlightened among women to become the torch-bearers of social reform. He desired these women to work among the young[1] wives, and young widows, until a time when girl marriages become inconceivable[2].

Gandhi asked:

> "What is all the education worth that they are receiving if on marriage they are to become mere dolls for their husbands and prematurely engaged in the task of rearing would-be minikins?"[3]

Education, Gandhi argued, was essential for allowing women to assert their natural rights, to exercise them wisely, and to work for their expansion[4]. He believed that the millions of women who lacked the rudiments of basic education would find much difficulty in attaining true knowledge of the self. Without education, women would be denied the many books full of innocent pleasure:

> "It is no exaggeration to say that a human being without education is not far removed from an animal."[5]

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Footnotes:-

1. "Young" here mean girl.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, October 7, 1926.

3. ibid.

4. M.K. Gandhi, Women and Social Injustice, p.6, 1942.

5. ibid., p.6.

(ix) Religious Education

Every aspect of human life, Gandhi believed, must be imbued with religion. Life without religion, he held, is life without principle. Furthermore,

> "life without principle is like a ship without a rudder; and just as a ship without a rudder will be tossed about from place to place, and never reach its destination, so will a man without this religious backing ... be also tossed about on this stormy ocean of the world, without ever reaching his destined goal." [1]

In a country like India, where there are so many differing religions, the perplexing question of religious education has caused endless controversy and bewilderment with the educational world. Gandhi himself stated:

> "The task is indeed difficult. My head begins to turn as I think of religious education."[2]

The best way to impart religious education, Gandhi explained, is for the teachers to rigorously practice the virtues of Satya and Ahimsa in their own daily life and personality. He declared teachers could impart to students a fine training in fundamental virtues by associating with students both inside and outside the classroom[3]. Gandhi wished all students to be exposed to the universal essentials of all religions. Instruction should be provided, he held, which re-

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Footnotes:-

1. Gandhi quoted by M.S. Patel, op. cit., p.200.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Hind Swaraj, p.67, 1921.

3. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, December 6, 1928.

veals to students the basic tenets of faiths other than those familiar to them. Thus, teachers should train students to cultivate the practice of understanding, appreciating and recognizing the doctrines of all great world religions in a spirit of broad-minded tolerance and reverence [1]. While studying the great religions, Gandhi insisted that only the writing of known votaries by studied. He explained, if one wishes to study the Bhagavatagita, one should not do so through a translation of it made by an estranged critic; but one prepared by a lover of the Bhagavatagita. Similarly, to study the Bible, one should study it through the commentaries of devoted Christians[2]. He asserted, by studying other religions besides one's own, each individual will be able to recognize the ultimate unity of all religions and will eventually realize the universal tenets "which lie beyond the dust of creeds and faiths"[3].

Just as students are taught to respect, understand, and appreciate other cultures as well as their own, in the same manner Gandhi wished to instill the basics of all religions into the hearts and minds of students. He explained:

> "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."[4]

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, December 6, 1928.

2. ibid.

3. M.K. Gandhi, Towards New Education, p.53, 1953.

4. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, June 1, 1921.

(x) The Creed of Non-Violence

Gandhi religiously endeavoured to create a generation of students which should believe in the credd of non-violence. This he thought to be the panacea for all communal suffering and strife. He desired to eliminate class and communal hatred, and eschew exploitation through his educational scheme. Through love, he said, students would accomplish every act. Gandhi wished to create for students an atmosphere

> "redolent with the pure fragrance of ahimsa ... and where students are bound to the teachers in ties of filial love; mutual respect and mutual trust."[1]

In the light of this discussion of Gandhi's educational theories, we must now examine the practical impact of these theories on Indian Education.

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Footnotes:-

1. V.R. Taneja, op. cit., p.181.

CHAPTER THREE

BASIC NATIONAL EDUCATION

A. Origin, Objective, and Essential Principles

As early as 1906, the Indian National Congress party[1] incorporated as an item of its political program the need for a system of national education. It was generally felt that, without a system of mass national education, it would be extremely difficult for any national progress to take place. National leaders were convinced that the prevailing system of primary education was a purely literary system, divorced from the Indian culture, philosophy, literature, and science. They asserted swift and far-reaching changes were restructuring both national and international life. Furthermore, these changes were creating new demands on citizens. Yet, the leaders maintained, the existing educational system continued operating listlessly, idependently from the real currents of life and without adjusting itself to the changed circumstances[2].

> "It does not train individuals to become useful productive members of society, able to pull their own right and participate effectively in its work. It has no conception of the new co-operative social order, which education must help bring into

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Footnotes:-

1. Indian National Congress party was the largest representative party of India. It fought for India's freedom on the basis of Gandhi's political philosophy of non-violence. It has been the ruling party of Indian Democratic Government since 1947, the year of Independence, except that the Janata party ruled for a short spell in the late seventies.

2. C.J Varkey, The Wardha Scheme of Education: An exposition and Examination, pp.1-2, 1939.

> existence, to replace the present competititive and inhuman regime based on exploitation and violent force."[1]

In the twenties and early thirties, much pressure was placed upon Gandhi by national leaders to evolve a scheme of education as part of his socio-economic schemes of national reconstruction[2]. After much critical observation of the existing educational system, Gandhi realized that it was flawed primarily because it was based upon a foreign culture, and almost entirely excluded the indigenous culture. In addition, it was confined mainly to the culture of the head and ignored the culture of the heart and the hand. He held that it placed an unnecessarily heavy strain upon the parents who supported their grown-up children by providing them with a highly expensive education, without the children making any immediate return. After many trials and experiments, Gandhi finalized a scheme of National education. He first presented it to the people of India, in 1937, in the columns of the "Harijan". His educational ideas caused much heated controversy as they ran counter to the established orthodox beliefs of educationists. Among the many labels his ideas received, the following were the most prominent:

> "reactionary, unpractical, fadist, spiritual, anti-revolutionary, and medieval."[3]

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid.

2. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Basic Education, The Need Of The Day, p.5, 1952.

3. Acharya J.B. Kripalani, The Latest Fad, p.5, 1948.

It was around that time when the Marwari High School at Wardha[1] was celebrating its Silver Jubilee. On that occasion, the management of the school decided to organize a small conference and invite nationally-minded educationists to consider Gandhi's newly-proposed educational scheme. When the Secretary of the Marwari Education Society approached Gandhi about the desirability of convening such a conference and having Gandhi preside over it, Gandhi showed no aversion to the suggestion. Accordingly, a huge All-India Educational Conference was held at Wardha on October 22 and 23, 1937, under Gandhi's presidency. Select educationists from all over India, including the seven Ministers for Education of provinces where Congress was in power[2], attended the Conference.

To facilitate the Conference discussions, Gandhi's educational scheme was summarized into a number of propositions by the Congress. For example: (1) The length and duration of elementary education was to be extended to seven years. It was to include the general knowledge gained up to the matriculation standard, and a useful vocation, less English language; (2) Private enterprise was expected to take the responsibility for higher education and to meet national requirements whether in industries, technical sciences to fine arts; (3) State universities were to be purely examining bodies, and self-supporting through the fees charged for examinations.

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Footnotes:-

1. Marwari High School was later renamed the Nava Bharat Vidyalaya.

2. The Congress ministries came into power in seven out of eleven provinces. Before independence, all Indian provinces were organized and administered on the basis of local self-government in cooperation with the British authorities.

Universities were expected to look after the entire field of education, and to prepare and approve courses of study for all educational departments. No private school was to run without the previous sanction of the respective universities. Furthermore, university charters were to be given liberally to any body of proved worth and integrity. Universities were not to cost the State anything[1].

Each proposition placed before the Conference underwent critical consideration and discussion. Then, in accordance with Gandhi's views, four resolutions were passed at the Conference. Each one is briefly stated below:

1. That 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 process of education throughout this period be centered around some form of manual and productive work. All abilities to be developed or training to be given, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft with due regard to the child's environment.

4. That gradually this educational system should assume full responsibility for the renumeration of the teachers.[2]

Thereafter, members of the Conference decided to appoint a committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Husain to prepare and submit,

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Footnotes:-

1. For a fully-summarized version of Gandhi's propositions, refer to C.J. Varkey, op. cit., pp.3-5.

2. M.K. Gandhi, Basic Education, p.26, 1951.

within a month, a detailed syllabus on the basis of the four resolutions. The Committee submitted its report, which embodied what was known as the Wardha Scheme or Basic National Education[1], on December 2, 1937. The major objectives of the scheme were listed by the Committee as follows:

> 1. To foster the physical, intellectual, and moral development of students through the medium of an activity-centered curriculum.
>
> 2. To carry education to the masses in the quickest and cheapest manner, in order to liquidate illiteracy in India, and make it ready for self-rule.
>
> 3. To build up a national[2] system of education best suited for the social, economic, political, and cultural needs of the Indian population.
>
> 4. To produce a new generation with opportunities of understanding its own problems, rights, or obligations. Through the provision of an education required for the intelligent exercise of citizenship duties as envisaged by Basic Education.[3]

Let us now examine the fundamental features of the new Wardha Scheme for Basic Education.

(i) Intellectual Training Through A Craft

The most fundamental feature of the scheme was the principle

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Footnotes:-

1. In this paper, the new scheme will be referred to as Basic Education.

2. For Gandhi, "national" connotes truth and non-violence. Basic Education was thus designed within this frame of reference.

3. Objectives in verbatim quoted by Mahima Ranjan Kundu, Educational Theory and Practice of Mahatma Gandhi, pp.59-62, 1968.

of intellectual training in and through a craft. Education imparted through a craft or some productive work was to provide the nucleus of all other subjects taught at school. This method was considered to be the most effective approach to the problem of providing an integral, all-sided education. Outlined below are certain advantages of the approach. It was argued that education through a vocation relieved students from the tyranny of a purely academic and theoretical curriculum of instruction, "against which its active nature is always making a healthy protest[1] ". It balanced the intellectual and practical components of experience and, consequently, became an instrument of educating the body and mind in coordination[2]. In accorance with Gandhi's views, the Zakir Husain Committee believed that, while producing something through a craft, students would experience the joy of creation. They would begin to develop self-confidence and a sense of self-respect and security. Furthermore, the emphasis on realistic activities and experiences centred around craftwork would develop in students basic moral virtues of self-sacrifice, self-reliance, human-brotherhood, truth, and non-violence [3]. Also, the Committee was convinced that craftwork was capable of satisfying the students' psychological needs of curiosity, self-assertion, creativity, interest, and inspiration[4]. The Committee

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Footnotes:-

1. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.93, 1956.

2. Ibid.

3. I.B. Verma, op. cit., p.143.

4. D.C. Soni, Agriculture and Khadi in Basic Education, p.6, 1959.

acknowledged that Gandhi's educational scheme recognized the unconscious and essential part of the student's nature, and aimed at reducing tensions by avoiding unnecessary constraints, passivity, and forced impositions in school life[1]. Craft-centred education provided students with a more real and concrete knowledge. It equipped students with a valuable and effective knowledge; learning became more purposeful.

The Committee explained that Gandhi's method of educating students was desirable because all the nation's students would participate in it and would eventually break down all barriers of the existing prejudice between manual and intellectual workers. His method focused at inculcating a better attitude towards work. Furthermore, Gandhi's educational scheme emphasized that work is the law of life, that work unites mental and manual development, and that work is the source of all learning; therefore, both rich and poor must toil alike. According to the Committee, education through a vocation aimed at developing the motive of social service as the basis of the conduct of life.

> "In fine the scheme envisages the idea of co-operative community, in which the motive of social service will dominate all the activities of children during the plastic years of childhood and youth." [2]

With its stress on education through crafts, the Basic Education scheme was expected to reconstruct Indian village life and revive

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Footnotes:-

1. I.B. Verma, op. cit., p.145.

2. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.96, 1950.

village crafts and industries. Gandhi and the Zakir Husain Committee members firmly believed that by reviving handicrafts and cottage industries each village would become an independent economic unit[1]. In addition, it was anticipated that the scheme would increase the productive capacity of workers and assist them in utilizing their leisure time favourably.

(ii) The Self-Supporting Nature of Basic Education

The Wardha scheme endorsed Gandhi's views on the self-supporting nature of Basic Education. The Zakir Husain Committee members agreed that the chosen craft for the educational scheme was a substantial solution to the problem of unemployment; that it could train the students to earn their "bread", so that when they finished their education at school they would be able to become self-supporting. Or, as Gandhi once explained:

> "This (Wardha School) education ought to be for them a kind of insurance against unemployment."[2]

Furthermore, the Committee was willing to accept on an experimental basis Gandhi's idea of meeting the expense of teachers' salaries

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Footnotes:-

1. Mahima Ranjan Kundu, op. cit., p.34.

2. M.K. Gandhi, The Harijan, September 11, 1937.

through the productive work of students[1]. The Committee affirmed that Gandhi's prime reason for imparting self-supporting education was the poverty of India, its inability to provide the millions of rupees required for the introduction of a free and compulsory educational system for her many million children. Gandhi was certain that, if the State took charge of children between seven and fourteen, and trained their minds and bodies through productive labour, "the public schools must be frauds and teachers idiots, if they cannot become self-supporting[2]".

(iii) Seven Year Course of Free And Compulsory Education

This feature of Basic Education as propounded by the Husain Committee differed from the then existing educational system in the following four ways:

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Footnotes:-

1. Kishorlal Mashruwalas, a former teacher of Satyagraha Ashram School, explained:

> "Reckoning on an average three hours of work per day of the efficiency of a Segaon school should be that a full school of not less than seven classes, with an average of 25 pupils per class, and 8 or 9 members of the staff, should be able to earn the annual salaries of the staff from the products manufactured in the school. The minimum salary of a teacher is expected to be Rs.25 per month (in no case should it be less than Rs.20)."

Kishorlal Mashruwalas, cited by C.J. Varkey, op. cit., pp.36-37.

2. M.K. Gandhi, The Harijan, September 11, 1937.

(a) Basic Education proposed to have a free and compulsory course of seven years, unlike the existing free and compulsory system which had a course of five years consisting of five grades.

(b) The age limits of students under Basic Education would be seven to fourteen years. As a concession, the Committee, with Gandhi, agreed that girls could be withdrawn after their twelfth year if the guardians so desired it [1]. The existing educational system had an age limit of five to ten years.

(c) Compulsory education under the prevailing system began at first or earliest stage of the students' education, whereas, according to the new scheme for Basic Education, infant education from the children's third to sixth year could be imparted by the parents at home.

(d) Under both educational systems, existing and proposed, free education meant an education for which parents did not pay any fees. However, in the Basic Education scheme, education would not be free from the students' standpoint. Students would have to pay for their tuition by their manual-productive labour, other expenses would be taken care of by the State.

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Footnotes:-

1. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.145, 1956.

