



**BENCH MARKING IN EDUCATION INCULCATION OF
GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY IN 21ST CENTURY.....**

Sabiha More

Associate Professor, Smt Surajba College of Education, Juhu, North, Mumbai

Abstract

The name of Mahatma Gandhi transcends the bounds of race, religion and nation- states, and has emerged as the prophetic voice of the 21st century. He is remembered for his passionate adherence to the practice of non-violence and his supreme humanism. After the great Buddha and Jesus he once again demonstrated that non-violence could also be effective instruments of social change. A giant of a man with his frail body, his short dhoti, his walking stick, a khadi shawl over his bare shoulders and his round spectacles. A man whose footprints are found in every corner of this country, a man of the soil, a man who lives India its ethos, its culture, its fabric! Gandhi successfully demonstrated to a world, weary with wars and continuing destruction that adherence to Truth and Non-violence is not meant for individual behavior alone but can be applied in global affairs too. But the saddest part of today's reality is that today's generation either don't know about Gandhi or are not provided enough opportunities to explore Gandhi and his ideologies. The school, the society, the polity, the community somehow does not take into cognizance about making the present generation familiar with the thoughts and ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. So a small little institute named Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan in a quiet corner of Juhu, Mumbai is trying to making persistent effort to make the present generation understand the ideas and thought process of the Father of Nation by propagating it through not only words but by action. Gandhi envisioned an ideal society where justice is done "unto the last" and in which institution's aim is to get the best out of man. We also are trying to promote the same.

Introduction: Today, the path and means used by Mahatma Gandhi have become more relevant not just in India, but elsewhere too where people have been suppressed or injustice has been institutionalized. The Jasmine Revolution is an example of Gandhian path at work. The Jasmine revolution that started in December-January 2013 in Tunisia was a peoples' movement that helped end the autocratic rule of president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on January 15. The revolution was ignited by the self-immolation of vegetable vendor Mohamed Bouazizi, when he was humiliated by a woman constable on December 17. Though, self-immolation is not within the tenets of Gandhian principles, the outrage against social injustice got a new spark. What were the people of Tunisia fighting for? Unemployment, food inflation, corruption, lack of freedom of speech and poor living conditions. All issues concerning common people for whom Gandhi raised his voice. The movement soon spread to Egypt and other Middle East nations. Martin Luther King was also a close follower of Gandhi. While celebrating the birth of a new nation in Ghana, King had said: "There's something in the soul that cries out for freedom." But the sad part is that in India people have started to forget Gandhi. Today Gandhi is remembered in India mostly on his birthday which is celebrated as a national holiday rather as a ritual. The present generation is either in oblivion with the sacrifices made by Mahatma Gandhi or are being ill-informed about his sacrifices that he made to make India free from the clutches of slavery. What saddens me the most is that neither the school nor the society is making any conscious effort to familiarize the present generation with the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. In fact our present generation is more familiar with computers, globalization, stocks and cricket than with Mahatma Gandhi. So we at our college feel that it's our duty to introduce Gandhi to the present generation. Since we are a Teacher's training institute and have 80 Student Teachers, we feel that if we familiarize teachers it will multiply and young learners would be molded well with the Gandhian philosophy.

Our Institution Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan is an institute which was established in the birth centenary year of Mahatma Gandhi 1969, at Juhu, Mumbai by two great teachers Shri Vaju Bhai Patel and his wife Smt Leelaben Patel who also happened to be a freedom fighter. When they started a trust called Indian Council of Basic Education it was their prime motive of spread, dissemination and fortification of Gandhian ideology amongst the masses through the means of Education. So they designed a very unique program for training would be Teachers would be

undergoing so as to become disseminator of Gandhian Philosophy on one hand and on the other have an all-round balanced and developed personality. So since its inception till date Gandhi ShikshanBhavan follows some unique programme which are as follows:

1. **PRAYER:** In a college of education prayer has always been an integral part, but our prayer is altogether different. We have a prayer in which we try to remember the Almighty not in any particular form but in all practical and possible ways, a prayer in which everyone can participate without any hesitation and in a manner with which everyone can identifywith. It starts with ISHAVASYAM followed by SEWAK KEE PRARTHANA. After that we have EKADASH VRAT which is a part of Jain Religion. After that every day we sing a community song which may be inspirational having the essence of social reconstruction, patriotism, national integration, human values, environmental preservation, international understanding etc. We end our prayer with another HYM which is a part of Upnishad. Thus it can be concluded that we have a prayer which inspire the students, provides them peace and solace, allows them to slow down and introspect one self, and in the bargain they are exposed to Gandhian Philosophy.

2. **COMMUNITY WORK:** Social Work is the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, or communities enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating societal conditions favorable to this goal. Social Work practice consists of the professional application of Social Work values, principles, and techniques to one or more of the following ends: helping people obtain tangible services; counseling and psychotherapy with individuals, families, and groups; helping communities or groups provide or improve processes. This is what Mahatma Gandhi thought about Social Work. In our college we have been doing community right from our inception. Today Community Work has become a part of our University Syllabus but our college is the pioneer in this area. We have been doing community work in different areas and sensitizing our Student teachers so that they can play their role of agent of social change more effectively. This is done all round the year by all students. Some of the places where we have been going to serve the society are:

a) Cheshire Home: A home for paraplegic patients situated at Andheri East. We have been going there for last Thirty years. Here we do cleaning work, make inmates learn non formally, play with them, have conversation with them, help them in the work shop, work in the inbuilt hospital etc.

b) Asha Kiran: Teaching the street children: Asha Kiran is an Ngo working to fortify the formal schooling of marginalized children. The organization help the Municipal school children learn better by fortifying the ability and capability of such students. So our students go to four such centers every Saturday for five hours along with one Teacher and spend time with children.

