

## **SYSTEMS THINKING: THE GANDHIAN WAY**

**“If I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning.” - Mahatma Gandhi**

\*Dr. Asha Sharma & \*\*Ms. Sunita Sharma

### **Abstract**

*The article discusses the parallels in systems thinking and Gandhian thinking. Aristotle’s principle that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts is interpreted from multiple perspectives. The whole and the part and their relationships are discussed to understand various wholes in the organization. The Gandhian orientation of whole and his leadership style in the light of various systems thinkers are evaluated. The article concentrates on the application of systems thinking to the Indian Freedom Movement to excavate the Gandhian foresight while leading the people in India. The article endeavours to project Mahatma Gandhi as a modern systems thinker in India.*

**Keywords: System Thinking, Gandhian way**

### **Introduction**

The people who are working in an organization many a times think that it is their fate to be in that organization. The employees in the organization are not able to make choices because they lack thinking predominates’. Fate and destiny are basically event oriented and are reactive in nature hence; one should go deeper than events to understand the structural explanations so that generative thinking can alter the fate through which one can design his desired future.

### **System Thinking**

---

\*Principal, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com](mailto:drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com)

\*\*Assistant Professor, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[sunitasharma93550@gmail.com](mailto:sunitasharma93550@gmail.com)

Systems thinking are about the relationship between the whole and the part. Peter M. Senge defines, 'systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots'. The paradigm of this thinking is based on Aristotle's principle, 'the whole is more than the sum of the parts'. Since organizations are social systems, according to Aristotle's principle, the social whole must be greater than the sum of individual beings in the organization

### **Views of Gandhiji on System thinking:**

Gandhi went a step ahead and operated from a higher level, the principle where one can understand the basis of interactions and interrelationships: **the three levels**

1. Principle
2. Pattern
3. Event

and thinking coming from **three inner levels-**

1. wisdom
2. knowledge
3. information/ data

For Gandhi, education with principle was sacred and he considered 'education without principle' as one of the Seven Deadly Sins. **The Seven Deadly Sins that were propounded by Gandhi are as follows:**

- Wealth without Work
- Pleasure without Conscience
- Science without Humanity
- Knowledge without Character
- Politics without Principle
- Commerce without Morality
- Worship without Sacrifice

---

\*Principal, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com](mailto:drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com)

\*\*Assistant Professor, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[sunitasharma93550@gmail.com](mailto:sunitasharma93550@gmail.com)

## **Implementation of Gandhiji's thinking in Education:**

The Gandhian strategy was rooted in 'education with principles' while fighting the British and was by principle non-violent and non-linear in its nature. System thinking is also inherently non-linear and of course non-violent too at a deeper level according to Gandhi.

### **1. Universalisation of Elementary Education in India**

Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been accepted as a national goal in India. Central and State governments are making strenuous efforts to achieve this goal.

As a result of these efforts, 94 per cent of the country's rural population has primary schools (grade I-V) within one km and 85 per cent of rural population has upper primary schools (grade VI – VIII) within a distance of 3 km.

The number of primary schools has gone up by three times, from 2.1 lakh to 6.42 lakh and of upper primary schools by about 15 times from 13,596 to 1.98 lakh during 1950-51 and 1999-2000, respectively. Number of teachers in these schools has also increased from 6.24 lakh in 1950-51 to 32.17 lakh in 1999-2000. Expenditure on education as a whole as percentage of GDP also rose from 0.7 per cent in 1951-52 to 3.74 per cent in 2003-04. The number of primary schools decreased from 6.64 lakh in 2001-02 to 6.51 lakh in 2002-03, whereas that of upper primary schools increased from 2.20 lakh to 2.45 lakh over the period, indicating up-gradation of a large number of primary schools to upper Primary Schools.

### **2. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyam (SSA):**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), launched in November 2000 as an umbrella programme, continued to be implemented to support and build upon other primary and elementary education projects. The programme aims to ensure five years of primary education for all children in the age group 6-14 years by 2007 and eight years of schooling by 2010.

---

\*Principal, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com](mailto:drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com)

\*\*Assistant Professor, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[sunitasharma93550@gmail.com](mailto:sunitasharma93550@gmail.com)

The programme is implemented in partnership with the States. The programme addresses the needs of 192 million children in 11 lakh habitations. 8.5 lakh existing primary and upper primary schools and 33 lakh existing teachers would be covered under the scheme.

