

## **Gandhian Educational Idea and the Preservation of World Peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**Tapas Roy**

Assistant Professor, Department of History MMC College, Kolkata

**Madhusudan Nayek**

Research Scholar of RKDF University

**Dr. Nirmal Barkandaj**

Assistant Teacher

**Submitted Date:** 15 Feb 2026 **Acceptance Date:** 4 Mar 2026 **Publication Date:** 30 Mar 2026

**Abstract:** Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was one of the leading thinkers, philosophers, and political leaders of the twentieth century. The scope of his thought was not confined merely to politics and economics. He also presented before the world a universal philosophy concerning holistic education and its underlying principles. Although Gandhi did not profound any separate ideological discourse exclusively on education, a comprehensive picture of his educational thought emerges from the book *Towards New Education*, published after his death. During his lifetime, apart from *Hind Swaraj* and *My Experiments with Truth*, Gandhi expressed detailed views on his educational ideas rooted in Indian ideals through numerous articles in the journals *Young India* and *Harijan*, which he edited.

Gandhi broadly rejected Western, materialistic, machine-centered education and expressed complete faith in spiritual and basic education. The central objective of his educational philosophy was to establish a harmonious connection between the soul and the body. In the globalized international situation of the twenty-first century, excessive dependence on technology has led humanity towards extreme violence and conflict. With the expansion of the information revolution, mutual disrespect and violence among students have become a matter of serious concern for educationists. Violence within school and university campuses is no longer confined to developed Western nations; students in third-world countries like India are also increasingly involved in various forms of violent activities.

No immediate solution to this deep crisis in global politics and education is clearly visible. UNESCO, in the preamble to its constitution, has presented a specific definition of peaceful education. According to this definition, education for peace is an organized acquisition of skills, achievable through the quality of education, ethics, competence, and values. In the contemporary Indian and global education system, which is largely value-less, mechanical, and competitive, the imparting of true moral, spiritual, and value-based education faces serious obstacles. In this fragmented and crisis-ridden educational environment, the relevance of Gandhian ideals is being strongly felt among educationists. This paper discusses in detail Gandhi's educational philosophy as a means of preserving true peace within the technology-driven education system of the twenty-first century.

**Keywords:** Gandhian Education, Saytagraha, Swaraj, Global Peace.

## **Introduction:**

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was one of the most influential international thinkers of the twentieth century. His innovative political movements undoubtedly added a new dimension to the history of India's freedom struggle. Alongside his political thought, Gandhi's educational philosophy continues to remain a subject of serious discussion and research among national and international scholars even in the twenty-first century. On the one hand, his educational ideas were practical and action-oriented; on the other, they represented a new pathway toward human peace. In the age of globalization, international thinkers consider Gandhian education as a significant guideline for establishing peace.

Globalization has not only deeply affected the commercial world (Chandra, 2005); it has also brought forth new challenges such as global warming, international recession, new forms of violence, and aggressive nationalism. The call for non-violent peace inherent in Gandhi's educational philosophy is gaining renewed importance in the international arena.

Chandra (2005) points out that globalization has created an explosive political and social environment that continuously generates new crises, breaking down established social structures. Increasing competition constantly destroys human values. In such a crisis-ridden situation, a new education system grounded in ethics and values has become essential. It must be noted that Gandhi was fundamentally opposed to Western mechanization (Lal, 2008). His education system clearly reflects an anti-Western orientation. Gandhi regarded Western-centric history as a history of violence (Guha, 2002).

Literacy, according to Gandhi, was not the most significant aspect of education. Literacy is neither the beginning nor the end of education (Gandhi, 1937, Harijan). He believed education to be the light of life, from which human consciousness emerges—this consciousness being an awakening toward unity. Gandhi further believed that awareness of universal religion could be achieved only through universal, holistic education. Through such education, national consciousness and peace are nurtured. A distinctive feature of his educational thought was the realization of the soul and the mind. Education, according to him, is formed within the mind itself (Gandhi, 1937).

## **Gandhi and the Indian Education System**

Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, presented the first blueprint of modern education in India, known as the "Blue Print" (Bala, 2005). The education system he envisioned was work-centered, value-based, and universal. He was the first to introduce a new model of vocational education. His educational plan came to be known as the Wardha Scheme. The core objective of this scheme was to establish a close relationship between the community and the school, through which education could become socially conscious and cooperative. He envisioned an education system where human potential could be maximally utilized for nation-building and meaningful goals.

