

## CHAPTER-3

### MAHATMA GANDHI AND ASHRAM SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN GUJARAT

The eighteenth century in the history of South Asia is considered as a transition period. It indicated the end of the Mughal Empire and the beginning of English East India Company's administration. The period from 1750-1850 can be identified as the period of many transitions political, economic as well social one and is identified as a shift from pre-colonial to colonial period. These changes are also noted in the field of education. As has been described in the previous chapter, the local education system in the pre-colonial times was well entrenched into the social set up with a space for everyone in it. Be it a domestic set up or an individualized one school, the pre-colonial educational system was qualified to absorb the newer generation into its rich and productive economy. However, with colonization came changes in the educational structure which destroyed the older system and adapted the western model of education. The system built by the British was mostly to facilitate their administration and to serve the trading interests of their mother country. *A commercial institution thus was made to become a colonial state, and to change its rhetoric from profit for itself into service of the empire. Involving the dominant groups of Indian society in the functioning of the colonial state was part of the Company's new job. It implied the creation of a new order in the colony, a civil society among the natives. The ethos, the rules, and the symbols of the new order had to be constructed, in a manner that would not disturb the ongoing commercial enterprise. The violence which had helped build the empire could now onwards be practiced only on the outskirts of the proposed civil society. Within it, coercion had to be replaced by socialization. This is where education had*

a role to play.<sup>1</sup> This setup was challenged by some of the educated Indians and efforts were made to transform the new social order, especially through education. Mahatma Gandhi was one such nationalist who focused on education and introduced Buniyadi education, the basis of which can be found in the ancient Ashram system of education.

To understand the BuniyadiAshram education system in the modern period, it is necessary to understand the situation of education before the beginning of Buniyadi education. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section analyzes the British education system with special reference to the education system in different parts of Gujarat. The second section describes the Ashram system of education which was devised by Mahatma Gandhi and his contemporaries.

### **Section-I: Educational Changes during British rule**

Modern period is dominated by British control and the changes that they brought in. The beginnings were made with the efforts of Warren Hasting, a Calcutta *Madrassa established* in 1781. Similarly, Jonathan Duncan founded the Hindu College at Banaras in 1791. There was a curiosity among those young men to understand the Indian structures. William Jones and other British scholars came to India and set about examining Indian society afresh. As a result Asiatic Society (1784) was established and Indian scholars were invited to participate in it. As more and more territories accepted the sovereignty of the British, a greater need was felt to invest more energy to change or reform the education structure in India. As a result when the Charter for the British East India Company came up for renewal in 1813, apart from many important administrative causes a tiny clause was added with regards to education.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kumar, K. (1989). *Colonial Citizen as an Educational ideal*. Economic and Political Weekly, PE45-PE. 51

<sup>2</sup>Anderson, George. “*Some Aspects of Indian Education Past and Present*.” Sir Philip Hartog University of London Institute of Education, Studies and Reports No: vii, pp. 109. Oxford University Press, 1939. 3s. 6d. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10, no. 1 (1940): 235-236.

In order to get a concerted idea of the changes introduced by the British, this section is divided into four phases. The first phase of British education began from the Charter Act of 1813 and ended around 1834, it was the first step taken by the British in the field of education.<sup>3</sup> Second phase is earmarked from 1834-1854. It mainly showcases experiments and controversies in the field of education. Third phase is marked between 1854-1900, when there was emphasis laid on western system of education. It eclipsed the local model of education.<sup>4</sup> Fourth phase, 1901-1947 deals with Lord Curzon view on education. It is outside the purview of this study to discuss British education policy in greater detail, but the following account gives a brief idea with regards to efforts made by the English officers to bring about changes in the education system.<sup>5</sup>

The Charter Act of 1813 provided for one lakh rupees to be spent on education growth in India per year. The letter of instruction dated on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1814 was explicit in stating “that no part of the grant was to be utilized for the establishment of any public college”.<sup>6</sup> The purpose for taking such a step was made fairly clear. It was to promote closer contacts between the British and the Indians in order to sustain British rule in India. This entailed helping those young British officers who wanted to learn to memorize Sanskrit language; translating ancient Sanskrit literature into English; investigation of old education institutions of India; investigation of the feelings of the Indians towards English and subsidizing the Indian scholars like *pandits* and *maulvis*.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Roy, Tirthankar. (2016). *The East Indian Company: The world's most powerful cooperation*. Delhi: Penguin Books Limited.

<sup>4</sup>Anderson, George. “Some Aspects of Indian Education Past and Present. By Sir Philip Hartog University of London Institute of Education, Studies and Reports No: vii, pp. 109. Oxford University Press, 1939. 3s. 6d.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10, no. 1 (1940): 235-236.

<sup>5</sup>Chaliha, A, Borah S, Neog S. (2016). *Foundation of Education*. Jorhat: Bidya Bhavan. 64

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company With Minutes of Evidence in Six Parts, and an Appendix and Index to Each · Volume 7, Issue 54 By Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons. Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company · 1832.446-47.

They were aware of the importance of setting up an efficient administrative structure, but they were also aware that if too many fast-paced changes were made then their efforts could meet with resistance. There was a degree of consciousness amongst the colonizers that the system of education was not universally institutionalized at the primary level. Simultaneously, there was a realization of the greatness of the literary heritage of the Subcontinent.

As a result, several steps were taken, and attempts were made to carry out an assessment of the existing education structure in India. Surveys were carried in the Madras Presidency from 1822-26; Bombay Presidency in 1823-28; and Bengal Presidency in 1835-38 respectively. Similar research was undertaken in North-western provinces in 1845 in Punjab in 1849 respectively. A discussion is carried out in the following section focusing on investigations carried out in various provinces.<sup>8</sup>

In 1822, Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras Presidency<sup>9</sup>, also known as the pioneer of **Tahsildar** Schools,<sup>10</sup> formed a committee to investigate geographical surveys, population, and number of students in the schools.<sup>11</sup> He submitted the report after five years to the British parliament in 1926. The suggestions involved appointment of a committee of public instruction for supervision in school.<sup>12</sup> A clear idea that came across is that the British were not in favor of taking the entire responsibility of education but merely to look at the administrative purpose. It is unclear as to what they thought had become of the local education system. What is significant

