



Gandhiji's Views on Nai Talim and Its Relevance in Context to NEP 2020

***Arpita Mondal**

****Sangita Pramanick**

*M.Ed. Student, Madhyamgram B.Ed. College, Kolkata, WB, India

**Assistant Professor, Madhyamgram B.Ed. College, Kolkata, WB, India

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Email: [*mondalarpita46196@gmail.com](mailto:mondalarpita46196@gmail.com)

[**mamansangita3@gmail.com](mailto:mamansangita3@gmail.com)

<p>Received 11/06/2025</p> <p>Accepted 13/06/2025</p> <p>Published 09/07/2025</p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p>Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is also known as the “Father of the Nation”. He was a freedom fighter and, education reformer in India. Gandhiji's Nai Talim is popularly known as “New Education”. This research would provide valuable insights into the social and educational fields. It provides a few ideas on how Gandhiji's Nai Talim is related to NEP-2020. Gandhiji's exalted social reform is included in the study. However, the main purpose behind conducting this study is to investigate the contemporary relevance of Gandhiji's Nai Talim in driving social change, explore Gandhiji's conceptualization of Nai Talim and its underlying principles and find out similarities and contrasts of Gandhiji's Nai Talim framework with the provisions of NEP 2020. This research paper is conducted using qualitative research methods. It is a qualitative research. So, philosophical, historical and content analysis have been used. In conclusion, Gandhiji wanted to bring about change in the field of education through Naitalim. NEP 2020 has implemented Gandhiji's Naitalim. Gandhiji's Naitalim, being relevant to NEP 2020, has brought about great changes in the field of education and social life. The similarities between NEP 2020 and Gandhiji's Naitalim are noticeable. Gandhiji, as a politician and educationist, tried to bring about radical changes in social life. NEP 2020 has created a stir in social life by embodying Gandhiji's ideology.</p> <p>Keywords: Mahatma Gandhi, Naitalim, NEP 2020</p>
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Introduction

The education extension covers a wide area. Education is related to the welfare of our country and nation. Children start early education through their families and slowly continue their journey towards school education. Behavior, critical thinking, discipline etc., are learned in school. Today's children will be the future citizens. An educated society can change our society and bring

about social change. For Nelson Mandela, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” He believed that education is the first step for people to gain the knowledge, empowerment, critical thinking and skills they need to make this world a better place (Agrawal, 2020).

Education is the backbone of the nation. Education contribution is wide for the development of the country and nation. Education reduces the challenges faced by individuals in their lives and helps them learn how to earn. Education opens more opportunities for individuals to achieve better possibilities in their career and in personal growth. The contribution of educationists and philosophers to the field of education in India, from ancient times to the present, is undeniable. Among them, the one whose philosophical thought gave a unique shape to Indian education since the 20th century is Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation of India. Mahatma Gandhi was a great personality born on 2nd October 1869, in a small town of Porbandar. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is also called Mahatma Gandhi. The meaning of ‘Mahatma’ is “Great Soul”. The title ‘Mahatma’ was first applied to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in South Africa in 1914 and was later popularized by Rabindranath Tagore in 1915. Gandhiji’s innovative approach to political activism, passive resistance, belief in non-violence and firm faith in ‘Satyagraha’ against oppressive regimes came as the biggest surprise to everyone across the globe. His philosophy is a harmonious blending of idealism, naturalism, and pragmatism. Mahatma Gandhi was a great personalities, aside social reformer and education reformer of India. NEP 2020 is restructured by Mahatma Gandhi’s NaiTalim, emphasizing learning through handcrafted work and quality education. The NEP 2020 tried to achieve the holistic development of children, early childhood care, and education and introduced new curricular and pedagogical structure, 5+3+3+4 hierarchical structure, multilingualism, equitable and inclusive education, compulsory education, gender inclusion and vocational education in school. NEP (2020) emphasizes a flexible and play-based approach in these foundation years that prepares children for school readiness and enables holistic development, which Gandhiji had long ago mentioned in his education system. (Pramanick,2024)