(iv) The Medium Of Instruction

In light of the views expressed by Gandhi from time to time, the Zakir Husain Committee dealt with the medium of instruction problem in a bold and realistic manner. It resolved to impart Basic Education through the mother-tongue. The Committee believed that the proper teaching of the mother-tongue was the foundation of all education [1]. In addition, it regarded the mother-tongue as a natural outlet for the expression of the child's aesthetic sense and appreciation [2].

(v) The Cult Of Non-Violence Or Ahimsa

In accordance with Gandhi's views, non-violence was an integral part of Basic Education, as Mahadev Desai declared at the All-India Educational Conference (1937):

> "The idea of self-supporting education cannot be divorced from the idealogical background of non-violence; and, unless we bear in mind that the scheme is intended to bring into being a new age from which class and communal hatred is eliminated, and exploitation eschewed, we cannot make a success of it. We should, therefore, approach the task with faith in non-violence and in the faith that the new scheme is evolved by a mind that has conceived non-violence as a panacea for all evils." [3]

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Footnotes:-

1. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.127, 1956.

2. ibid.

3. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.94, 1956.

(vi) The Ideal Of Citizenship

Another important feature of the new educational scheme was the implicit idea of citizenship. Members at the Conference generally felt that popular participation in the social, economic, cultural, and political affairs of India was destined to increase. Citizenship training would involve methods such as cooperative procedures in the solution of problems, intrinsic and spontaneous concern for the welfare of others. The Committee wanted interstate school life closely into the life of the outside community. This would prepare students for the larger responsibilities of adult life in a democracy. It was believed that factors such as student government, athletic teams, clubs, and societies require student initiative and administration and present opportunities for the development of the proper essence of citizenship[1]. The Zakir Husain Committee hoped that the new scheme would give further citizens:

> "a keen sense of personal worth, dignity and efficiency, and will strengthen in them the desire for self-improvement and social service in a cooperative community."[2]

During the seven years, Basic Education was to equip students with the essential modicum of social and civic training, and make students feel that they were both directly and personally cooperating in the great experiment of national, educational reconstruction.

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Footnotes:-

1. I.B. Verma, op. cit., p.314.

2. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, pp.123-124, 1956.

(vii) Relationship With Life

An important feature of Basic Education was its close relationship with real life. The Zakir Husain Committee organized the Basic Syllabus around three areas; namely, the physical environment, the social environment, and the handicraft. The Committee stressed all education be imparted and carried on through concrete life situations. Thus, whatever the student learned was easily assimilated into his growing activity. Like Gandhi's, the Committee's conception of school was not that of a place where passive absorption of information imparted at second-hand took place; but, instead, a place where work, experimentation, and discovery occurred. What was taught, thus, arose from actual social circumstance - the student's home, village, family, friends, their occupations, and so on. Moreover, the knowledge that was acquired through an activity-based syllabus was to be utilized for the better understanding and control of the students' environment.

Vishwanath Das, Minister for Education, Orissa, made some conclusive comments at the All-India Educational Conference (1937), in regard to the fundamental features of the new scheme for Basic Education.

> "Such changes are bound to be revolutionary. They are proposed to change not only the system of instruction, but the very notion and conception of education. These changes are proposed to make education in India really useful to men so as to develop the creative genius of youth." [1]

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Footnotes:-

1. Vishwanath Das, quoted by C.J. Varkey, op. cit., p.52.

Having considered the origin, objective, essential principles, and fundamental characteristics of Basic Education, let us now examine the curriculum prepared by the Zahir Husain Committee for the proposed new national system.

B. Curriculum[1]

In March 1938, the Zakir Husain Committee published a report in which the basic principles and a tentative curriculum were laid down. The curriculum included the following subjects:

(i) The Basic Craft

The most suitable crafts recommended by the Committee were agriculture, spinning and weaving, cardboard work, woodwork and metalwork, gardening, and leather work. According to the Committee, each of these crafts were rich in educational possibilities and permitted natural correlation with important human activities. The crafts were educative, for they stimulated the student's intellect, taught the sense of form, and trained the hand and the eye. In addition, whenever a craft was interposed with thoughtful academic work, it improved the student's understanding. The Committee chose crafts which could be easily assimilated with school studies, extra-curricular activities, and the student's life and community. Each craft was capable of satisfying basic human needs as it was closely

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Footnotes:-

1. For a complete Basic School syllabus, Grade I-VIII, refer to Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Basic National Education, 1938.

related to life and the Committee expected each craft to give tangible returns. The produce of the crafts were to be saleable and capable of yielding a margin of profit. The Committee believed that, if a chosen craft failed to succeed in any of the above "aims", the teachers, students, and parents would most likely be discouraged. The craft was to be the chief means of education and could not be regarded as merely an additional subject. The Zakir Husain Committee wanted the basic craft to be "the nucleus of all other instruction provided in the school[1]."

The Committee recommended that students should generally be taught through one craft, but also be introduced to other crafts which would be used for purposes of diversion and subsidiary aid[2]. Gandhi felt that in the beginning the pursuit of craft activities should be a form of play for the students and, in this way, many diverse fields of interesting activity within the same craft would be discovered by the students. He maintained the activities organized around the same craft could not become boring for the students:

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Footnotes:-

1. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Zakir Husain Committee Report, p.8, 1938.

2. Humayun Kabir claimed that alternative crafts are necessary for three reasons. He said:

> "Multiple crafts tend to reflect something of the many-sidedness of life. Different crafts meet the requirements of children and teachers with different abilities. Still more important the presence of alternative crafts gives to the child a sense of freedom of choice."

Humayun Kabir, Education in New India, p.31, 1959.

> "There will be newness in every lesson just as there can be new music on the same instrument. By changing over from one craft to another, a child tends to become like a monkey jumping from branch to branch with abode nowhere."[1]

The Secondary Education Commission[2] supported Gandhi's idea of a single craft. According to the Commission, it was necessary for all students to devote some time to working with their hands, and become reasonably proficient in one particular craft. This way, each student would be able to support himself by pursuing work in relation to the specific craft. The Commission remarked:

> "There is no greater educative medium than making with efficiency and integrity, things of utility and beauty."[3]

It maintained that education through one main craft trains practical aptitudes, renders easy clarity of thinking, provides opportunities for cooperative work, and, consequently, enriches the entire personality[4]. For making craft-centred education successful, the Zakir Husain Committee recommended that, when teaching through the medium of a craft, the major emphasis should be on "the principles of cooperative activity, planning, accuracy, initiative, and individual responsibility in learning[5]".

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, The Harijan, March 3, 1939.

2. Government of India, Ministry of Education, The Report of the Secondary Education Commission, p.90, 1953. Among its nine members, two (John Christie, Principal of Jesus College, Oxford, and Kenneth Rast Williams of U.S.A.) were from outside India.

3. ibid.

4. ibid.

5. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.122, 1956.

(ii) The Mother Tongue

In accordance with Gandhi's educational theory and praxis, the Zakir Husain Committee recommended that the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction. The Committee explained that because the mother tongue provided a natural outlet for the student's constructive impulses[1], creative imagination, aesthetic sense, and application[2], it should be given an honoured place in the Basic curriculum. Lessons in the mother tongue itself should be organized so that, at the end of the seven years of Basic Education, all students would be able to converse freely, naturally, and confidently about the objects, people, and happenings within their environment; they would be able to speak lucidly, coherently, and relevantly on any given topic of everyday interest. Further, through the mother tongue, students' capacity to read quietly, comprehensively, and speedily, average reading materials such as books, magazines, and newspapers[3] should be developed. Also, students should ably read aloud with expression, understanding, and enjoyment both prose and poetry.

By teaching the mother tongue, students were expected to develop the skill of writing legibly with accuracy and reasonable speed[4]. In addition, students were foreseen to describe and narrate

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Footnotes:-

1. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.99, 1950.
2. I.B. Verma, op. cit., p.239.
3. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.100, 1950.
4. The Government of India, Ministry of Education, Syllabus for Basic Schools, p.8, no date.

plainly events which they had witnessed, read, or heard about. The Zakir Husain Committee anticipated students writing personal letters and business communications. The Committee desired students to become acquainted with, and interested in, the writing of standard authors. It also wanted students to develop their study skills by using content pages, indexes, dictionaries, reference books, and libraries. The Committee parted from Gandhi's views in this regard. In sum, the Zakir Husain Committee intended the mother tongue to assist students in developing the five characteristic skills of language, speaking, reading, composition, and grammar.

(iii) Mathematics

The Zakir Husain Committee introduced students to the world of calculation and numeration through mathematics. The Committee expected students to develop an ability to work with numbers, symbolism, lineage, and angularity. Students were also expected to acquire a knowledge of the essentials in the field of business and bookkeeping. It hoped students would comprehensively solve mathematical problems and connect any mathematical relationships with their craft, home, and community life. The Committee suggested that the various mathematical processes should be correlated with the many craft processes. Students were to be encouraged to learn the simple mathematical rules by actually working out problems that arose in their craft work. Activities such as buying and selling, weighing and measuring, shaping and sizing, accounting, drawing, and surveying are all examples of practical problems related to mathematics and craft work. In accordance with Gandhi, the Committee maintained that the

learning of mathematics not only became for students an active process, but also a means of interpreting and understanding the social environment[1] . It also taught attitudes of accuracy, order, patience, stability, and coordination[2].

(iv) Social Studies

Many objectives were outlined by the Zakir Husain Committee for the teaching of social studies. Among these were the need for students to understand properly their geographical and social environment, suggest ways for improving it, and realizing the role it plays in the life of man. Social studies was intended:

> "to adjust the child to his social environment, both in place, which is the function of geography, and in time, which is the function of history."[3]

The Committee's syllabus for social studies hoped to develop in students the sense of rights and responsibilities of citizenship, by including the virtues of a true Satyagrahi. Students were expected to:

> "possess respect for the past, humility in the present, and faith in the future of a cooperative society, a democratic social order based on truth, love, and justice." [4]

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Footnotes:-

1. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.161, 1956.
2. ibid.
3. M.S. Patel, op. cit., p.120.
4. Interpretation from I.B. Verma, op. cit., p.240.

Furthermore, the Committee desired students to acquire a feeling of respect for the great cultures and world religions. History, geography, and civics together comprised the social studies syllabus. Accounts of the social and cultural developments in the lives of people were taught. Special emphasis was to be given to the great liberators of mankind and their involvement with truth and non-violence in the name of peace. Students were to participate in the celebrations of national festivals in order to develop a sense of human happiness. The geography segment of the social studies syllabus was to focus on aspects such as weather phenomena, map-making and map-reading, vegetation, minerals, and countries. Civics entailed studying the functions and operation of public services such as the cooperative society, municipal, and district boards. The Committee hoped students would realize the connection between the knowledge obtained from social studies and their actual life. It anticipated that students would develop a broad civic attitude and an interest in current events and international affairs.

(v) General Science

According to the Zakir Husain Committee, the general science course should include nature study, botany, zoology, chemistry, astronomy, physiology, and hygiene. Part of the Committee wished to include sex education in the general science course and Gandhi did not object to this proposal, for, as he once stated:

> "I am strongly in favour of teaching young boys and girls the significance and right use of their generative organs."[1]

He further said that sex education should only be taught by that person "who has attained mastery over his passions"[2]. This was perhaps the reason why the Committee decided not to include sex education in the basic curriculum. The Committee recommended that both girls and boys should study the same syllabus up to the fifth grade. However, in the fourth and fifth grades, the general science syllabus was to be modified to include for the girls domestic science in the sixth and seventh grades. The girls were thus allowed to take an advanced course in domestic science in place of the basic craft.

Through the study of general science, the Zakir Husain Committee intended to develop in the student an intelligent interest and appreciative outlook on nature[3]. Furthermore, it desired students to form habits of "accurate observation, testing experience by experiment, comparison, reasoning, and systematic inference"[4]. To ensure that science became a part of liberal education, and an instrument for the appreciation of the special characteristics of modern culture[5], students were to be introduced to the important

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, The Harijan, November 21, 1936.
2. ibid.
3. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Basic National Education, p.23, 1939.
4. ibid.
5. Government of India, Ministry of Education, The Secondary Education Commission, p.94, 1953.

incidents in the lives of great scientists. Science teaching, according to the Committee, should develop the capacity in students for venture, sustained hard work, inventiveness, and dedication. Eventually, the student was expected to recognize the significance of science in the service of mankind and be able to utilize natural resources for the benefit of civilization.

(vi) Art

Art occupied an important place in the Basic Education scheme. During the first four years of the basic course, art would enable students to give full expression to their various activities. It was to be correlated primarily with work involving the craft, reading, pictorial representation of plants, animals, and human forms, and general science. The Zakir Husain Committee anticipated that students, during the last three years, would ably produce artistic designs, decorations, and mechanical drawings. The Committee planned the art course in such a manner that it would train the eye in the observation and discrimination of forms and colour; and, also, cultivate a memory, knowledge, and an appreciation for the beautiful in nature and art.

(vii) Music

Gandhi regarded music as a noteworth element to be included in the school syllabus. He believed:

> "The modulation of voice is as necessary as the training of the hand. Physical drill, handicrafts, drawing and music should go hand in hand in order to draw the best out of boys and girls and create in them a real interest in their tuition."[1]

The Zakir Husain Committee envisaged a problem in providing a scientific training in music to all students, and so it did not draft a regular syllabus for music. It recommended that all students should take a course in standard choral singing, and should become familiar with a basic knowledge of the chief Indian ragas[2] and tals[3]. The Committee advised that the music should be carefully selected to include national songs, devotional songs, seasonal and festive songs, and short, simple, quick songs. The songs were to be suitable for group singing and relating to craft work and physical training. The Committee's objective was to teach students a number of enchanting songs and to cultivate in them a love for music. It wanted to develop the student's natural sense for rhythm by teaching him to keep his own time by beating with the hand and by walking in time to a fixed rhythm[4].

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, The Harijan, September 11, 1937.

2. Ragas: tunes.

3. Tals: measures of time.

4. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.135, 1950.

(viii) Hindustani

The Zakir Husain Committee agreed that Hindustani comprised both Hindi and Urdu and, therefore, Hindustani was made a compulsory subject in the school curriculum. The Committee recommended that Hindustani be written in both the Hindi and Urdu scripts. It wanted Hindustani to replace English and to become the lingua franca of the country[1] and for students to communicate and cooperate with their fellow countrymen from other States. The Committee recommended that Hindustani be taught to all students. Without this language, students would be unable to forge common thoughts, aspirations, and culture. The Committee suggested that, when teaching the language, the teacher should in numerous ways quicken in the students the realization that Hindustani is the most important product of the cultural contact of the Hindus and Muslims in India[2].