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<sup>8</sup>Thomas, Frederick William. (1891). The history and prospects of British education in India: being the 'Le Bas' prize essay for 1890. Cambridge: Deighton Bell and Co.; London: George Bell and Sons. For more Information see: Syed Nurulah & Naik J. P. (1951). *History of education in India during the British period*, Bombay: Macmillan. 3

<sup>9</sup>Burton Stein, & David Arnold. (2010). *A History of India*. John Wiley & Sons. 209

<sup>10</sup>Sattianadhan, S. (1894). *History of education in the Madras Presidency*. Madras: Srinivasa, Varadachari. 9

<sup>11</sup> Ghosh, Suresh Chandra. (2007) *History of Education in India*. Rawat Publications. 87

<sup>12</sup>Bharathy, R. "Sir Thomas Munro's Minute on Education - Its Effects." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 61, 2000, pp. 1005-1010. [www.jstor.org/stable/44148176](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44148176).

about the report is that it showed the number of students who were enrolled in the school and the number of children who were getting educated at home.

Mountstuart Elphinstone in the Bombay Presidency took the initiative of conducting a survey in 1823. The report of which appeared in 1829. He wrote a letter to Mr. Francis Warden (Member of Council) 1832 in which he stated that 'in Bombay, out of the population of 4,681,735 people, there were 1705 schools in which 36,143 students were receiving education. 25 schools had 1315 students and out of 1680 village schools had 33,838 students.'<sup>13</sup> This data was of the Bombay Province but the Bombay Government till then had not made any connected efforts to set up schools, it alone administered it in the city. The issues of the successful village schools were lacking and had become a cause of concern for many officials. The above-mentioned data was later on challenged, by Mr. G. L. (member of the executive council of the governor of Bombay) who wrote that there was hardly a village, great or small, throughout their territories, in which there was not at least one school, where young men were taught to write and read. This data too was later put to question when, in 1881-1882, the Indian education commission found 3954 indigenous schools with 78,205 students.<sup>14</sup>

So far as the Bengal region is concerned a survey was conducted by a missionary William Adam. He especially focused upon the regions of Bihar and Bengal.<sup>15</sup> He presented three reports to the British Government in July, first in 1835, 1836, and 1838 respectively. In his First report (1835), he stated that traditionally there were about 1, 00,000 schools where the age of admission was from five to six years of age. Although there were no printed textbooks, reading and writing were

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<sup>13</sup>Thomas, Frederick William. (1891). The history and prospects of British education in India: being the 'Le Bas' prize essay for 1890. Cambridge: Deighton Bell and Co.; London: George Bell and Sons. 4

<sup>14</sup>Ibid. 13

<sup>15</sup>Stark, Herbert Alick. (1916). *Vernacular education in Bengal from 1813 to 1912*. Calcutta: Calcutta General Publishing Co. 25

carried out in a structured manner.<sup>16</sup> The schools were of two types, 'Hindu Elementary' of *Pathshalas*, (Hindu schools of learning) and 'Muslim elementary' (Muslim schools of learning) or *Mukhtabs*. There were no fees charged and the method of teaching was mostly oral through recitation. Subjects taught were arithmetic, numeration, and weights.<sup>17</sup>

In the Second report he gave out the details of Thana Nattore (district of Rajshahi). A microlevel survey was conducted to investigate various issues and its deterrents. He reported that the number of villages was 485. Population of Thana was about 1, 95,296 out of which 1,29, 640 (Muslims), 66,656 (Hindus). There were twenty-seven elementary education institutes with 262 students. Besides these there were ten Bengalis schools with 167 students. Additionally, there were eleven Arabic schools with forty two students, two were Bengali and Persian schools with thirty students and four Persian schools with twenty three students. He says that the average age for admission was eight years. In elementary schools a teacher's salary was Rs. Five to Eight per month. There were thirty-eight Sanskrit institutes of higher learning with 397 students and no higher educational institutes for Islamic studies.<sup>18</sup>

In the Third report he conducted a survey in the district of Murshidabad. There the population was 1, 24,804. Number of schools imparting elementary education was 2,566 and these schools were divided into Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit (353), Persian (694) and Arabic (31). In the district of Midnapore there were 548 Bengali schools, forty-eight Persian schools, 182 Oriya schools and an English school.

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<sup>16</sup>Syed Nurulah & Naik J. P. (1951). *History of education in India during the British period*. Bombay: Macmillan. 25

<sup>17</sup>Philip Hartog. (1939). *Some Aspects of Indian Education Past and Present*. London: Oxford University Press. 79

<sup>18</sup> Long, J. Adam's reports on vernacular education in Bengal and Behar, submitted to government in 1855, 1836 and 1838 with a brief view of its past and present condition. Calcutta: Home Department Press. 76

The basic education or primary education here too followed the same pattern as in Bombay. There were many schools which taught Sanskrit, and it was the Brahmins who taught. The subjects taught predominantly were Grammar, Logic and even Law. Other subjects taught here are Mythology, Astrology, Lexicology, Rhetoric, Medicine, *Vedanta*, *Tantra*, *Mimansa* and *Sankhya*.<sup>19</sup> The general conclusion that was reached was that young students had been receiving some indigenous education. Mr. Thompson in the North-West Provinces and Sir John Lawrence in the Punjab also reached a conclusion when the investigations were conducted in 1845 and 1849 respectively.

The British had misconstrued by deliberate omission the local education system in these provinces. The new education system was designed to suit the administrative as well as the other requirements of the state and society. It was realized by the English officials especially when the utilitarian took change of the education policy. As a result, various efforts were made by the British officials to spread western education all over India.<sup>20</sup>

The British policy of education in India in the 1830's was dominated by the Utilitarian or Anglistics school of thought. Despite the recognition of the greatness of the Indian civilisation and its education structure. (as gets reflected from the above section), the policy underwent change. The purpose behind British policy was to create an administrative structure in which Indians could be employed, the rule of British East India Company was almost over and the crown's Government (which was to take even rule of Indian territories) began. By the time the British East India Company was abolished a generation had already been trained in western ideas. The circle had begun, and the stage had been set. However, the number of students

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<sup>19</sup>Dharampal. (1983). *The beautiful tree: Indigenous Indian education in the eighteenth century*. Biblia Impex. 54