Review of Literature

Singh and Singh (2025) conducted a study to assess “Mahatma Gandhi’s Nayee-Talim and NEP-2020 On School Education: A Perspective” this article aims to underscore the educational perspectives articulated by Mahatma Gandhi through his concept of Nai Talim, alongside an exploration of the National Education policy (NEP). It includes a thematic analysis of several shared themes, the principles of free and compulsory education, the medium of instruction, craft and vocational training, and the advancement of girls’ education, all from a comparative standpoint. This study employs qualitative research methods. This paper examines the National Education Policy -2020 and Nayee- Talim, highlighting their similarities while acknowledging their distinctions. Both frameworks present comparable themes and ideas in education, particularly concerning national interest and future generations. Furthermore, they share profound insights linked to Mahatma Gandhi’s principles, including truth, Ahimsa, non-stealing, fearlessness, the rejection of untouchability, the value of manual labor, Swadeshi, and Sarvodaya. Ultimately, the influence of Gandhi’s Nayee-Talim is clearly reflected throughout the NEP2020, even if it is not overly recognized, paralleling broader humanitarian principles.

Sahoo and Sahoo (2024) conducted a study to assess “A Study on the relevance of M.K. Gandhi’s Educational Thoughts in NEP 2020: A Reflections.” The primary objectives of this research are to evaluate the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi’s educational philosophy in relation to the goals and principles set forth in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This study employs a historical and Meta – analytical approach, utilizing both primary and secondary resources. It investigates how Gandhi’s tenets of self- reliance, sustainability, and social responsibility can enhance the promoting a more inclusive, equitable, and values-driven educational system.

Gupta (2020) examined “Impact of Mahatma Gandhi’s Nai Talim on the Education Policy 2020: An Analysis ”. Even after several decades, his perspectives on national education policy (NEP-2020) provides an excellent opportunity to explore remnants of Gandhiji’s vision in the daily practice of education. This study employs a document review in accordance with the qualitative approach to research. This paper will critically analyze the National Education Policy 2020 through the lens of Gandhi’s principles of Nai Talim and education, assessing the relevance of his ideas in modern India.

Jena (2020) discussed “Mahatma Gandhi and Basic Education”, the focus of this paper is to examine and review Gandhiji’s principles regarding basic education and key features of his approach to education. The research is conducted within a qualitative research paradigm. Given the pressing issue of educated unemployment among youth, it is imperative that the current educational framework undergo significant reform in alignment with Gandhiji’s philosophy of basic education. The modern educational system should be restructured at the foundational level, incorporating moral values and employability aspects inherent in Gandhiji’s Basic Education.

Gonsalves (2019) explored “Half-Naked Fakir”, the Story of Gandhiji’s Personal Search for Sartorial integrity the primary aim of this paper is to focus on Gandhiji’s personal experiences rather than the social revolution that these experiences catalyzed. This study employs a qualitative research paradigm to explore the subject matter. This paper succinctly reiterates Gandhiji’s significant insights regarding the path to a more socially integrated framework.

Dey (2017) explored “Mahatma Gandhi and his Idea of Basic Education: An Historical Appraisal.” This paper seeks to analyze and reflect on Gandhi’s principles of basic education, drawing directly from his writings. The researcher applied a qualitative research approach. This study reveals that Gandhi not only transformed India’s educational framework but also initiated a social revolution.

Dundar et.al (2016) conducted a study to assess “A role model in light of values: Mahatma Gandhi”, this study seeks to highlight Mahatma Gandhiji, a Widely recognized role model, by exploring his personal attributes, philosophy of life, commitment to his beliefs, methods of addressing challenges, and his overarching views on peace and tolerance. Additionally, it aims to articulate educational perspectives based on the values he embodied. The research utilized a document review methodology aligned with a qualitative approach. The finding suggest that Mahatma Gandhiji’s personality embraced universal values such as love, justice, peace, non-violence, tolerance, and freedom. Throughout his life, he dominated a consistent attitude that reflected his principles, concretising these values when confronted with various situations.

