

Gandhi in school

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Gandhiji's belief in education was to enhance the notion of the individual and social change believing that both are connected to each other. According to him, education cannot remain in the claustrophobic domains of books only. There has to be an outreach between students and the outside world.

Mahatma Gandhi is no doubt, one of the most influential people of the 20th century and his most valuable wealth was his thoughts on peace, love, harmony, truth and non-violence. These are valid even today as the core structure is the same. I read a book written by a Urdu writer Khwaja Ahmad Abbas – 'Letter from a child to Gandhiji'. It is based on five children writing a letter to Mahatma Gandhi in heaven requesting him to come back to the world; promising that they would never play a game that he asked them not to play. Later, I came to know that this was staged as a play and even appreciated. There have also been reports in the press about a village in Madhya Pradesh, solving its water scarcity problem through 'shramdan'. I know this is rare. But I think we, as educators, must not lose the hope that we can still imbibe Gandhiji's philosophy, ideas, principles, and views. It is up to us as mentors to instill Gandhiji's ideas and values in ourselves and also in our children.

Gandhiji can be remembered in the following ways in school:

Value days – We can organize an Honesty, Truth, and Peace Day. It is observed that sometimes students in general just pick up things that belong to others. So, to instill honesty, the school can display stationery items with a price tag. The child can pick up an item of his/her choice and put the money into the payment box kept on the table.

CCE activities – These activities can be designed such that it focuses and inculcates Gandhiji's ideas and thoughts. For example, an activity such as a role play on the theme of peace and harmony can be organized. There can be debates on topics like 'Relevance of Gandhiji's principles in the 21st century'. We can also have an elocution competition on 'Gandhiji and today's education system'.



For seniors, there can be a monologue competition on the theme 'Freedom Fighters' where students enact Mahatma Gandhi and talk about his ideologies.

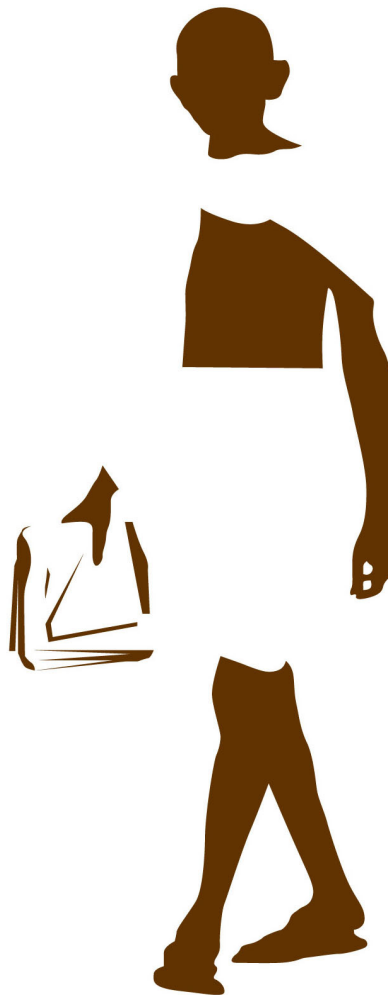
For the juniors there can be 'Fancy Dress' or 'Mono Act'.

Creative writing – We can conduct essay writing or poetry competition where the children will have to write on 'Gandhiji's educational philosophy, planning, and practice.' They can compose poems on 'I am Gandhi', 'Gandhiji, father of our Nation', 'Youth and Gandhiji...' Comic can be created depicting the life of Gandhiji and his freedom struggle. It can be taken up as an integrated project in English and history.

Exhibition – In our schools we have exhibitions in maths, social science, language, and art. Under history we can have real models of Gandhiji, enacting his life incidents. Posters and comics can showcase his principles while play cards and flashcards can highlight Gandhiji's views on education. In the 'art gallery' we can have, sketches, drawings and paintings on Mahatma Gandhi's life and struggle for the nation.

Interactive activity – Students of classes IX and XI can be assigned an interactive activity – 'Each one teach one' thus implementing Gandhiji's ideology of educating each one. According to Gandhiji – 'Literacy in itself is no education.' So here s/he has not only to make a person literate but also inform him/her about the various vocational trainings. S/he should also update him/her about the various schemes and facilities implemented by the government and NGO's.

"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."
Mahatma Gandhi



Gandhiji said even as a tree has a single trunk but many branches and leaves, there is one religion – HUMANITY. The essence of all religion is one, only their approaches are different. Gandhiji propounded the teaching of Bhagavad Gita – work without

expectation of fruits of the labour done. He always maintained that one should look beyond one's personal aspiration and needs and work for the common good of society at large.

Today, we must teach the children to be socially responsible individuals who should give back to the society what they gain. It is the need of the hour to really 'rethink on Gandhiji's ideologies'. We all together can surely make a difference by not only incorporating Gandhiji's ideologies in our lives, but also drill it into the heads and soul of the children.

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