From the very beginning of his political life, Gandhi realized that education was the key to political and economic development of society. His educational thought reveals that he was the first in India to present a comprehensive plan regarding both the theory and practice of modern education. Scholars consider the Wardha Scheme as the primary source of his educational framework. However, Bala (2005) notes that the Wardha Scheme does not encompass the entirety of Gandhi's educational philosophy, which was deeper and multi-dimensional. Gandhi believed that education should facilitate the integrated development of mind, body, and soul. According to him, conventional education focuses only on the mind and neglects the soul and the body.

## **Gandhi's Educational Philosophy**

A close unity can be observed between Gandhi's philosophy and his educational system (Bala, 2005). His philosophy was rooted in metaphysics and ethics. He believed that God is Truth, and that truth and non-violence are interdependent; without non-violence, truth becomes falsehood (Hind Swaraj, 1909). Therefore, the establishment of non-violence requires the cultivation of truth. His philosophy rested on two core principles: truth and non-violence (Bala, 2005; Guha, 2008). These were not abstract concepts for Gandhi; he sought to practice them in real life.

Gandhi believed that the unity of humanity could be achieved only through truth, and that God has no form other than truth (*My Experiments with Truth*, 1924). Truth can be realized only through non-violence. This reflection of truth and non-violence is clearly visible in his educational philosophy. According to him, genuine and truthful education enables the fulfillment of life's ultimate goals. True knowledge, in Gandhi's view, is knowing truth and knowing oneself.

However, Gandhi did not seek only spiritual liberation through education (Bala, 2005). He wanted education to contribute to material and social development as well. He believed education must ensure the all-round development of a child—spiritual, physical, and mental. This holistic development could be achieved through hands-on learning. Education, according to Gandhi, should promote intellectual, spiritual, and physical growth.

He believed education should evolve within society, as society shapes human understanding. Educational development reflects social development. His educational vision was not limited to individual growth but aimed at the moral upliftment of society as a whole.

Gandhi was completely opposed to the textbook-centered colonial education system. In 1893, the Royal Institute of International Affairs claimed that India had progressed significantly in education compared to fifty years earlier. Gandhi strongly opposed this view. He later wrote that the teaching of history and geography in primary schools alienated children from their local environment and context, leading to dangerous consequences (Gandhi, 1909; 1923; 1937). He argued that colonial education was antagonistic to Indian society and tradition, creating a class of English-educated elites and dividing society into two groups. This system, he believed, produced a professional class loyal to the government but devoid of social responsibility.

Gandhi regarded Macaulay's "downward filtration theory" as a major obstacle to comprehensive education for the Indian masses. He criticized this education as devoid of moral understanding and values, asserting that it fostered unethical competition and social irresponsibility. He believed education without basic, work-centered learning made individuals self-centered. In many speeches during the freedom struggle, Gandhi emphasized that the Indian people wished to reject colonial education due to its excessive emphasis on technology.

### **Gandhi's Educational Thought and Modern Technology**

Gandhi was a severe critic of Western mechanized technology (Guha, 2002). He believed modern science and technology spread unnecessary violence and created conflict between individuals and the state (*Hind Swaraj*, 1909). Although Indians had used technology earlier, they abandoned it upon realizing its harmful effects. Gandhi rejected mechanization in education and emphasized self-reliant work through khadi and the spinning wheel. He argued that machine-based education inflated material desires and distracted the mind. Moral education, he believed, was the only way to gain control over the mind.

In the Wardha Scheme of 1937, Gandhi emphasized handicrafts as the core of children's education. In Harijan, he later wrote that handicraft education fostered the highest development of mind and soul. Such education not only avoided mechanical learning but also made students aware of society as a whole. He believed handicraft-based learning enabled moral and spiritual development and wanted workers to be integrated into the system through the spinning wheel. He even believed history and geography could be taught through handicrafts, leading to experiential learning rather than superficial knowledge.