(ix) Summary

During the Provincial elections in 1937, the Indian National Congress Party emerged as the largest elected party in India. Among the many urgent problems which had baffled solution during the previous few decades, the dissemination of compulsory elementary education was one of the more important of the lot[3]. Much pressure was placed upon Gandhi by national leaders to evolve a scheme of

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, p.395, 1933.
2. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.135, 1950.
3. T.S. Avinshilingam, op. cit., p.51.

education as part of his socio-economic schemes of national reconstruction. Gandhi considered the proposal and thought it opportune to place his findings, resulting from forty years of personal experience and experiment, in a coherent and comprehensive form at the disposal of the nation;. At his insistence, an All-India National Education Conference was held at Wardha and Gandhi presided over it. During his presidential speech, he explained the most important and distinct features of his scheme. At the end, he earnestly pleaded that no person should agree to any of his proposals out of respect for him. He requested each of the delegates to examine the scheme on its merits and then to frankly, fully, and openly express his or her considered opinion. After Gandhi had spoken, the discussions began in right earnest. Eventually, four resolutions were passed in complete conformity with Gandhi's views and proposals and a committee was appointed, with Dr. Zakir Husain as Chairman, to prepare a detailed curriculum on the basis of the resolution passed at the conference. Subsequently, the Zakir Husan Committee worked out the details of the new scheme and submitted them on December 2, 1937 to Gandhi for his opinion, further advice, and guidance. Three months later, with Gandhi's approval, the Zakir Husain Committee published a report entitled "Basic National Education", in which the basic principles and a tentative curriculum were laid down.

Overall, the tentative, Basic Education was considered practicable and workable. The idea of educating children through some suitable form of productive work was thought to be the most effective

approach to the problem of providing an integral all-sided education[1]. Further, by making some significant craft the basis of education, the knowledge acquired by children was deemed to be highly realistic and concrete. According to the salient features of the new curriculum, the function of education was to enable the student to develop, through a proper and harmonious combination, a well-adjusted individual - the result of correlated knowledge. In essence, the Zakir Husain Committee report on Basic National Education was practically unanimous with Gandhi's views and proposals, except that it deviated from his thoughts on the self-supporting aspect of the scheme. It stated:

> "Even if it is not self-supporting in any sense, it should be accepted as a matter of sound educational policy and as an urgent measure of national reconstruction."[2]

The Basic Education curriculum prepared and presented by the Committee was organized and administered as an experimental measure on a national scale. Let us now turn to a consideration regarding the progress and development of the new Basic Education curriculum.

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Footnotes:-

1. T.S. Avinashilingam, op. cit., p.63.

2. ibid., cited on p.65.

C. The Growth And Progress Of Basic Education

In February 1938, at the general session of the Indian National Congress held at Haripura, the scheme of Basic Education was accepted and recommended for nationwide implementation[1]. Dr. Zakir Husain and Mr. E.W. Aryanayakam were requested by the Congress to establish an All-India Education Board in order to "work out in a consolidated manner a programme of Basic National Education"[2]. In April 1938, with the advice and guidance of Gandhi, the Board was founded, under the banner of Hindustani Talimi Sangh. Thereafter, the Basic Education programme was launched and the Hindustani Talimi Sangh held annual conferences, pooled together insights and experiences gained, and published pertinent material on the practice of the new educational scheme in India.

The first year of Basic Education, 1938, was marked by much hope and high aspirations. Indians throughout the country expressed keen interest and entusiasm towards the new scheme. Basic Education was initiated as an experimental measure in numerous private institutions and in the provinces[3] where Congress ministries were in power. Boards of Basic Education were instituted and Special Officers of Basic Education were appointed to promote and supervise the new scheme. Within a year, the Governments of Bombay, Bihar, United

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Footnotes:-

1. A.B. Solanki, op. cit., p.66.
2. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Seven Years of Work, 1938-1945, p.6, 1946.
3. Orissa, Bihar, Bombay, Central Province, United Province and Kashmir.

Province, Madhyapradesh, Kashmir, and Orissa had begun several new basic training centres. For teachers, National educational institutions such as the Jamia Milia Islamia of Delhi, the Andhra Jatiya Kalshala of Musulipatam, the Gujarat Vidyapith of Poona undertook the administrative responsibilities of the training of teachers[1]. The national institution of the United Province also followed suit. The cause of Basic Education was further espoused by the Government of Bihar, Bombay, Kashmir, and Central Province, who opened new Basic schools and converted the existing primary schools to the Basic pattern. For the next two years, enthusiasm for translating the new educational scheme into practice continued. In April 1939, the Bihar and Orissa Governments founded thirty new basic schools and, by May 1939, a total of fourteen training schools were operating in India[2]. A month later, the Bombay Government converted forty-eight primary schools into basic schools and introduced Basic Education to fifty-eight district board schools in the Wardha District[3].

While only in its preliminary stages, Basic Education became a great success in several provinces. This fact caught the attention of the Central Government of India and soon it became interested in Basic Education. In January 1938, the Central Advisory Board of Education in Delhi appointed a Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. B.G.

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Footnotes:-

1. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Seven Years of Work, 1938-1945, pp.5-8, 1946.
2. M.S. Patel, op. cit., pp.139-140.
3. M.S. Patel, op. cit., pp.139-140.

Kher[1], to examine the scheme of Basic Education and to make recommendations[2]. After carefully scrutinizing the Basic scheme, the Kher Committee drafted a report containing a thorough and favourable analysis of the ideas and principles underlying Basic Education. The report was then submitted to the Central Advisory Board of Education on December 3, 1938, and general approval was given by the Board to the recommendations and conclusions of the Kher Committee. Basic Education, therefore, received the approval of the Indian Government as a scheme of educational reconstruction. The most significant recommendations outlined in the Report advocated that Basic Education should first be introduced in the rural areas of India and that the compulsory age range should be six to fourteen years, although the Basic School could admit children at the age of five. In addition, the language of the Province was to be the medium of instruction. Finally, the Kher Committee recommended that serious efforts should be made to recruit more women teachers[3].

The First Conference on Basic Education convened at Poona in October 1939. It was attended by a large number of persons who were either directly involved in, or interested in, the progress of Basic Education. Fifteen major recommendations were made and the most important of these suggested that all student-teachers in rural and

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Footnotes:-

1. Premier and Minister for Education, Government of Bombay.
2. Government of India, Ministry of Education, Syllabus for Basic Schools, p.2, 1956.
3. Government of India, Ministry of Education, Reports of the Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education in India, pp.9-10, 1944.

urban areas were to be trained together in the same institution and not separately. The reason for this was to ensure that teachers would develop a national outlook, in common. Generally, Basic Education was reported to be making steady and encouraging progress and it was hoped that in due course Basic Education would bring about a revolution in the prevailing educational system of India[1]. By the end of the year 1939, 247 Basic schools had been established and approximately 25,000 students were enrolled in the first and second grades of these schools [2]. Furthermore, in the United Province, Basic Education had been introduced in 1,750 elementary schools[3] . Also, about 8,320 teachers had been trained or re-trained in Basic Education[4].

In September 1939, when war broke out, the Governor General included India in the warfare without even consulting the Central Legislature or the Provincial Governments[5]. As a result, all Congress Ministries resigned. The Congress had no intention of associating itself with the war effort unless India was declared an Independent nation[6]. Most measures sponsored by the Congress Ministries had to be

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Footnotes:-

1. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, One Step Forward - The Report of the First Conference of Basic National Education, Poona, October 1939, pp.217-219, 1948.

2. ibid., Seven Years of Work, 1938-1945, p.10, 1946.

3. E.W. Aryanayakam, The Story of Twelve Years, p.3, 1949.

4. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Seven Years of Work, 1938-1945, p.10, 1946.

5. Mahima Ranjan Kundu, op. cit., p.83.

6. Mahima Ranjan Kundu, op. cit., p.83.

abandoned. The Central Province Government closed all its training centres and confined the Basic Education experiment to only two selected areas. The Orissa Government dissolved its Board of Basic Education and closed its Basic schools. Many national workers, however, continued to work independently. Villagers also continued to provide support. In addition, the provinces of Bihar and Bombay sustained the new educational experiment. In April 1941, the Second All-India Basic National Education Conference was held at Jamianagar, Delhi, to consider the continuation of the experiment. The Conference resolved:

> "The work of Basic National Education is of such vital importance to the future of the country that it should be continued without interruption, whatever the political changes that may occur in the near future." [1]

On August 9, 1942, the Indian National Congress launched the Quit-India movement, under the leadership of Gandhi. The peoples' attention throughout India was diverted from the field of education. Thus, during the period of struggle, Basic Education could not make much headway. Gandhi and many other nationalists were forced behind prison bars. Most national educational institutions had to be closed. Consequently, for some time, the significance of Basic Education faded from the forefront of India's national life.

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Footnotes:-

1. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Two Years of Work, Report of the Second Basic Education Conference, 1941, p.40, 1942.

During his detention period, Gandhi became convinced that India would be given its freedom; but, before this ideal could be achieved, he believed that Indian society had to undergo a complete reconstruction. He regarded education as the only basic non-violent means for such a reconstruction to take place. After Gandhi and all the national leaders were released from prison[1], Gandhi publicly widened his conception of education as follows:

> "We must not rest content with our present achievements. We must educate their parents. Basic Education must become literally education for life ..."[2]

Basic Education was thus redefined as "coextensive with life itself"[3]. The scope of Gandhi's Nai Talim or New Education extended:

> "from the moment the child is conceived in the mother's womb to the moment of death."[4]

He explained, "there is nothing in life, however small, which is not the concern of education" [5]. Gandhi wished to extend the scope of Basic Education so as to include an education for every individual at every stage of his life.

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Footnotes:-

1. By the end of 1944.

2. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Seven Years of Work, 1938-1945, p.24, 1946.

3. M.S. Patel, op. cit., p.145.

4. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Basic National Education, p.V, 1951.

5. ibid.

The third All-India Basic Education Conference was called in January 1945 at Sevagram, Wardha. The Conference convened to assess the progress of Basic Education, after seven years, to discuss future plans for the programme, and to implement Gandhi's new conception of Nai Talim as education for life and through life into a national educational system [1]. After thoroughly examining Gandhi's new vision of education, the Conference worked out a complete programme of national education consisting of four parts: pre-basic, basic, post-basic, and adult education. Pre-basic education, or the education of children under the age of seven, was to be conducted by teachers in cooperation with the parents and the community in schools, at home, and in the village. Basic Education was the education for children from the ages of seven to fourteen. Post-basic education represented the education of adolescents who had completed Basic Education. This education aimed at guiding individuals naturally to the responsibilities of adult and family life or, in the case of those endowed with high aptitudes, to some form of professional university training. Adult education was designed for men and women in all stages of life, most of whom would not have received much prior education. In Nai Talim, education was to begin with the community and the parents and Gandhi hoped Nai Talim would encourage every member of the community to strive for a happy, healthy, clean, and self-reliant life.

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Footnotes:-

1. Mahima Ranjan Kundu, op. cit., p.90.

The Conference appointed four committees to plan and revise schemes of education to suit the aforementioned stages of life. A Pre-Basic school was opened at Sevagram and an adult education programme was being prepared. Sevagram was the first place chosen for the complete functioning of a Nai Talim programme.

Between 1946 and 1947, the Congress Ministries were re-established and Basic Education received a new impetus. Education Ministries essayed to introduce the Basic Education scheme to all the provinces of India. The scheme became an integral part of the official programs of rural reconstruction and post-war reconstruction. Educational workers and Ministers of Education from the Central Province, Madras, Bihar, North-West Frontier Province, Bombay, Orissa, and Assam were of the opinion that Basic Education had passed the experimental stage. They requested all provincial governments to take the necessary steps to introduce Basic Education on a province-wide scale[1]. Consequently, all the provinces of India, including some Indian Princely States, began to introduce Basic Education and to extend its scope in areas where it had or had not already been introduced. Basic Education had by then been experimented with for about ten years. Its principles were considered to be educationally stable and it could be said that Basic Education had come to stay[2]. On April 1, 1947, the eve of India's Independence, all Provincial Governments and states adopted and began to execute a Five-year Plan

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Footnotes:-

1. Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, op. cit., p.811.

2. Mahima Ranjan Kundu, op. cit., p.93.

for educational reconstruction. The expansion and development of Basic Education was an essential part of the plan.

Some days before his tragic assassination, Gandhi described his educational scheme in its ultimate form. He declared:

> "The true education must be easily available to everyone. It is not meant for a few lakhs of city people but must be within easy reach of millions of villagers. This education cannot be given through the dry leaves of books. It can only be given through the book of life. It does not need any expenditure in money. It cannot be taken away by force. It can have nothing to do with the teaching of sectarian dogmas or ritual. It teaches the universal truths common to all religions. The teachers in Nai Talim can do their work effectively, only if they have faith in truth and non-violence." [1]

Later, on January 26, 1950, the Constitution of India came into force, requiring all states to provide within a period of ten years[2] a free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of six and fourteen[3]. All the Indian States immediately undertook the full responsibility for carrying out the constitutional directive, within the shortest feasible time. A number of Basic Schools were opened and many existing primary and elementary schools were converted into Basic Schools. Teacher-training facilities greatly increased. Nine post-graduate Basic training colleges were sponsored by the Indian Government. In addition, the Government

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Footnotes:-

1. Government of India, Ministry of Education, Report of the Fifth All-Indian Basic Education Conference, p.36, 1949.

2. From the commencement of the Constitution, January 26, 1950.

3. Government of India, The Constitution of India, Article 45, 1956.

assisted by training and producing administrative personnel to plan, execute, and supervise the new scheme. Many liberal grants were offered by the central governments in order to encourage the change from the old to the new educational system[1]. Basic teachers were given a slightly higher wage on the grounds that they had received a longer and better training. Furthermore, because higher salaries may induce ordinary teachers to undertake training in Basic methods[2]. The number of new Basic schools opened[3] between 1949 and 1952, and the total student enrollments during the same period are represented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

PROGRESS OF BASIC EDUCATION IN INDIA BETWEEN 1949 AND 1952[4]

	Number of Schools				Student Enrollments			
Year	Junior Basic	% Increase	Senior Basic	% Increase	Junior Basic	% Increase	Senior Basic	% Increase
1940-50	873	-	261	-	69,225	-	48,334	-
1950-51	1,306	49.5	351	34.4	116,505	68.2	66,482	37.5
1951-52	1,510	15.6	376	7.1	136,030	16.7	63,026	-5.1

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Footnotes:-

1. V.R. Taneja, op. cit., p.202.

2. Government of India, Ministry of Education, Progress of Education in India, 1947-1952, p.27, 1953.

3. The Table does not include those elementary schools which were converted into the Basic pattern.

4. Government of India, Ministry of Education, Progress of Education in India, 1947-1952, pp.29-32, 1953,

Gandhi's scheme of education was divided into five stages: pre-basic (3-5 age group), junior basic (6-10 age group), senior basic (11-13 age group), post basic (14-17 age group), and the final stage which included the following three areas: rural university, technical college, and adult or social education.