### **3. Adult Education:**

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) launched on May 5, 1988 as Technology Mission to impart functional literacy to non-literates and modified from time to time aims at attaining a literacy rate of 75 per cent by 2007. The Total Literacy Rate Campaign (TLC) has been the principal strategy of NLM for eradicating illiteracy. However, India continues to lag behind several other developing countries in terms of adult literacy and youth literacy rates.

### **4. Right to education**

The **right to education** is a universal entitlement to education. This is recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as a human right that includes the right to free, compulsory primary education for all, an obligation to develop secondary education accessible to all, in particular by the progressive introduction of free secondary education, as well as an obligation to develop equitable access to higher education, ideally by the progressive introduction of free higher education. Today, almost 70 million children across the world are prevented from going to school each day. The right to education also includes a responsibility to provide basic education for individuals who have not completed primary education. In addition to these access to education provisions, the right to education encompasses the obligation to rule out discrimination at all levels of the educational system, to set minimum standards and to improve the quality of education.

### **5. Skill India**

\*Principal, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com](mailto:drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com)

\*\*Assistant Professor, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[sunitasharma93550@gmail.com](mailto:sunitasharma93550@gmail.com)

The main goal is to create opportunities, space and scope for the development of the talents of the Indian youth and to develop more of those sectors which have already been put under skill development for the last so many years and also to identify new sectors for skill development. The new programme aims at providing training and skill development to 500 million youth of our country by 2020, covering each and every village. Various schemes are also proposed to achieve this objective.

### **Features of ‘Skill India’**

- The emphasis is to skill the youths in such a way so that they get employment and also improve entrepreneurship.
- Provides training, support and guidance for all occupations that were of traditional type like carpenters, cobblers, welders, blacksmiths, masons, nurses, tailors, weavers etc.
- More emphasis will be given on new areas like real estate, construction, transportation, textile, gem industry, jewellery designing, banking, tourism and various other sectors, where skill development is inadequate or nil.
- The training programmes would be on the lines of international level so that the youths of our country can not only meet the domestic demands but also of other countries like the US, Japan, China, Germany, Russia and those in the West Asia.
- Another remarkable feature of the ‘Skill India’ programme would be to create a hallmark called ‘Rural India Skill’, so as to standardise and certify the training process.
- Tailor-made, need-based programmes would be initiated for specific age groups which can be like language and communication skills, life and positive thinking skills, personality development skills, management skills, behavioural skills, including job and employability skills.
- The course methodology of ‘Skill India’ would be innovative, which would include games, group discussions, brainstorming sessions, practical experiences, case studies etc.

### **6. Vocational education**

---

\*Principal, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com](mailto:drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com)

\*\*Assistant Professor, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[sunitasharma93550@gmail.com](mailto:sunitasharma93550@gmail.com)

Vocational Education is education that prepares people to work in a trade, a craft, as a technician, or in professional vocations such as accountancy, nursing, medicine, architecture, or law. Craft vocations are usually based on manual or practical activities and are traditionally non-academic but related to a specific trade or occupation. Vocational education is sometimes referred to as *career education* or *technical education*.

Vocational education can take place at the secondary, post-secondary, further education, and higher education level; and can interact with the apprenticeship system. At the post-secondary level, vocational education is often provided by highly specialized trade, Technical schools community colleges, colleges of further education UK, universities, Institutes of technology / Polytechnic Institutes.

### **Gandhiji's golden rules for better Life:**

Gandhiji's philosophy of life has a deep spiritual basis and the two pillars of his thoughts were obviously 'Satya' and 'Ahimsa' ‡ 'Truth' and 'Nonviolence' ‡ a happy combination of 'Karmayoga' and 'Gyanयोग':

1) **Realization of Truth:** A devout worshipper of truth, Gandhiji firmly believed that no religion is possible without truth. In his view, God is absolute truth. He said, , I have no God to serve but truth.,,

2) **Non-violence (Ahimsa):** Ahimsa is the only way, Gandhiji suggested, that can lead us the ultimate destination of life. Satya and ahimsa are the two sides of the same coin.

3) **Realization of God:** Mahatma Gandhi believed in Ekeswarabad and thought that only through the medium of God, the manifestation of truth, love, life and knowledge if possible.

