states that knowledge and work can never be separated. It was actually a reaction against the British educational system and colonialism in general, which had the negative effect of making Indian children alienated and career-based; it promoted disdain for manual work, the development of a new elite class, and the increasing problems of industrialisation and urbanisation. The three pillars of Gandhi's pedagogy were its focus on the *lifelong character* of education, its *social character* and its form as a *holistic process*. For Gandhi, education is 'the moral development of the person', a process that is by definition 'lifelong'. By the time, you finish reading the unit, you will learn that Gandhi's views on education were the result of his views on life.

12.3 MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI: AN INTRODUCTION

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, known to the whole world as Mahatma Gandhi, was born on October 2, 1869 in the small town of Porbandar on the Western coast of India. Mohandas' father, Karamchand Gandhi, was a Dewan of a petty state. He kept many books, mostly about religion in his home. The Gandhi family embraced a belief in many Hindu gods and strict moral values. In his childhood, Mohandas was a strange looking little boy. He had a long, skinny neck, and ears that stuck out. His best features were a happy smile, and bright, twinkling eyes.

At the time Mohandas was born, India was under the domination of the British. Besides, the Indian culture was dominated by the caste system. Mohandas started primary school at Rajkot, 120 miles from Porbandar, where his father was transferred. In 1888, Mohandas finished high school and enrolled in college. After failing in college, he decided to find a profession that would bring in good money. He chose law. Mohandas Gandhi was told that he could become a lawyer if he went to Great Britain and studied for three years. This was less time than it would have taken him to become a lawyer in India. But the cost of this education in Great Britain was thirteen thousand rupees. That was a huge amount for a boy from a lower middle class family like his. Besides, at that time, there were no scholarships.



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Gandhiji raised the vocal alarm against untouchability. He also highly stressed on equality for women. There was one specific way in which women suffered greatly during Gandhi's time. That was the tradition that if a man died his wife was expected to jump onto the funeral **pyre** to die as well. Gandhi fought against this tradition and built a community of followers at Sabarmati. He also invited the untouchables to join it. Gandhi admitted the untouchable familes in Sabarmati.

Gandhi was also a writer. One of Gandhi's earliest publications, *"Hind Swaraj"*, originally published in Gujarati in 1909, is often considered the intellectual blueprint of India's independence movement. Besides, for decades, he edited several newspapers including "Harijan" in Gujarati, in Hindi and in English language; "Indian Opinion" while in South Africa and, "Young India" in English, and "Navajivan", a Gujarati monthly, on his return to India. Gandhi also wrote some books including his autobiography, The Story of "My Experiments with Truth" which is a classic. His other autobiographical works include *"Satyagraha in South Africa"* about his struggle there, Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule and a paraphrase in Gujarati of John Ruskin's Unto This Last. Now, all his works are available as Collected Volume.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What were the three pillars of Gandhi's Pedagogy?

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Q2. When and where was Mahatma Gandhi born?

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Q3. Name one famous publication of Mahatma Gandhi.

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its training." Thus, every school could be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufacture of these schools.

Cultural Development: According to Gandhi, one of the real function of education is to impart valuable information on culture and native heritage. He believed that India has to flourish in her own climate, scenery, and her own literature, even though all the three may be inferior to the English climate, scenery and literature. He said: "We and our children must build on our own heritage. If we borrow another, we impoverish our own. We can never grow on foreign victuals. I want the nation to have the treasures contained in that language and, for that matter, in other languages of the world, through its own vernaculars." However, he also believed that this cultural belongingness should show itself in the smallest details of one's conduct and personal behaviour such as how one sits, how one walks, how one dresses etc. Thus, in his views, education must transmit the age old spiritual tradition of our land.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q4. What does Gandhiji meant by all round development?

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Q5. Mention one real function of education advocated by Gandhiji.