Between April 1, 1951, and March 31, 1956, the Government of India Planning Commission undertook and carried out some major projects. For example, to help teachers improve their Basic techniques and better develop certain methods, groups of model Basic institutions were established in each state and federally-administered territory of the Indian Republic. Each group included several pre-basic, junior, and senior basic schools, a post-basic school, one teachers' training school, and a teachers' training college[1]. In addition, short in-service courses and workshops were provided for teachers. To develop agriculture-centered Basic School and to introduce to other schools kitchen gardening, it was essential for schools to possess adequate amounts of land. The Planning Commission, therefore, suggested to the State Governments the following directives:

> "a. Wherever Government land is available or where Government comes into possession of land, such as by the abolition of Zamindari[2] estates, basic institutions should have prior claim to the surplus land.

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Footnotes:-

1. Teachers' training schools provide teacher education for generalists and teachers' training colleges provide teacher education for specialists.

2. Zamindari: agricultural.

"b. All Government demonstration farms should be used for training the staff of basic institutions.

c. Wherever the consolidation of holdings is undertaken the needs of the local school for land should be taken into consideration in determining the extent of land to be reserved for the common needs of the village.

d. Governments should provide for schools with necessary facilities and cooperation of the agricultural department for improving the land offered."[1]

Another progressive feature of Basic Education was that, between 1951 and 1961, the annual average value of handloom fabrics and handicrafts was estimated to be Rs. 210 million[2]. Further:

> "Out of the total export of Rs. 6551.7 million in 1961-62, the products of the handicrafts contributed to Rs. 210 million. By the end of the Third Plan (1966), exports of handicrafts had been raised and now account for Rs. 250 million a year."[3]

Basic Education continued to steadily expand in scope and direction between April 1956 and March 1961. Many more new Basic schools were opened and numerous non-basic schools were converted to the Basic pattern. Craft-centred teaching had been introduced to all

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Footnotes:-

1. Government of India, Planning Commission, The First Five-Year Plan, pp.535-536, 1951.

2. Mahima Ranjan Kundu, op. cit., p.114.

3. ibid., Kundu obtained his statistics from Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, India, 1966 - A Reference Annual, pp.67-70, 1966.

elementary schools and teacher training still remained a high priority[1]. An Assessment Committee on Basic Education was established at various levels, State Government level, administrative level, teacher-training level, Basic School level, and public level. The Committee members visited eleven states and made a total of sixty-five recommendations in order that Basic Education should gather more momentum. The most significant recommendations were as follows:

(a) The Government of India should make it clear that Basic Education had its concurrence.

(b) Public opinion should be educated through films, the radio, the press, publications, and exhibitions.

(c) Universities should recognize Post Basic education and affiliate Post graduate Basic training colleges.

(d) Examinations should be mainly a continuous assessment of work and progress of pupils and this should be considered more important than written examinations.

(e) English should be offered as an optional subject from grade six onwards[2].

During these years, the Federal Government continued to provide grants to the State Governments at a hundred percent rate and to voluntary organizations at a sixty percent rate[3]. In 1956, the National Institute of Basic Education was established to carry out

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Footnotes:-

1. Government of India, Ministry of Education, Education in India, 1959-60, p.67, 1963.

2. Recommendations cited by V.R. Taneja, op. cit., pp.203-204.

3. Mahima Ranjan Kundu, op. cit., p.105.

research, offer training and guidance to all those involved with Basic Education, publish literature on Basic Education, and develop a general framework for Basic school syllabi. Those persons involved in the programme of converting all elementary schools into the Basic patterns anticipated that this goal would be achieved by the early years of the Third Five-Year Plan, 1961-1963. However, by the end of 1963, the progress made in this direction was not satisfactory. Factors such as lack of financial resources and trained personnel inhibited the realization of this goal. Many converted elementary schools were not maintaining a reasonable standard. Thus, from now on, greater stress was laid on qualitative improvement rather than on quantitative expansion[1].

The State and Union Territories continued to undertake various schemes for the development of Basic Education. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, a new training school was opened for women in Hyderabad. The extension centres in Assam undertook the programme of all-round development in fifty schools around these centres. In Madras, greater emphasis was laid upon gardening and agriculture, besides spinning and weaving. Fifty reading books for students in all grades in Basic schools and one guide book for teachers were printed and distributed[2]. Also, in Himachal Pradesh, an audio-visual unit was made part of the Basic training college. In addition, an Evaluation

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Footnotes:-

1. Government of India, Ministry of Education, Education in India, 1963-64, p.61, Vol.I, 1968.

2. Paragraph based on Government of India, Ministry of Education, Education in India, 1963-64, p.61, Vol.I, 1968.

Unit organized workshops and seminars on evaluation and examination reforms[1].

In 1963-64, the Government of India managed 14.6 percent of the junior basic schools, 10.2 percent of the senior basic, and 17.6 percent of the post basic schools, and Local Boards managed 76.9 percent of the junior basic schools and 71.0 percent of the senior basic schools. Post basic institutions were mainly managed by private bodies (82.4 percent). Details of the number of Basic Schools by management are given in Table 2.

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF BASIC SCHOOLS BY MANAGEMENT, 1963-1964[2]

Management	Junior Basic		Senior Basic		Post Basic	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Government	12,178	14.6	1,740	10.2	3	17.6
Local Boards	64,188	76.9	12,098	71.0	-	-
Private Bodies	7,095	8.5	3,198	18.8	14	82.4
TOTAL	83,461	100.0	17,036	100.0	17	100.0

Details about the expansion of Basic Education in India are given in Table 3.

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid., p.62.

2. Government of India, Ministry of Education, Education in India, 1963-64, p.62, Vol.I. 1968.

TABLE 3

EXPANSION OF BASIC EDUCATION IN INDIA, 1951-1963[1]

Years	Junior Basic			Senior Basic			Post Basic		
	Schools	Students	Teachers	Schools	Students	Teachers	Schools	Students	Teachers
1951	33,379	2,846,240	74,756	351	66,482	2,563	-	-	-
1956	42,971	3,730,459	111,347	4,842	1,329,748	39,672	19	2,377	-
1961	65,891	6,490,315	161,339	14,321	3,220,098	102,643	31	4,340	242
1963	78,937	10,371,622	211,470	16,745	3,934,027	119,613	24	5,510	230

The direct expenditure on Basic schools increased by 11.5 percent from 1962-64. Of this, fifty-nine percent was expended on junior basic schools, forty percent on senior basic schools, and one percent on past basic schools. The corresponding expenditures for the 1962-63 year were fifty-seven percent, forty-two percent, and one percent, respectively[2].

In July 1964, the Government of India appointed an Education Commission[3] "to advise Government on the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of

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Footnotes:-

1. Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, India, 1966 - A Reference Annual, pp.67-70, 1966.

2. Expenditure statistics obtained from Government of India, Ministry of Education, Education in India, 1963-64, p.77, Vol.1, 1968.

3. Popularly known as the Kothari Commission.

education at all stages[1]. The Commission was chaired by D.S. Kothari[2] and J.P. Naik[3] served as its member-secretary. Twenty consultants from twenty different countries of the world were available to advise the Commission, which consisted of seventeen members. About one hundred days were spent by the Commission visiting universities, colleges, and schools in all the States and some selected Union Territories. Approximately nine thousand persons were interviewed[4].

The Commission viewed Basic Education as a landmark in the history of education in India. It believed that the essential elements of the system were basically sound, and that with necessary modifications such as productive activity in education, correlation of the curriculum with the environment, and intimate contact between school and local community, it could operate effectively at all stages of India's educational system[5]. The Education Commission's report was a great achievement. Yet, it failed to provide a redefinition of Basic Education, a clear description of the content and courses for the junior and senior basic levels, or an examination of the merits of the eight-year composite Basic School.

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Footnotes:-

1. B.D. Bhatt and J.C. Aggarwal, op. cit., p.252.
2. Chairman of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi.
3. Head of Department of Education Planning, Administration on Finance, Gokhle Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona.
4. Statistics obtained from B.D. Bhatt and J.C. Aggarwal, op. cit., p.252.
5. Government of India, Ministry of Education, Education Commission 1964-66, 3.02, p.46, 1966.

In the late 1960s and 70s, however, the system of Basic Education was gradually accepted and referred to as the national pattern of education at the primary and elementary school division. This stage represented the six to ten student age group. The senior and post basic stages[1] were more popularly referred to as the secondary educational division.

In September 1972, the Central Advisory Board of Education held its thirty-sixth meeting to discuss the working paper on "Education in the Fifth Five-Year Plan". The most significant decision made at the meeting was to accord top priority to the Universal Elementary Education programme in India, for the six to fourteen[2] student age group. During the 1972-73 school year, the highest increase in student enrollment was in the junior basic schools, followed by the senior basic schools. Of the total direct expenditure, the second highest amount was incurred on junior basic schools, followed by senior basic schools[3] . At the thirty-eighth session of the Central Advisory Board of Education, November 1975, it was recommended that increased efforts to mobilize additional resources be made to achieve the target of universal elementary education by 1986[4]. Accordingly, concerted efforts were made, such as

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Footnotes:-

1. The 11-13 and 14-17 student age groups respectively.
2. Note that the Universal Elementary Education Programme represented the junior basic and senior basic stages.
3. Governments of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Education in India, 1972-73, p.8, 1978.
4. ibid., Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Education in India, 1975-76, p.3, 1979.

renewing the curriculum in cooperation with the State Primary Curriculum Units and trying out a community-based education approach with the aid of specially-selected Community Primary Centres in various States[1]. Further, to improve the quality of elementary education, the Ministry of Education continued to provide projects of crucial importance, like reorganization of science teaching, and the renewal and development of activities in community education. Thirty-five thousand schools spread throughout India were supplied with science kits by 1976-77 and a fair number of teachers were trained to teach the new science programme. Details regarding student enrollments, total number of types of institutions, and total number of trained teachers for pre-basic, junior basic, and senior basic schools are provided in the tables below:

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid., Community education is based on the premise that local resources can be mobilized to solve most community problems and that local schools should be directly involved in such efforts.

TABLE 4

EXPANSION OF BASIC EDUCATION IN INDIA, 1970-1980 [1]

Years	Pre-Basic			Junior Basic			Senior Basic		
	Schools	Students	Teachers	Schools	Students	Teachers	Schools	Students	Teachers
70-71	4,174	276,748	8,338	408,378	41,153,274	1,059,950	90,621	20,145,369	637,569
71-72	4,272	298,288	8,919	417,473	42,372,492	1,097,995	93,665	20,845,096	665,597
72-73	4,806	347,133	9,555	431,791	45,275,704	1,150,805	97,623	21,682,617	692,263
74-75	5,530	365,631	9,678	450,950	46,494,666	1,231,622	104,545	23,033,678	758,210
75-76	5,658	888,077	9,951	454,270	46,751,050	1,247,553	106,571	23,642,153	777,928
76-77	6,509	433,429	10,589	457,324	48,612,998	1,258,578	108,602	25,147,547	793,395
79-80 [2]	-	-	-	478,000	48,972,000	1,312,000	114,720	-	-

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Footnotes:-

1. Statistics obtained from Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Education in India, 1971-72, pp.11,12,14, 1972-73, pp.9,10,13, 1975-76, pp.11,12,15, 1976-77, pp.26-29, 34, 35.

2. Statistics for 1979-80 obtained from Government of India, Ministry of Planning, Basic Statistics Relating to the Indian Economy, 1950-51 to 1979-80, p.81, 1981.

TABLE 5[1]

EXPENDITURE ON BASIC EDUCATION IN INDIA, 1970-1972

LEVEL	Year	Amount in Rs.	Percentage[2]	Percentage of Total Gov't Expenditure on Education	Percentage of Gov't Expenditure to Total Expenditure on Education At Each Level
Pre Basic	70-71	19,066,758	0.2	-	-
	71-72	21,144,922	0.2	0.1	37.3
	72-73	23,839,232	0.2	0.1	36.0
	74-75	29,148,317	0.2	0.1	37.5
	75-76	33,018,463	0.1	0.1	34.7
Jr Basic	70-71	2,345,663,391	20.9	-	-
	71-72	2,579,874,510	20.8	23.6	85.7
	72-73	2,898,624,582	21.1	23.8	86.4
	74-75	3,848,571,532	21.3	23.5	88.7
	75-76	4,463,148,131	21.2	23.8	88.2
Sr Basic	70-71	1,709,367,956	15.3	-	-
	71-72	1,884,690,785	15.2	17.3	86.3
	72-73	2,104,732,717	15.3	17.4	86.7
	74-75	2,926,359,199	16.2	18.3	90.6
	75-76	3,409,671,812	16.2	18.3	88.5

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Footnotes:-

1. Statistics obtained from Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Education in India, 1971-72, p.15, 1972-73, pp.14,16, 1975-76, pp.16,18.

2. Percentage - Percent of total educational expenditure allocated to specified institution.

   Total educational expenditure consists of government funds, local funds, fees, and other sources.

The foregoing analysis, in short, makes it evident that there was a phenomenal increase in educational facilities and amenities at the pre-basic, junior, senior, and post-basic levels. Numerous policies and programmes of reorganization and expansion stimulated public and private educational personnel interested in Basic Education in India. There was unprecedented, quantitative growth in the number of Basic Schools, teachers, and student enrollments. In addition, steps towards qualitative improvement were made from time to time. The Central Government gave financial assistance to various programmes, such as the establishment of new junior basic schools, upgrading all junior basic schools to senior basic standards[1], converting non-basic educational institutions to suit the Basic patterns, and providing hostels, equipments, seminars, and refresher courses for teachers, administrators, and others interested or involved in elementary and Basic Education[2]. The number of junior and senior basic schools in 1950-51 was 33,379 and 351. In 1956-57, the number rose to 42,971 and 4,842. By the end of 1966, the number increased to 153,000 and 16,700[3]. In 1976-77, it rose to 457,324 and 108,602[4]. The number for 1979-80 was 478,000 and 114,720[5]. However,

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Footnotes:-

1. Shiv Kumar Saini, op. cit., p.388.
2. ibid.
3. ibid.
4. Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Education in India, 1976-77, Vol.I, p.26, 1980.
5. Government of India, Ministry of Planning, Basic Statistics Relating to the Indian Economy, 1950-51 to 1979-80, pp.81,83, 1981.

the two aims which India set before itself, namely (a) the introduction of free and compulsory education to all children up to fourteen years, and (b) the conversion of all primary (to age fourteen) schools to the Basic pattern have not yet been achieved. However, Central Advisory Board of Education anticipates that the two aims would be realized by 1986.

