



## RELEVANCE OF GANDHISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

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Gandhi's philosophy is still relevant in many aspects of life today in India and around the world, including politics and education. The primary objective of this study is to emphasize Gandhi's ideology and how it relates to human civilization in the present period. Gandhi served as one of the leaders of India's educational revival. His ideology had a strong foundation in spirituality and idealism. His educational theory emphasizes the whole development of human existence as it relates to the modern era of both India and the rest of the world. Gandhi's ideology places a strong emphasis on manual labor and places for "learning by doing," or includes craft work, community life, and natural study as curricular components. He attempts to create a social framework based on moral values, altruism, and equality. Gandhi was a multifaceted philosopher who focused on gender equality and held strong beliefs in God, truth, love, Ahimsa, the Brotherhood of Man, and real education.. Gandhi's idea of education is mirrored in today's society in which we live. It appears that Gandhi's theory is still relevant in light of this modern society.

**Keywords:** Mahatma Gandhi, Philosophical thought, Relevancy, Education, Contemporary Era.



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Every year, October 2<sup>nd</sup> is a wonderful day for both India and the rest of the globe. Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi, the father of the nation, was born on this day, and it is also recognized as the International Day for Non-violence to honor Gandhiji's lifelong promotion of the real spirit of non-violence. Gandhism begins with the well-known phrase, "Simple living and high thinking," and seeks to improve both the individual and the community. The principles and body of work of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the nation's father, are found in Gandhism. Gandhiji's contributions to the idea of nonviolent conflict, also known as civil resistance, make up the majority of what is known as Gandhism. Gandhism's tenets of truth and

non-violence are its major pillars (Desai, Chetan, 2016). Gandhism seems to be simple to everyone, but actually putting it into practice in daily life is challenging. For instance, remaining truthful, tolerant and non-violent and respecting others in difficult circumstances of life require a great degree of commitment from one self., Mahatma has placed a high emphasis on truth, one of the guiding principles of the Gandhian philosophy, and he himself has made an effort to be truthful at all times. The autobiography of this revered holy Mahatma "My experiment with truth" is a testament to Mahatma Gandhi's love of the truth. Gandhi believed that truth was unchangeable in many situations. Regardless of the urgency of the circumstance, in a manner akin to Immanuel Kant's.

Here, we can point to the Non-Cooperation Movement, which was abandoned in the middle after the Satyagrahis veered away from the road of truth and the Chauri-Chaura Incident, in which British officers were set afire by Satyagrahis, spread throughout the nation. Mahatma Gandhiji also had the opinion that the truth strengthens a person from the inside out, whereas lies make a person weaker. The Mahatma's ideology is fantastic (Syed Areesh Ahmed,2020). Every person needs to adhere to this notion of being genuine to themselves and to the outside world in order to succeed in life today. Gandhi's commitment to nonviolence, which was his most effective strategy for fighting the British Raj during the Indian freedom movement, is another essential aspect of Gandhianism. In reality non-violence and tolerance require a high level of courage and patience that is unattainable by the average person. With the world currently experiencing phases of war marred by violence and the tragic deaths of ordinary people and innocent children due to the threat of terrorism, Gandhian ideas are greatly needed. Today, nonviolence is more prevalent than it was in former times.

There is a school of thought that contends that since there is no "Gandhism" that Gandhi himself approved of, we must infer what Gandhism stands for from Gandhiji's life, work, and way of life. The conclusion that his worldview was basically founded on "truth" and "non-violence" is crucial. People differ from one another on many levels, and we must accept this. Second, we should never use violence to resolve fundamental conflicts between people at all levels. Martin Luther King Jr stated that if humanity is to progress, than Gandhi can never be ignored. He observed that ignoring Gandhi would be at our own risk. Therefore, it is essential to work towards incorporating Gandhian philosophy into all parts of life and administration in the difficult times where the globe is coping with so many issues (Sahu,N. and Behera, H. ,2022).

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi
- To learn about and comprehend the Gandhian tenets and how they apply to the modern world.
- To study the Gandhian thought of education in the present day context
- To offer some policy recommendations in light of the findings.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

A thorough and historical strategy has been adopted in this work to attain its goal. Both original sources and secondary sources were used for this. The works of Mahatma Gandhi, his speeches, and his essays in periodicals and newspapers were used as primary

sources. In addition, the research method has examined and reviewed the secondary sources, which include books, regional, national, and worldwide publications, and research papers.

