

## **Report on IQAC approved National Webinar, organised by the Department of B.Ed, Loreto College, Kolkata.**

The Department of B.Ed, Loreto College, Kolkata had organised a National Webinar on the theme "Perspectives and Reflection of Gandhi's Philosophy of Education towards an Atmanirbhar Bharat" on October, 16, 2020. The webinar was on Google Meet platform. The target audience were faculty of Educational Institutions and the students of the Department of B.Ed, Loreto College, Kolkata.

The esteemed resource people of the webinar included Professor Asheesh Srivastava, Dean , School of Education, Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Bihar; Dr. Ajay Kumar Behera, Assistant Regional Director, IGNOU Regional Centre, Kolkata; Professor Dr. Tridib Chakraborti, Professor and Ex-Head of the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, Professor Emeritus, School of Liberal Arts and Culture Studies, Adamas University and participants joined the webinar.

It began with an inaugural address by the Principal of the Loreto College, Sister Christine Coutinho. It was followed by the welcome address delivered by the Head of the Department of B.Ed, Dr. Devika Guha. This was followed by presentation of the concept note by the Coordinator of the Webinar, Mrs. Kaustuva Banerjee. Prof. Asheesh Srivastava was the first speaker of the webinar who was introduced by the Co- coordinator of the webinar, Dr. Suparna Ghosh.

### *Prof Asheesh Srivastava*

He started his lecture by mentioning Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary celebrated throughout the country. He mentioned that Gandhiji started the Satyagraha movement from Champaran. The teaching and its relevance are universal, irrespective of the time. The thoughts and philosophy of Gandhiji are like guidelines to the entire world. UNO declared to celebrate his birthday as an International Day of Non-violence. In India, he is known as "Rashtriya Pita". His philosophies are followed in several institutions throughout the country and many institutions are working on Gandhiji. Vast and varied writing is available on Gandhiji. He was the basic tool of consciousness and reconstruction of society. He spoke of the societal context of Gandhiji's life span from 1869-1948 to be a period of orthodoxy prevalent in society. He brought a change in the attitude of the people, the ideas and philosophies are universal and eloquent. If he lived after independence we would have seen a different education system. Presently India has planned a careless attitude.

Regarding Naitalim he mentioned that the British system was bookish and created a great gap between the educated class and the toiling masses. He highlighted the importance of manual work and education should be related to physical work. So teaching should be a balanced knowledge of craft centric and literacy skills. Our education should be revolutionized. The head heart and hands should be well coordinated. Mere bookish knowledge does not attract the child. They see and hear what they are ought not to, but they do not see and hear what they are ought to.

He also mentioned V Kumarappa, "A society cannot live above the level of womenfolk", if we educate a man, we educate an individual but if we educate a woman, we educate the

whole family. He highlighted Gandhiji's thoughts on women's education. Sabarmati ashram was a place where women received education in a free environment. He also mentioned about Buniyadi Vidyalaya and its significance. Bihar was known as the land of an educational experiment as many such Vidyalaya was established.

NPE-2020 the whole country is talking about it. The fundamental ideas of Basic Education are universal. There is a commonality as education should be self-supporting, education should be imparted through the mother tongue, the introduction of manual training will develop respect for manual labour, and therefore we can say NPE 2020 is also related with the philosophies of Gandhiji.

Dr. Ajay Kumar Behara was the second speaker of the webinar who was introduced by Dr. Ranjita Dawn, Head of the Department of Education and a faculty member of the B.Ed department.

### Ajay Kumar Behera

He started his presentation by stating Gandhiji's philosophies of education being a blend of Idealism, Naturalism, and Pragmatism. According to Gandhi "By education, I mean the drawing out the best in child and man-body mind and spirit."

That literacy should not be the beginning or end of education. Idealism is the base of Gandhiji's philosophy whereas Naturalism and Pragmatism are supporters in translating the philosophy into practice. Gandhiji gave the concept of 3R's and 3H's.  
3H's- Hand, Heart, Head. 3R's- Reading Writing and Arithmetic.

Gandhiji's education has been characterized as encompassing the Head, Heart, and Hands which means all-around development of the child. Education stimulates the spiritual, intellectual, and physical faculties of children.

He then mentioned about Gandhiji's Sarvodaya Society which emphasized on Basic education, Buniyadi Shiksha, Nayi Talim, New Education, Wardha Scheme, and Life Education. He highlighted that the new NPE 2020 reflects Gandhian philosophies like free and compulsory education, mother tongue being the medium of instruction, and craft centered education.

He mentioned that Gandhiji emphasized on truth, satyagraha, swabalambhi, swaraj, non-violence, personality development, the dignity of labour, vocational training, character development, the concept of self-discipline, training for leadership, social awareness, service for motherland, and education for all.

He also highlighted that the fundamentals of Gandhiji's philosophy are reflected in the following ways - Martin Luther King Junior of the USA and Nelson Mandel of South Africa also find commonality with Gandhian philosophies of 'Reconciliation', 'Unan- Greek Athens', 'economics of happiness', 'small unit', 'socialism', 'liberalism', education is the best equalizer and not divider, 'social strata and caste factors' etc The Gandhian philosophies are reflected in the 'UNO 2015 Millennium development Goal', 'UNO- 2030 Sustainable development Goal', 'NPE 2020' etc.

