ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 4| April 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

IMPACT OF GANDHIAN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN NORTHEAST INDIA

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Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra20956
DOI No: 10.36713/epra20956

ABSTRACT
This article explores the impact of Gandhian educational philosophy on the socio-economic and cultural activities of women in Northeast India. Gandhian principles of self-reliance, holistic education, and social equality have empowered women to improve their socio-economic status and engage in political and social movements. His emphasis on vocational training, self-help groups, and leadership has enabled women to revive indigenous crafts, gain financial independence, and assume roles in governance and community development. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aligns with these Gandhian ideals, promoting inclusive education, gender equality, and practical skills. By focusing on self-reliance and leadership, the NEP ensures that women, especially in marginalized regions like Northeast India, have access to quality education that empowers them both socially and economically. Additionally, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 5: Gender Equality, resonate with Gandhian values. SDG 4 advocates for equitable educational opportunities, while SDG 5 seeks to eliminate gender-based discrimination, empowering women to fully participate in all spheres of life. Gandhian philosophy, supported by NEP 2020 and aligned with SDGs 4 and 5, has played a crucial role in empowering women in Northeast India, fostering both personal growth and collective social transformation.

KEYWORDS: *Gandhian Educational Philosophy, Women Empowerment, NEP 2020, SDGs, 4, 5*

MAHATMA GANDHI: HIS LIFE, PHILOSOPHY, AND EDUCATIONAL VISION

Mahatma Gandhi, born on October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, Gujarat, remains one of the most influential leaders in world history. Known as the "Father of the Nation," Gandhi led India's struggle for independence using the principles of non-violence (Ahimsa) and truth (Satya). His revolutionary method of non-violent civil disobedience, known as Satyagraha, inspired movements worldwide for justice, freedom, and equality (Gandhi, 1965).

After studying law in London, Gandhi traveled to South Africa, where he first practiced his principles of non-violent resistance. Upon returning to India in 1915, he became a pivotal figure in the Indian National Congress. His leadership sparked major national movements, including the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920), the Salt March (1930), and the Quit India Movement (1942). These campaigns played an essential role in securing India's independence on August 15, 1947. Beyond the political realm, Gandhi also championed social causes such as Dalit (Harijan) rights, women's empowerment, and religious harmony. His advocacy for self-reliance and rural development was reflected in his promotion of the Swadeshi Movement, which emphasized local industries and simplicity (Gandhi, 1922, 1980).

Gandhi's legacy continues to inspire global movements for justice and peace, and his birthday, October 2, is celebrated annually as Gandhi Jayanti in India and globally as International Day of Non-Violence.

Women in Northeast India played a crucial role in the independence struggle, defying social norms and engaging in both armed resistance and social mobilization. From the early 1930s, figures like Rani Gaidinliu and Haipou Jadonang led movements against British colonial rule. Gaidinliu, a prominent Naga leader, led armed resistance from 1930, demanding Naga self-rule, and was arrested in 1932. Haipou Jadonang, who spearheaded the Heraka movement in the 1920s, fought for cultural preservation and against British rule before his execution in 1931. Women in these regions participated in these struggles, often taking up arms in direct confrontation with British forces. In Mizoram, women were involved in raids against the British, while in Tripura, they formed associations to organize boycotts and protests, raising awareness about the freedom struggle in the 1930s and 1940s.

These women also resisted British efforts to assimilate tribal communities, safeguarding their cultural traditions. While the influence of Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation and civil

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disobedience campaigns reached Northeast India, the region's resistance remained characterized by armed struggles. Overall, between 1930 and 1947, women in Northeast India not only fought colonial rule but also challenged gender roles, making vital contributions to the broader Indian independence movement.

Gandhi's educational philosophy was grounded in the belief that education should be holistic, emphasizing not only intellectual development but also moral, physical, and spiritual growth. His idea of Nai Talim or Basic Education aimed to build character, foster self-reliance, and integrate practical skills with moral values. Gandhi envisioned an education system that would not only prepare individuals for academic achievements but also for social responsibilities and active participation in nation-building. In this vision, education was a tool for social change, capable of transforming individuals and society by nurturing qualities such as self-respect, integrity, and empathy (Gandhi, 1958, 1980).