## 4. GANDHIAN PRINCIPLES IN THE MODERN TIMES

"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

People still hold the individual in high regard who bore a great deal of responsibility for securing this freedom in memory. Mahatma Gandhi is remembered for his teachings and is frequently referenced. His thoughts continue to have an impact on people. How applicable are these principles of nonviolence and truth, which grant us freedom, today, though? The most distinguished Indian statesman, according to many, was Mahatma Gandhi. His theories and opinions continue to play a vital role in the nation's policies and governance and highlight the most compassionate approach to many of the issues that afflict our society. Gandhi was crucial to India's fight for independence. His beliefs in ahimsa, truth, swadeshi, and swaraj contributed to India's independence from colonial domination (Andrews, Charles,2005). The main query, though, is whether or not this guideline is still applicable today. Let's contrast the Gandhian approach with the current situation.

## 5. MAHATMA'S VIEW ON AHIMSA

"Ahimsa and truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin, or rather a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say, which is the observe, and which the reverse? Ahimsa is the means; Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so ahimsa is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later." The non-violence taught by Mahatma Gandhi is still very relevant today as the world deals with terrorism and other forms of violence. The philosophy of non-violence and compassion served as the foundation for Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence policy. He suggested a non-violent reaction against imperial brutality. In his opinion, a calm, nonviolent response is a more effective weapon than violence because it lessens the aggressor's rage and anger. The Salt March of 1930 was among Gandhi's most well-known actions of nonviolent protest (Gandhi, Rajmohan (2017). Today, nations and individuals must act in accordance with the concept of nonviolence since, like violence, world organisations start a cycle of oppression and injustice. Chinese expansionist policies currently pose a threat to India, but Gandhi's philosophy is preventing India from

starting a conflict with China. India continually deals with Pakistan's aggressive behaviour in the west, yet the nation's ahimsa policy maintains its respect in international forum. Gandhi's ahimsa policy is still relevant after 74 years of independence.

## 6. SATYAGRAH AS PROPAGATED BY GANDHI

Gandhiji dubbed nonviolent protest in general "Satyagraha." It is the manifestation of the most pure spiritual force in opposition to all forms of injustice, exploitation, and oppression. War was viewed as immoral, and Satyagraha was the moral alternative. Gandhi has demonstrated successful solutions for issues and conflicts at all scales, from the micro to the enormous. Gandhian ideology can be used to address a number of current issues, including those involving human rights, sustainable development, climate change, sociopolitical upheaval, war and peace, terrorism, and political and administrative corruption. Standing up for the truth without resorting to violence is a crucial component of Satyagraha, and this philosophy needs to be applied to all aspects of society (Jena, P. K. (2020)). The farmers protesting the Farm Law are currently using nonviolent protest as a means of expressing their support for the government-passed law.

## 7. MAHATMA ON RELIGION

Gandhi used to have a great deal of respect for all religions and the people who practice them. Gandhi's secular ideals serve as a guiding principle for Indian society as well as being reflected in the country's constitution. Because of this, there are many different religions present in Indian society (Asopa, S. (2019)). Gandhianism was inclusive of all religions, and in today's violent countries, more and more people who are accepting of other faiths and religions are needed. In order to counteract the growing ethnocentric bias on the basis of religion, caste, ethnicity, and area, tolerance in society is necessary.

## 8. MAHATMA ON EQUALITY

According to Mahatma, all lives are the sparks of the same fire and no one can be born untouchable. He values every human being. Gandhi opposed the caste system, which is still taboo in Indian society, and for that reason he supported the Vedic system of Varna, which assigned people to different varnas based on their work rather than their birth as was the case in the rigid and oppressive caste system. Mahatma Gandhi did not enter the premises of the temples where lower caste people were not permitted, thus he coined the term "harijana" to pay respect to those who are considered by society to be "lower caste people" In order to establish a caste-free society in which everyone is treated equally regardless of caste, the Gandhian ideology is helpful and desperately needed

today. In his opinion, loving others is the only way to satisfy anti touchability. Economic untouchability and caste system untouchability are the two types of untouchability that are now prominent. We need the services of masons, carpenters and other services of laborers but do not pay them adequately which is cause of economic untouchability which deprives them from a good standard of living and meeting their demands. So as per Gandhi we should treat equally with everyone as must not exploit them. So, this point also hold the relevance in the present times.