Gonsalves (2012) explored “Khadi: Gandhiji’s Mega Symbol of Subversion” In the study, main objectives of author is the role of khadi in India and Gandhiji’s political entrance towards Purna Swaraj. The study employed an interdisciplinary approach for its analysis. This book

explores the eco-political, socio-religious, and philosophical factors that enabled this vision. The author revisits Gandhiji's core insights that fueled the khadi revolution.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the contemporary relevance of Gandhiji's Nai Talim in driving social change.
2. To explore Gandhiji's conceptualization of Nai Talim and its underlying principles.
3. To find out similarities and contrast of Gandhiji's Nai Talim framework with the provisions of NEP 2020.

Research Questions

1. How can Gandhiji's Nai Talim inform and shape contemporary efforts to drive social change in India?
2. What are the underlying principles and values that guided Gandhiji's concept of basic education, and how did they shape his vision for Indian society?
3. To what extent do the principles and provisions of Gandhiji's Nai Talim framework align with those outlined in the National Education Policy NEP-2020?

Methodology of the Study

This research paper is conducted using qualitative research methods. Here, we analyze Gandhiji's Nai Talim (Basic Education) and its influence on Indian Education. This work is based on an increasing number of secondary sources such as research articles, e-journals, magazines, book etc. For that, some documents related to Gandhi's life are used by researchers. Each document's content is examined in detail by researchers.

It is a qualitative research, so philosophical, historical and content analysis have been used. Here, the Independent variable is Nai Talim and the Dependent variable is NEP 2020, so the relationship between Independent variable and Dependent variable is cause and effect. Dependent variable can always be reduced and increased. So, if you add how much of Mahatma Gandhi's Nai Talim to NEP 2020, child development will happen, social change will happen, it will reduce and increase the National Education Policy. In this research paper, Nai Talim is the cause and NEP is the effect.

Result and Discussion

The contemporary relevance of Gandhiji's Nai Talim in driving social change

This research would provide valuable insights into the social and educational fields. It provides a few ideas on how Gandhiji's Nai Talim is related to NEP-2020. Gandhiji's exalted social reform is included in the study.

a. Relevance of Gandhiji's Nai Talim to Modern India

The principles embedded within Nai Talim gain a renewed relevance as India navigates complex challenges such as unemployment, poverty, and social inequality. This educational framework places a strong emphasis on practical skills, encouraging students to engage in hands-on learning that directly applicable to their lives and communities. By fostering community involvement and vocational training, Nai Talim not only equips individuals with the necessary skills for employment but also promotes a sincere of responsibility towards one's community. Such an approach is crucial in addressing the passing issues of un- and underemployment, paving

the way for economic empowerment among marginalized populations and contributing to the overall development of society.

b. Empowerment Through Nai Talim

Beyond mere skill acquisition, Gandhiji's Nai Talim offers a powerful platform for empowering both individuals and communities. Its core objectives are to cultivate self-reliance and self-sufficiency, enabling individuals to take charge of their own destinies and fostering a resilient community spirit. By instilling values of independence and resourcefulness, Nai Talim strives to create a population that is not only capable of meeting its own needs but also actively participates in community development and improvement initiatives.

c. Promotion of social Harmony and National Integration

Another vital aspect of Nai Talim is its role in fostering social harmony and national integration. By emphasizing instruction in the mother tongue, Nai Talim acknowledges and celebrates regional identities while simultaneously promoting cultural diversity. This linguistic approach not only strengthens personal identity but also encourages respect and application for different cultures within the broader fabric of Indian society. Such an educational philosophy plays a crucial role in bridging divides and building a cohesive nation.

The New Education Policy brings about many social changes through education. Viewing education as a tool for social change, Mahatma Gandhi emphasized producing well-rounded individuals with strong character through education tailored to individual talents and community needs. Gandhiji's Nai Talim is related to social change.

