



BASIC EDUCATION OF MK GANDHI AND NEP 2020

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Abstract

This paper examines Mahatma Gandhi's NaiTalim (Basic Education) in relation to India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, particularly its focus on skill-based and vocational education. While NEP 2020 promotes hands-on learning and flexible curricula, Gandhi's philosophy stresses self-reliance, experiential learning, and the importance of local crafts. The study compares their principles, objectives, and challenges, highlighting how Gandhi's ideas remain relevant in addressing current issues like unemployment and poverty. It argues that the existing education system does not sufficiently prepare students for independence and suggests that adopting Gandhi's Basic Education framework could initiate necessary reforms in India's education landscape. The paper advocates for a Gandhian approach to address unemployment, poverty, and corruption through transformative educational principles in light of NEP 2020.

Key Words: Mahatma Gandhi's NaiTalim (Basic Education), National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

Introduction

Education is a vital process that equips individuals with knowledge, skills, and moral habits, enhancing personal growth and career opportunities. It fosters critical thinking and problem-solving, essential for overcoming life's challenges. Education is a social process, impacting both individual and societal stability. However, the current Indian educational system fails to promote social development. Gandhi's efforts to establish a native education system during British rule introduced a conflict with traditional educational practices, leading to societal disparities. His writings in Basic Education and Towards New Education articulate a philosophy intertwining Idealism, Naturalism, and Pragmatism, advocating for continuous and life-enriching education. With a global shift toward skill-based education, India's NEP 2020 aligns with Gandhi's NaiTalim system, emphasizing hands-on and vocational learning, signalling a notable evolution in educational approaches.

Education involves gaining knowledge, skills, beliefs, and moral habits to improve individual abilities and confidence for life's challenges.



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It teaches critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which lead to better job opportunities and personal growth. Basic education is essential for children's development and occurs in families, communities, and schools, helping with social stability and individual socialization. However, India's current education system does not create a caring society or support social development, making quality education for everyone necessary for social change. Education is a key social system, like family, marriage, and politics, important for keeping society organized. Mahatma Gandhi aimed to create an Indian education system during British rule to counter the harmful effects of foreign educational methods that increased social divides. His writings, especially Basic Education (1951) and Towards New Education (1953), present an educational philosophy based on Idealism, Naturalism, and Pragmatism, promoting lifelong learning. As economies focus on practical skills and innovation, skill-based education has become more popular, with roots in Gandhi's Nai Talim system, which combined work with learning. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 shows a major change towards hands-on and vocational education. This paper looks at how Gandhi's ideas about education connect with today's skill development efforts, including NEP 2020, pointing out both similarities and differences.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- Understand and review Gandhi's principles of basic education.
- Highlight important features of Gandhi's basic education and its relevance to NEP 2020

Methodology

To achieve the study's objectives, a comprehensive methodology was utilized, incorporating both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included the collected works, speeches, and articles of Mahatma Gandhi, while secondary sources comprised books and articles from national and international magazines, enhancing the research's depth and evaluation.

Educational Thoughts of MK Gandhi

Gandhi's Basic Education exemplifies his educational philosophy, emphasizing the development of morally upright, independent, socially responsible, economically



productive citizens. This educational model aims to combat unemployment by encouraging self-employment among youth. Gandhi posited that education should cultivate the child comprehensively—body, mind, and spirit—leading to personal fulfilment and the ultimate pursuit of Truth or God. He asserted that literacy is merely a preliminary step in the broader educational journey, aiming to unlock a child's full potential. Education for children aged seven to fourteen should be free, required, and available to everyone, using their first language for teaching. It should go beyond basic reading and writing by including skills training to help them become economically independent. Education should also promote good values to develop responsible citizens and support the overall growth of the child. It should be connected to a useful craft or industry so that children can gain practical work experience and work towards their financial independence.

