

Analysis of The Philosophical And Educational Thoughts of Nelson Mandela

Abstract

Nelson Mandela was a black nationalist and the first black president of South Africa. He sacrificed his early life to end the nation's apartheid system of racial segregation. He was a visionary, a democrat and international political leader who uses his influence and leadership with humility and respect for his colleagues as well as opponents. His life was an extraordinary example of peace, nonviolence and forgiveness. He taught us that we have a choice of love over hate, forgiveness over bitterness and peace over anger. His thoughts and philosophy are highly relevant to the contemporary world, which is suffering from many wicked problems.

Keywords: Nelson Mandela, Educational Thoughts, Higher Education, Innovation.

Introduction

Nelson Mandela was born on July 18, 1918, at Mvezo, South Africa and died on December 5, 2013, at Johannesburg. He was black nationalist and the first black president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He sacrificed his early life with South African President F.W. de Klerk and helped in ending the nation's apartheid system of racial segregation and commenced in a peaceful change to majority rule (Mandela 1995).

Nelson Mandela, with the few outlines of his personality, was a philosopher, a great teacher, a scholar par-excellence, a creative genius, a great humanist, a spiritualist, a man of vision, a man of mission, a man of principles, an idealist, an orator with gift of the gab, an original thinker, an eminent author and then the role of the president of South Africa (Meer 1988; Sampson 1999).

Mandela was a revolutionary leader who spent almost seven decades of his life in the struggle against white minority rule and for a democratic non-racial society. He was a visionary, a democrat and international political leader who uses his influence and leadership with humility and respect for his colleagues as well as opponents. His life was an extraordinary example of peace, nonviolence and forgiveness. He taught us that we have a choice of love over hate, forgiveness over bitterness and peace over anger (Meer 1988; Sampson 1999). His thoughts and philosophy are highly relevant to the contemporary world which is suffering from many wicked problems. His ideology focus on the value of education for society and expressed it as, education is an essential right of every person and true education shows right path and paves the direction towards character building and moral grounding.

Objective of the Study

The objectives of the present research work are: -

1. To Analyse the philosophical and educational thoughts of the Nelson Mandela in reference to contemporary world.
2. To study the impact of the Nelson Mandela's social and educational ideology.

Review of Literature

Oppenheim (2012) studied the literatures and biographies of the Nelson Mandela and he revealed that Mandela dedicated his life to fighting for the freedom of his South African kin of all colours against the institution of apartheid. He spent twenty-seven years fighting from within prison, only gaining his freedom when his fellow South Africans could claim it as well. Oppenheim also discussed that how his faith, his spiritual development and



Saroj Sharma

Research Scholar,
Dept. of Education,
Bharti Teacher Training College,
Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan, India.

Minakshi Mishra

Principal,
Dept. of Education,
Bharti Teacher Training College,
Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan, India

his noble purpose can be conceptualised through the lens of Ubuntu: the African ethic of community, unity, humanity and harmony.

Aggarwal and Chaudhary (2015) narrated that Rabindranath Tagore believed that all faculties of human beings, intellectual, physical, moral, aesthetic should be nurtured, cultivated in a good educational system.

Albina (2016) studied the relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context: perception of middle school teachers in Sivagangai district. In this study, he sampled the 150 middle school teachers and used a self-made tool to collect the data. He revealed that there is significant difference between male and female middle school teachers with regard to perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context and its dimension.

Muhammad Saleem (2016) analysed the educational concepts of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore outlining its features and methods, comparing the similarities and differences between them. He narrated that Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore are the prominent personalities who designed the nation and contributed much for the wellbeing of the millions dwelt in it. As a matter of fact, educational concepts and theories of this duo are the core draft or cruxes of the educational policies implemented today even in this twenty-first century.

Gebremedhin and Joshi (2016) studied the Mandela's thoughts and pronouncements on education and found two major emphases: a view of education as a practical means to economic development, and education as a means to social justice, human rights, and democracy. Assessing the legacy of these twin emphases, they conducted qualitative and quantitative content analysis of turning point documents in education policy and annual reports from the respective South African ministries of education over the last two decades. Their analysis revealed that although a focus on education policy for economic development has consistently remained strong.

Methodology

The present research work is a type of descriptive research and to accomplish this research work the historical research method was employed. Various data source related to Nelson Mandela were rigorously examined such as various textbooks, research paper, news article written on the Nelson Mandela to find the answers of research problem.

Educational Thoughts and Its Analysis

Mandela recognised education as a great vehicle to bring equality of opportunity to the world. He gave many quotes about education which are reflecting his philosophy and ideology for social reformation through education. To understand the views and hidden messages of Mandela, analysis of the selective quotes were done here.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." (Mandela 1995)

The education is an essential right of every person. The true education shows right path and paves the direction towards character building and moral grounding, besides facilitating the process of learning and acquisition of worthy, life-long habits and value systems. Education does not take place only inside the four walls of a classroom. The opportunities for education abound in plenty all around oneself, if one is willing to learn! Thus, the will, yearning and desire to learn determine and facilitate the positive impacts of education.