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

receiving western education was less and was mostly restricted to the elites. This only meant that the majority of the people continued to be educated in the traditional method of education. In fact, the recent studies indicate that the western educational structure had not met with much success and the traditional method of education had continued in South Asia.<sup>21</sup>

### **The failure of western education and the continuity of tradition education system in the modern period**

As can be clearly seen from the above narrative, the British in order to obtain control of India brought about nominal changes in their educational structure, at least in the initial period. Tall claims, however, were made that in the nineteenth century the traditional education system of India was destroyed and was replaced with western education system instead. There was a general belief that all these changes took place in the nineteenth century and it was for the betterment of the Indians. In reality, the British policies were not effective till the Indians themselves became a partisan to that. By the twentieth century, the western education imparted a half hazard and biased thinking, encouraging servile attitudes.<sup>22</sup>

The acceptance came mainly from the various surveys that were conducted in the three presidencies. This was mainly to understand the nature of local education structure. For instance in 1835 and 1838, surveys were conducted by British officials on the prevailing Indian education system in Bengal and in some districts of Bihar. Additionally surveys were conducted which threw significant light on the province of Bombay from 1820 to 1830. There are many published reports of surveys conducted on the Indian education system in Chennai Province from 1822 to

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<sup>21</sup>Gupta, P. K. (1998). Education: a beautiful tree: Reflections on sustainability, rights and responsibility. *India International Centre Quarterly*. 25(2/3). 109-118

<sup>22</sup>Bagchi, A. K. (2010). Towards democratization of education in India. *Social Scientist*, 38(9/12). 5-16



1825. The province of Punjab published reports from the survey conducted by G. W. Littner on the traditional Indian education system.<sup>23</sup> One thing is clear from all these reports that there existed a fully functional educational structure in the pre-British era and in a sense the British were responsible for the decline in the education system in these areas after the arrival of the British in India.

It is also generally believed that the British showed a benevolent attitude and instituted a systematic education system. This viewpoint went unchallenged till 1983, when Dharmapal in his work using official records negated the lack of educational sense in the Indians in the pre-British times. His central argument was based on Gandhian defence which was offered in the Royal Institute of International Affairs in 1931. In a lecture Gandhi had said that ‘the literacy rate in India has gone down drastically in the last 50-100 years and the British are responsible for that.’ This had created an uproar and Gandhi’s statement was disputed by Philip Hartog, a former Vice Chancellor of Dacca University. Although Gandhi was unable to convince Hartog, the job was successfully done by Dharmapal in 1983. Dharmapal in his work ‘The Beautiful Tree’ writes that there were primary schools before the British came to India and there was one school for every 400 people.<sup>24</sup> Dharmapal had carried painstaking research into archival sources both in India as well as England. The work mainly dealt with the surveys made on the state of traditional education in the Madras Presidency. When the Charter Act of 1813 was to be passed a debate had ensued in the House of Commons in England, which was focused on the agenda of proselytisation by the Christian missionaries. The policy that was proposed was that Indians should be compulsorily converted. Before doing so, it was thought important that an assessment should be carried out of the then existing conditions. As a result a survey was carried out in the

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<sup>23</sup>Dharmapal. (1983).4

<sup>24</sup>Dharmapal. (1983). 70

Madras Presidency under Thomas Munroe.<sup>25</sup> According to this data, Dharmapal concluded that the educational situation in India was much better than even England in 1800. Dharmapal also provided caste-wise and region-wise, which showcased that the education was imparted irrespective of caste. Dharmapal shows that almost 75% of the literate students belonged to the *Shudras* and the caste below them. distribution of students His had set out to rediscover India's past from official records and concluded that India's past needs saving, as a misconstrued narrative has been played out.

Dharmapal also clarifies the term 'School' which has been used by British officials in surveys to understand the indigenous education system of India. He defines the school as traditional institutions of India which imparted education in *pathshala*, *gurukul*, *ashram*, temple and *madrasas*. These educational activities were given financial support by the society. The educational institutions worked to inculcate cultural, ethical and spiritual values in the society in general and more importantly to provide employment opportunities besides providing a general education. Dharmapal also insists that the word 'school' used for such educational institutions does not actually accurately represent the concept of word '*Shala*' which is generally used to imply primary or basic education.<sup>26</sup>

It is also important to note that the above mentioned surveys and reports were ridiculed later and almost were dismissed both by the imperialists and some nationalists. The imperialists i.e. the utilitarian rejected these official surveys (used extensively by Dharmapal), as it undermined the superiority of the western civilization, especially their educational system. The functioning of educational institutions in England (at least at primary level) at the time was not systematic.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.83-251

<sup>26</sup>Dharmapal. (1983). 19

They maintained the rhetoric of stagnancy and caste divisions in the pre-colonial education narrative.<sup>27</sup>

Besides Dharmapal, there were other scholars who studied these surveys with different perspectives. For instance, the girl-boy student ratio was always mocked by the imperialists since the third decade of the 19th century. However, in the survey an inquiry was made in which the number of schools and colleges in the district and it was revealed both boys and girls received education.<sup>28</sup> Another general belief was that the syllabi was mostly drawn upon religious and spiritual grounds. However, the data from the survey revealed that there were at least forty-three subjects that were taught at different levels in the schools.<sup>29</sup> It was also noted that apart from schools the students were engaged in specialized subjects like **Dharmashastra** (collection of ancient Sanskrit texts), Astronomy, Ritual, Spirituality, Ethics and Vedic studies.