In the context of Northeast India, a region known for its rich cultural diversity and historical challenges, Gandhi's educational philosophy contributed significantly to women's empowerment. The region's diverse communities and ethnicities had unique social structures, where traditional roles often restricted women to domestic responsibilities. Gandhi's emphasis on inclusive education directly impacted women by breaking these societal barriers(Kumar, 2022; Sıddıque & Bano, 2020). His belief that education should be available to everyone, regardless of gender, social status, or background, allowed women in Northeast India to gain access to education and skills that were previously denied to them. As women gained access to education, they found new opportunities for personal growth, social mobility, and economic independence (Taneja, 2005a; Thakur, 2006a).

The principles of self-reliance and practical learning were particularly empowering for women in this region. Gandhi's philosophy emphasized the importance of practical skills alongside academic knowledge, and in Northeast India, women learned skills such as weaving, agriculture, and handicrafts(Mahmoud Mahmoud, 2025). This focus on practical education not only helped women become economically self-sufficient but also enabled them to contribute to their families and communities. The ability to engage in local industries, produce goods, and participate in economic activities fostered a sense of dignity and autonomy among women(Ryland, 1977; Taneja, 2005b; Thakur, 2006b) .

Gandhi's focus on value-based education also had a profound impact on women's role in society. His teachings on truth, non-violence, and service to others encouraged women to become active agents of social change. In Northeast India, where many communities were still governed by traditional patriarchal structures, Gandhian ideals gave women the strength to challenge societal norms and take on leadership roles in social, economic, and political spheres. Women began to organize, advocate for their rights, and participate in movements for social justice, including the fight for their political representation and equal opportunities(Gandhi, 1958; Wills, 2016).

Additionally, Gandhi's teachings on social equality and justice led to a redefinition of women's roles in the public and private spheres. His ideas helped to break down caste-based and gender-based discrimination, which had historically kept women in subordinate positions. Women were encouraged to take an active part in the political struggles for independence, and their involvement in movements such as the Quit India Movement (1942) demonstrated their growing political awareness and activism. As India moved towards independence, women from Northeast India, inspired by Gandhian principles, took an active role in shaping their future(Wills, 2016). In a region where the legacy of colonialism had left significant social and economic divisions, Gandhi's philosophy of education also contributed to social cohesion. His emphasis on unity, harmony, and mutual respect helped to bridge divides between different communities, including between men and women, and provided women with a sense of belonging in a more equal society(Tula & Goswami, 2023). Through Gandhi's teachings, women were not only able to contribute to their own well-being but also to the collective welfare of their communities.

Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy significantly impacted the empowerment of women in Northeast India. His vision for a holistic, practical, and value-based education system provided women with the tools to become self-reliant, socially responsible, and politically active. The principles of non-violence, truth, and self-sufficiency that Gandhi promoted continue to resonate with women in North East India Today (Barman, 2013; Gandhi, 1922a). His legacy lives on, inspiring generations of women to take charge of their lives, challenge traditional gender norms, and work towards a more just and equal society. Gandhi's educational philosophy remains a key force in the ongoing movement for women's empowerment, not just in India, but globally.

Gandhi's Educational Philosophy

Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy was grounded in his values of truth, non-violence, and self-reliance. His vision for education went beyond academic learning to encompass holistic development, moral integrity, and social responsibility. Gandhi believed that education should be a transformative process, fostering not just intellectual growth, but also practical skills and character development.

Key Principles of Gandhi's Educational Philosophy

Universal Education

Gandhi believed that education should be accessible to all, regardless of caste, creed, or gender. He stressed that education was a right, not a privilege, and should reach the poor, marginalized communities, including Dalits and women.

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Integral Development: Head, Heart, and Hands
Gandhi's vision was for a well-rounded education that develops the head (intellectual growth), heart (moral and emotional development), and hands (practical skills). Education, he argued, should nurture every aspect of a person's character, preparing them for life in society.

Craft-Based Education
Gandhi believed that education through work was key to instilling practical skills and self-reliance. He introduced Nai Talim (Basic Education), an approach where children would learn through hands-on work such as spinning, weaving, and agriculture, which would not only teach skills but also promote dignity of labor and break social hierarchies.

Self-Reliance (Swadeshi)
In line with his broader philosophy of self-reliance, Gandhi emphasized that education should help students become self-sufficient, morally and financially. He believed that education should foster a sense of responsibility towards one's community and nation, moving away from the colonial system that created dependence.