2. Gandhiji's conceptualization of Nai Talim and its underlying principles.

Gandhiji was an educationist and politician. He was one of the educational reformers in the history of India. He considered the mother tongue as one of the medium of education. He didn't accept the British period English medium system for education. According to Gandhi, the colonial system of education was: **i.** Based on foreign culture, which has almost destroyed the local culture; **ii.** This system of education has limited itself to educating the mind; it has completely ignored the education of the heart and hand; and **iii.** The right education is not possible through a foreign language.

Nai Talim was introduced in this situation. The 'Wardha Scheme' of Education is popularly known as 'Basic Education'. This scheme was the first attempt to develop a scheme of education in British India by Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. For Gandhiji, 'education means all-around development of an individual. In the words of Gandhi, "By education I mean all round drawing out of the best in child and man- body, mind and spirit."

Nai Talim consists of main components such as Agriculture, Carpentry, Husbandry, Horticulture, Dairy science, Technology, Healthcare, Health and Beauty studies, medical science, Clothing construction, Textile Design and Music services, all of which are related to the ancient education system. These socially useful works were divided into sixteen areas of knowledge, which are also called 'Solah Kalas' in the ancient education system. Lord Macaulay's influence in 1835 introduced English medium education into the Indian Education system. Lord Macaulay, given by the statement in 1835, "Education should create a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but

English in test, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.”

As a nationalist leader, he fully realizes that the British education system could not serve the socio-economic needs of the country. Gandhiji’s Nai Talim is popularly known as a “New Education”. This New Education has been described as “Education for Lifted”. This education theory is ‘original’, ‘new’ and epoch-making. Gandhiji wanted education to be free and compulsory for all boys and girls between the ages of seven to fourteen. The one of Nai Talim is well narrated in the word of Jeyapragasam (2010, p.26), he writes, “Mahatma Gandhi visualized an alternative and a new civilization based on the principles of welfare of all levels (Sarvodaya) and welfare of the last first all levels (Antyodaya). He investigated a new education policy and philosophy, Nai Talim to suit his vision.

3. Similarities and contrasts of Gandhiji's Nai Talim framework with the provisions of NEP 2020.

Gandhiji’s New Education has been described as “Education for lifted “This Education Theory is ‘original’, ‘new’ and epoch-making. Gandhiji’s Nai Talim emphasizes holistic development through learning by doing, craft-centred curriculum, mother tongue instruction, self-sufficiency and moral character building. Nai Talim aims to create an education system relevant to learners’ lives, fostering a just and sustainable society.

Nai Talim main features are: **1.** Free and compulsory education, **2.** The mother tongue as a medium of Instruction, **3.** Development of creativity and critical thinking, **4.** Emphasis on character building, **5.** Social service awareness. All these key features of basic education can be seen easily in the New Education Policy 2020 of India.