As has been mentioned earlier, the reports of the survey also disproved the notion that education in India was always dominated by the upper caste. For instance, one of the officers in the survey noted that 95% of the students in Chennai province were from the lower castes.<sup>30</sup> Some British officers noted that lower caste students had knowledge of medicine. The reports explicitly contain information regarding the eligibility of the students for admission in the schools and the school schedule etc. The reports mention the age of entry of the child's entry into the school system from five years to seven years of age. Education was free and the teachers were paid according to the will of the patrons. Although, there is no direct mention of the presence of India's traditional vocational education system there was some kind of vocational training that

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<sup>27</sup>Dharmapal. (1983). 20

<sup>28</sup>Ibid. 22

<sup>29</sup>Ibid. 24

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. 27

was given to students. For instance there is a mention of agricultural implements, cotton or silk weaving, tools related to building architecture, tools for building boats, ice, paper, etc., and traditional craftsmanship.<sup>31</sup>

To render the point home, is a statement given by G. L. Pendergust the Member of Bombay provincial Government in 1821 stated that ‘Every member of this provincial assembly knows that there is not a single big or small village in this province, where there is not a single school, larger villages have more than one school, In big cities there are schools in every part, In this school the children of the residents are taught writing, reading and arithmetic. Moreover, this method of education is so cheap (low cost) that every parent can teach his child by giving the teacher a little grain or one rupee per month, depending on his financial situation. Not only this, but this method of education is also so simple and effective that an ordinary farmer or small trader here can write his own accounts with perfect accuracy. These people can keep better accounts than the people of our country.’<sup>32</sup>

The question that arises is that it may have been true for a few British officers in a few districts but was a pan India affair. To get a closer look at the chain of events, Gujarat is chosen as a study area to see the development of local education and to see whether there were continuities from the earlier times.

### **Evolution of Modern system of Education in Gujarat**

Western education system reached late in Gujarat almost by 1885, till then all educational activities in Gujarat and India were taken care of by private institutions or people.<sup>33</sup> Although the

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<sup>31</sup>Dharampal. (1983). 53

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.61

<sup>33</sup>RajgorShivprasad B. (1966). *Gujarat noKelavani no Itihas*. Ahmedabad: Anada Book Depo. 51

English presence could be noted with the presence of Christian missionaries. More importantly the local system of education was imparted in the princely states like Baroda, Bhavnagar, Junagadh, Jamnagar and Gondal. These states developed their own system of education which carried forward the legacy of the older system but later they also transformed their system into the western model. Historically, Indian territories were broadly divided into two categories, the British provinces and the princely states.<sup>34</sup> The territories annexed by the British East India Company in Gujarat formed the British Gujarat, comprising *Surat, Bharuch, Kheda, Panchamaharaj*, and *Ahmedabad*.<sup>35</sup> Rest of the territories were administered by multiple big and small states.

Gujarat becomes a classic case where the stark difference between British administered regions and princely states was visible. It is a common belief that it was the British influence that led to the emergence of a “new middle class”. It was the middle class in the form of lawyers, doctors and teachers that led to changes in the Gujarati society in the nineteenth century. For instance, the spread of education was affected and influenced by various socio-religious reform movements in Gujarat.<sup>36</sup> However, this view needs to be challenged. Gujarat has been a great commercial centre since ancient times. The region also has had a rich cultural heritage. As has been proven in the previous chapter the educational structure of Gujarat in the ancient and medieval time was strong and produced young men who learnt the craft and gained knowledge at an early age. This was true even of the eighteenth century. Unlike the Presidencies of EEIC (English East India Company), not much data is available to show the presence of schools or institutionalization of schools. However what can be ascertained with surety was that people of

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<sup>34</sup> Warner, William Lee. (1910). *The Native States of India*. Bombay: Macmillan And Co., Limited. 20-35

<sup>35</sup> *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*. Volume 1, Part 1, (1896). Printed at the Government Central Press. 280

<sup>36</sup> Raval, R. L. (1987). *Socio-religious reform movements in Gujarat during the nineteenth century*. EssPublication . 70

Gujarat were hardly illiterate or backward in the modern sense of the term. Being a commercial hub, it was hard not to find literate young men and even women. They were trained craftsmen or businessmen. When the colonial government took control over Gujarat in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they claimed that they “introduced” education in Gujarat. The fact was that they had used Indians to first of all assert and negate the pre-colonial educational structure and secondly to replace it with ‘legal rational’ uniform structure. Following is an account of changes that occurred.

This was carried out through a group of intellectuals in Gujarat such as Narmad Shankar, Durgaram Mehta, Mahipatram Rupram and Dalpatram Dahyabhai. They were the first generation of Gujaratis who had been educated on western lines and became the pioneers of social reform and literacy movements.<sup>37</sup> These intellectuals were trained in Bombay at the Elphinstonian institute, and they took up the responsibility to educate the others. Armed with impressions of the great British Raj, they went about to create a revolution in the field of education. The colonial government on the other hand had wanted trained locals for their administrative structure.<sup>38</sup>

As a result, many changes were effected in the urban areas of British Gujarat in the nineteenth century. For a period almost fifty years Gujarat experienced a small but definite change in the education sector. There emerged a class which was colonial in mindset and appearances. English speaking ‘Babus’ became the new elite and getting educated abroad was considered fashionable. Some of the Gujarati intellectuals of the late nineteenth century stressed that the British had brought security, affluence, justice, and education into the region.<sup>39</sup> However, amidst this

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<sup>37</sup>Shastri Vajlal Kalidas. (1887). Gujarati Bhasha no Itihas. (Publication Detail not Available).58-90

<sup>38</sup>Syed Nurulah & Naik J. P. (1951). *History of education in India during the British period*, Bombay: Macmillan. 33

<sup>39</sup>Isaka, R. (2002). Gujarati intellectuals and history writing in the colonial period. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No, 48. 4870.

transformation germinated a seed of doubt in the mind of those individuals who were visionaries. A realization began to set in that the next generation were although English speaking albeit unemployed men. Also the fact that this was dividing the Gujarati society on the basis of the education that they received or jobs that they obtained. There were many intellectuals and litterateurs who began to question if not challenge the intentions of the British. They were supported and sometimes patronized by the mercantile community. They were proud in their capacity to support the educational institutions whether western or local. They believed in swadeshi as can be interpreted from Kavi Dalpatram's poem, "*Hunnarkhannichadhai* " the metaphorical poem on the indigence of India because of foreign invasion.<sup>40</sup> Towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the Gujarati elites were affected by the changes taking place in the rest of the Subcontinent such as the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra. This political inclination towards Swadeshi translated into experiments to be conducted in the field of education as well, especially under Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>41</sup>

## **SECTION- 2: Mahatma Gandhi and His Philosophy**

Mahatma Gandhi said on Education or Learning 'Live as if you were to die tomorrow; learn as if you were to live forever.' Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Mahatma to the millions) has written extensively about his different theories and practices that are of utmost relevance even today. He is believed to be one of the most researched historical personalities on google. Education formed an important component of Mahatma Gandhi's writings. He believed in practicing what he preached and carried it out himself. This can be noted since the beginning of his political

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<sup>40</sup> For details, please see Dalpatram, Dahyabhai (1921): *HunnarkhanniChadhai* (14th ed.), Gujarat Vernacular Society, Ahmedabad.

