

# The Biography of M. K. Gandhi: An Address to the Contemporary Indian Youth

Dr. Prasad A. Joshi

Head & Research Guide, Department of English M. J. P. Mahavidyalaya, Mukhed District: Nanded 431715 Maharashtra, India

Corresponding author E-mail: profprasad74@gmail.com

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## Abstract

One's beliefs shape their cognitive processes and influence the formation of their thoughts. One's thoughts manifest through verbal expression. The language one uses ultimately manifests into their behaviours. One's actions ultimately shape their habits. One's behaviours shape and influence their personal ideals. The concept of "values becoming one's destiny" suggests that an individual's moral principles and beliefs ultimately shape their future outcomes and life trajectory.

**Keywords:** Gandhian Philosophy, Youths, Integration, Early Maturity, Physical Education

## Introduction

Presently, the younger generation in India is encountering significant challenges. After a span of seventy five years since achieving independence, the younger generation has exhibited a noticeable decline in moral, ethical, social, and spiritual values. The diminishing of a feeling of purpose is becoming less pronounced in compared to its prevalence during the era preceding independence. The individuals experience a sense of alienation and frustration. There exist numerous factors, encompassing both internal and environmental dimensions, that contribute to feelings of frustration and a lack of purpose.

The convergence of modernization and globalisation has brought about significant transformations in both the overall societal landscape and the specific way of life among young people. These changes have consequently resulted in the alteration of social institutions and structures. In addition to significant demographic shifts in population, the presence of political decay, escalating unemployment rates, and the erosion of societal values, along with an excessive reliance on market-oriented economic systems, have collectively contributed to a complex and challenging environment for the younger generation. The alterations have a disproportionate impact on the younger generation, as their minds are akin to blank

canvases. While it is true that the younger generation may be susceptible to the influence of a dynamic value system, it is equally possible to shape their mindset by instilling positive attitudes, behaviours, habits, and values. The present-day societal context must effectively address the demands of the younger generation to engage them as active participants in the holistic progress and nation-building endeavours.

### **Gandhian Address to the Youths of Modern India**

To enhance the participation of the contemporary Indian youth in the process of nation-building, it is imperative to establish a comprehensive system that effectively aligns with the aspirations and motivations of both the younger and older generations, thereby fostering a sense of purpose and enthusiasm. In order to foster a harmonious coexistence between different age groups and effectively operate as a dynamic society, it is imperative for the younger generation in our nation to assume the role as catalysts for transformation.

In the same perspective, it is imperative that the principles espoused by Mahatma Gandhi are instilled among the younger generation with sincerity, in order to enhance their vitality and engagement in the process of nation-building. Before any measures can be implemented to instil positive values in the youth and foster their active participation in nation-building, it is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges encountered by the future generation.

In order to effectively tackle these concerns, it is argued that the principles of Gandhian philosophy are highly applicable to the contemporary context and should be embraced by the younger generation. The Gandhian approach on cultivating a healthy and virtuous lifestyle may initially appear ordinary, yet it proves to be highly efficacious and enduring over time. The younger generation may exhibit a natural aversion towards these ideals, however, it is imperative for older individuals, educators, and particularly parents to assist in instilling these values within the kids.

### **The Adverse Consequences of Substance Abuse**

Gandhi proposed practical and efficacious methods to guide young individuals towards a life devoid of addiction. The reliance of predominantly youthful individuals on their peer groups often results in instances where they are influenced in undesirable directions. Individuals engage in substance abuse and consume explicit media as a means to occupy their leisure time and cope with emotional distress. According to the most recent data by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the per capita consumption of alcohol in India has experienced a twofold increase, rising from 2.4 litres in 2005 to 5.7 litres in 2016. Numerous individuals find themselves in a predicament when attempting to differentiate between morally correct and morally incorrect actions. The adult who is preoccupied is frequently unable to provide timely guidance, which poses challenges for the individual in making appropriate choices and decisions. Once individuals, particularly young people, find themselves trapped in the grip of addiction, extricating oneself from its clutches becomes an arduous endeavour.

The younger generation is not immune to the influence of opulent values and extravagant lives prevalent in contemporary culture. Consequently, they may be inclined to seek expedient methods to acquire material wealth. In instances when these efforts prove unsuccessful, individuals may find themselves compelled to turn to illicit substances or engage in criminal activities. Adolescents are also susceptible to developing an addiction to excessive utilisation of digital devices. Technology has shown to be highly beneficial to a large percentage of our society. However, the over utilisation of cyber resources has become disproportionately widespread, and in certain instances, it has resulted in

detrimental consequences, including fatalities. The over use of smartphones has not only resulted in significant physical injury to young individuals, but it has also had an impact on their cognitive abilities and psychological well-being. A portion of individuals are engaging in cybercriminal activities. Due to the convenience and efficacy of cyber services, the younger generation tends to utilise them more frequently than is deemed appropriate.