CHAPTER FOUR

CRITICISMS OF BASIC EDUCATION

In spite of the impressive development of Basic Education described in the last chapter, however, both educators and lay public feel that Basic Education has not been wholly accepted as the national educational system of India. Taneja remarked in 1965:

> "It has not yet caught the imagination of the people in general. So far the common man has not been drawn towards it spontaneously ... Basic Education is not yet as popular as it should be."[1]

The same remark would be true today, and in this chapter we will examine some of the reasons why this is so.

(i) Nature of Critics And Their Criticisms

As soon as Ghandhi revealed his scheme for Basic Education in the late thirties, critics appeared with fundamental and detailed objections to the plan, and these objections were refined and multiplied in the year that followed. Writing in 1939, Varkey identified three groups of critics as follows. Firstly, there were those who were politically opposed to the Congress Party and these, inevitably, were the most implacable critics of all. Secondly, there were those who, by reason of their generally conservative views, were unable to understand and appreciate the fundamental ideals underlying the concept. Finally, there were those who accepted the Gandhian ideal and genuinely desired a new social order, but who joined the

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Footnotes:-

1. V.R. Taneja op. cit., p.204.

critics through misunderstanding of certain aspects of the scheme[1]. But, whatever their motives, the critics developed some trenchant criticisms which Gandhi struggled hard to refute in his lifetime, and which have continued to impede the progress of Basic Education ever since. Let us now examine some of those objections.

(ii) Doubts About Craft-Centred Education

Bhowmik[2] pointed out in a 1964 article that craft teaching in Basic Education was becoming more and more unsatisfactory and he noted the antagonism of teachers, parents, and guardians towards craft-centred education. They believed that, by greatly emphasizing the craft, academic work tended to get neglected[3]. Perhaps the most universal complaint against Basic Education was the fact that three hours and twenty minutes of every working day of the school was allotted to craft work and only ten minutes to physical training.

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Footnotes:-

1. C.J. Varkey, op. cit., p.92.

2. Tarapada Bhowmik, "Craft Teaching in Basic Schools", Buniyade Talim, Vol.VII, pp.51-52, April 1964.

3. To quote one such example, P.S. Naidu said:
> "Neglect of psychological principle is also evident in the Wardha timetable. If some attention had been paid to the laws of fatigue, physical and mental, then daily drudgery of 3½ hours of monotonous craft work would not have been suggested."

The Visva-Bharati Quarterly, May-Oct., p.62, 1947.

The Basic Timetable[1]

The Basic Craft	--	3 hours, 20 minutes
Music, Drawing, and Arithmetic	--	40 minutes
The Mother Tongue	--	40 minutes
Social Studies and General Science	--	30 minutes
Physical Training	--	10 minutes
Recess	--	10 minutes
TOTAL		5 hours, 30 minutes

Gandhi responsed to this argument by explaining that the chosen craft for Basic Education was the actual means of academic work. Through craft work, he said,:

> "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, the ears will catch the names and meanings of things and sentences."[2]

The craft, therefore, included oral work, drawing, and mechanical practice. With the disc of takli, Gandhi explained, he could teach students almost everything about a circle without any mention of the name Euclid.

Moreover, as the Zakir Husain Committee recommended in 1937, the three hours of twenty minutes were to be spread over the whole day

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Footnotes:-

1. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, The Zakir Husain Committee Reports, pp.39-49, 1938.
2. Gandhi quoted by V.R. Taneja, op. cit., p.210.

and not over one continuous period of instruction. For example, one hour and twenty minutes could be spent in the afternoon and two hours in the forenoon on the Basic craft. In addition, short, ten-minute intervals were provided for the teacher and students. Further, for any given period of craft work, the practical work was taught in unity with theory. Consequently, no continuous mechanical practice of the craft took place. Practical work was interspersed with the teaching of theory and together both made up the three hours and twenty minutes[1].

According to Gandhi, by allotting only ten minutes to physical training in the Basic timetable, physical education was by no means neglected. He maintained that Basic Education was wholly based upon a spirit of play and activity. He flet that, if a separate, distinct, and compulsory place was given to "play" in the Basic syllabus, then the scheme would lose its spontaneity. It would cease to be considered as play in the psychological sense. Furthermore, in the activity-oriented Basic school, play was an integral part of its method and technique. It was, therefore, not necessary to include it into the Basic timetable merely as an escape from "academic drudgery". However, the theoretical aspects of physical training were in no manner neglected. Gandhi's syllabus for General Science allowed students to learn about significant matters such as physiology, hygiene, and dietetics.

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Footnotes:-

1. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Basic National Education, Appendix A - Syllabus in Woodwork and Metal work as a Basic Craft, pp.49-52, 1939.

Another criticism was that Basic Education produced fine weavers and carpenters, but failed to produce cultured men and women; that Basic Education neglected the cultural subjects for the sake of crafts. Varkey responded to this criticism by remarking that the best authority to comment on this aspect of the system was the teacher. Teachers were able to understand the many processes and techniques of education and their influence on culture. According to an expert body, and perhaps the most permanent organization of the teaching profession in India, The South Indian Teachers' Union, there was no justification for the fear that culture was being neglected in the Basic syllabus. The Union felt that the subjects and objectives of the scheme were quite suitable and adequate for children, since literature, science, art, craft, humanities, and aesthetics were all represented [1]. In a column of The New Review, under the title "Light from Wardha", it was stated:

> "They (children) may know less of such subjects (besides their chosen handicraft) than now; but they will certainly know that little more intelligently, more vitally; and they will on the whole turn out better men - which is, after all, the only test of education." [2]

The emphasis on craft in Basic Education was not meant to produce more weavers and carpenters, but to educate the whole personality.

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Footnotes:-

1. C.J. Varkey, op. cit., p.94.

2. Quoted by C.J. Varkey, op. cit., pp.94-95.

Siqueria[1] advanced another major argument against Basic Education. He maintained that it was difficult to teach every subject through a craft and that the correlation between the craft and other subjects in the Basic curriculum was highly artificial and thus not likely to rouse the enthusiasm of teachers[2]. Siqueria believed that, without the teachers' enthusiasm, the success of the scheme was highly uncertain. Moreover, critics contended that, although most subjects could be well correlated with the craft, it was neither entirely possible nor necessary to teach all the subjects in the curriculum by means of a craft[3].

Adams, a supporter of the principle of correlation and integration, suggested that a close connection exists between all subjects and that the division of the curriculum is only a matter of convenience [4]. He claimed that, in the timetable and the minds of the pupils and teachers, subjects have a separate existence and this fragmentation contributed to the loss of interest, waste of effort, and narrow specialization:

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Footnotes:-

1. T.N. Siqueira, Modern Indian Education, Teaching in India Series, pp.207-208, 1967.

2. Solansky, in 1952, conducted a study to learn the attitude of teachers toward Basic Education. Many teachers favoured the reform and believed it to be superior to existing elementary education. However, they expressed their difficulty in teaching all subjects on the basis of the chosen craft. Chand Solansky, "Attitude of Basic Education", Christian Education Vol. LXI, pp.29-35, March, 1952.

3. M.S. Patel, op. cit., p.127.

4. John Adams, Modern Developments in Educational Practice, pp.16-17, 1952.

> "At present, instruction is largely a thing of shreds and patches ... it is a case of a fragment of an educator addressing itself to a fragment of a pupil ... about a fragment of a subject."[1]

Adams stated that the process of correlation was the remedy. By realizing the inter-connectedness of various subjects through the deliberate use of a craft, both teaching and learning would become less combersome and bewildering.

Gandhi was, however, aware that not all subjects could be imparted through a craft. He said:

> "We will teach as much of these subjects through the takli (or any other basic craft) as possible. The rest we cannot leave untouched."[2]

At first he believed that every subject could be taught through a Basic craft, but, having personally encountered certain difficulties in the actual working of the scheme, Gandhi modified his stance. He suggested that the knowledge imparted by the craft should be supplemented by other techniques and processes. He made it clear that, during the first year, everything should be taught through the takli and, in the second year, other processes may be taught side by side[3].

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid.

2. M.K. Gandhi, The Harijan, October 30, 1937, The subjects he was referring to were history, geography, arithmetic, science, language, painting, and music.

3. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.62, 1950.

Some parents also believed that, by laying emphasis on craftwork, the Basic course became dull and could have easily cramped the students' minds. Varkey reminded parents that Basic Education was an activity-centered programme. Students appeared active and alert, not half-sleepy, passive spectators of the teacher, "nor passive listeners of a human gramaphone placed on a chair in front of them"[1]. Students were generally taught through one craft, but they were gradually introduced to alternative crafts for diversion and as subsidiaries. Alternative crafts tended to reflect the many-sidedness of life, provided for individual differences among students and teachers, and gave them a sense of freedom of choice of one main and one subsidiary craft[2]. Gandhi believed that teachers could easily make a lesson dull. He stated:

> "I have known the most fascinating of subjects boring children when taught in the wrong way by an incompetent instructor."[3]

Other parents feared that, by introducing students to craft work at a very early age, most students would be led to specializing a vocation at a very premature age, often before they have even discovered their individual aptitudes. Supporters of the scheme pointed out that many different vocations were usually taught in every Basic school. Students were, therefore, exposed to a whole spectrum of crafts. Each student and his parents could choose a career best suited to his aptitudes and interests.

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Footnotes:-

1. C.J. Varkey, op. cit., p.99.

2. Humayun Kabir, op. cit., p.31.

3. Gandhi quoted by C.J. Varkey, op. cit., pp.98-99.

(iii) Doubts About The Quality Of Teachers

Another criticism launched against Basic Education was that there was a lack of the required type of teachers. No matter how good the new educational scheme might have been, its ultimate success depended upon the teachers. The ultimate arbiters of the educational process were teachers. To make the educational scheme a success, it was important "to devise ways and means for training the suitable persons as teachers and to raise the scale of pay for teachers ... to check frustration and starvation on their part"[1]. Gandhi agreed that Basic Education would fail to make any headway if the teachers were not exactly what he expected them to be. Based on Gandhi's suggestions, the Zakir Husain Committee recommended that the teachers' salaries should be twenty-five rupees and never less than twenty rupees[2]. Many people felt that the proposed salary for Basic teachers was ridiculously low[3]. In a column of the Madras Mail, Ayyar commented as follows:

> "The whole fault with Mr. Gandhi's gospel is that he believes that the whole world is as austere as he is. He assumes that all men can be trained to be as austere and abstenious as he is. Apart from a few enthusiasts when he can gather around him, I do not think his proposition is workable."[4]

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Footnotes:-

1. S.P. Chaube, op. cit., p.166.

2. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.147, 1950.

3. According to K.L. Shrimali, (in his book Education in Changing India, p.7, 1965), by 1965 most Indian States were paying a basic minimum salary of Rs. 50 and Rs. 40 to trained and untrained teachers, respectively.

4. P.S. Sivaswami Ayyar, The Madras Mail, July 15, 1938.

Even if Gandhi agreed to raise teachers' salaries to sixty or seventy-five rupees, because of the rising standard of living since the inception of the Basic scheme, many people wondered if that salary would be adequate to attract teachers to the Basic profession. Also, Patel declared in 1953:

> "Everybody would agree with Gandhiji that those who take to the noble profession of teaching should be imbued with the spirit of service and self-sacrifice if they are to be worthy of it. But we have to keep our feet on the earth and face the situation in a spirit of realism. So long as the world is what it is and human nature is still harking back to its primitive state, the conditions of service for the teachers shall have to be such as would prevent the drainage of talent to more lucrative channels ... With all our reverence for Gandhiji, we cannot help saying that the teachers, if they are of the right sort, should be decently paid, so that they may be free from worldly worries, and be able to give their undivided attention to their work. If teachers who can live on a mere pittance are fortcoming in a missionary spirit, it would be a happy augury for the country; but as long as that golden age has not set it, we can ill afford to toy with the future of the millions of our children by consigning them to the care of ill-paid, semi-starved, and discontented teachers."[1]

Taneja[2], a Gandhian supporter, asserted that Gandhi's ideals were indeed being realized, because the salaries of some high executive officers had fallen from five thousand rupees to five hundred rupees. Also, hundreds of applications were being processed for Basic teaching positions with a lower salary, from willing and

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Footnotes:-

1. M.S. Patel, op. cit., pp.129-130.

2. V.R. Taneja, op. cit., p.101.

self-sacrificing men and women. Varkey responded by questioning, if those high states of moral ferver should be regarded as permanent or should they be considered as great but temporary exaltations of individual spirit, necessary for developing institutions to higher levels [1].

The Assessment Committee on Basic Education, 1956, was convinced that a period of two or three years was hardly enough to adequately train a matriculate, intermediate, or graduate to be a fit and able Basic school teacher. The teachers being trained were expected to acquire both a practical and theoretical knowledge of one major craft and one or two subsidiary crafts. In addition, the teachers were to acquire the art of correlating the Basic crafts with various subjects[2]. There were, however, complaints made against the three-year teacher-training course. Most people were accustomed to the one-year training for a Bachelor of Education degree, or the two-year secondary and Higher Elementary training course.

(iv) Doubts About The Self-Supporting Nature Of Basic Education

The self-supporting feature of Basic Education had been attacked from various angles. Some confusion existed about the extent of financial assistance the State or Central Government was expected to provide and about how much they actually provided. Article forty-five in the Constitution of India stated that it was the

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Footnotes:-

1. C.J. Varkey, op. cit., pp.104-105.

2. B.D. Bhatt and J.C. Aggarwal, op. cit., p.182.

funadmanetal duty of the State Governments to provide free and compulsory education for all students receiving elementary or primary education. It was a fundamental duty of the State Governments to financially support the secondary education component of Basic Education. However, the Indian Government could only barely manage to provide the millions of rupees needed for millions of India's children receiving elementary education. The self-supporting feature of Basic Education was expected to provide the much needed extra money. For this to happen, it was important to impart and maintain Basic Education as efficiently as possible. Decision-making, planning, organization, communication, directing, and evaluation techniques had to be effective in order to meet expectations.

There was the general feeling among some critics that the bulk of what was produced in the Basic schools was not marketable. The educational scheme was thus considered to be uneconomical and wasteful. Critics argued that a great deal of raw material was wasted when handled by very young children. Gandhi responded by declaring that, at the students' learning stage, there was bound to be wastage. He held that it was the task of the clever and tactful teacher to see that students learn the most with the least waste. He explained, even if there was a lot of wastage at the end of the first year, there would still be some gain. The financial gain would not be very much, he expounded, but the loss would most likely be made up in the next year or two.