<sup>41</sup> RajgorShivprasad B. (1966). 66

life.[1]<sup>42</sup>A comprehensive system of education emerged from his writings.<sup>43</sup> Juxtaposing Gandhi's ideals with the educational thinking of humankind, this section makes an attempt to reassess Gandhian ideas in the context of the *ashram* system of education.

As is widely known Mahatma Gandhi had established *ashrams* in South Africa and subsequently in India. The Tolstoy Farm, the Phoenix Settlement in South Africa, the Sabarmati *ashram* and the Sevagram in India emerged as platforms where he experimented with his educational idea amongst other ideas. In these *ashrams* Mahatma Gandhi engaged with the question of unity in diversity. The people living in the *ashram* (along with him) came from different socio- cultural regional backgrounds. The challenge was to evolve a mechanism whereby the multi-cultural environment would be sustained in a unifying thread. The method to integrate the elements of uniqueness with similarities was to devise an education structure which would have had a holistic pedagogical program.

It was not that Mahatma Gandhi was the pioneer, many before him had a headstart such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidhyasagar, DayanadSaraswati, Swami Vivekananda and many others.[2]<sup>44</sup>Gandhi stood out because he not only formulated a theory but through his prowess as a people's leader, prevailed upon them to follow it with great sincerity and discipline. It was not an easy task and Mahatma Gandhi was able to accomplish it with almost seamless efforts. Gandhi's ideas on education had stemmed from years of experience and training. It is therefore important to understand his mental make-up as his educational philosophy evolved as a part of his ideas on socio-political issues.

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<sup>42</sup>Gandhi, M. K. (1999). *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi* (electronic book).39. New Delhi: Publications Division Government of India. 60

<sup>43</sup>Gandhi, M.K. (1997). *Gandhi:Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*. Cambridge University Press.  
(For further details see) Parel, A. J. (2009). *Gandhi:Hind Swaraj and Other Writings Centenary Edition*.

<sup>44</sup>Cenkner, W. (1976). *The Hindu personality in education: Tagore. Gandhi, Aurobindo*. New Delhi.Manohar Book Service. 87



The central idea is based on Mahatma Gandhi's writings, speeches, and responses to the practical problems of society, country and humankind. There were two basic principles that defined almost every policy: *satyanasti paramo dharma (there is no other supreme duty than the truth)*; <sup>45</sup>*Ahimsa Paramo Dharma (Nonviolence is the supreme religion)*. He believed that these two ideas would resolve any issues and problems. Both these ideas were based on ancient Indian philosophy. Another principle that Gandhi believed in was the idea of *swaraj* or rule of self, which became the basis of his ideas on education. He believed that Indians in the post-independence period must live a simpler and communal lifestyle and that human beings should become self-sufficient and as a unit (be it a village; town or city) the civil society should be capable of managing their own affairs rather than being dependent on each other. He believed that Indian as tradition had continued since ancient times and that should not change even after India becomes independent.<sup>46</sup> According to Mahatma Gandhi "The resting of the ultimate authority in the peasant and the labour and not the mere transference of power from the white bureaucrats to the brown bureaucrats."<sup>47</sup> He believed in economic equality. Everybody was entitled to be provided with the necessities and that such a system should be established where the younger generation would find employment. Mahatma Gandhi very strongly believed in the principle of 'Sarvodaya' (*Serva* =everyone; *Uday*=emerged) progress and growth of all. These ideas get reflected in his ideas on education.

### **Gandhi's Ideas on Education**

Gandhi's ideas of education are quite practical and adopted a holistic approach. He believed in the ancient Indian philosophy of education, '*Sa Vidya Yavimuktaye*' means that only that

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<sup>45</sup>Cenkner, W. (1976). *The Hindu personality in education: Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobindo*. New Delhi. Manohar Book Service. 87

<sup>46</sup>Gandhi, M. K. (1927). *An Autobiography, or the Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Ahmedabad. 23

<sup>47</sup>Dhawan, G. N. (1957). *The political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*. Navajivan Publishing House. 58

education should be imparted which liberates the mind. Mahatma Gandhi believed that education is a liberating agency that becomes relevant irrespective of time and space. Knowledge includes training that can be read for the services of humankind. The knowledge acquired in the pursuit of this ideal alone constitutes true knowledge which leads to freedom that it is sinful.[6]<sup>48</sup> The Gandhian principle of education was based on utility and nationalism. He borrowed the ideas from the ancient Indian knowledge system. The practicality was not only applied to theoretical knowledge but also to physical labour. Gandhi advocated intense physical labour, which he equated with the term '*karma yoga*'. He said "Manual labour intelligently performed is the means par excellence for developing the intellect."<sup>49</sup> Besides this he insisted on enlarging physical education with the mainstream curriculum.

**Vocational Education:** The core of Gandhi's idea was the introduction of vocational training especially handicrafts in the school. There involved the training of the production process of crafts such as weaving, spinning, pottery, metal work, leather work, basket making and book binding etc. He believed that this in turn would lead to social transformation, the experiment of which he had earlier conducted in his *ashrams*. Gandhi believed in localizing vocational training. This he felt was going to strengthen the village economy which in turn formed the basis of the national economy. Mahatma Gandhi very strongly believed in making rural education self-sufficient in nature. He also believed that if it was self-sufficient and efficient then there was no need to make it compulsory. This will not only improve the village economy but also compare to the rise of socio-economic conditions of the country.