## 9. SWARAJ AS PER GANDHI

"Real Swaraj will come, not by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused," said Mahatma Gandhi. Swaraj occupies a prominent significance in contemporary society. The economic, social, spiritual, and political overtones of swaraj nevertheless have weight in an era when markets are flooded with goods designed to win rapid social approval and when the public imagination is becoming more open to demagogues.

## 10. GANDHI AND SECULARISM

All religions were tolerated under Gandhism. In civilizations where violence is committed in the name of religion, the world now needs an increasing number of religious and intelligently tolerant individuals. Tolerance in society works to dispel biases that are frequently based on an individual's ethnicity, such as those that are based on caste, religion, location, etc (Girani, E. (2020)). The ideas of equality and secularism are still promoted in society through a variety of events. Although there are religious divisions between Hindus and Muslims, for example, the secularism concept is preventing a second division of the nation.

## 11. COMMUNAL HARMONY

Mahatma Gandhi promoted intergroup unity and urged all Indians, regardless of their religious affiliation, to band together in order to fight the colonial authorities. He never discovered any significant disparities between Hindus, Muslims and other marginalized groups like Christians, Sikhs, or Parsis. Gandhi believed that there is an unbreakable harmony in all of creation, which is affirmed in all religions. It was this belief that inspired him to treat all faiths equally. He emphasized the importance of world peace, brotherhood, and respect for all forms of life. The realization of this fundamental unity, according to Gandhi, is the ultimate objective of all religions. Gandhi consistently worked to bring Hindus and Muslims together. This ideology is equally important at the moment. The nation can achieve greatness and become a superpower if Hindus and Muslims work together



(Misra, J. (2020). The faith of others should always be respected. The Gandhian ideal of promoting communal harmony is also violated by instances of mob lynching; hence action should be made in this area

## 12. SWADESHI

Native Americans place a strong emphasis on political and economic activity both inside and outside of their communities. It is the interdependence of self-reliance and community. Gandhi's swadeshi philosophy still permeates our culture as we work to make India self-sufficient. The second iteration of Swadeshi was termed "AtmaNirbhar Bharat" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Covid era, when India was going through a terrible economic crisis. The goal of this swadeshi form is to make the nation independent. Swadeshi is the most effective way to break the country's chains of hunger, unemployment, and poverty.

## 13. MAHATMA'S VIEW ON DECENTRALIZATION

In the Gandhian idea of a decentralized state, the Panchayati raj structure is not pyramidal but rather than the oceanic circle. where the person and the flow of political power are both given equal weight from bottom to top. In contrast, the top-down method of controlling subordinates is used in bureaucratic structures. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments, which gave local self-governments more power, helped democracies execute Gandhi's concept of decentralisation. For instance, the Indian government has established local self-governance by implementing the Panchayati Raj and Municipality systems in rural and urban areas, respectively, and by granting them access to several state-listed subjects. Gandhi's philosophy is still applicable today and is essential to India's grassroots development.

## 14. CLEANLINESS

Gandhiji led India to independence but his vision of a clean India has not come to pass. As per Gandhi sanitation is more important than independence."He incorporated hygiene and sanitation into the Gandhian way of life. He envisioned universal comprehensive sanitation. For physical well-being and a healthy atmosphere, cleanliness is crucial. it affects both personal and public hygiene. Everyone needs to understand about cleanliness, hygiene, sanitation and the several diseases that are brought on in insanitary environments. Young behaviors become ingrained in a person's psyche. Even while we teach our children to wash their hands before eating, to regularly brush their teeth, and to take a bath, we don't care if public spaces are clean. In his famous quote, Mahatma Gandhi declared, "I will not let anyone walk through my mind with their dirty feet." Gandhi emphasized cleanliness and good habits, emphasizing the connection between

them and health (Sahu, N and Behera, H. (2022). On the streets, nobody should spit or bow their nose. Gandhi was a strong supporter of "Swachhata" and placed a high value on purity or cleanliness. His catchphrase was "Cleanliness hi Seva." The recently launched Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, India's largest cleanliness effort, realizes Bapu's vision of a clean India. However, this pursuit of purity extends beyond outward purity and calls for more focus on inner purity. So, in order to have a clean India with clean roads and bathrooms, we must have a society that is devoid of corruption and has a high level of accountability.

