

Nai Talim and Gandhian Approaches to Development

**PCF6: Sub-Theme 3: Skill Development,
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By

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NAI TALIM METHODOLOGY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi has given his scheme of Nai Talim (New Education) in a well formulated approach to education in 1937 in his news paper 'Harijan'. It is a well developed philosophy of education based on experiments he did right from 1904 when he was in South Africa to his stay in ashrams in India at Sabarmati (Gujarat) and Sevagram (Maharashtra). It is an approach to the total personality development of body, mind and spirit and was based on four basic principles (Panse 2007):

- i. Education or learning in mother tongue along with handicraft work,
- ii. Work should be linked with most useful vocational needs of the locality,
- iii. Learning should be linked with vocational work, and
- iv. Work should be socially useful and productive needed for living.

This approach of work centric education with technology accessible locally was the basic approach of Nai Talim. It is essentially a mass education approach due to its centrality of socially useful work, and was expected to create National System of Education.

Failure of Nai Talim in Implementation

History of inducting Nai Talim in Indian education system has been a story of failure. After Indian independence in 1947, Nai Talim was introduced in some states in India in primary schools. However the knowledge centric learning culture from text books and dominance of leadership educated in western model of education created during the British colonial rule, decided the policies of education. Further, the western model of education founded on personal development and competitiveness was of a class nature and could not gel with mass education system (Kamat 1994) . This program continued for a couple of decades and was abandoned. It appeared again as Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW) in school education, and has remained peripheral and never got integrated with mainstream curricula and classroom teaching.

Another opportunity of introducing *Nai Talim* came up while implementing national policy on education based on Education Commission Report of 1966. The Report had two distinct approaches for educational policies, one for linking education with national development as suggested by Mahatma Gandhi in his Rastriya Shikhsan (National System of Education), and another for developing industrial society on the lines of western education and developmental models- both capitalist and communist. The first approach whose exponent was J P Naik, who was a freedom fighter and true Gandhian, worked as a member secretary of the Commission and was intimately attached with the concept of 'Educational Revolution' for linking education with socio-economic transformation of society as detailed in the Report (ECR 1966). The education revolution was never started. Among others, the two main reasons attributed to the failure of educational revolution were (Naik, 1982):

- Wrong choice of change makers: the teachers and administrators of the existing education system. The people who were having vested interests in the continuation of the system can never be the change agents of revolution.

- Unclear relationship between education and development: Only two developmental models were available - capitalist and communist. India adopted a mixed model of development.

Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is to show that many of the basic concepts of Nai Talim can now be adapted in the work centric education system of Mahatma Gandhi. The essentials of the Nai Talim for decentralised and autonomous system of education are now getting available in the connected society with Information Communication Technology (ICT) sweeping the whole world with communication revolution. The educational revolution can now be founded on the communication revolution (Naik, 1978), which is creating entirely new processes and mechanisms for living and working of the connected people. The major task is to find the processes and mechanisms of the new age society to suit the elements of educational system that can help personal and social development with work and development centric approaches with non-exploitation and non-degradation of humans and nature.

BASIC FORMULATION OF NAI TALIM

The three elements of education - learning, work and locally available technology- are linked by an iterative process:

Education + work + Technology → Socially Useful and Productive Work (SUPW)

In this formulation,

- Work is assumed to be wholesome, having routine, rest, progress and pleasure all integrated into working and using technology (Kumarappa 1957)
- Technology is either empowering and / or non-exploitative of people and nature, and does offer wholesome work, and does not make a human being a 'cog in the machine' and degrades human creative nature, or pollutes and degrades the nature around.
- Education is the learning through working and using technology for creating SUPW, in which quality is embedded due to output of work (products and services) being socially useful and helpful in raising productivity of all those involved in using the products and services. This is the Nai or newness aspects that could be involved in the process of working- in its inputs, throughputs and outputs – giving freedom and autonomy to the learner and his/her work in choosing and creating new processes and results.

Samavaya between Learning and Social Development

In Nai Talim, one of the basic concepts is *Samavaya*. (Sama –equal and vaya / vyaya- expenditure), Both learning and development are simultaneously expended as are required for creating SUPW. The process is like bootstrapping with use of learning and developing for fitting into each other, and demand of SUPW leads to higher levels of processes and results. In this sense, the system after every cycle of operation permits innovation and becomes new / *Nai*, and is really striving for excellence, which is the Indian Constitutional obligation of every Indian citizen and particularly of teachers and students. Since Samavaya incorporates a looping process of reforming, this model of education is embedded with continuous developing and striving for excelling in performance. This also happens to be the Baldrige Model of Performance Excellence in Education (Process of Approach, Deployment, Learning and Internalization-ADLI). (www.baldrige.nist/PDFfiles2009-10) Nai Talim is highly value based, mass based and avoids restrictive class approach- eventually a class of talented persons gets selected by their superior performance, but every learner and worker has an equal and open opportunity to develop his/her innate talents.