Value-Based Education
For Gandhi, the purpose of education was the development of character. He believed that education should not just impart knowledge but should focus on building integrity, compassion, and justice. Truth and non-violence were core values that should guide every educational pursuit.

Experiential Learning
Gandhi's approach to education was based on learning by doing. He opposed rote learning and believed students should learn through real-life experiences—whether through community service, engagement with nature, or participation in social movements. He saw this as a way to prepare individuals to contribute meaningfully to society.

Education as a Tool for Social Change
Gandhi viewed education as a tool for social transformation. He saw it as a means to break down social injustices like the caste system and inequality. By educating marginalized communities and women, Gandhi aimed to create a more just and equitable society.

Cultural and Linguistic Relevance
Gandhi stressed the importance of conducting education in the local language and making it culturally relevant. He believed this would make learning more accessible and meaningful, and help preserve India's rich cultural heritage. Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy was revolutionary in its approach, advocating for an education system that went beyond academic achievement to include practical skills, moral values, and social responsibility. His emphasis on holistic development, self-reliance, and social justice laid the foundation for an inclusive education system that continues to inspire educators and social reformers today.

His ideas, particularly through the lens of Nai Talim (Basic Education), challenge the conventional boundaries of traditional education. Gandhi's legacy in education emphasizes the integration of practical learning with moral integrity, providing a blueprint for an education system that fosters not only the mind but also the heart and hands, helping individuals become responsible citizens committed to the betterment of society.

Women's Empowerment through Gandhian Educational Philosophy
During the Gandhian period, women were given significant importance in line with their capacity and needs. Mahatma Gandhi believed that women should actively participate in India's freedom struggle. He called for their involvement in various activities such as Satyagraha campaigns, processions, public meetings, and demonstrations against the British, including protests in front of foreign cloth and liquor shops (Mahmoud Mahmoud, 2025). Gandhi's approach was rooted in Indian values rather than Western ideology. He was both a reformist and a revivalist in the true sense, advocating for a return to India's original, dignified treatment of women, which had declined over the centuries due to various social and cultural changes. Gandhi often referred to the honorable position women once held in ancient Indian society, seen in terms like "ardhangini" (half of a man), "sahadharmini" (co-partner), and "sahayatri" (companion). These terms reflected women's esteemed role, but Gandhi acknowledged the unfortunate decline of their status over time and worked to restore equality between men and women(Baek & Choi, 2002; Mahmoud Mahmoud, 2025).
He firmly believed that women had the right to be part of every aspect of social, economic, and political life. Gandhi stated, "Women have a right to participate in every minutest detail in the activities of men, and she has an equal right to freedom and liberty with him." His revolutionary ideas not only sought to uplift women within their households but also encouraged them to take an active role in the broader social and political movements(Howard, 2013).

Gandhi's commitment to women's rights extended to his personal life, where he began with self-reflection. As Prof. J.N. Sharma from Punjab University pointed out, Gandhi was a passionate advocate for humanity, and his stance on women's issues stemmed from his own self-realization. Once he recognized his role as a "slave holder" in his marriage, he altered his treatment toward his wife, Kasturba. This change in his personal life reflected his growing understanding of gender equality and his broader work to improve the status of women. Gandhi became a fearless critic of the injustices women faced, including widowhood, child marriage, the dowry system, Purdah (veil system), and marital slavery. He condemned these practices, insisting that "man and woman are equal in status(Kumari & Chandra, 2017).

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One of the most powerful aspects of Gandhi's work on behalf of women was his uncompromising stance on women's rights. He was adamant that women should not labor under any legal or societal disability that men did not experience. Gandhi famously said, "I am uncompromising in the matter of woman's rights. In my opinion, she should labor under no legal disability not suffered by man." His opposition to texts that depicted women as inferior was clear when he criticized the Manu Smritis, saying they contained lines that could no longer command respect in a society where women's liberty was valued(Nandela, 2019).