The family, school, peer group, institutions (religious, cultural as well as political) and media, each can play a great role in the process of socialisation. When every agent will play their part well, there will be minimise space for the prejudice, stereotyping, aggression, hatred and violence towards other groups and communities. An individual will learn to accept oneself and others in a holistic manner. That, according to Nelson Mandela, is the weapon of education that can be used to change the world. Surely, change, comes from within. It starts from the self. Like Mahatma Gandhi rightly said, we must 'be the change we want to see in the world'.

True education does not merely consist of scholastic achievements and rote learning, like is propagated in many academic institutions, but it incorporates a wholesome assimilation of a wide range of life skills and values such as Emotional Intelligence and Resilience.

"A good head and good heart are always a formidable combination. But when you add to that a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special." (Mandela 1995).

As literate tongue or pen can be revealed as the ability to articulate ourselves that makes us stand out among the others. Mandela pointed the importance of the education for becoming an intellectual personality. Only education can inculcate the intellectual development in individual as well in society.

Our society always welcome a person with beautiful face and a good heart without knowing his thoughts since it pose a positive impression on the public. Therefore both characters are appreciated in society. If same person has scholastic views, it add multifold fascination to public. Unquestionably, all great personality in human history had scholastic and intellectual views. The main driving force for the scholastic and intellectual views is only education. Education makes a person to indifferent or scholar and can help to evolve the society in right direction.

Nelson Mandela always gave the importance to education and clearly narrated that education can only reform the society for its rational characteristic.

"Young people must take it upon themselves to ensure that they receive the highest education possible so that they can represent us well in future as future leaders." (Mandela 1995).

It is well revealed that youth leads the future of society or nation. In present they may be our partners or pupil but tomorrow they will be a leaders. Unquestionably, youths are very energetic and enthusiastic and have the ability to learn the things.

Youth can bring the social reformation and improvement in society or nation. Moreover, every nation to achieve the goal of progress, requires their positive participation. Therefore, we must make all the youth aware of their power and the role they have to play in nation-building. According to Mandela, the only education can give them proper guidance and direction to push in forefront of national development. In present scenario youth and their role must be kept in centre for the reformation of the society. Unquestionably education is great tool for this cause.

"Without language, one cannot talk to people and understand them; one cannot share their hopes and aspirations, grasp their history, appreciate their poetry, or savour their songs." (Mandela 1995).

Language is basically a system of communication where sound or signs convey objects, actions and ideas. The history of language dates back us to many thousands of years. Language is primarily spoken not written. But the development of the writing medium and later the printing system went a long way is the dissipation of knowledge and without which humans would have remained in the dark about the ways of life and the thought processes of their ancestors. Surely, language is the key to human lives. They can eliminate misunderstanding by using it as an instrument to transfer communication among people. As language is "the necessary means of communion; it is the one indispensable instrument for creating the ties of the moment without which unified social action is impossible.

According to Mandela, language is the core of humanity and social reformation. Mandela's ideology also support the Aristotle thought that "Man is a rational animal and that what sets him apart, what raises him above the animals, is that he has the ability to reason, and it is very clear that he cannot reason without language."

"No country can really develop unless its citizens are educated." (Mandela 1995).

Education is the great engine of personal development. Nelson Mandela revealed that it is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another (Sampson 1999).

Nelson Mandela focused on the education of the every stockholder of the society, either he/she belong to socially backward class or socially forward class. According to him, the joy of democratic, rational and socially refined world can only feel by ensuring the education of every citizen of the nation. Since democracy, rationality, social refinement are the pillars of the progressive country. It can be concluded that every progressive nation ensure the access of quality education to every citizen for its own

development irrespective to social class of the individual.

"It is not beyond our power to create a world in which all children have access to a good education. Those who do not believe this have small imaginations." (Mandela 1995).

Every nation or society soon leads by their children and young ones. Nelson Mandela believed that they should be well informed by their history and cultural heritage along with the kind and rational views for the world. He always inspired the people for the education of their children and during his presidential tenureship he worked for the education of children, as he identified the root cause of the social irrationality and socioeconomic deferences in the South Africa.

Nelson Mandela urged the world community to ensure the accessibility of quality education to their children through his quotes and ideology and justified that economical investment of the nation on the education of their children is the investment for safeguard of the future of nation.

Conclusion

The philosophy and thoughts of the Nelson Mandela are equally relevant to contemporary world to eradicate the social irrationally as well as for the overall development of the young citizens or students. The status of Nelson Mandela is equivalent to the other Indian philosophers. The philosophical application of Nelson Mandela are much wider with includes individual students development to nation building. The Nelson Mandela's ideology has contextual applicability in contemporary word.

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