From another viewpoint, Basic Education actually avoided waste. It provided a knowledge to its students that was purposeful

useful to them in life. Students not only learned, but also increased their productive capacities. Essentially, Basic Education aimed at eliminating wastage of money and of the human being. Moreover, most critics questioned supporters about who would buy the products made by "children" in the Basic schools? Gandhi would have responded by stating that Basic Education hoped to imbue a sense of patriotism and citizenship into the hearts and minds of all the Indian people. He anticipated that the vast majority of men and women who had been educated under the Basic system would develop a nationalist zeal and a genuine love for their country and people. These persons would most willingly purchase the Basic products produced by the students of Basic schools. In addition, the State and Government offices were also expected to assist by proudly purchasing the basic products.

(v) The Attack On Child Labour

A serious charge made against the self-supporting feature of Basic Education was that the need to provide extra money for educational purposes was leading to the introduction of child labour and slavery into the schools, and that the schools were beginning to resemble factories[1] . Gandhi expressed his feelings about the matter in the following extracts:

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Footnotes:-

1. C.J. Varkey, op. cit., p.92.

"The writer has not taken the trouble to understand my plan. He condemns himself when he likens the boys in the schools of my imagination to the boys of the semi-slave plantations of Ceylon. He forgets that the boys on the plantations are not treated as students. Their labour is no part of their training. In the school I advocate, boys have all that boys learn in high schools less English, but plus drill, music, drawing, and of course a vacation. To call these factories amounts to an obstinate refusal to appreciate a series of facts. It is very like a man refusing to read the description of a human being and calling him a monkey, because he has seen no other animal but a monkey, and because the description in some particulars, but only some, answers that of monkeys." [1]

"The fact that the whole person in the boys and girls to be developed through a vocation automatically saves the schools from degerating into factories. For, over and above the required degree of proficiency in the vocation in which they are trained, boys and girls will have to show equal proficiency in the other subjects they will be expected to learn." [2]

"Each of us must work eight hours a day. Nobody becomes a slave by working. Just as we do not become slaves of our parent at home when we carry out their instructions, so the question of slavery should not arise at all in our proposed schools ... It is said that my scheme will bring about slavery in schools. But this can be said about all good things, because in bad hands even the good things become bad." [3]

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, The Harijan, September 18, 1937.

2. ibid., October 30, 1937.

3. Gandhi cited by C.J. Varkey, op. cit., p.92.

(vi) Alleged Neglect Of Secondary And Higher Education

Siqueira was concerned about the ability of a Basic student to adapt to and compete with students from other types of schools in higher educational institutions; also, if the Basic system would depress or raise secondary and higher education standards[1]. Cenker pointed out that the fundamental criticism about Basic Education was its major emphasis on primary education, leaving secondary and higher education to a subordinate consideration[2]. Patel, a Gandhian, held that if Gandhi had not died so tragically he would have given to Indian an integrated scheme of education embracing all stages, pre-basic, basic, senior basic, and adult[3]. The Zakir Husain Committee expounded that those alarmed at the omission or neglect of secondary and higher education in the Basic scheme forgot that Basic Education was confined to seven years only. The Committee pointed out that the scheme for universal and compulsory education was meant for young children. However, the Committee planned to provide higher education for those persons qualified to receive it, as an extension of the Basic scheme. Higher education would be coordinated with Basic Education to ensure continuity and proper intellectual equipment for those interested in further proceeding educationally[4]. The Zakir Husain Committee warned that, to avoid confusion and setbacks by

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Footnotes:-

1. T.N. Siqueira, op. cit., p.208.
2. William Cenker, op. cit., p.122.
3. M.S. Patel, op. cit., p.131.
4. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.163, 1950.

several years in the field of education, all governments had to introduce Basic Education carefully and with certainty that no school followed an independent educational policy. In a country as vast as India, educational reform was expected to hasten slowly. In a column of his journal, Gandhi maintained that he was not opposed to higher education. In fact, he encouraged more and better libraries, laboratories, and research insititutions. He held that higher education was not to be paid for through general revenues; instead he wanted universities to become self-supporting[1].

(vii) Doubts About The Utopian Quality Of Basic Education

Basic Education is utopian and beyond the realm of practice. This is another criticism of Basic Education. Critics labelled the scheme as a fad or fantasy of a philosopher who did not know much about education in the first instance. Because Gandhi, a person of great eminence, expounded the new education scheme, the scheme appeared specially glamarous and was able to function with ease. However, Gandhi never wanted his ideas to be accepted dogmatically by the people of India. At the First All-India Education Conference, Gandhi said:

> "You should not accept anything out of your regard for me. I am near death's door and would not dream of thrusting anything down peoples' throats. The scheme should be accepted after full and mature consideration so that it may not have to be given up after a little while."[2]

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, The Harijan, July 9, 1938.

2. Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Educational Reconstruction, p.75, 1950.

Supporters contended that those who worked for the scheme during the last four decades had no doubts in their minds abouts its successful operation. They believed that, with earnest efforts and a spirit of cooperation, both the Governments and the people of India could make Basic Education successful. Patel declared that the Basic scheme would take firm root in Indian soil after undergoing much experimentation for a sufficiently long period on a nationwide scale. Only then could any correct estimate of the scheme be made:

> "To say that it is utopian is the result of preconceived notions and deserves little attention." [1]

(viii) Concern Over The English Language

From Gandhi's writing and speeches, it was clear that he wished to eliminate English from the Basic scheme altogether. Two very cogent reasons led him to recommend this omission: (a) the ned to find time for the Basic crafts and other subjects; and (b) the need to remove from students the burden of having to learn and master a difficult foreign language. A sizeable group of critics and supporters of the scheme felt that, because English was a language of international communication and, in general, of higher education, it was necessary to assign a small portion of the Basic timetable to English. Further they believed that, in that manner, students would acquire at least a working knowledge of the language. According to Thomas, Basic Education endeavoured to promote a sense of citizenship

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Footnotes:-

1. M.S. Patel, op. cit., p.132.

and patriotism in students by emphasizing the importance of the Hindi language and neglecting the study of English[1]. But, he contended that at a time when internationalism was growing throughout the world, the study of English could in no manner be neglected[2].

(ix) Concern Over Industrial Development

It was also argued that, by recommending a craft as a core in Basic Education, the clock of civilization was being put back. In an age of scientific inventions and technological advancements, it was unwise to popularize such a medium of education. Basic Education aimed at creating a rural society depending upon cottage industries and agriculture in lieu of cumbersome industries. However, under the leadership of Nehru, India began to move toward heavy industrialization. In the words of Thomas:

> "When such a society is the goal, Basic Education becomes obsolete."[3]

Basic Education had little to contribute toward the goal of rapid industrialization which was being attempted in India. Supporters of the Basic scheme asserted that these persons who argued on the above basis lacked knowledge of rural conditions in a country as vast as India. Chaube explained:

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Footnotes:-

1. T.M. Thomas, op. cit., p.161.

2. ibid.

3. C.J. Varkey, op. cit., p.94.

> "Promoting big industries in the rural areas at the cost of rual handicrafts would bring in concentration of power within a few hands, exploitation of the poor by the rich, chronic unemployment and all the evils which modern industries bring in their train ... In the name of civilization it is difficult to ignore the best treasures of art and industry inherited from teaming millions in the country in this space age."[1]

Over seventy-five percent of India's population lived in the rural villages and so no scheme of education could afford to ignore those peoples' needs and environment. Suitable local crafts, with rick educative possibilities, were the most convenient means of imparting education to the children of India's innumerable rural villages. Moreover, a large sector of small scale industries was deemed essential to utilize the limited capital resources of rural populations and to reduce over-population and under-development in India.

(x) Concern About The Lack Of Religion

Basic Education was condemned for not having made a provision for religious instruction. Some parents felt that, for many children, the seven-year Basic programme was the only "formal" education they would ever receive and, without the provision of any serious training in religion, it would be a real tragedy. Critics accepted that it was a difficult task to provide religious training in a country of many diverse religions, but they argued that no amount of difficulty could

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Footnotes:-

1. Quoted by C.J. Varkey, op. cit., pp.94-95.

stand in the way of a sacred and primary duty. In addition, it was generally believed that the parents and the child had a right to religious education and a duty to assert that right. If the State or Government act as trustees of parents and undertake to educate their children, then both the State and Central Governments must provide religious training[1]. To this, Gandhians replied that the Basic scheme advocated a practical religion on Godliness, self-help, love, truth, justice, and peace. Gandhi never believed in the religion of rosary beads, dogmas, divisive creeds, violence, and deceit. Gandhi believed that the essence of the divine message was the creation of a classless society. Gandhi held that truths common to all religions should be taught to all students, but they were not to be imparted through words or books. They could, however, be imparted through the daily life of the teacher. He said:

> "If the teacher himself lives up to the tenets of truth and justice, then alone can the children learn that truth and justice are the basis of all religions."[2]

(xi) Concern About Apathetic Administrators

The Assessment Committee on Basic Education appointed by the Government of India, 1956, reported that the most serious difficulties that had arisen during the development of Basic Education originated primarily from the administrative level. The Committee observed that,

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Footnotes:-

1. V.R. Taneja, op. cit., p.211.

2. Gandhi cited by S.P. Chaube, op. cit., p.170.

in comparison to the innumerable problems Education Departments were concerned about, the Basic Scheme was regarded as a small side item in their programme of work:

> "In none of the States did we find a Director of Public Instruction to whom Basic Education was an issue of utmost importance nor did we find any of them fully conversant with the problems of Basic Education in their respective States."[1]

Thomas argued that the initiative for educational reform came from the leaders of India[2], but they failed to convince the people of India of the desirability of a different educational system[3]. Furthermore, he stated, while educational administrators worked hard to implement the new scheme, they neglected to obtain the cooperation of the common people who had no opportunity to discuss aspects of their children's education. Thomas concluded:

> "With the cooperation and backing of the masses the new system of education might have been more successful."[4]

(xii) Doubts About New Educational Experiments

Beeby[5] argued that most societies, especially those of the

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Footnotes:-

1. Government of India, Ministry of Education, Report of the Assessment Committee on Basic Education, p.27, 1956.
2. T.M. Thomas, op. cit., p.160.
3. ibid.
4. ibid.
5. C.E. Beeby, The Quality of Education in Developing Countries, p.29, 1966.

newly emerging and ex-colonial countries, have often regarded experiments with suspicion. Beeby held that parents of newly developing countries enjoin the academic schooling that their European rulers had received "which has been handed on to them, perhaps in a watered-down form, through schools of the missions or of the State"[1]. This was the case in India. Most parents believed that anything different from academic teaching was only a distortion of true education. Most parents were opposed to the new Basic experiment, as they believed that it would degrade the academic quality of schools.

Another group of persons who feared or had doubts about the new educational experiment was the ruling class. Some of these people feared that Basic Education was a threat to the existing social order. They were apprehensive that the new scheme would produce citizens capable of realizing the injustices of the prevailing social order and that the common man would learn about his given place in society - subordinate and inferior. Aspiring members of this class decided to accept Basic Education only if it had no serious impact on the masses and if it encouraged the common man to accept meekly his subordination and poverty.

(xiii) Exclusion Of Textbooks

The exclusion of textbooks in Basic schools caused much unrest among those who believed that textbooks foster the logical organization of knowledge in the minds of children. They contend

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Footnotes:-

1. C.E. Beeby, op. cit., p.29.

textbooks play a significant role in the all-round education of the child. Parents, in particular, argued that the value of a book both as a course of systemized knowledge and of pleasure could not be denied by anybody. Further, most parents believed that a good library was always as essential as it was in any other type of good school[1]. Learning in Basic schools was restricted to learning from direct experience and the teacher.

Pires argued that:

> "Learning cannot be restricted to learning from direct experience or from the teacher. In modern complex civilization experience from books, radio, films, etc., are also important ... Taste for reading should be developed early."[2]

Menzel, another critic, stressed that, while working out the Basic scheme, the best means of communication invented by man, besides language itself, namely the printed page, should not be neglected[3].

(xiv) The Cost Of Basic Education

A major factor which discouraged the firm establishment of Basic Education on a mass scale was the disparity between the income earned from the Basic products and the financial outlay of a good Basic school. The initial cost on the purchase of equipment for the successful production of the product was always great, as was the cost

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Footnotes:-

1. R.S. Mani, op. cit., p.99.

2. E.A. Pires, Modern Education, p.33, October 1952.

3. E.W. Menzel, Modern Education, p.18, October 1952.

for establishing a successful Basic school. It was, thus, essential for the income earned from the products to grow in commensuration with recurring expenditures and other such finances.

(xv) Narrow-Mindedness

By focusing only on certain features of the Basic scheme, some people allegedly became narrow-minded and neglected to appreciate and understand other equally important aspects of the scheme. Taneja declared that the artistic and aesthetics side of education was not attended to in some Basic schools:

> "the only art work they do is the drawing of the charkha[1] or rice-plant or charts, depicting the technique of correlation. Their songs are limited to songs related to Takli, Charkha, Plough, or the Rashtrabhasa and seldom to the lotus bedrocked pools, natural phenomena and the like. If not in theory at least in practice the appreciation of art or beauty is not to be found there."[2]

Another similar criticism was that many Basic educationists were losing sight of the educational objectives for teaching a craft, by becoming overly involved in production. They had excessive enthusiasm for productivity. The enthusiasm, based largely on economics and the increasing preoccupation of certain Basic teachers in producing as much of the product as possible, led many parents to believe that the purpose of Basic Education was to turn their children into ardent labourers.

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Footnotes:-

1. Charkha: a wheel; a disk; the illustration found in the centre of the Indian flag.

2. V.R. Taneja, op. cit., p.205.

In the face of these criticisms, some of the original features of Basic Education had to be substantially modified as the Government of India and its educational advisors endeavoured to implement the scheme in the generation after independence. Already in 1955, Pillai, a Ghandian disciple, was complaining that the scheme of Basic Education accepted by the authorities in India was not the same as that which Gandhi had proposed[1], and, at the end of the sixties, Narayan lamented that the Gandhian scheme of Basic Education had not really been given a fair hearing in India, nor tested nationally as Gandhi had intended it[2]. One of the msot important modifications was the virtual abandonment of the self-sufficiency aspect of the scheme, although, if the craft is well practiced and happens to bring in some income, the school of course will gladly use the money. A second modification is that correlation between subjects is no longer stressed to the extent the pioneer intended; moreover, while originally the craft was the only nucleus of correlation, today the whole physical and social environment of the student is utilized for the purpose. Moreover, Basic educationists no longer insist on emphasizing spinning and weaving as the only suitable major crafts and, indee a whole spectrum of crafts, particularly agriculture, are taught in different schools as the major activity. Again, both textbooks and the English language are now both widely accepted in

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Footnotes:-

1. N.P. Pillai, The Educational Aims of Mahatma Gandhi, p.295, 1959.

2. Shriman Narayan, Towards Better Education, p.56, 1969.

schools committed to Basic Education[1]. To some, these changes represent a betrayal of the pure Gandhian ideal, to others they represent a welcome concession to reality.