This help our student teachers to know the real situation of society, gives then exposure to tackle such sticky situation. Also they can reconstruct society by helping the poor, the down trodden, the less capable children.

3. EXPOSURE TO KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES: I am indeed very proud that our college may be the only college of education where our children are every year exposed to KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES. On 2nd October every year we never have holiday, instead we have special program on this day like Special Seminar, Special Film, Debate and Discussion etc. The entire week is dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi in which we go to KVIC, Irla, Vile Parle where we have a very lively and fruitful discussion with the authorities. A tour is also organized and students understand the KHADI PHILOSOPHY. The entire day is dedicated for inculcation of Gandhian values and Gandhian ideologies. The college atmosphere is conducive for dissemination of Gandhian values and thought process.

Such an endeavor ensures that students are well versed with the ideology of KHADI and spinning. They also understand why CHARKHA was called the “wheel of life”. What better way to understand Gandhiji?

4. BOOK REVIEW: In our college as soon as the students take admission we give them Gandhiji’s autobiography MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH. It is mandatory for them to read the book which is the story of Bapu’s life. After reading it they have to choose any five stories that has impressed them the most, convert them in simple words and when they go for internship they have to narrate them to the school students and then take feedback from them.

Mumbai University in their syllabus have made it compulsory for every student to do Book Review and is awarded 10 marks. We have in our college have converted this exercise that all the book review will be done of books connected to Mahatma Gandhi. I am very proud to say that in this entire endeavor our students are exposed to a vast amount of Gandhian literature. During the Viva taken our students have confessed that because of this exercise they have grown

and bloomed. They have developed a lot of respect and understanding of Mahatma Gandhi. Some of the books read by students are as follows:

Serial No	Name of the Book	Author
1	The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi	RaghuramIyer
2	Gandhi – Patel: Letters and Speeches : differences within consensus	Neeraj Singh
3	Education and Ideology: Gandhi and Ivan Milch	B Ramesh Babu
4	My Religion	Edited By: Ramesh Ganta, Bharatan Kumar
5	Gandhi Today	J D Sethi
6	Mahatma Gandhi:- Gandhi in Anecdotes	Ravi Varma
7	Law and The lawyers	Edited: SanchitKharat
8	The Gandhian Philosophy of Spinning Wheel	MohitChakravarty
9	Gandhi and his disciples	Jayant Pandya
10	Relevance of Gandhian Economics	Shriman Narayan
11	India of my dreams	M K Gandhi
12	Educational Ideas of Gandhi and Tagore	Dr R S Mani
13	Hind Swaraj and Other Writings	Anthony J Pasel

5. Socially Useful Productive Work: One of the components of Gandhian Philosophy is that training of head heart and hand. So in our college we train hands through SUPW. We make our each student teacher undergo some craft and handicraft training which include jute work, tailoring, puppet making, handicraft, card board work etc. Boys are encouraged to do tailoring which also ensure role reversal. Also we promote best out of waste to make card board work. We have an exhibition on 30th of January each year. The products are displayed and nearby schools visit the exhibition. This is again a very powerful medium to get exposed and to understand the Gandhian ideology of working with hand. Let people not get confused that we are trying to run our own course avoiding the Affiliated University syllabus. We are honoring the university syllabus but along the line we do interweave the institutions philosophy along the line. To stand out among the lot you need to have an edge and in our institution we provide that edge. We make

them DIFFERENT in the crowd so that they have their own shine and sheen. I am not boasting but our student teachers are identified for their thoughts, deed and action, they stand apart and are appreciated for the way they are groomed.

6. SARVODAYA AND SARVA DHARAM PRATHANA: Every Thursday we at our institution have Sarva Dharm Prayer i.e. prayer from Hindu, Islam, Christian, Buddha, Jain, Sikh and Parsi religion. Everyone recites the prayer giving respect to all religion, the different prayers are explained to students so students learn acceptance, assimilation and fraternity. This also allows religious acceptance without erasing identity at a very young age. Children learn to accept each other. This exercise is done from pre-primary to B Ed College in the entire institution. On the same day we rotate a Patra (Vessel) called SarvodayaPaatra in the class. Each student had to give some amount of money in the paatra, but on a condition that the money that is put in the paatra is put after making some sacrifice. In simple words one walks instead of taking a bus, save 10 rupees and then he gives that money for the poorest of the poor in the society. Gandhiji's first encounter with this noble notion was in the form of the book titled *Unto This Last* by John Ruskin, which he read in South Africa in 1904. The impact of this reading was so powerful that it proved to be a life changing experience for Gandhiji, "I determined to change my life in accordance with the ideals of the book"

CONCLUSION: Gandhiji not only gave India its freedom but also gave the world and us a new thought on nonviolence and sustainable living. His teachings and experiments are more valid today than ever before, especially when we are trying to find solutions to worldwide greed, corruption, violence and runaway consumptive lifestyle which are putting a very heavy burden on the world's resources. Through ages India has time and again given to the world a new thought. Thus Buddhism, Jainism, Yogic system, Sikhism are part of the great spiritual thought given by India from time to time. Gandhiji's message of nonviolence and sustainable living is a continuation of that long tradition.

Gandhiji believed in all - inclusive growth and felt that India can only become a great nation when its teeming and impoverished rural masses become better off. He therefore focused on rural development for last 30 years of his life and felt intuitively that future of India is in decentralized rural development. This vision which he stated in 1920's is even more valid today after almost 100 years. So we make it a point to disseminate his philosophy in all possible ways.

"Generations to come, it may well be, will scarce believe that such a man as this one ever in flesh and blood walked upon this Earth."— Albert Einstein

We want this to happen in all its true sense that why all this effort!!!!

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