On 2 October 1937, Gandhi presented his educational vision in a landmark speech. The Wardha Scheme, later known as *Nai Talim*, included the following key features:

Free and compulsory education for all children aged 7–14. Gandhi believed that excluding English during this stage would help bring all children into the educational fold. He wanted primary and secondary education to be integrated and did not strongly promote higher education. Gandhi preferred higher education to be run by private institutions rather than the state, arguing that privatization would better serve national needs.

## Gandhi and World Peace

In the twenty-first century, world peace faces new challenges. The emergence of new global powers in a unipolar world has created instability in international politics and economics. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, ideological conflicts have been replaced by religious extremism and aggressive nationalism. Terrorism, fundamentalism, nuclear arms races, biological and chemical weapons, and the misuse of information technology have pushed civilization toward destruction. New protectionist policies of capitalist nations are creating further economic conflicts, with similar trends visible in education.

In this context, global civil society is once again recognizing Gandhi's philosophy as essential for international peace. Gandhi's relevance has increased, not diminished, in the twenty-first century (Vaishya, 2015). His emphasis on non-violence and truth is more meaningful today than ever before.

Gandhi should not be viewed merely as a politician; he was a multifaceted philosopher. His educational philosophy reflects not only idealism but also practical realism. He opposed Western industrialization but not ships or trains (Vaishya, 2015). His education system emphasized experiential learning rooted in Indian ideals, compassion, coexistence, and respect for other religions—values essential for world peace today. His ideas have influenced many twentieth- and twenty-first-century leaders, as reflected in the non-violent movement led by Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar.

The unprecedented advancement of information technology has turned the world into a digital village. Intense cultural interaction and competition have increased material desires among students, leading to mental stress, indiscipline, and violence in schools and universities alike. In this complex situation, Gandhi's educational philosophy can inspire students toward non-violence and self-reliance.

### Conclusion

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a unique philosophical personality. Even eighty years after his assassination, his ideas remain relevant and respected not only in India but also in international political, economic, and philosophical discourse. Gandhi's educational philosophy is as applicable globally as it is in India. His basic education offers rural students a vision of self-reliance. His advocacy of experiential, environment-based education over technology-driven learning remains highly relevant today. The growing need for values and ethics in education is increasingly recognized by society.

Through Nai Talim and basic education, Gandhi envisioned a holistic social order whose significance in maintaining international peace is immense. In an era marked by rising religious fanaticism, aggressive nationalism, and conservative religious education, Gandhi's liberal, value-based educational philosophy can undoubtedly offer new pathways toward global peace in the twenty-first century.

### Reference:

1. Bala, S. (2005). *GANDHIAN CONCEPTION OF EDUCATION-ITS RELEVANCE IN PRESENT TIMES*. The Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol-LXVI, No-3, July-Sept., 2005. pp.- 531-548. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41856147>
2. Chandra, B., Mukherjee, M., Mukherjee, A., Panikkar, K. N., & Mahajan, S. (2016). *India's struggle for independence*. Penguin UK.
3. Chatterjee, P. (1999). *The Partha Chatterjee omnibus: comprising Nationalist thought and the colonial world, The nation and its fragments, A possible India*. Oxford University Press.
4. Dhariwal, M., Pradhan, R. C., & Sharan, R. (2010). *Engaging the students of technology in an ethical discourse in the information age: thoughts of Wiener and Gandhi*. Journal: Acm Sigcas Computers and Society, Vol-40(3), pp- 62-71. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1862406.1862411>
5. Gandhi, M. (1997). *Gandhi: 'Hind Swaraj' and Other Writings*. Cambridge University Press.

6. Gandhi, M. (1958). *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. XXVI. Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
7. Guha, R. (2013). *Gandhi before India*. Penguin, India.
8. Guha, R. (2017). *India after Gandhi: The history of the world's largest democracy*. Pan Macmillan. India.
9. Gandhi, M. K. (1927). *An Autobiography Of My Experiments With Truth*. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, India.
10. Iyer, R. N. (2000). *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*. Oxford University Press, India.
11. Lal, V. (2008). *Gandhi, Citizenship, and the Idea of a Good Civil Society*. UCLA, Social Sciences, MANAS, <https://southasia.ucla.edu/history-politics/gandhi/gandhi-citizenship-idea-good-civil-society/>
12. Sharp, G. (1979). *Gandhi as a political strategist: With essays on ethics and politics*. P.Sargent Publisher, USA.