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<sup>48</sup>Gandhi, M., &Kumarappa, B. (1949). *To the students*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.288

<sup>49</sup>Gandhi, M. K. (1999). *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi* (electronic book).85. New Delhi: Publications Division Government of India.199

He even had hoped that vocations like electricity, ship building, iron works and making machines would also be included along with village crafts. He wanted every home to be a factory; where villagers can produce for self-consumption and for the market<sup>50</sup>. Scale industry makes people lazy and helps concentration of wealth in the hands of few. On the contrary, rural industries are based on family labour and require less capital. His concentration on village and agrarian industry was noteworthy. This was based on the extension principles and learning methods. Hence came the motto “*vidyapith to the villagers*.”<sup>51</sup> However Gandhi suggested that the village education should be customized; “Give the villagers village arithmetic, village geography, village history and the literary knowledge that they must use daily,”<sup>52</sup> Gandhian ideas of education in villages were not limited to only children but adults as well. Village itself was to be converted into a classroom.<sup>53</sup>

Just like the traditional Ashram system of education, a *Guru* (a teacher) played an important role. Mahatma Gandhi believed that no textbook could replace a teacher. He challenged the western model which was more reliant on the textbook rather than hands-on experience which only teachers could facilitate. He felt that text centric education was bound to create a helpless society which would not be able to reduce employment. Gandhi was very clear that every society needed young men (and women) hands on experience and skill. He was very clear about the fact that education was to help students to earn and therefore the solution suggested was to expand from rural vocations to industrial vocations.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Kripalani, J. B. (1991). *Gandhi His Life and Thought*. Publications Division Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. 385

<sup>51</sup>*Sarvodaya*, Vol.1, No.5 (2004).

<sup>52</sup>Gandhi, M. K. (1999). *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi* (electronic book).72. New Delhi: Publications Division Government of India.180-181

<sup>53</sup>Gandhi, M. K. (1937). *Adult Education / Towards New Education / Education*. [https://www.mkgandhi.org/Towards\\_edu/Chap18.Htm](https://www.mkgandhi.org/Towards_edu/Chap18.Htm).

<sup>54</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1999) 137

**Cultural and Moral Ethos:** Mahatma Gandhi very sincerely believed that a society can be civilized only if the education structure integrated elements of morality in it. He believed that character was the socio-ethical aim of education. He believed that real education did not fill the brain with information or simply topping the examination but in developing basic character.<sup>55</sup> According to him the focus was to be laid on development of mind, body and spirit. Mahatma Gandhi believed in enabling a fine balance between various social and cultural facts. In fact he placed greater importance to knowledge of age old tradition and culture rather than literacy. Gandhi belonged to that generation which believed that since the girls should be the main caretakers therefore cultural values can be inculcated into them through cultural education. For him ‘education is a means and culture is the end’ this is the reason why Gandhi in his Ashram system of education emphasis on cultural ethos.

**Self Sufficiency in Education:** An important idea that is extremely relevant in today’s times is the focus on ‘self-sufficient systems.’ Self-supporting aspect of education takes the central place in the Gandhian system of education. The focus was that the students should be independent to earn their own money after completion of their studies. Mahatma Gandhi felt that Indian villages were traditionally self-sufficient and therefore it was important to restore their autonomy. Hence both the state as well as the civil society should empower the villages and develop it as a viable limit. The basic education was chalked to the villages by training the students to focus on becoming self-sufficient by enabling something like the start-ups in today’s lingo. This would also inculcate a spirit of cooperation.<sup>56</sup> Mahatma Gandhi felt that a student of agriculture or craft would as training in other crafts be strengthened and could compile with need as well as global market without leaving his village. He also gave more importance to servitude than simply

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid. 422

<sup>56</sup>Gandhi, M. K. (1999). 63-64

looking at education as a job centered mechanism. He felt that if the education does not include a spirit of nationalism and unity then it was not a correct path.<sup>57</sup>

So far as the medium of instruction is concerned Mahatma Gandhi felt that instead of laying focus on the English language, it was important to use local languages for learning and the learning process. He saw the English language as an obstruction. To put it in his own words, *“The foreign medium has caused brain tag, put an undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and imitators, unfitted them for original work and thought, and disabled them for filtrating their learning to the family, on the masses. The foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own land.”*<sup>58</sup>

**Religion in Education:** Along with culture, Mahatma Gandhi believed that religion should be an important part of education. This was to coincide with his idea of culture which was to entire lines of the students as they take on to a high moral ground in their future. Although he also insisted that the state should be involved, and religious education must be the concern of religious bodies. He believed that religion should be taught at home.

**Naturalism in Education:** A very important and relevant idea of Gandhi that connects directly with the Ashram system is naturalism in education. It stands for the education of a child within the nature of the child. It basically means that complete freedom should be given to the students in learning. Mahatma Gandhi believed in exploring education in a natural environment, outside the four walls of the classroom. This was so that students could develop their faculties to the fullest. This connection with nature also allowed the students to evolve spiritually. According to

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<sup>57</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1950). *PayaniKelavani*. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Trust. 30

<sup>58</sup>Gandhi, M. K. (1999). *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi* (electronic book).21. New Delhi: Publications Division Government of India.40

Mahatma Gandhi spiritual development led to character development and in a sense holistic development of personality. This also enabled the students to be in touch with reality. Mahatma Gandhi also followed the ancient Indian tradition of ‘learning by doing’<sup>59</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi in fact took a lot from the ancient Indian education structure. Which lay in the traditional ‘*Gurukula Ashram*’. He translated the philosophy of this ancient tradition into his ashram that was instituted at various places. People living in the *ashram* had to follow ancient strict discipline and live together with everyone irrespective of caste, creed or social statuses. In the ashram he was the ‘guru’ where he set an example for his disciple to follow. This was his way to bring about reform in education. Gandhi’s concern was to focus on the dignity of labour and of education in a free environment, in a disciplined manner. He believed that every individual has to earn his/her place in the society. This way everyone would be equipped to gain employment as per their needs. If the needs were limited, as was the case with rural India, then the education should be facilitated at the least for basic requirements.<sup>60</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi had major issues with western model of education. He believed that this form of education was costly and exam-oriented which was basically structured to create ‘babus’ or service men. Gandhi had hence concluded that western education was not useful for common man and women. Family played a very important role in the Gandhian scheme of things. He believed in the ‘whole family approach’ and wanted to extend it to school.<sup>61</sup> The informal way of teaching, Mahatma Gandhi believed, would enable a healthy relationship between a teacher and

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<sup>59</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1938). *Khari Kelavani*. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Trust. 87

<sup>60</sup>Bhuimali, A. (2004). *Relevance of MK Gandhi’s Ideal of Self-Sufficient Village Economy in the 21st Century*. Sarvodaya. 170

<sup>61</sup>Nanda, S. K. (1977). *Indian Education and Its Problems Today*. Kalyani Publishers.41

the student, where even the teacher learns from the students.<sup>62</sup> Due to this, Gandhi believed that more attention should be paid to the school level training as a result he thought of Basic education or NaiTalim.