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Footnotes:-

1. **Examples of modifications based on J.P. Naik, <u>Elementary Education In India</u>, pp.38-39, 1966.**

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The educational system of any country reflects its social, political, and economic conditions. It endeavours to meet the needs of the times or the special needs of the country. In a country divided by a federation of village communities, the emphasis in the education of the young is on principles such as voluntary cooperation, peaceful existence, social cohesion, and self-regulation. In a country predominantly rural, like India, vocational and agricultural education is provided. Educational systems throughout the world, while having some basic elements in common, differ in emphasis according to the conditions unique to a society. Gandhi's scheme of Basic Education was the direct outcome of India's problematic situation.

After twenty long years (1893-1914) of a sustained, relentless struggle against the canker of race, prejudice, and white superiority in South Africa, Gandhi returned to India[1]. Soon after his arrival, he set out by train to discover India's large and diverse landscape. He found the masses firstly oppressed by the land and then more ruthlessly by their colonial masters. Poverty, weakness, and [illegible]unity predominated. India was in bondage and under British su[illegible]. The alien rulers used and manipulated many members of the educated [illegible]sses

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Footnotes:-

1. Pyarelal, Gandhiji and the African Question, African Quarterly, Journal of Indian Council for Africa, July-September, Vol.II, No.2, p.77, 1962.

and certain endowed interests to help them maintain their grasp on the country and to further exploit the people of India. The educated received their education through the English medium. This foreign language was oblivious of their own Indian culture and ideals and attracted many to live a life modelled after the pattern of the colonial masters. Consequently, the gulf between the "educated" and the uneducated grew even wider[1].

With his keen insight, Gandhi not only found out the ills of Indian society responsible for its national weakness and poverty, but also delved deeply into the causes. An aversion to manual labour existed among many in Indian society. Those who toiled from dawn to dusk in the fields were hardly respected for their labour and were placed on the lowest rung of the social ladder. These people - the Ranchamas community - were responsible for the creation of India's agricultural wealth, yet they were classified as the untoucables and outcastes. The Sudras occupied the next highest rung of the social ladder. They also laboured with their hands, but not to the extent of the Ranchamas. Above them came the Vysias, who represented the merchant community not indulging in manual labour. The highest castes, known as the Kshatriyas and the Bragmans, never engaged in any manual work[2]. Hence, the caste system, begun thousands of years ago based upon an occupational structure, degenerated into a class system.

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Footnotes:-

1. T.S. Avinashilingam, Gandhi's Experiments in Education, Ministry of Education Publication No. 435, p.67, 1960.

2. This paragraph was based on T.S. Avinashilingam, op. cit., pp.67-68.

Instead of inculcating respect for labour, the source of all wealth, labour came to be associated with low esteeem and inferiority. As Avinashilingam observes:

> "In a society where labour is not held in esteem and where the so-called higher castes live on the exploitation of the lower castes, wealth is inevitably reduced resulting in large-scale poverty."[1]

In addition to the above evil, there was the genuine poverty of the Indian masses. Millions of people were deprived of the basic necessities and one full meal a day was a rarity for most. Clothing was compensated for by the shelter of trees and huts, but, even so, survival for many depended on a precarious hand-to-mouth existence. Next to the extreme poverty of the masses, Gandhi observed the extreme wealth of the few. Indian princes, high officials, and successful merchants were living a life of unrestrained luxury.

Amidst the rank poverty, Gandhi found dirt and squalor in the thousands of villages he visited. Village waste and human dung were found in almost every nook and cranny of the village; no official dumping grounds existed. Disease and unsanitary conditions existed virtually everywhere. Epidemics of cholera, typhoid, and other water-borne diseases frequently led to severe suffering and heavy death tolls.

Gandhi felt that the people of India were severely lacking in social-cooperation, common interests, and understanding. He realized that the millions of Indians were divided into thousands of castes and

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid., p.68.

subcastes, spent most of their lives squabbling, and had no common objectives and ideals. Consequently, they were weak and miserable. Because a few thousand foreigners thought coordinately and lived together with one idelogoy and one objective, they were able to live, dominate, and rule over millions in India[1]. Gandhi firmly believed that, unless common interests were developed, India would never rise as a nation.

Moved by the inhuman sufferings and social, political, and economic wrongs of the downtrodden portions of humanity in India, Gandhi pledged himself to work towards ameliorating the squalid conditions and incessant strife. It was his ardent wish to wipe every tear out of every eye[2]. He intended to create a casteless and classless society, willing to work and live together and united it its ideology and objectives. The reminiscences of his historic mission to South Africa provided him with a framework to begin his work; many of his activities in India were originally experimented with, practiced, and perfected in South Africa. Some interesting references to his activities in South Africa are aptly outlined by Chatterrjee:

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Footnotes:-

1. T.S. Avinashilingam,-op. cit., p.70.

2. D.S. Kothari, "Education, Science and Development, Africa Quarterly, Journal of Indian Council for Africa, April-June, Vol. VIII, No. 1, p.83, 1968.

> "... he established the Tolstoy Farm; he founded his paper, Indian Opinion, and worked in various capacities for its success; his nature cure programme; his basic education, his daily prayers, his work for unity among different people, races, castes and creeds, his stress on manual labour, and his love of villages and farms, his experiences in prison, his political and other self-purifying fasts, ... John Ruskins, Unto This Last, became a great turning point in his life and because of which he immediately changed his entire outlook and adapted a simple life; ... he fell in love with Tolstoy's writings although he had never met him; ... he read the Gita and remembered all its slokas by heart and devoted himself to prayers ..."[1]

Gandhi dedicated his life to the pursuit of self-realization. He held that man's ultimate objective of life was self-realization, which means seeing God face-to-face or realizing the Absolute Truth. He explained that no antithesis exists between God and man, instead an absolute oneness. Thus, if one man gained spiritually, then the whole world would gain with him. Similarly, if one man falls, then the whole world would also fall to that extent[2]. The only means of realizing the Absolute Truth or God, according to Gandhi, was non-violence. He insisted that the only way to discover God was to see Him in His creation through honest and sincere service to mankind. Self-realization for Gandhi, therefore, entailed the realization of the greatest good of all. Truth, as we have already observed, is the end and non-violence is the means to realize it. Thus, when every

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Footnotes:-

1. Sailen Chatterrjee, "Mahatma Gandhi and South Africa", Africa Quaterly, pp.94,98, 1962.

2. M.S. Patel, op. cit., p.251.

human being expresses satya in both individual and social life, the greatest good of all will be realized.

Gandhi's grat ambition was to create a new social order - known as the Sarvodya Smaj. He envisaged it to be stateless, classless, non-violent, and having constantly before itself the goal of self-realization. Each person, he explained, would be his own ruler. Social life would be self-regulated because it would become so perfect. In a column of his weekly publication, Young India, Gandhi said:

> "He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no state."[1]

He desired groups of people to be settled in Satyagraha village communities in which each person would live a life of simplicity and renunciation, service and sacrifice, and of equality and justice. Gandhi wanted to decentralize the instruments of production, so that wealth would be distributed justly among all. He strongly opposed centralized production and centralized power resulting in the concentration of wealth among a few. He believed that decentralization would encourage versatility, initiative, creativeness, courage, and self-government. The capitalist system, with its centralized mass production and the profit motive, was incompatible with his ideal social order.

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Footnotes:-

1. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, July 2, 1931.

Owing to human imperfections, Gandhi affirmed, his great dream of a new social order was unattainable. But, if India adhered to the principle of Satyagraha, he believed a middle ideal could be realized. In short, Dhawan explains:

> "Gandhiji's social ideal is the classless and stateless society, a state of self-regulated enlightened "anarchy" in which social cohesion will be maintained by internal and non-coercive external sanctions. But at this ideal is not realizable, he has an attainable, middle ideal also - the predominantly non-violent State. Retaining the State in this second best society is a concession to human imperfection. Gandhiji distrusts the State because it is steeped in violence. He believes that for the State to be democratic citizens must acquire the capacity to resist non-violently any misuse of authority. The non-violent State will not be an end in itself but one of the means for the achievement of the greatest good of all. The State will be a federation of decentralized democratic rural Satyagrahi communities."[1]

Education, for Gandhi, represented the most powerful and practical means for creating the new social order. As a step towards the realization of this order, Gandhi evolved and introduced a scheme of education known as Basic Education. He defined education as the all-round drawing out of the best in child and man - body, mind, and spirit. It was Gandhi's main thesis that the educational system enforced by the British was out of tune with Indian life and failed to take into consideration the special needs of the masses. The foreign educational system ran contrary to Gandhi's idea of self realization.

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Footnotes:-

1. G.N. Dhawan, The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, p.323.

In fact, it created men and women who not only developed a contempt for manual work, but who could not work with their hands. Avinashilingam aptly explained:

> "It taught principles of sanitation, but not in the practical way so that knowledge was on paper and for examinations and rarely used in life. It taught pupils to be intellectual without developing their sense of oneness with the rest of the people and the result was they became exploiters of the common people jointly with the foreign rulers." [1]

Gandhi maintained that the school failed to train students for the demands of an active, productive, and social life. All primary education, he held, should be created around a productive handicraft and all knowledge should be imparted through the medium of a productive activity. Manual labour, through constructive crafts intelligently performed, Gandhi stated, is the best means of developing a balanced intellect. Through craftwork, Gandhi intended to impart and inculcate his philosophy of life, social outlook, spirit, and mental temper. He regarded the spinning wheel as the pivot of India's national struggle for achieving independence and craftwork as the pivot on which all instruction would revolve. Gandhi conceived education as no less than a struggle for freedom - freedom from ignorance, inefficiency, insecurity, oppression, exploitation, and injustice. Education for its own sake had no appeal to him; instead, he regarded education as a dynamic force leading to a definite destination[2].

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Footnotes:-

1. T.S. Avinashilingam, op. cit., p.70.

2. Viswa Bharati Quarterly, Vol. XIII, May-October, p.80, 1947.

An essential part of Gandhi's educational system was to turn out men and women who understand their place in society and become socially useful citizens. It was his firm conviction that, to redress the balance between theory and praxis and to bring education near to life, education must be related to the basic interests of the students and the basic occupation of community life.

In 1938, the scheme of Basic National Education was accepted by the Indian National Congress. Training Centres and basic schools were started throughout India and extensive research work and experimentation in the field of Basic Education was undertaken by both governmental and non-governmental institutions. Spinning became a symbol of manual labour and both students and parents indulged in hard labour such as laying roads, digging ponds, latrine and urinal pits. Endeavours were made to raise the people's standard of living by the resuscitation of many village industries which were fast disappearing under the competition of large-scale centralized production in India. The fundamental principles of dietetics, sanitation, hygiene, and healthy living were imparted to the people. The youth of the nation were trained in the proper disposal of [redacted] and night-soil and taught how it could be profitably utilized for making compost and enriching the soil[1]. Along with the daily prayers, everybody took the following vow:

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Footnotes:-

1. T.S. Avinashilingam, op. cit., p.69.

> Love, truth, non-stealing, purity, non-possession, manual labour, control of palate, fearlessness, equal reverence for all religions, swadeshi, eradication of untouchability.
> To the service of these eleven virtues, I pledge myself.

The ultimate aim of education, Gandhi said, was the knowledge of God leading to self-realization, or merging the finite being into the infinite. All his immediate and subordinate aims, such as character-building, harmonious development of the personality, adjustment to the environment, and perfection of one's nature, were included and embraced within the ultimate aim.

The Basic Educational scheme, taken as a whole, is an original one, although, if we analyze it into its component parts, each part may not be found to be entirely original [1]. Each part was in existence, scattered about the world, but Gandhi gathered, organized, and welded them together into a big and effective movement. Like Rousseau, Gandhi made his education child-centred. Both of them wanted the child to work with his hands for the development of his mind. Pestalozzi was called "Father Pestalozzi", similarly, Gandhi was called "Father of the Nation". They both advocated education for all the harmonious development of human personality. They preferred agriculture and spinning and weaving as the main crafts which should be taught to the child. Froebel and Gandhi believed that the innate propensities of the child must be aroused and not be allowed to lie dormant. The function of education, they said, was to arouse the

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Footnotes:-

1. C.J. Varkey, op. cit., p.161.

natural power to their fullest development. This chief principle of learning for both was self-activity. Behind every activity, both Gandhi and Froebel saw spiritual meaning. Also, both were in complete accord about the fact that God pervades everything and that the ultimate aim of education is indeed the realization of God.

Dewey and Gandhi are primarily classified as "activists", realists, and pragmatists. Both conceived the idea that education is a social process, the primary and the only most effective instrument of social reconstruction. They believed that the school was not merely a residual institution to maintain the status quo; they regarded education as having a creative function to play in the shaping of society[1]. Both believed in doing and not listening and talking in education. Through cooperative community and social experience, they said, children learned. Their ideals of making education self-supporting, and attaining intellectural education through crafts and occupations, were similar - the cardinal principles of activity. Even though Dewey was an atheist and a true naturalist, both he and Gandhi stood for love, equality, justice, and for the democratic order of society.

Both Tagore and Gandhi made their educational system the vehicle of their philosophy of life. They both considered life as the centre of education and wanted to provide opportunities for the expression of individual and community life through education. Handwork and crafts were given prominent places in their educational

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Footnotes:-

1. Mahima Rajan Kundu, op. cit., p.147.

scheme. Both Tagore and Gandhi rejected the book-centred system of education and insisted that education should be life-making, leading to the self-realization and integrated growth of the individual personality[1]. In short, it may be said that Basic Education has actively embraced many educational aims and ideals expounded by classical educationists[2] of all ages. In the words of Taneja:

> "It is natural, scientific and psychological, and meets the social needs and the economic standards of our country. Taking into account all the pedagogical principles and maxims, it attends to the discipline of the hand and the heart as that of the head. Children are not imitative but have initiative."[3]

Basic Education not only contributed to educational reform in India, but also to social and political reform. Gandhi implanted the principle of non-violence in his educational scheme and succeeded in demonstrating the strength of non-violence by dealing with aggression and oppression.

On August 13, 1947, India achieved her freedom, a direct outcome of Gandhi's non-violent experiment. Untouchability, the greatest evil of Hindu society, was abolished by law through Gandhi's teachings of love and justice. Article seventeen of the Constitution of India abolished untouchability. The Untoucability Offence Act, of 1955, projects the Harijans from any discrimination. All free and

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Footnotes:-

1. V.R. Taneja, op. cit., p.215.
2. Gandhi was aware of and to an extent influenced by the people mentioned in the previous two and present paragraphs.
3. V.R. Taneja, op. cit., p.215.

compulsory education in India guarantees Harijans the educational opportunity. The Government of India has provided the Harijans with concessions such as free tuition, stipends, scholarships, books, stationery, and mid-day meals. Gandhi's attempts to abolish untouchability in India and provide the Harijans with respect, dignity, and equal opportunity represented both a religious reformation and a psychological revolution in India[1].

