Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas Concerning Education

“In a gentle way, you can shake the world”.(Mahatma Gandhi)

“EDUCATION is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”(Nelson Mandela). Education is the Development of the total personality of a child. Education is concerned with methods of teaching and learning whether in schools or school like environments. Education is the process of transmission of value and accumulating knowledge of society. Children, whether conceived among tribal people, the Florentines, or the middle class are born without culture. Education is the outline to guide them in learning a culture, shaping their behavior in the ways of adulthood, and guiding them toward their eventual role in society. As the societies grows more complex, the quantity of knowledge to be passed on from one generation to another becomes more than a person can know, and, hence, there must evolve more particular and essential means of cultural transmission. Day by day, society is becoming more complex and schools become even more institutionalized, educational experience is directly less to daily life. They are developing philosophies and theories of education rather than learning formal education, which is quite necessary for them to grow.

MAHATMA GANDHI, by name of MOHANDAS KARAM CHAND GANDHI, who is considered as FATHER OF NATION (born on October 2, 1869, Porbandar, India-died January 30, 1948, Delhi). He is an Indian Lawyer, Anti-Colonial Nationalist and Political Ethicist, who employed non-violent resistance to lead the successful campaign for India’s Independence from Rule, and in turn inspire the movements for Civil Right and Freedom across the world. He is famous for INDIAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT, NON VIOLENCE RESISTANCE. Being a leader of Indian National Congress that is INC in 1921, he led the campaign of social cause and for achieving SWARAJ or SELF-RULE. Gandhi also led Indians challenging imposed Salt tax with 400km DANDI SALT MARCH in 1930, and later in calling for to QUIT INDIA. There is war inside each individual, family, and society. Peace has become more illusive than ever before. The violent man used to subdue nature has now resulted in global warming and climate change, a phenomenon that has the potentials of wiping out all life form planet earth. We need peace; Mahatma Gandhi shown the way.

Hind Swaraj thought written in South Africa in the midst of struggle to secure the basic human rights of Indians living there, it is not just a book which prescribes how to gain political freedom but more of that to realize human being that they are the reason to maintain world peace they have to rise above everything. Gandhi wrote Hind Swaraj in 1908 during his return visit to South Africa from India via London by ship.

Gandhiji’s Hind Swaraj presents us with an idealised version of Indian culture that is completely counterpunctal to the ‘modern west’. Gandhi’s critique of modern civilization does overlook many of its strengths: its scientific and critical spirit of inquiry: its human control over the natural world; its organisational capacity. However, the focus of his criticism is modern civilization of a specific period; his condemnation of colonialism focuses on its imperialistic inspiration; his rejection of industrialism derives mostly from its capitalist context; his apprehensions about rationality regard its truncation by materialism. However, once the real limitations of Gandhi’s critique are acknowledged, then we can better contextualize and interpret his relevance for us

today, whether this be with regard to politics in our neocolonial world, or technologies in our postindustrial times, or culture in our postmodern age. These will now be some of the issues on which we must allow Gandhi to interrogate us. For “the kinds of questions Gandhi asked nearly eight decades ago are the ones which now face both the underdeveloped and the post-industrial societies caught up in a deep upsurge of confusion and disillusionment” [Sethi 1979:3].

Gandhiji penned Hind Swaraj; he was already convinced that violence in not Indian way of fighting for injustice, and that it was a gift of modern industrial civilisation to humankind. Gandhiji was neither against of nor west, he was committed towards Indian culture and values. So he was against the idea of modern industrial civilisation. He wanted independent India to be governed by Indian roots in because, ‘it is the glitter of the modern world that seduced India and rendered it captive and grounded into submission. And said (page38) “The English have not taken India; we have given to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them”. Thus Hind Swaraj is as much a treatise on nonviolence as it is on the dangers inherent to modern civilization.

On one hundred and fifty birth anniversary of Gandhi, His teachings and ideas are once again recalled under the hashtag “#change within” which is totally agreed. Mahatma Gandhi teachings are all about non-violence, courage, service, faith, belief, truth, peace, thoughts, etc. People should bring changes within themselves first then only they can bring changes in others perspectives. “When a flower doesn’t bloom you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower”- Alexander des Heiser.

Gandhi’s life was a continuing series of controversies and contestations with those in power on behalf of the powerless. He never lacked opponents, among and even the Indian elites, and often found himself isolated and alone particularly at the end of his life, which was far from being one long triumphant procession. Yet one of the great contributions of Gandhi was precisely his centering of the periphery: in politics with ‘anthyodaya’; in religion by de-brahamising Hinduism, de-institutionalizing practice and personalizing belief; in education by his proposal for ‘nai talim’ or basic education. Not all of these efforts were successful or perhaps even practical, but they did contribute, which is still valid today.

The history of Indian education has its roots to the ancient ages where they followed the Gurukul system that is where the students have to live in the house of their teacher until the teacher felt that he has imparted what he requires. The subjects taught varied from Sanskrit to Scriptures to Mathematics to Metaphysics and the knowledge attain would be passed on the generations to generations.

However, this system was changed during the Colonial era when set up schools that followed a curriculum confined to subjects such as Mathematics, Science, etc. while the ancient system include more interaction with the nature, the modern system was more class room oriented. Hence, education system divides into two: primary system and higher system.

The objective of primary education is to achieve the basic skills; it is only for development of mind. Gandhiji explained there are pros and corn to the education. People can use it in any way whether good or bad. If a farmer who is earning his bread honestly, who is behaving nicely with his parents, his wife, his children and his fellow villagers. He understands and observes rules morality. But he cannot write his own name. Gandhiji favors this, that a person should be

morally educated. However, basic education including mind, body, and spiritual development given importance. It is totally all round development of the child.

Therefore, it is call as milestone in the history of education. It rebelled against the prevailing passive, book-centered and examination dominated system, where a student left with choosing from Science, Humanities or Commerce. It has been a trend for opting to go abroad for further higher studies. Gandhi realized that this system is unreal and artificial. He said, “I am convinced that the present system of education is not only wistful but positively harmful.” Here Gandhiji’s concern there will be a gap between parents and children and not able to understand their basic moral and ethics. The words of Gandhi the present system of education do not meet the present requirement of the country in any shape. “English have been made medium of education in all the higher fields and created a gulf between the highly educated and the uneducated many.”

In today’s era, education system has lost its real meaning, everything is just a money-making process. Why knowledge is charged? Why the system is not doing anything to improvise the education criteria? Where is the young India going these days? Why people prefer to go abroad for higher education? In addition, if education is given then why people are using it in the wrong ways? Answer to these entire questions, education is something, which is necessary for every human being whether rich or poor. Knowledge is something, which should not be charged. There are still some people who teach their students free, they do not take anything in return. Our system is getting worst day by day, whether school or any other institution, they all charge higher monetary prices to give knowledge. Moreover, even parents invest on their children education in return, they want their children to be highly educated and get successful in their future. Seriously, their children are working on it or wasting their parent’s money. Some children come into family pressure and lead to wrong steps in their life. Every parent wants his or her children to be stable and it is not necessary to be a Doctor, an Engineer or Police Officer. However, more important is to be good human being, which no school no institution helps to develop in a person.

Gandhi says,” If we feel inclined to receive that education, we may make good use of it. As an ornament, it is likely to sit well on us. It now follows that it is not necessary to make this education compulsory. Our ancient school system is enough. Character building has the first place in it and that is primary education. A building erected on that foundation will last.”