Therefore, it is evident that both forms of addictions enable adolescents to get desired outcomes without regard for the methods employed. The contemporary generation holds the belief that the significance of means has diminished, with greater emphasis placed on the desired outcome. The principle espoused by Mahatma Gandhi, known as the Gandhian maxim, posits that the means employed to achieve a goal hold greater significance than the goal itself. This implies that individuals should prioritise the methods and processes utilised, rather than solely fixating on the attainment of an objective regardless of the consequences. To emphasise the need of employing ethical methods to achieve desired outcomes, it is crucial to underscore that the consumption of drugs or alcohol undermines the fundamental fabric of our societal structure and does not contribute to the cultivation of a prosperous existence. The use of addictive substances or digital gadgets as a technique to attain pleasure, money gain, and evade the uncertainties of life is not a viable approach for accomplishing positive outcomes. In order to tackle the affliction, Mahatma Gandhi proposed that the younger generation should duly consider a range of factors.

### **The condition of early maturity in physique**

The onset of puberty and adolescence presents several challenges among young individuals, encompassing physiological, social, and cultural aspects. There are a multitude of environmental, ecological, and other factors that contribute to the early onset of biological maturity. The utilisation of the biological maturation of young individuals is vital for the betterment of society. The lack of adequate involvement with and instruction for the development of maturity among young individuals is concerning and has negative consequences in various aspects. In order to effectively respond to the shifts in adolescent behaviour and their level of involvement, the adoption of the Gandhian principle of a "satwik lifestyle" can prove to be highly beneficial. This principle centres around the cultivation of inner contentment as a means of personal growth, placing significant emphasis on the integration of fundamental human values. The concept of right conduct pertains to the appropriate behaviours that are recognised and upheld by society, grounded in principles of moral rectitude. It encompasses the observance of obedience, adherence to social norms, fulfilment of societal responsibilities, cooperation, and empathy, among other qualities.

The younger generation in contemporary society is subject to the adverse effects of intolerance, impatience, and misguided convictions. The characteristics of intolerance and impatience often propel individuals into a trajectory characterised by acts of violence. In contemporary society, characterised by rapid pace and demanding obligations, individuals frequently find themselves compelled to a threshold beyond which they are unable to retreat, thereby fueling the emergence of destructive and violent behaviours within their own selves. The situation further declines when there is an increase in the societal expectation for achieving a certain standard of living, and individuals are unable to meet these expectations.

The topic of concern is obesity and its association with the consumption of junk food.

The widely recognised adage "health is wealth" is commonly disregarded by the general population, even the younger generation. The prevalence of immediate and fast food culture is widespread in both rural and urban regions. The majority of individuals prefer consuming refined grains to unrefined grains. The consumption of diets high in fat and sugar has become popular among the current generation. The younger generation demonstrates a preference for convenience, as evidenced by their inclination towards readily available wheat flour bags and partially prepared packaged food items that need minimal work to consume. The limited intake of green leafy vegetables is associated with a range of gastrointestinal issues. The cohort maturing within such an environment is prone to the emergence of several ailments.

A significant issue of great worry is to the prevalent unemployment rates among the youth population inside our nation. The level of formal education attained by young individuals does not significantly impact their circumstances or outcomes. The labour market is struggling to match the continuous influx of individuals searching for employment. Nevertheless, only a small fraction of suitably qualified job applicants are able to secure employment. There are numerous contributing variables to the occurrence of such anomalies, with one prominent factor being an education system that lacks market sophistication. The education provided to young individuals during their academic journey is predominantly conventional and does not align adequately with the demands of domestic or global employment markets.

## **Conclusion**

Mahatma Gandhi always advocated for the implementation of comprehensive vocational training programmes for both male and female individuals. The individual had the belief that a significant portion of our nation's population resides in rural areas, where there exists a diverse range of occupations that require the specific abilities possessed by young individuals from these villages, making them particularly well-suited for such rural settings. The acquisition of diverse skill sets by rural Indian youth has the potential to yield multiple benefits, including self-employment opportunities and the ability to provide work to other individuals residing in their villages. The present state of the job market is characterised by a notable decline in employment opportunities inside rural areas, which might be seen as an ironic phenomenon. Therefore, the implementation of contemporary techniques such as digitization, if done sincerely and in alignment with local requirements, has been beneficial for various industries. Consequently, a significant portion of our younger generation and skilled practitioners of rural crafts remain overlooked, since they have not received adequate training in contemporary technology-driven rural occupations. In order to effectively navigate the contemporary landscape of societal progress, it is imperative for the forthcoming generation to possess a profound understanding and proficiency in modern scientific and technological advancements. Simultaneously, it is equally crucial for them to cultivate the very social principles that Mahatma Gandhi ardently championed throughout his lifetime. It is imperative for the younger generation of the nation to internalise the essential principles of respect and reverence towards the elderly, as well as the pursuit of truth. Furthermore, it is crucial for them to uphold and preserve the values embedded within established social institutions, as these institutions serve as the foundational framework of any given culture. Individuals should exercise caution to avoid falling into the pitfalls of caste or creed, and should also refrain from permitting others to manipulate these matters for personal or trivial advantages.

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