## 15. SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Gandhi always emphasized minimizing wants and promoting ideas that were good to the environment. According to Gandhi, "there is enough on earth for human needs, but not enough for human greed." These quotes from Mahatma Gandhi demonstrate how human actions harm the environment and the necessity for a sustainable way of life in the modern era. Global warming, climate change, and resource depletion are the three main issues facing the globe today, and Gandhi's thought must be incorporated into all environmental agreements and sustainable development initiatives. Additionally, the current coal issue forces us to adhere to Gandhi's philosophy of sustainable development. The carbon footprints are growing faster because more resources like land, water and air are being consumed.

## 16. WOMEN EMANCIPATION

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mahatma Gandhi was a key figure in bringing about dramatic improvements to the position of women. The emancipation of Indian women, who were and still are the most suppressed and downtrodden group in society from a variety of social dimensions, was essential in his view for the liberalization and overall progress of humanity. Gandhi always emphasized the empowerment of women because they were the group in charge of creating India's future citizens (Jyoti (2017). Gandhi was instrumental in removing women from household duties and integrating them into society. He disapproved of the patriarchal structure of society. The Gandhian idea of women's independence is still relevant because public glass ceilings have yet to be broken.

## 17. RELEVANCE OF GANDHIAN THOUGHT OF EDUCATION IN PRESENT DAY CONTEXT

### 17.1. GANDHI'S VIEWS ON EDUCATION

Gandhiji believed that education needed to change and be revolutionized such that the needs of the lowest of the poor were met rather than those of the imperial exploiter. He acknowledged the crucial role

that basic or primary education plays and expressed the opinion that, regardless of villages or cities, basic education connects children from cities and villages to everything that is best and most needed in the nation.<sup>8</sup> He discussed the importance of bringing Vidyapith to the communities to provide education tailored to the needs of the locals.

### 17.2. WORK ORIENTED

He believed that by educating children, we should be able to bring out their greatest qualities on a physical, mental, and spiritual level. He added that literacy is not education in and of itself. He thought that education ought to be a form of unemployment insurance.<sup>10</sup> He concentrated on education by industry and crafts for that. We all agree that this form of schooling is necessary given the current situation because we can see many young people who are unemployed or underemployed travelling about. As a result, youth develop a growing sense of dissatisfaction and depression. The youth must look abroad for employment (Panda, R. (2017). For example, approximately 80% of families in the Indian state of Punjab have members who are employed overseas and send money home. Therefore, the government must ensure that education is work-oriented. We can state that we adhere to Gandhi's educational philosophy because the national education policy of 2020 gave the vocationalization of education more weight.

### 17.3. CHARACTER BUILDING AS A GOAL

Instead to literacy, character development was given more weight in his educational concept because it included nonviolence, purity of ideas, and actions.<sup>11</sup> Looking at the headlines in the US and UK media, we can see that school shootings are becoming more commonplace there. As a result, teachers in these nations are now quite frightened. We also believe that society's character is deteriorating and has to be improved. Even political parties are using violence in today's world to express their concerns, which poses a severe danger to democracy. Men and women today work to provide for their daily requirements as a result of industrialization and the increased cost of life. They occasionally have to arrive late for work, and as they travel from the office to their homes, they are constantly alarmed by the appearance of antisocial elements (Dutta, S.(2018). These antisocial traits are the outcome of an impure soul and corrupt ideals. Companies now also need employees that are trustworthy, capable, and helpful. In order to reach later thought and soul purity and to move further on the path of non-violence and truth, it is necessary to adapt the curriculum in the school to Gandhi's beliefs and teach the Bhagwat Geeta, Upanishad, spirituality and meditation.

### 17.4. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Gandhi believed that education should emphasis' a child's social development rather than only imparting knowledge. The child must learn how to behave in society and adhere to its rules. The world is currently experiencing a social mobility phase. Since social unrest exists in society and only responsible people can contribute to keeping things peaceful, social disturbance should be avoided at all costs. The democratic system that Gandhiji had always supported would be harmed. Responsibility and discipline must emerge from inside rather than being imposed from without (Sakhare, T. (2020). If you live by these principles, your life will be more beautiful and you will have satisfying connections with your family members, including your parents, siblings, wife, neighbors, friends, classmates, and junior and senior colleagues.