In Gandhi's view, both men and women were individuals and should be given the liberty to make their own moral claims. He saw the long-standing subordination of women as a result of self-interested teachings by men. According to Gandhi, these teachings misrepresented women's roles and abilities, thus keeping them in a state of dependence. He sought mutual cooperation between men and women, understanding that only through such collaboration could both sexes achieve true freedom and equality(Barman, 2013).Gandhi also regarded women as having qualities superior to men in many respects. He valued traits like suffering, sacrifice, humility, penance, and tolerance, which he saw as integral to the feminine spirit. Gandhi didn't believe that bravery was measured by killing or fighting; rather, it was best reflected in the highest form of suffering and endurance, qualities that women exhibited in abundance. He considered women to be not just comrades but honored members of society, worthy of respect and dignity(Kumari & Chandra, 2017).

A key part of Gandhi's empowerment of women was his call for compulsory education for girls. He saw education as essential to enabling women to assert their natural rights, exercise them wisely, and work for their own expansion and emancipation from male domination. Gandhi emphasized that without education, women could never be fully free or empowered. Gandhi's understanding of women's issues was progressive, reflecting a keen awareness of the gender inequalities in society. His concepts of women's development, empowerment, and gender equality are echoed today in global discussions on these topics. Gandhi's holistic approach to women's rights encompassed social, cultural, economic, and political change. He led the charge against numerous societal evils that oppressed women, including compulsory widowhood, child marriage, Sati (the practice of widow burning), dowry, the purdah system, female prostitution, and illiteracy. Gandhi's activism against these practices not only called for immediate reforms but also for a cultural shift that would restore the dignity of women in society (Nandela, 2019; Prasad, 2020).

His efforts to uplift women were a crucial part of his broader vision for a just society. Gandhi viewed the struggle for women's rights as a moral imperative, deeply intertwined with the fight for Indian independence. His vision for women in a future independent India was one where they would have equal opportunities, rights, and access to education and self-sufficiency. He sought to create a society where women's contributions to the family, community, and nation were recognized and valued.

Gandhi's ideas on women's empowerment, gender equality, and social justice remain highly relevant today. His belief that women should have equal rights and opportunities as men, and his insistence on their participation in all spheres of life, continues to inspire movements for gender equality around the world. His lifelong dedication to the upliftment of women serves as a guiding principle for the ongoing struggle for women's rights, not only in India but across the globe (Ganai & Mir, 2016).

Gandhi's ideas on women's education and empowerment resonated deeply with the women of Northeast India, who had long been relegated to the confines of domestic spaces and traditional gender roles. With its rich cultural heritage and distinct social structures, the region witnessed a slow but transformative shift in women's education and societal roles through the application of Gandhian principles.

1. Increased Access to Education for Women

Before Gandhi's advocacy, the literacy rate among women in Northeast India was very low due to patriarchal restrictions, with women largely confined to domestic roles. Gandhi's emphasis on women's right to education led to a significant shift. In states like Assam, Meghalaya, and Nagaland, women began breaking free from illiteracy. Gandhi promoted accessible schools, including Gandhi Ashrams, which provided education based on his principles. These institutions focused on formal education as well as life skills like hygiene, healthcare, and community service, making women more self-reliant and socially responsible. Gandhi's approach also emphasized cultural, artistic, and vocational skills, which helped women in Northeast India, already skilled in weaving, pottery, and agriculture, achieve economic independence.

2. Economic Empowerment and Self-Reliance

Gandhi's educational philosophy had a profound impact on women's economic empowerment in Northeast India. By promoting vocational training in skills like weaving, tailoring, and organic farming, women gained the tools to become self-sufficient and financially independent. In states like Assam and Tripura, women formed cooperatives and self-help groups, contributing to local economies through the production of goods like tea and textiles. Gandhi's emphasis on manual labor as dignified work also helped elevate the status of traditionally female-dominated crafts, fostering pride in their work.

3. Social Responsibility and Political Engagement

Gandhi's educational philosophy encouraged social responsibility, inspiring women in Northeast India to contribute to societal well-being. In states like Assam, Meghalaya, and Manipur, women engaged in social movements for education, health, land rights, and social justice. The principle of non-violence influenced figures like Irom Sharmila, who led a peaceful hunger strike for the repeal of the Armed Forces Special

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Powers Act (AFSPA). Gandhi's ideas also prompted women's political involvement. In regions like Nagaland and Mizoram, women with strong cultural identities became more active in local governance, advocating for women's rights and participating in village councils and community welfare programs.