4) **Sarvodaya Society:** According to Gandhiji, completion of life is attained through the fulfillment of soul, and for this purpose a favorable society if needed. What he sought was a spiritual society set on the foundation of freedom, justice, equality, love, peace and non-violence.

---

\*Principal, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com](mailto:drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com)

\*\*Assistant Professor, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[sunitasharma93550@gmail.com](mailto:sunitasharma93550@gmail.com)

5) **Combination of karmayoga and Gyanyoga:** Gandhian philosophy is a fine blending of gyan and karma, knowledge and work. He said, , By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man- body, mind and spirit. According to him, the purpose of life is to acquire spiritual knowledge to self-control and activity (Varkey, 2010; Malik, 2013).

## Conclusion

Gandhi dreamed of a new world of non-violence with overall peaceful environment. Non-violence is a universal phenomenon and it has great relevance and significance. It is the ultimate solution of all kinds of problems and conflicts in the society, nation and world. However, its result depends upon its understanding and proper application. The present scenario of violence and exploitation all over the world has raised an important issue. Any nation which has been suffered with communalism, dictatorship, corruption and power games really needs to go back to Gandhi's conviction of nonviolence and truth as his mission. By adopting non-violence, social, political, economic and religious conflicts shall be removed. Today, there is need to adopt Ghandhian philosophy and ideology in overall world to remove all kind of problems and creating peaceful environment. Gandhi is not the past, he is the future. He is an early sign of what we can be. He talks about education in terms of discipline. It is regarded as one of the most important parts and parcels of education. Without discipline, the sound education system is impossible. It is a quality that one's self can lead to the regulation of one's intellectual, moral, spiritual and social behaviour.. Such character-building requires the moral, intellectual and social behaviour under all circumstances i.e., strength of personality, the virtue of compassion, kindness, fair-mindedness and the spirit of dedication. Gandhi strongly holds that education is not end in itself but it is the most powerful weapon which creates all persons of genuine characters. True education is life process which helps in cultivating the spirit of co-operation, tolerance, public spirit and a sense of responsibility. All these qualities are considered as disciplines for the development of human personality. Such disciplines can create the harmonious balance between the individuals and social aim of education. His principle of 'learning by doing' tries to stimulate

---

\*Principal, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com](mailto:drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com)

\*\*Assistant Professor, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[sunitasharma93550@gmail.com](mailto:sunitasharma93550@gmail.com)

the individual's mind to think creatively, independently and critically. His great emphasis on work-culture to the students from the primary stage to higher stage is to enable the students to start producing from the time he started his training. So, his primary information of basic education is Head, Heart and Hand rather than Reading, Writing and Arithmetic.

## REFERENCES

Ackoff, Russell L. (2004), 'Transforming the Systems Movement', available at [http://ackoffcenter.blogs.com/ackoff\\_center\\_weblog/2004/05/index.html](http://ackoffcenter.blogs.com/ackoff_center_weblog/2004/05/index.html). Accessed on 13 December 2005.

Chandra, Bipan (1988), *Indian National Movement: The Long Term Dynamics* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House). ——— (1989), *India's Struggle for Independence* (New Delhi: Penguin Books).

Chandra, Satish (1990), *Medieval India: A History Text Book for Class XI* (New Delhi: NCERT).

Coelho, Paulo (2004), *The Alchemist* (New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India).

Collins, Jim (2001), *Good to Great* (New York: Random House).

Covey, Stephen R. (2004), *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness To Greatness* (London: Simon & Schuster).

Engardio, Pete (2006), 'Karma Capitalism', *Business Week*, October 30.

Gandhi M.K. (1927), *An Autobiography or My Experiments with Truth* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House).

Patil, V.T., ed., (1989), *Studies on Gandhi* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers).

---

\*Principal, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com](mailto:drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com)

\*\*Assistant Professor, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:  
[sunitasharma93550@gmail.com](mailto:sunitasharma93550@gmail.com)

---

\*Principal, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:

[drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com](mailto:drashasharma.vaksm@gmail.com)

\*\*Assistant Professor, Vaish Arya Shikshan Mahila Mahavidyalaya, E mail:

[sunitasharma93550@gmail.com](mailto:sunitasharma93550@gmail.com)