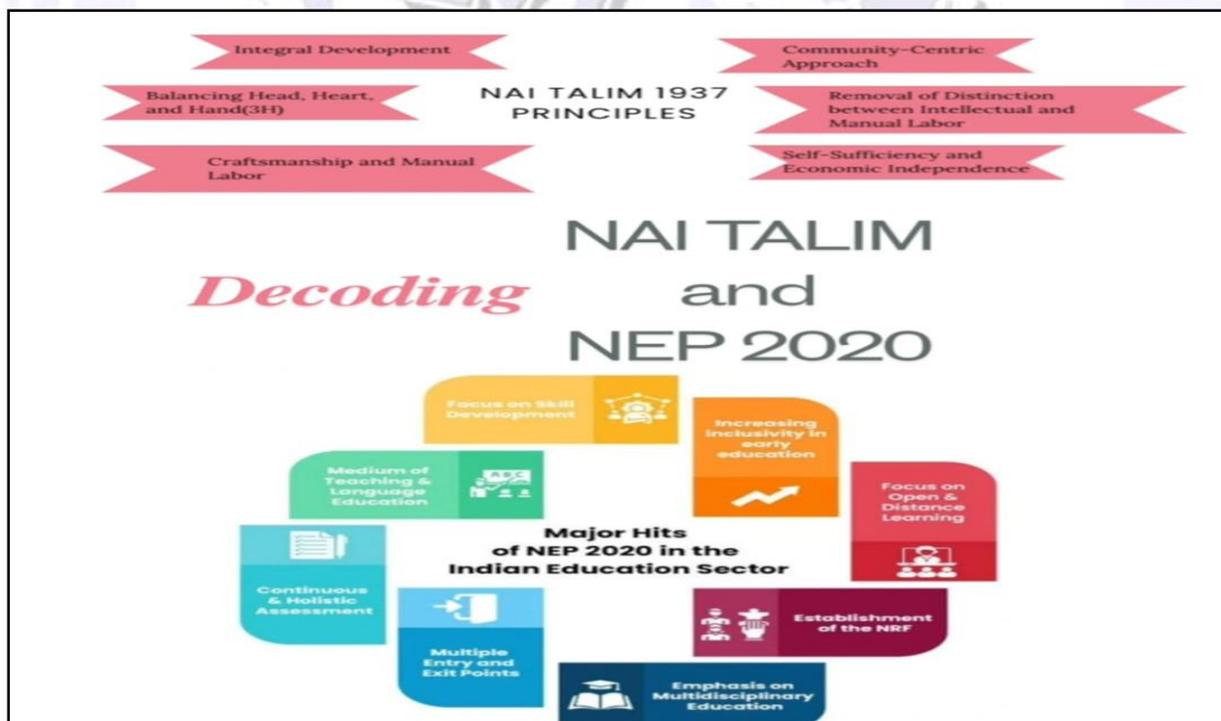


Figure: 1: Similarities and contrast of Gandhiji's Nai Talim framework with the provisions of NEP 2020

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NEP (National Education Policy), if there are changes/deficiencies in the education system, this policy is formed to correct and reconsider it. Three Education Policies were formed in India in 1968, 1986 and 2020. In 1986, the policy structure was changed and it was revised in 2020. The chairman of the NEP drafting committee was Dr. K. Kasturirangan. Who was the chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)? The draft of the education policy was submitted to the Ministry of Human Resource Development in May 2019. The NEP was approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020. The structure of NEP 5+3+3+4, Foundation (5 years), Preparatory (3 years), Middle (3 years), and Secondary (4 years). The NEP says, "The purpose of education system to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing and empathy system, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination with sound ethical moorings and values." The NEP 2020 tried to achieve the holistic development of children, early childhood care, and education and introduced new curricular and pedagogical structure, 5+3+3+4 hierarchical structure, multilingualism, equitable and inclusive education, compulsory education, gender inclusion and vocational education in school. NEP 2020 is restructured by Mahatma Gandhi's Nai Talim, emphasizing learning through handcrafted work and quality education. These are part of NEP 2020. Its foundation is disclosed in Gandhiji's concept of Basic Education.

Conclusion

Gandhiji wanted to bring about change in the field of education through Nai Talim. NEP 2020 has implemented Gandhiji's Naitalim. The structure NEP 5+3+3+4 Foundation (5 years), Preparatory (3 years), Middle (3 years), and Secondary (4 years). Gandhiji's Nai Talim, being relevant to NEP 2020, has brought about great changes in the field of education and social life. The similarities between NEP 2020 and Gandhiji's Nai Talim are noticeable. Gandhiji, as a politician and educationist, tried to bring about radical changes in social life. The NEP 2020 tried to achieve the holistic development of children, early childhood care, and education and introduced a new curricular and pedagogical structure, 5+3+3+4 hierarchical structure, multilingualism, equitable and inclusive education, compulsory education, gender inclusion and vocational education in school. NEP 2020 has created a stir in social life by embodying Gandhiji's ideology.

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