Linkage with Life-long Learning and Developing

The goal is how an education system could be designed and developed in which personal and social performance could be enhanced with autonomy given to the learner and his learning for doing wholesome work and to make work creative and innovative. Another issue is how to make this

process a life-long, creative and innovative, as well as useful for fulfilling the needs of living and working. Gandhian approach in education is for learning for life, learning from life and learning throughout life – linking education with yoga, industry and cooperative working (*yoga, udyoga and sahayoga*) (Bhave, 1959) It is a way for learning, working, developing and transforming continuously and rising on higher cultural and innovation levels of modernity and post-modernity.

APPROPRIATENESS OF NAI TALIM IN 21ST CENTURY NEW AGE SOCIETY

Failure of Nai Talim in Industrial Society

Before considering the nature of New Age society, it is better to know why Nai Talim was met with defeat in its post independent implementation in India. The obvious reasons are the founding principles of two systems, western model of education as adopted in India and Nai Talim, are contradictory. Current Indian education system is a tool for the industrialisation, which depends on mass production and global marketing processes, which are competitive and exploitative in nature, and takes away work and jobs from many, making them poorer and without livelihood. The concept of wealth created and used in mass production and open marketing systems with financial business models for the value or wealth creation, have limited the meaning of wealth in terms of GDP growth as measured in monetary terms. The social capital, which is quite varied and diverse as required for living and working, is not necessarily convertible in terms of only one measure, money. The mass production processes obviously takes away jobs from many and makes them not only non-profitable and non-competitive, but also takes away jobs and working opportunities, makes them non-productive and useless for society. This is the basic contradiction between work centric and knowledge centric learning and working approaches. According to Gandhian Nai Talim, we take away basic function of living of life-long working, learning and creating by doing wholesome work for progressive and satisfactory living. Outcome of the mass-production and marketing is poverty of some and prosperity for select few

Industrial Society and Modernity

The industrial society has also created a new basis of social formation, the basis of modernity besides creating plenty. The value system that has been selected by the Indian Republic has been based on modernity with values of liberty, equality and fraternity and social justice, and principles of democracy, secularism and socialism (autonomy and self-governance or *swaraj* or self rule of Mahatma Gandhi (1909)) in social organisation. However the exploitative nature of processes promoting mass production and wealth creation through marketing processes has obviously degraded human nature built in earlier stage of human society- the agrarian society. The Indian adaption of western model is inherently of class nature (Kamat 1994) and inappropriate for the value system and modernity expected in the Indian Constitution. J P Naik (1982) defined modernity in terms of human and social cultural development, by following the best in one's own culture and adopting the best practices of cultures of others, and following the values and principles enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The modernity defined in these terms and post-modernity as the pursuit of creativity and innovation leads to a personal and social goal to be pursued along the learning and developing paths in one's own as well as of collective living and working. The failures of both the capitalist and communist models of development leads us to the search for the alternative third model of education. Nai Talim offers itself as an alternative with its value system and work and development centricity.

New Processes and Mechanism of Connected Society

The connected society now being created with ICT has:

1. IT created new processes: Digitisation, virtualisation and mass-personalisation / group customisation.
2. Connected people created processes and mechanisms: Creation of 'cognitive surplus' of society as released and integrated through new techno-social processes such as Wiki processes (Wikipedia, Wikimapia, YouTube, etc) open resource movement (MIT's Open Courseware, Learning Commons, WikiEducator, etc), self-learning processes (Hole-in-the-wall experiment: Mitra 2005) self-expression processes (Blogs, Flogs, etc), social networking processes (FaceBook), etc.

3. Global Standards and Protocols for supporting communication and working together, such as SCORM.
4. MIT FabLab that enables, with the help of a workshop, tools and CAD, to 'create almost anything' by designing and developing any product with global quality and high personalisation and localisation.

In fact the broadband is now creating connectedness with entirely different social processes that were not only not existing earlier but are highly decentralised and allow high level of personalisation. Many of the new processes such as Clay Shirky's (2008, 2010) identification of '*Here Comes Everybody*' on e-Platform and gives humans a '*power of organisation without organisation*', or '*Cognitive Surplus*' accumulated as in Wikipedia due to '*creativity and generosity in a connected age*', or C K Prahalad's idea of 21st century as the *New Age of Innovation* in which networking is '*driving co-creation of values*' with marketing wealth creation that has 'fortune at the bottom of the pyramid' and Muhammad Yunus (2007) processes of '*social business for creating World Without Poverty*', are some of the new processes found in the technologically connected society that have just started emerging.