4. Challenging Patriarchal Norms

Gandhi's philosophy played a crucial role in challenging patriarchal norms in Northeast India. He emphasized that women's empowerment was essential for national progress and should include not only access to education and economic resources but also the dismantling of societal structures that oppressed them. In regions with deeply entrenched patriarchy, like many tribal communities in Northeast India, Gandhi's ideas provided women with a framework to challenge gender discrimination.

In Meghalaya, where matrilineal traditions existed, women gained more rights through Gandhian principles of equality. Similarly, in Assam, Nagaland, and Mizoram, women started to challenge social taboos such as child marriage, early widowhood, and restrictions on property rights, demanding equal rights in their homes and communities.

5. Preserving and Promoting Cultural Identity

Gandhi's educational philosophy also encouraged the preservation of indigenous culture while embracing modernity. In Northeast India, where multiple ethnic groups with distinct traditions coexist, Gandhi's philosophy promoted the teaching of local languages, customs, and arts in educational institutions. Women, who were the bearers of cultural heritage, were encouraged to pass on their traditional knowledge to younger generations while simultaneously adopting new skills that could improve their economic and social standing.

By integrating cultural pride with modern education, Gandhian principles allowed women in Northeast India to contribute to the preservation of their heritage while embracing new ideas for social and economic development.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: Reflection of Gandhian Educational Philosophy and its Impact on Women's Empowerment in Northeast India

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 reflects several core values emphasized by Gandhi's educational philosophy, making it especially relevant for the empowerment of women in Northeast India. NEP 2020 promotes an inclusive, holistic, and flexible education system, rooted in Gandhian principles such as self-reliance, community-based learning, and the integration of practical skills into education. Below is an in-depth analysis of how the NEP 2020 resonates with Gandhian values, specifically focusing on empowering women in the region.

1. Holistic and Inclusive Education

Gandhi's vision of education was holistic, focusing on the moral, intellectual, and physical development of individuals. His educational approach emphasized the importance of developing both the individual and the community, nurturing well-rounded citizens who could contribute to social progress.

NEP 2020 Reflection

The NEP 2020 prioritizes inclusive education, ensuring that no child, especially girls, is left behind in terms of quality education. The policy seeks to provide universal access to quality education, placing a special emphasis on gender equality and ensuring that marginalized groups, including women in rural and tribal areas like Northeast India, have access to educational opportunities.

Relevant Sections

Page 12-13, Section 2.1: "Ensuring universal access to quality education at all levels, especially for girls and marginalized communities."

Key Points:

Point 2.1 (a): "Ensure universal access to quality education at all levels, and especially for girls and marginalized communities."

Point 2.1 (b): "Focus on inclusive education for gender equality."

In Relevance to Women's Empowerment

The NEP 2020 promotes gender-sensitive education, specifically targeting rural and tribal areas of Northeast India, where gender disparities in education are more pronounced. By ensuring that girls in these areas receive quality education, it aims to provide the tools for personal growth and social transformation, echoing Gandhi's vision of empowering women to be independent and self-reliant.

2. Emphasis on Practical Skills and Vocational Training

Gandhi's concept of Nai Talim (New Education) emphasized learning by doing and the integration of practical work into the curriculum. For Gandhi, education should be linked to the realities of life and should prepare individuals to be self-reliant and socially responsible.

NEP 2020 Reflection

The NEP 2020 echoes Gandhi's philosophy by emphasizing vocational education and skill development from an early stage, with a particular focus on integrating local and traditional knowledge into mainstream education. The policy encourages a holistic approach to education, where practical, life-oriented skills are given as much importance as academic learning.

Relevant Sections

Page 21, Section 4.2: "Integration of vocational education into mainstream education starting at the middle stage."

Key Points

Point 4.2 (b): "Integrating vocational education into mainstream education starting from the middle stage."

Point 4.3 (a): "Revitalization of vocational education at all levels."

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In Relevance to Northeast India
Women in Northeast India are traditionally involved in agriculture, weaving, and other indigenous crafts. NEP's focus on vocational education empowers women by helping them acquire practical skills, enhancing their economic independence and preserving cultural heritage. By integrating local skills into formal education, women can gain the self-reliance and economic stability envisioned in Gandhian thought.