Gandhi's idea of basic education focuses on developing the whole child. Key principles include:

- Complete Development: Education should support spiritual, intellectual, and physical growth, even though some see it as outdated.
- Free and Compulsory Education: For children aged 7 to 14, education should be free and taught in their native languages to strengthen society.
- Occupation-focused Education: Education should include local crafts to promote self-sufficiency and connect manual and intellectual work.
- Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction: Teaching in the mother tongue helps with clear thinking and understanding.
- Creativity and Critical Thinking: "Learning by doing" promotes creativity and critical thinking, emphasizing practical work beyond just reading and writing.
- Collaborative Learning: Education should encourage teamwork and social responsibility to help create well-rounded individuals.
- Moral Education: Gandhi believed that teaching morality and ethics is essential for peace and effective education.
- Character Building: The main goal of education is to develop moral and social character in students.



- Self-Reliance and Patriotism: Gandhi wanted education to foster patriotism and practical skills for independence, avoiding financial dependence.

- Faith in Truth and Non-Violence: Education should encourage truth and non-violence, avoiding exploitation and hatred, and promoting cooperative living in society.

Gandhi's educational philosophy emphasizes service, social awareness, and responsibility through community engagement. He advocated for cleanliness and equality among all castes, vehemently opposing untouchability. Central to his approach was a focus on children, encouraging them to draw from their experiences and creativity. Gandhi believed that education should foster self-discipline as intrinsic motivation, steering clear of corporal punishment. He viewed education as a means to cultivate the whole person, aligning with the demand for vocational training. Prioritizing character development over mere literacy, he underscored the significance of moral integrity and non-violence. Gandhi's educational vision seeks to achieve not just academic success, but also the ethical and social development of students, equipping them to become responsible citizens. His teachings resonate the importance of non-violence and tolerance in a world rife with violence and terrorism, advocating for the courage and patience necessary to nurture a culture of peace.

Basic Education and NEP2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to create a flexible and well-rounded education system that focuses on basic reading and writing skills, modern skills for the 21st century, and job training. Its main goals include encouraging hands-on learning and critical thinking, with job training starting from Grade 6 along with internships. It highlights the importance of coding, data science, artificial intelligence, and entrepreneurship while working with the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) to meet job market needs. To implement this, the policy plans to work with industry partners, train teachers in new teaching methods, and use digital platforms like DIKSHA and SWAYAM for delivering content.

This analysis compares Gandhi's Basic Education with NEP-2020 based on four points:

A). Philosophy: Gandhi values moral, spiritual, and manual work, while NEP-2020 emphasizes global skills and flexibility.



B). Methodology: Gandhi promotes learning through productive activities like spinning, while NEP-2020 focuses on vocational training and digital skills.

C). Curriculum: Gandhi's curriculum connects with rural life and crafts, while NEP-2020 includes a variety of subjects like STEM, arts, and vocations.

D). Teacher's Role: Gandhi sees teachers as guides and facilitators, while NEP-2020 views them as trainers and sources of knowledge.

The results are different as well; Gandhi aims to develop self-reliant, socially aware individuals, while NEP-2020 aims to create employable, adaptable global citizens.

Challenges for Gandhi's Basic Education include poor infrastructure, views that it is outdated, ideological opposition, disagreements on self-sufficiency, and a focus on industrialization. For NEP 2020, challenges include varied implementation across different areas, gaps in teacher preparation and training, aligning education with job readiness, infrastructure problems, financial limitations, and the need to update the curriculum.

Suggestions include adding Gandhian values to the NEP 2020 curriculum for value-based education, encouraging community-based and ethical learning, and making sure that infrastructure and policies work together for vocational integration to meet the goals of NEP 2020.

Conclusion

Basic education is very important for a child's growth. Mahatma Gandhi believed in an education system that includes practical skills and moral values. Today, education reforms try to match learning with job market needs to solve problems like educated unemployment. Gandhi's ideas are still important, as they point out issues with modern education, which is often criticized for promoting consumerism and violence. There is a call to revive Indian culture to address these problems. Gandhi's emphasis on values like truth and non-violence should also include awareness of the environment and community involvement for real development.

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