Mahatma Gandhi believed in implementing Basic education in every village. This meant that the education should be informal in nature. Here the difference between Gandhi's model of *ashram* and *gurukul* was that in the *ashram* teachers lived with their children and worked along with them to earn their living. They taught them in a local language alongside teaching the value of hard work. This form of education has proven to be inexpensive. As regards *NayeeTalim*, Gandhi says, "It is my firm belief that if *NayeeTalim* cannot become self-supporting, then the teachers do not understand what it is. In my view, amongst other characteristics, self-reliance is the most important characteristic of *NayeeTalim*." The values of adult education were also integrated into the scheme of Basic Education. According to Mahatma Gandhi agriculture had to play an important part in adult education under the basic education scheme. The farmers must be given literacy instruction even if it means that they are orally given. In order to inculcate the idea of cooperation amongst the others, Gandhi wanted that the children should be taught to trust and respect neighbours. It should integrate the element of good neighborliness.<sup>63</sup>

While discussing Gandhian influence on education it is important to draw attention towards pre-school education, where mothers play a central role. Gandhi's major concern was that a large number of the female population was illiterate. This meant when the children were educated at home in the initial years, they were unaware of the basics and hence when they approached

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<sup>62</sup>Rangan, S. K. (1936). *A Gandhian Agenda for Universal Education by Swachid K. Rangan / Articles on Education*. GANDHI SEVAGRAM ASHRAM. <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-articles/gandhian-agenda-for-universal-education.php>.

<sup>63</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1999). *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi* (electronic book).75. New Delhi: Publications Division Government of India.p.269.

school years, they were relatively ignorant. Gandhiji's views about women education was an inclusive one. He felt that a woman had to bear domestic responsibilities which included education of her children, so the form of education that should be imparted to her should be based on family ideals.<sup>64</sup> Gandhi did not believe that women should join commercial enterprises and hence did not advocate any special vocation for them.

The above account clearly shows that Gandhian ideas with regards to education were definite. However, these ideas came to be implemented first in his Ashrams or his platform for experimentation and then a policy was formulated. The following section focuses on the experiments that he conducted in his Ashrams.

### **Experiment at Sabarmati in Gujarat**

When Gandhiji came from Africa, his relatives who came with him initially stayed at Swami Shraddhanand's Gurukul Kangdi and then at the invitation of Rabindranath Tagore, they all stayed at the Santiniketan Ashram. At Santiniketan Ashram, Gandhiji thought of implementing the experiments he had done in education while living in Africa. Gandhiji mainly emphasized on self-reliance here he suggested that if the teachers and students do the cooking work themselves instead of having the cook, the control of the teaching staff would increase in terms of health and policy and teaching would be done through practical approach. Thus a unique experiment was started there for the first time in India.<sup>65</sup> He then established the Kocharab Ashram in Ahmedabad and Gandhiji prepared the Ashram education to educate the children of his followers who lived with him there. He designed some characteristics of ashram education such as 1. Boys and girls

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<sup>64</sup>Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, pp. 425, 426. [https://www.mkgandhi.org/towrds\\_edu/chap19.htm](https://www.mkgandhi.org/towrds_edu/chap19.htm)

<sup>65</sup>Gandhi, M. K. (1941). *Constructive Program: It's meaning and it's Purpose*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House. 10



should be educated together. Childhood assumed till eight years of the age. 2. Their time should be spent mainly on physical work and that work should also be done under the supervision of an educator. 3. The child's talent should be identified or judged and assigned a task accordingly. 4. When the child becomes a little mature, he should be given general knowledge first then literary knowledge should be imparted. 5. Teaching a child to consider literacy as a part of calligraphy. 6. All the education of a child must be done through the mother tongue. 7. The child should be given the knowledge of Hindi-Urdu language as the national language. 8. Religious education should be considered essential. 9. Gandhiji divided the age of education into three parts: Eight years of childhood, nine to sixteen years of adolescence and sixteen to twenty five years of youth. Gandhiji believes that education after nine years should be completely self-sufficient.<sup>66</sup> (A history of the Satyagraha ashram, published in English as *Ashram Observances in Action*). In July 1917, the Kocharab Ashram was shifted to the banks of the river Sabarmati and since then it has been called Sabarmati Ashram and there Gandhiji started experimenting with basic education.

In these ashrams, a lot of attention was paid to hygiene and sanitation. The constructive program of Mahatma Gandhi which was carried out at grassroots level focused on health, hygiene, childcare, sanitation, literacy and even rudimentary medicine among the others. He believed that one of the ways to inculcate a sense of cleanliness in people is to integrate the idea into the educational structure of India. He felt that it was the moral responsibility of the state to take concrete steps to inculcate the spirit of cleanliness amongst people. He felt that the responsibility lay with the Education Department of India. In his speech at the Second Gujarat Educational Conference, Bharuch Gujarat on 20th October 1917, he said, “as to hygiene, it is no

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<sup>66</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1999). *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi* (electronic book). 75. New Delhi: Publications Division Government of India. 290

*exaggeration to say that it is not taught at all. We do not know, after 60 years of education, how to protect ourselves against epidemics like cholera, plague or such illness. I consider it a very serious blot on the state of our education that our doctors have not found it possible to eradicate these diseases. I have seen hundreds of homes. I cannot say that I have found any evidence in them of knowledge of hygiene. This is the disastrous result of the system under which we are educated. People in almost all the parts of the world have managed to eradicate the plague. Here it seems to have made a home and thousands of Indians die untimely deaths. If this is to be attributed to poverty, it would still be up to the education department to answer why, even after 60 years of education, there is poverty in India'.*

In 1929, he gave a speech in Gujarati on rural education and hygiene, connecting education with cleanliness and sanitation titled 'Shiksha ane Sahitya'<sup>67</sup> Mahatma Gandhi in order to educate the people also gave examples in his speeches of the environment around him. He gave an example of how cats are known to keep themselves and their surroundings clean. He insisted on four basic ideas viz., cleanliness, truthfulness, purity and neatness, which cleansed a person from outside and within. At Wardha, he said, while sanitation was a part of the training in government schools and colleges, none was taught how to clean the roads and lavatories. Alongside Mahatma Gandhi emphasized that women be taught management of home, how to manage pregnancy, nursing, and child care etc. He also recognized that women had a special responsibility of educating their children. This meant that they should equip themselves with lessons of personal hygiene, elementary arithmetic, music, dance, religion, geometry and even crafts.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Discourse On Physical and Moral Insanitation: Published in Young India on 31-10-1929, Gandhi, Mohandas K. "Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. 42, Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958. 75

<sup>68</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1999). *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi* (electronic book).41. New Delhi: Publications Division Government of India. 7-9.