The nature of connected society emerging now has global linkage with each one anywhere anytime; and new processes such as global open resources, with large number of voluntary services of people offering their experience and personal expertise to anyone in the world is creating different brotherhood and social service. The decentralised and personalised use of all the world resources at the service of one and many helping one to solve his/her problem is creating a society where livelihood and culture essential for living and working has to be different. The 20th Century Industrial Society models are of no use and have already started creating many contradictions. This always happens when humanity crosses over 'age discontinuity' as seen when society changed from agrarian to industrial form. The same will happen now as society transforms from Industrial to the Post-Modern form of society. We want to have a social system and related education system that will support education and development in a consistent way in the New Age society.

I-CONSENT Teacher Education Program: Supportive Elements to Nai Talim

The flagship program of I-CONSENT, the Teacher Education, in which pilot experiment is being used to create the social developmental education model, has the following processes and mechanisms in use / development.

1. All students, teachers, tutors and mentors and supporting staff form a connected group and use internet connectivity for communicating and working together on LMS-e-platform for personalised and group services and recording.
2. Learning Resource created jointly by teachers and Course Teams is available on e-Platform along with all the technical and administrative services. They support role based courses dependent on competency and capability development through related functions and deliverables (process-result approach).
3. The basic model is Social Developmental Education with scenario-situation (Next-Now → Future-Now) learning-development model for preparing reflective teacher along with self- and social-development. We propose to use samavaya and value system useful for social and group working and developing. (Takwale 2010, Deshmukh 2010)
4. Evaluation of personal and social learning and development outcomes are measured in terms of FIVE personality framework parameters through evaluation rubric with self and tutor /mentor evaluation system. Learner is expected to find his/her learning and developing paths. A tool of e-Portfolio is given to students for knowing personal, group and situated learning and social developmental results.
5. Creating Open Education Resource (OER) useful for role based development of competencies and capabilities. It supports resource accumulation related to knowledge, technology, social organisations, natural wealth, voluntary services and financial services available to learners and developers.
6. Formation of autonomous self-governing pariwar and communities for learning and developing the situation through Secondary Network for stakeholders- students, teachers and parents.

The Teacher Education program is network supported and creates learning and developing groups based on some specific shared values and principles. We use only the values and principles enshrined in the Indian Constitution as the basis for the Teacher Education program.

Linkages between Teacher Education Program and Nai Talim

The Teacher Education program uses completely the New Processes and Mechanisms of New Age social development through OER, e-Portfolio, Group working and developing, LMS platform for level playing field for all concerned and secondary stakeholders, life-long learning and developing with personal and group / institutional development and self and social transformation on their learning and developing paths with process-result approach. Continuous reforming loops creates striving for excellence. Continuous learning and developing and creating social capital development leads to supporting quality learning and striving for achieving higher cultural, social and personal creativity goals. The program is at a pilot stage and one more year is to go before it completes its first run.

The Teacher Education creates elements that can match the Nai Talim concepts of wholesome work, non-destructive and empowering use of technologies; social reconstructive approaches essential for cooperative and collaborative learning and developing in the scenarios-situations so as to develop locality and local situations; and in using e-culture with higher value system for creating OER that help eachone and groups to earn quality education and livelihood.

NEED OF THE THIRD MODEL

J C Kumarappa, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi in his book on Economy of Permanence (1957) describes the two types of economies, one of transient and destructive type based on selfish and exploitative services and another of permanent and creative nature based on duties and altruistic values and services. He also gives the Valuation Scale for assessing service culture values on scale of five: parasitic culture, predatory culture, enterprise culture, gregation culture and selfless service culture. Each culture support economy and are ranged from selfish and exploitative to the self-less economies and depends on how much one contributes to social capital and takes away for one's own development.

The Gandhian economy observes the natural limitations and limits to growth with non-exploitative and non-violent ways of using social and human resources. However it has no limits to growth of individual and social cultural and innovation powers of human being. Creation of artificial materials, tools and techniques, products and services that empower humans and nature could be given place in the non-destructive and selfless economy. All should support sustainable and innovative growth of economy of permanence. There will be many philosophical and ideological issues arising out this formulation. One thing is sure, we need a new model of socio-economic and cultural development, the third model, which will help fulfilment of physical and biological needs, modern cultural needs and post-modern creativity and innovation needs.

One of the major drawbacks of the earlier models, working in a system of existing socio-economic power structures is avoided by creating empowered groups, pariwars and communities. Any model in which public-private partnerships can be linked with community partnerships as in the case of social business of Grameen Bank of Muhammad Yunus and forming public-private-community (PPC) partnership that gives share in production and services and makes them prosumers (producer +consumer) creates a different socio-economic power structure providing alternative essential.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Finding developmental ways and linking them with education is a big issue. Our goals is limited at this stage in finding Social Developmental Education model that will resemble with Nai Talim and link the education with situated development with support of OER for offering Quality Education for All that will permit innovative and creative education essential for living and working processes of individuals and groups.

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