Professor Behera also stated that the concept of Atmanirbhar Bharat also reflects Gandhian thoughts. He mentioned that on May 12, 2020, our honourable PM announced the five pillars of the Atmanirbhar Bharat-

1) Economy, 2) Infrastructure, 3) System, 4) Vibrant demography, 5) Demand.

He also mentions that our honourable PM, Sri Narendra Modi mentions about being vocal for the local and then becoming global. Packages to cater to various sections include the Cottage industry, MSME, Labourers, Middle class, Industries, etc. bold reforms across these sectors will drive the country's push towards self-reliance.

He also mentioned Dr. Prassana Kumar, an eminent Gandhi practitioner and chairman of MGNCRE, Hyderabad who advocated the Gandhian Economics having these following underlying principles- Satya, Ahimsa, Aparigraha, Swadeshi, Self-respect, Swachatta, Sudhjal, Swasthya, Paryavaran, Life on Earth.

He concluded by stating that Gandhian philosophies should not remain as content or chapter in books rather we should practice in our daily life, which will be the greatest tribute to the 'Great Soul'.

The last speaker of the webinar was Professor Tridib Chakraborti who was introduced by Mrs. Kaustuva Banerjee.

*Professor Dr. Tridib Chakraborti*

His paper was divided into three-parts. The first part dealt with the core views of Gandhiji. The second part dealt with Atmanirbhar Bharat. The third part dealt with his own conceptual ideas and perceptions of implementation of Gandhian ideas in present times. He started by mentioning that Gandhiji raised his voice against the British colonial rule and the British education system. Gandhi stated, "By education, I mean the drawing out the best in child and man-body mind and spirit." In 1937 he charted out his philosophy of education, where he emphasized the importance of mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Secondly, free and compulsory education, thirdly it should be craft/work-centric education. He highlighted on the core philosophical doctrines of Gandhiji which are education should be given to children from 7-14 years, vocational education should be provided through manual productive work, moral and ethical code of conduct like charity equality, etc. education for women, education should be interconnected with life, and moral and spiritual development should be provided, all-inclusive progress of the individual as well as society and life experience is the vital role of education.

He mentioned about two aims of Gandhian philosophy. Instant aims and Definite aims. Instant aims included cultural aims, moral aims, emancipation; definite aims included values of non-violence and self-reliance. He also mentioned about the main principles of Gandhiji-

1. Mental development through training of senses.
2. Teaching of writing and reading.
3. Learning by doing.
4. Knowledge practice.
5. Constructive dynamic citizenship,
6. All education should be craft-centred/industry coordinated.
7. Education should be self-supporting.
8. Well-coordinated teaching-learning process.

He also mentioned that Gandhiji presented a very pragmatic view. He remained a visionary of handicraft, he emphasized on the advancement of human development through an integrated curriculum which is pedagogically sound and practical. His Basic Education ideas were confined to Satya and ahimsa.

He also mentioned the latest statistics from the Reserve Bank of India, that 27.7% of the population are living below the poverty line in the rural areas and 14% in urban areas highlighting the gap in our society. Although there are various government programs and

policies like RTE, MDM, SIM, Swayam, etc yet the gap has not reduced. Even there is a digital gap prevalent in our country.

He also highlighted the relevance of NPE-2020 with Gandhian philosophy and Atmanirbhar Bharat. That the new model should be based on Swadeshi Bharat. "Vocal for Local". He also emphasized the five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat reiterated by our honourable PM. It emphasized on vocational education, non-formal education is also included in the new NPE, and students will be given a variety of subjects to choose from, introduce vocational education from class-6, in high school level vocational education should be in partnership with NGOs and industries. However, he also mentioned that our mindset has concretized. So it will take time to change our mindset. Only time can say how far we could implement the new NPE and make India Atmanirbhar.

The presentation was followed by an interesting, interactive session amongst the resource people and the participants conducted effectively by Ms. Sanghita Sanyal, faculty member of the Department of B.Ed , followed by a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Suparna Ghosh.

The webinar has been rated by the participants as excellent in the live chat on Google Meet platform. The participants expressed that the webinar was thought provoking, informative, analytical and insightful.

The students who had participated in the webinar had gathered profound knowledge from the webinar pertaining to their syllabus and beyond. It had enriched them about the principles and contexts which had shaped the educational ideologies and principles of Gandhi and the process through which Gandhi envisaged his Naitalim and proposed to implement it for effective growth of an individual. Significantly, they could also perceive the vision and agenda of Atmanirbhar Bharat and its relation with the concept of Gandhi's Basic Education/ Naitalim. In fact this webinar has helped them to conceptualise, contextualize and critically analyse the true essence of the Gandhian Philosophy of Education in the present setting and more precisely in the light of National Educational Policy, 2020 which was much discussed and debated throughout the course of the webinar.