Gandhi's conception of religious instruction as the cultivation of the spirit of universal brotherhood and mutual respect for the world religions significantly contributed to Hindu-Muslim unity. An event which well-represented India's funadmanetal religious tolerance was the election of Dr. Zakir Husain as President of India. Dr. Husain was a distinguished educator and chaired the committee which prepared the Basic Education scheme for national implementation. In a speech, he noted:

> "... that education is inexplicably involved in the quality of nation's life, that it is indeed a prime instrument of national purpose."[2]

Dr. Husain was a Muslim. Muslims number about eleven percent of India's population, and Hindus over eighty percent. Kundu aptly stated:

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Footnotes:-

1. Louis Fisher, "Was the Mahatma's Torment Unnecessary?", The Gandhi Reader, Homer A. Jack, ed., p.296, 1956.
   N.B.: Though, unfortunately untouchability still pervades in Hindu society, particularly at the social-personal level.

2. India News, p.1, May 19, 1967.

> "Never before in the history of the world, a large country with a vast majority of one religious faith has by popular vote, elected a Head of the State of an altogether different faith."[1]

The Christian Science Monitor commented:

> "Today the whispering campaign is swept away by its "principle" of nondemoninational secularism".[2]

Basic Education succeeded in raising the status of women; it extended educational opportunity to all girls of the nation; and emancipated Indian women from age-old customs such as child marriages, dowry, and purdah (the veil which kept women in seclusion). A tribute to the liberated womanhood of India is the fact that India, the world's largest democracy and the second most populous nation, has elected a woman as Prime Minister to head the nation[3].

However, as we noted in Chapter Four, Basic Education has not been without its problems. Upon introduction, virtually all of Gandhi's views and policies were found acceptable, but, in the course of time, they were so modified, watered down, and even adulterated that most of them never led to the expected results. For example, in accordance with Gandhi's thoughts, the use of textbooks once was forbidden in Basic Schools, but today it is generally accepted. Similarly, use of the English language was considered to be contrary to Basic Education and, consequently, not taught in Basic schools.

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Footnotes:-

1. Mahima Rajan Kundu, op. cit., p.126.
2. The Christian Science Monitor, May 11, p.I, 1967.
3. Mahima Rajan Kundu, op. cit., p.127.

Today it is regarded as an integral component of the scheme. Instead of craft being the only centre for correlation, the physical and social environment of the child, including craft, are now the generally accepted centres. Gandhians, in the past, exclusively and fanatically supported the correlation aspect of Basic Education, but today it is attempted "naturally" to the extent possible. Evidently then, the scheme of Basic Education has outgrown many of its earlier perplexing features.

Gandhi's educational scheme failed to fully work in practice for several reasons. According to Naik, perhaps the most important of these is the "adoption of a wrong strategy":

> "It tried to introduce craft as the primary stage where the numbers are so large that no experiment worth the name was possible. Similarly, the idea that every teacher can teach craft has not worked well in practice so far, nor is it likely to do so in the future." [1]

Naik[2] reckoned that a better strategy for the universalization of Basic Education would be to establish an orientation programme at the pre-basic and junior basic stages. Students at these stages would be introduced to handwork and simple crafts like kitchen-gardening. Also, they would be trained and eventually equipped with the necessary skill in the manipulation of fingers and hands. Following this, at the senior and post-basic stages, the craft would be taught by properly trained and specialized teachers as a compulsory subject to

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Footnotes:-

1. J.P. Naik, Elementary Education in India, p.39, 1966.

2. J.P. Naik, op. cit., pp.38-39.

all students. In addition, all available efforts[1] under this strategy need to be coordinated and directed towards the provision of ancillary services, such as the supply of free textbooks, writing materials, and school meals to the poor and needy children. Essentially, by adopting this strategy, there would be less wastage of time, money, and materials. Students at all stages would become more enthusiastic and able to learn a craft better. Thus, the teaching and learning of the craft would be more efficient and productivity and returns would be high. Furthermore, by effectively allocating both specialized and generalized teachers, as well as giving high priority to their renumeration, qualitative improvements in Basic Education would be inevitable.

Basic Education may have difficulties and impediments in its implementation, but it must be borne in mind that education represents one of the most important nation-building activities. It should be given high priority in any programme of national planning. Steps must be taken to remove the shortcomings of existing Basic institutions. In the words of the Planning Commission:

> "This calls for much effort in ensuring adequate training, improvement in teaching methods, efficient inspection, provision of suitable literature and conscious efforts to link the activities of Basic schools with those of the local community in the field of agriculture, village industries, community development, social education ..."[2]

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Footnotes:-

1. Human and material.

2. Third Five-Year Plan: A Draft Outline, Government of India, Planning Commission, p.101, June 1960.

Thr rural masses of India need to become involved in an educational system which appeals to their life, activities, and basic needs. India requires workers, craftsmen, labourers, and people who can find the real fulfillment of their life by doing work with the greatest amount of persistence and integrity. Illiteracy must be eradicated from poor India. The root causes of the migration of people from villages to towns and cities should be stamped out. The rural population must find happiness and contentment with their rural environment. Basic Education is the remedy for all these problems and needs. Taneja explains:

> "Once education of this kind has been provided for the great mass of people, they cannot be kept in poverty and ill-health, or exploited by vested interests. They will demand and get their legitimate economic, social, and cultural rights and this education will prove a long-range investment, paying its dividends in the shape of a happier, healthier, and more enlightened men and women. The system is inspired in its ideology as well as its methods and content by a certain vision of society based on cooperation, truth, non-violence, and social equality."[1]

Gandhi thought with intense care about his plans and strategies and, throughout his life, he subjected them to critical examination and even invited the criticisms of friends and foes alike[2]. However, Bose rightly pointed out that, in present-day India, there is an impatience among many practioners who wish to secure

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Footnotes:-

1. V.R. Taneja, op. cit., p.216.

2. Nirmal Kumar Bose.

justice for the masses and improve their lot, and that as quickly as possible. Practioners became disillusioned when progress did not come as quickly as seemed possible when Gandhi was alive.

Gandhi's ideas have been well received in other countries, but examples of non-violent social action, whether based in the constructive line or in resistance movements, are too few and too meagre to offer sound answers to the enormity of the problems which face mankind today. But, as Bose aptly remarked:

> "One need not despair. For all great revolutions have had small beginnings."[1]

There is, however, a small but significant sign of hope in India today. There is a growing intellectual interest with regard to what Gandhi really represented and how he endeavoured to achieve his ideals under the circumstances in which he worked. Hopefully, through this renewed interest, Gandhism will be reborn in India. Moreover, since Sir Richard Attenborough's epic film, "Gandhi", a box-office success world-wide and the winner of eight Academy Awards[2], there has been some revived interest in Gandhi and his message to the world, which is perhaps even more relevant now than it was in his age. At one point in the film, Gandhi observes dryly:

> "An eye for an eye only makes the whole world blind."

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Footnotes:-

1. ibid., p.115.
2. The film "Gandhi" had its premier showing in India in January 1983.

To the world, and the modern India midwifed by the Mahatma, which now increasingly chooses vengeance as the only recourse for old redresses, Attenbourough's Gandhi could not have been more timely[1]. Furthermore, Tolstoy Farm, the historic institution founded by Gandhi to pursue his philosophy of Satyagraha during his stay in South Africa, is being renovated at a cost of four million dollars[2] to serve the present generation of people who are struggling against apartheid. N.G. Patel, Chairman of the Transvaal Gandhi Centenary Council, reported that the restoration project being undertaken because of the historical importance of Tolstoy Farm and the resurgence in the principles of Gandhi's Satyagraha philosophy. Patel explained that, once the farm is renovated, it could be used as a conference venue, library, and museum. The library would contain material reflecting the Ghandian concept of resistance, change, and development.

Another result of Attenborough's "Gandhi" was that, on April 16, 1983, poignant memories of historic events in the life of Gandhi and the Indian freedom movement were evoked at an exhibition of books and photographs organized by the Oriental Literary Society. In addition, according to Dutch actress, Josine Van Dalsan:

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Footnotes:-

1. Beno John, "An eye for an eye only makes the whole world blind," The Prairie Link, p.19, February 1983.

2. "Tolstoy Farm glory being restored", India Weekly, p.5, Thursday, April 21, 1983.

> "No other film in the history of cinema in Holland has ever actually made the audience start clapping and give a standing ovation at the end of it as the film "Gandhi" did when shown in the cinema houses in Holland ... the film turned out to be a raving success and generated a lot of interest among the Dutch."[1]

The overwhelming response of the Dutch people to the film has inspired the organization of a competition in Holland on Gandhi, which will have a free visit to India as one of the prizes.

Despite the renewed interest in Gandhi, Attenborough's Oscar-winning film has caused no great reawakening of Gandhian thought in India, nor has there been any Gandhi fad of the sort that has been reported in some Western countries. Indians still pay a measure of official lip service to the father of their nation and mention his name with respect, but Gandhi is largely ignored in the country that he helped create. Tyler Marshall, a correspondent with the Los Angeles Times, reported that Gandhi's vision of an independent India bears little resemblance to present-day India:

> "He envisioned India as an aggregate of small economically independent village production units. But today India is the world's tenth largest industrial power characterized by ponderous, State-owned enterprises ... Many of today's Indians, educated and upper class, compete in an undignified scramble for imported consumer goods ... the simmering discontent in Punjab threatens to make 1983 the bloodiest year in India since the partition riots that followed independence in 1947."[2]

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Footnotes:-

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2. Tyler Marshall, "India ignores Gandhi vision", Calgary Herald, 1983.

In short, on October 2, 1982, an editorial published in the Times of India aptly observed:

> "We in India deify our great men and then quietly ignore their teachings."

Though there may be some serious doubts about the relevance of Gandhi's views and scheme of Basic Education for national reconstruction in India, there is an increasing realization of Gandhi's ideas and ideals among the developing countries.[1] For example, in 1973, Sri Lanka began an experiment in community-based education. Students were led to examine how the use of science, history, and other subjects could improve the everyday life of the community. Most of the instructional tools were made by the students themselves. Parents who are farmers helped in conducting the school farm. Older students took part in community service programmes in nearby villages. Another example is that of Botswana's educational system, which is presently organized to foster the spirit of rural development. Botswana's brigade movement aims to provide primary school leavers with vocational training and at meeting the needs of the local area. It has developed an ox-drawn, multi-purpose vehicle for ploughing, planting, cultivating, and hauling machinery. The government has recommended this relatively cheap carrier to farmers.

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Footnotes:-

1. "Developing" has become a widely-used term to describe the economically power countries. All countries rich and poor are, in fact, developing. The converting of labelling most of Asia, Africa, and Latin America as developing highlights that those nations share a number of similar development problems. Nance Lui Fuson, The Development Puzzle, p.4, 1979.

Further, the brigades are endeavouring to lesson Botswana's dependence as neighbouring countries for certain goods which can now be produced locally. For instance, a bicycle plant was opened for a programme designed to enable students to cover a part of their training costs by part-time work. Moreover, in Kenya village, polytechnics are a growing part of Kenyan village life, where ninety percent of the population lives. These polytechnics are part of the Kenya Government's "Youth Development Programme"[1].

There is a tendency to feel, among the students of development, that the developing countries should be emphasizing in their development plans the improvement of agricultural production and small industries in rural areas, where most of the people live. In accordance with Gandhi's views, such emphasis is important for increasing food supplies, and also for slowing the drift to already overcrowded urban areas[2]. Thus, there is an increasing realization in developing countries that rural development rather than urbanization is the key to a healthy future. Labour intensive, intermediate technology is another contemporary feature of most developing countries, and one which Gandhi would have favoured. This form in industrialization, unlike the Western style, operates on low-cost, labour-intensive techniques. It utilizes simple tools and machinery which can be quickly understood and used by farmers and craftsmen to

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Footnotes:-

1. Examples of Sri Lanka, Botswana, and Kenya based on Nance Lui Fyson, op. cit., p.47.

2. ibid., p.40.

improve productivity. Intermediate or "appropriate" technology is generally chosen to fit with the social and political goals, as well as with local conditions and resources. On the basis of Gandhi's constructive programme for national reconstruction and cooperative social action, there is a growing movement of more exchange between the developing countries. Fyson aptly observed:

> "Often the technology useful in one part of the Third World is more appropriate to the situation of another poor country than the type of technology which a rich country would be offering. Developing a Technical Cooperation network among Third World countries would very much improve the choice of technologies - and the choices of just what sort of development is to be followed."[1]

It is important to note that economic development itself does not ensure a healthy society. Gandhi was highly concerned about improving the state of health and hygiene in India. Many developing countries are focusing more of their resources on rural health centres and medical assistants[2]. In Bangladesh, Dr. Zafrullah Choudhury has pioneered the training of para-medical workers trained on the spot in villages where they live to teach preventive medicine and to recognize and treat simple disorders. In Kenya, diseases are being prevented by

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Footnotes:-

1. Nance Lui Fyson, op. cit., p.43.

2. Medical assistants are less costly than full professional physicians. Expensively-trained physicians are sensibly used in developing countries. A sufficient number of adequately-trained assistants, when appropriately used, can be of better overall value than a small number of doctors. In Tanzania, 1974-75, eight rural medical assistants and sixteen rural medical aides were all trained for the same cost as producing only one qualified doctor.

improving basic hygiene in the villages. By demonstrating, explaining, and discussing first to officials and community leaders and then to villagers, conditons are improving. This method emphasizes the communication and discussion on information to people in a way they can understand and without the need to invest in expensive health equipment.

Gandhi died as he had lived, a firm believer in the dignity and worth of a human being. He battled against war and violence, avarice and belligerance, fervor and prejudice. He served to reconcile all oppressed people to their servitude. He could not hate or hurt any living being for any cause. His religion was the moral law. He disliked intimate and sentimental relations. Love, for him, was a collective bond - love of humanity[1]. In the face of weighty provocations, he exercised restraint. His philosophy of truth, justice, and non-violence impelled him to submit willingly to personal inconvenience and even imprisonment rather than offer violent resistance. He possessed in abundance the virtues of tolerance, patience, and self-suffering. He held that the moral virtue is closely interrelated with all social, political, and economic situations. He preached self-discipline, high moral principles, disregard for pomp and ceremony, personal liberty, national self-determination, and international peace. The significance of

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Footnotes:-

1. J.B. Kripalani, "Gandhi the Revolutionary", Africa Quarterly, Journal of Indian Council of Africa, April-June, Vol. IX, No.1, p.54, 1969.

Gandhi's life lies not so much in his philosophical principles as in his practice of them. He was a man of thought and a man of action. His message to the world was his life.

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