The ashrams became Mahatma Gandhi's experimenting ground. This is where he learnt about the requirements of education, where he experimented with the idea of Basic education. Once he found the idea to be plausible, he went ahead and asked his followers to prepare a policy around it. This idea took shape in the form of Basic education or NaiTalim or Ashram system of education. The following section focuses on this very idea of Mahatma Gandhi.

### **Basic education: Pre-Independence Period**

Mahatma Gandhi's major emphasis was on Basic education. The need was felt to focus on Basic education so that a holistic framework of school education could be developed. The idea was born out of the need to evolve a national education system. Fully aware of the abject poverty that the colonial administration had left India with, Mahatma Gandhi advocated an educational system which should be able to meet its cost. By this time, the Government India Act of 1935 was passed which gave legal sanction for the Indian political parties to fight elections in the provinces. Elections took place in 1937 where Indian National Congress came to form governments in many provinces. Education was a state subject and hence it depended upon the respective provincial governments as to how much importance they assign to this. Once again, all eyes were on Mahatma Gandhi and he did not disappoint. He already had carried out many experiments related to Basic Education in his *ashrams*. It was time to implement them at the provincial level.

The idea was discussed at a national conference on education which was held at Sevagram in Wardha in 1937. Education was to be made compulsory and was to be at a minimal cost. The medium of instruction should be given in the respective local languages. Throughout the schooling period, manual labour and productive work should be the focal point. The craft taught

and the skill acquired should depend on the potential and performance of the student. Here the teacher had to be actively engaged and hence salary of teachers should be automatically generated.

Armed with these fundamental ideas, a committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain to work out a detailed program. A report was submitted in December 1937. Later Indian National Congress adopted the Basic education or *Buniyadi Shiksha* as their official policy on education. An All India Education Board was formed to work out the implementation of the program. It was later renamed as Hindustani NaiTalim Sangh.

According to the board, Education was made compulsory for the age group from seven to fourteen. The state was given responsibility to ensure education for all boys and girls. Emphasis was laid on productive education which had to relate with the student's social and physical environment. The teacher had to be involved with the craft production so that it could meet the running expenditure of the school along with the teacher's salary. The Zakir Hussain committee Report clearly highlighted the importance of Basic education as the future of the country.<sup>69</sup>

The scheme had obtained approval of the Indian National Congress in March 1939. The Hindustani Talim Sangh was to advise the government in the matter of implementation of Basic education. It adopted a twofold strategy; One was through the Department of Education and secondly through private institutions. Basic education was implemented by the government first and every region gave a different response. In most of the provinces the scheme remained unsuccessful. However there were some provinces in which the scheme met with partial success such as Bihar and United Provinces (UP). The Basic education scheme was in an

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<sup>69</sup>Rajput, J. S. (2004). *Encyclopaedia of Indian Education*.1(A-K) NCERT. 155-164

experimentative stage in this period. In any case since the Indian Subcontinent was facing political turmoil on account of the freedom struggle, the focus on education was minimal. Nonetheless, the provincial governments continued to work towards implementing Basic Education.

The scheme was successful in the United Provinces where the state government modified the scheme in its essential aspects. It emphasized more on crafts so as to create self-sustaining structure. However, before even the work could enter a second stage, World War-II (1939-1945) broke out. Since India was dragged into the War without consultation with the provincial ministries, they resigned in protest. It gave a heavy blow to the progress of the Basic education program in most of the provinces, although, the work of Basic Education continued on a limited scale and hence received a setback for six years.<sup>70</sup> In Jan. 1945, a national conference was held at Sevagram (Wardha). However, much of the work was carried out only after independence.

After independence, keeping in view the present and future educational needs of the country, the Government of India under the chairmanship of Dr. Sarwapalli Radha Krishnan, 4 Nov. In 1948, the University Education Commission was formed.<sup>71</sup>

In the reports presented by this commission, many ideas of Mahatma Gandhi's basic education were adopted. The commission also believed that the basic purpose of education should be the same as Gandhi's ideas, considering it as a strong means of harmonious development of education, personality, society, nation and the world, in the aims of education of a new democratic India. Emphasis should be laid on creation of eligible citizens for creation, justice, freedom, equality, and feeling of national and international fraternity and development of Indian

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<sup>70</sup>Taneja, V. R. (1995). *Educational thought and practice*. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 208-209

<sup>71</sup>University Commission (1948-49), Part-2. 1-67

culture. It was proposed to make the regional language (mother tongue) the medium of instruction.

The Commission also adhered to Gandhian ideas like providing equal opportunities for education to women. The commission proposed special courses for women like 'home economics, nursing, teaching and fine arts'. The idea of co-education was also accepted by the Commission. It also believed that vocational education should be self-reliant and should be able to be productive in terms of providing employment to everyone in the society.

Based on these ideas, the Secondary Education Commission was established in (1952-1953), which was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. LakshmanaswamyMudaliar to investigate all the aspects of the present secondary education of India and submit the report and make suggestions for the reorganization or improvement of secondary education. The basic ideas of Mahatma Gandhi were kept in mind, such as, development of citizens, improvement in professional skills, development of personality, development of leadership power, medium of instruction, mother tongue, improvement in female education relationship etc.<sup>72</sup>

The Kothari education commission (1964-1966) also was in favour of implementing the principles of Gandhi's basic education. The commission eventually incorporated the educational ideas of Mahatma Gandhi in its report, and proposed a new education policy to be formed on its basis. The Government of India made its new National Education Policy in 1986 which was implemented in 2020.

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<sup>72</sup>Report by Government of India, Proposal of Education Ministry, No. F 9-/52-B1, Dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 1952. 72-123