

# Mahatma Gandhi's views on Health and Education





# What is Health ?

*Health* is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 2012).

*It's health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver – M.K. Gandhi*

# Gandhi's Idea of Healthy Living

- Incorporated **Morality** and **Spirituality** into the definition of Health.
- Focused on **curative, preventive** and **promotive** health care.
- Incited people to adopt **selfcare** by promoting
  - ✓ **balanced diet**
  - ✓ **vegetarianism** (ahimsa) and
  - ✓ **self control**
- Wrote several books on health such as: Navjiwan (1919), A Guide to Health (1921), Nature Cure (1944), and Key to Health (1948).
- Established Nature Cure Ashram in Gujarat and Emergency Hospital in Johannesburg.





# Why Health?

- Gandhi was the first Indian immigrant to witness racial segregation during the Plague outbreak in Johannesburg in 1904.
- Health services as a **commodity** was being controlled and managed by the whites.
- Health became a tool of **oppression and segregation** of non-white population.





# Gandhi's Experiments with Health

- **After returning back to India:**
  - Visualized health as a tool to bring '**swaraj**' i.e. self rule.
  - **Swaraj** could only be achieved by self motivated individuals who were **physically, psychologically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually fit**.
  - Emphasized on promoting **sanitation** by abolishing **untouchability** and putting an end to **manual scavenging**.
  - **Cleanliness** formed an integral part of Gandhi's way of living.
  - In his Ashram self service was mandatory and practice of **learning by doing** was promoted.



## Contd..

- Experimented throughout his life to find his 'perfect diet', and it lasted over 35 years.
- Against western medicine and western lifestyle and promoted **home based (*swadesi*) remedies**.
- Organized mass contact movements to make people (especially women) aware about the importance of **sanitation** and **good health practices**.
- Big critique of increasing population but was also against artificial birth control methods.



# Gandhi on Education

- Gandhi conceived **education** as that it “must correspond to the surrounding” and to him “**surrounding**” was not only the social but the results of **interaction of the self** with it
- **For Gandhi Youth was never a separate category**
- Visualized youth **through education** which he considered indispensable for their development
- “an **agent for social transformation**”

# The concept of *Nai Talim* (1937):

*Nai Talim* is a model for **basic education**, it is more for the development of **rational life skills**