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12.4.2 Buniyadi Siksha (Basic Education)

Gandhiji provided several important views on the ideas of Basic Education which are relevant even in today's contexts. It is said that education is a great liberating force. But, for Gandhi, education does not mean mere spiritual knowledge, nor does liberation signify only spiritual liberation after death. Knowledge includes all training that is useful for the service of mankind and liberation means freedom

present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the different classes of people. It would finally lay the foundation of a more just social order in which there is no unnatural division between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right to freedom. Basic education is meant to transform village children into model villagers. Primary education is a farce designed without regard to the wants of the India of the villages and for that matter even of the cities. Basic education links the children, whether of the cities or the villages, to all that is best and lasting in India.

12.4.3 Curriculum

Gandhiji held that education should be related to the environment of the child. That is why emphasis in education should be based on all those subjects which concern our own country, own life, own people, as well as physical and social environment. Again he emphasised the teaching of mother tongue rather than English. He said: "education through a foreign language entails a certain degree of strain, and our boys have to pay dearly for it. To a large extent, they lose the capacity of shouldering any other burden afterwards, for they become a useless lot who are weak of body, without any zest for work and mere imitators of the West''. ''Besides, Gandhiji was worried that in many cases, the only meaning of education is knowledge of English. But all these are to be seen as signs of our slavery and degradation, and he was of the view that "the foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own lands. It is the greatest tragedy of the existing system. The sooner, therefore, educated India shakes itself free from the hypnotic spell of the foreign medium, the better it would be for them and the people."



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''English is today admittedly the world language. I would therefore accord it a place as a second, optional language, not in the school, but in the university course.

Learning by Doing: Gandhi's views on education is based on the philosophy of learning by doing. It lies in the application of truth and love in every variety of human activity, weather in individual life or a corporate one. The notion of education through handicrafts rises from the contemplation of truth and love permeating life's activities. Such education is not derived from, nor does it depend upon books. It has no relation to sectional religion. If it can be called religious, it is universal religion from which all sectional religions are derived. Therefore, it is learned from the Book of Life which costs nothing and which cannot be taken away from one by any force on earth.

12.4.5 Free and Compulsory Education

Gandhi was a firm believer in the principle of free and compulsory primary education for India. But, this could be realised only by teaching the children a useful vocation and utilising it as a means for cultivating their mental, physical and spiritual abilities. No one should consider economic calculations in connection with education as sordid or out of place. He held the view that for imparting education best suited to the needs of the villagers, one should convert it into a training school in order that one might be able to give practical training to teachers in the needs of the villages. Gandhiji wanted free and compulsory education within the age group of 7-14 for the whole population of India, equally giving stress on primary education. He advocated that the state should take the responsibility of school education and should finance it.

12.4.6 Religious and Moral Education

Another important facet of Gandhi's views on education is to give emphasis on one's religion which can be an effective means of development of personality and character of the students. Gandhi emphasised the spirit of self-sacrifice, social service, Ahimsa and Brahmacharya. For Gandhi, true religion meant an abiding faith in the absolute values of truth, love and justice. Thus, he came to recommend instructions in the universal essentials of religion and the training in the fundamental virtues of truth and non-violence as

- Literacy in itself is no education. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. True education is one gift that visibly distinguishes man from beast.
- Real education has to draw out the best from the boys and girls to be educated.
- True education must correspond to the surrounding circumstances and focus on its healthy growth.
- What is really needed to make democracy function is not knowledge of facts, but right education.
- National education to be truly national must reflect the national condition for the time being.
- The function of Nai-Talim is not to teach an occupation, but through it to develop the whole man.
- Religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations.
- By education, Gandhi meant an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man—body, mind and spirit.
- Gandhi regarded spinning and weaving as the necessary part of any national system of education.
- The notion of education through handicrafts rises from the contemplation of truth and love permeating life's activities.
- Persistent questioning and healthy inquisitiveness are the first requisites for acquiring learning of any kind.
- If we want to impart education best suited to the needs of the villagers, we should take the vidyapith to the villages.



12.6 FURTHER READING

1) "The selected works of Gandhi", Vol.6

2) http://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/on-education/

3) Mahatma Gandhi: Anne Schraff. SADDLEBACK EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING

4) Three Watson, Irvine, CA 92618-2767