### 17.5. WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Gandhiji supported women's educational opportunities. Gandhiji placed a lot of emphasis on the liberation of women. He fought sati, untouchability, Pardah, child marriage, and the severe mistreatment of Hindu widows.<sup>14</sup> Both the Kothari Commission and the New Education Policy have made the same recommendation. The Indian government is making progress in this area, and women's educational opportunities are now better than they were in the past. For the benefit of women, the government is currently attempting to provide reservations in the workplace, in politics, etc. The 2020 National Education Policy placed a focus on women in particular. The goal of NEP 2020 is to solve the problem of gender inequality in rural teacher recruitment. The goal of the strategy is to implement fresh approaches that guarantee consideration of qualifications and quality, as well as the provision of suitable recruitment channels for female teachers.

### 17.6. EMPHASIS ON DEMOCRATIC VALUES

Gandhi placed a strong emphasis on the development of democratic values in children when it came to schooling. Gandhi believed that children would become valuable members of society if they were given the opportunity to develop their civic sensibilities and adapt to their surroundings.<sup>15</sup> Gandhiji's views on education appear to be particularly pertinent given the state of society now. Gandhiji's ideas on education are still very applicable in the modern world. According to the Kothari Commission, "the current education system will require fundamental adjustments to satisfy the aims of a modernizing democratic and socialist society within the restrictions set by a feudal and traditional culture. The long-awaited social, economic, and Cultural revolution must actually begin with a reassessment of Education.

## 17.7. ADULT EDUCATION

Gandhiji saw very early on that the only way society could be structured on a new and healthy basis was by waking and reorienting the adult mind. The definition of adult education was covered during the UNESCO symposium on the subject that took place in Mysore in November 1949. Following that, it was determined that adult education meant the minimal basic education required of every adult over the age of 18, but that the advantages of this kind of education may be adapted and extended to children younger than that. In accordance with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the central government has approved the “New India Literacy Programme” for the fiscal years 2022–2027, which will now include all facets of adult education in the nation. Education for All’ will now be used to refer to adult education. The NEP 2020 Programme has put too much emphasis on age, which is not a barrier to education. Everyone recognizes the value of education, thus starting down the path of education whenever you choose is the proper move. One may not always have the chance to finish their basic education in life, but if the resources are there and you have the will to learn, the teachers will show you the way.

## 17.8. MOTHER TONGUE

Mother tongue’ as a required medium of instruction throughout primary education was one of the causes most strongly supported by Mahatma Gandhi. In a language they can comprehend, children learn more quickly and effectively. They learn more in school and develop their self-esteem when they communicate in their mother tongue.<sup>16</sup> According to the National Education Policy 2020, “wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language” for both public and private schools.

## 18. FEW POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In view of the above analysis and relevance of Mahatma’s view in the present world.

- The views and concepts of Mahatma should be made mandatory for students along with their regular coursework because they prepare them for the VUCA world.
- All children should be required to read historical and mythical texts from all major world faiths from the beginning of their education. This will allow them to comprehend and appreciate all major world religions as well as the many cultures and morals that make up those cultures.
- Physical education could be offered as a non-credit course beginning in primary school and

continuing in secondary school, along with professional and cultural education (introduction to carpentry, plumbing, music, dance, and drama), which would foster leadership skills and a sense of camaraderie among the participants.

- Given that school is the children’s prime learning environment, some courses on the natural world, the environment, and sustainable development should be made required. Students need to be aware of the issues that nature poses as a result of climatic change.

## 19. CONCLUSION

Gandhian philosophy still has a lot to say in today’s world. All throughout the world, Gandhi has inspired and will continue to inspire leaders in politics, society, and religion. Gandhi and Gandhianism are always more than what we know, and they remain highly relevant in the twenty-first century as the nation goes through a difficult period. Gandhiji’s political achievements gave us our independence, but even now, many years later, his philosophies continue to enlighten both India and the rest of the world. Perhaps Rabindranath Tagore, the recipient of the Nobel Prize, was aware of this at the time and correctly referred to Gandhi as the Mahatma. To ensure a happy, wealthy, healthy, peaceful, and sustainable future, each person should adhere to the core Gandhian ideologies in their daily lives. Men are wealth: instead of gold and silver, every nation has the greatest concentration of virtuous and contended people and in these trying days of COVID-19, these noble thoughts become even more priceless and valuable. Gandhi’s ideas served as an example for society. Gandhian concepts are more important in the modern period since the Mahatma came to all of his conclusions after a lifetime of experimentation with truths. India should uphold Gandhian ideals and follow the prescribed road to independence in order to become a superpower. Ultimately “Be the change you want to see in the World” -Let’s all strive together to build a strong nation based on the ideals of Mahatma and human development and be the pride of mother India.

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