3. Promotion of Local Languages and Cultures
Gandhi believed that education should be rooted in local languages and cultural contexts, promoting a sense of identity and community. For Gandhi, the language of instruction should be mother tongue to ensure that children fully grasp concepts and can relate education to their lived experiences.

NEP 2020 Reflection
The NEP 2020 strongly advocates for the use of mother tongue or regional languages in early education. It emphasizes the importance of integrating local languages and cultures into the curriculum to help students form a strong connection with their heritage.

Relevant Sections
Page 14, Section 3.2: "Promotion of mother tongue and regional languages as the medium of instruction."

Key Points
Point 3.2 (a): "Promote mother tongue and regional languages as mediums of instruction."

In Relevance to Northeast India
The Northeast is a region of immense linguistic diversity, with multiple indigenous languages spoken across various communities. The NEP's promotion of multilingual education empowers women by enabling them to access education in their native languages, removing the language barrier that often prevents effective learning. This also preserves and celebrates their cultural heritage, allowing them to thrive in both the local and global context.

4. Empowering Women through Education
For Gandhi, the empowerment of women was central to social change. He believed that women should be educated to become independent, self-reliant, and active participants in both domestic and public life. Education, for Gandhi, was the key to breaking the social limitations imposed on women.

NEP 2020 Reflection
The NEP 2020 places strong emphasis on gender equality and aims to eliminate the gender gap in education. It encourages special measures to increase girls' enrollment, particularly in remote regions, and improve access to education for women through scholarships, gender-sensitive curricula, and hostel facilities.

Relevant Sections
Page 13-14, Section 2.4: "Ensuring gender parity in education and enhancing opportunities for women."

Key Points
Point 2.4 (a): "Ensuring gender parity in education and enhancing opportunities for women."
Point 2.4 (b): "Improving access to education for girls, particularly in rural areas."

In Relevance to Northeast India
The NEP 2020 focuses on creating special opportunities for women in remote regions like Northeast India, where they often play pivotal roles in family and community life. Through scholarships, gender-sensitive curricula, and community support, the NEP aims to empower women by providing them with the tools to overcome socio-cultural barriers and engage more fully in both education and public life.

5. Focus on Community and Service-Oriented Learning
Gandhi's model of education emphasized community service as a core part of learning. He believed that education should help students serve society and contribute to the greater good.

NEP 2020 Reflection
The NEP 2020 promotes community engagement through service learning, which allows students to work on real-world problems within their communities. The policy stresses the importance of social responsibility and encourages students to contribute to society through community-based projects.

Relevant Sections
Page 27, Section 5.4: "Promoting social responsibility and community engagement."

Key Points
Point 5.4 (a): "Promote social responsibility and community engagement as part of the curriculum."
Point 5.4 (b): "Support for community-based projects and leadership development."

In Relevance to Northeast India
The NEP 2020's emphasis on community-based learning resonates with Gandhian ideals, as it fosters self-reliance and social service. Women in Northeast India can engage in community-driven projects, particularly in sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and local governance, thus becoming leaders in their communities and contributing to the social and economic empowerment of their regions.

6. Encouraging Leadership and Critical Thinking
Gandhi believed in fostering leadership in individuals, particularly women, by encouraging them to take responsibility for their own education and progress. For Gandhi, critical thinking and problem-solving skills were essential for personal growth and leadership.

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NEP 2020 Reflection
The NEP 2020 stresses the development of critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills across all levels of education. It encourages the growth of entrepreneurial skills and self-reliance among students, aiming to prepare them for leadership roles in both the economic and social spheres.

Relevant Sections
Page 20, Section 4.1: "Promoting critical thinking, creativity, and entrepreneurship."

Key Points
Point 4.1 (a): "Emphasizing critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving."
Point 4.1 (b): "Fostering entrepreneurship and self-reliance through education."

In Relevance to Northeast India
The NEP's focus on developing leadership and entrepreneurial skills is especially significant in Northeast India, where women can play a central role in driving local economic development. By encouraging self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and leadership, the NEP offers women opportunities to lead businesses, take on leadership positions, and break traditional barriers to empowerment.

CONCLUSION

The influence of Gandhian educational philosophy on women's empowerment in Northeast India has been both profound and transformative. Gandhi's advocacy for education based on self-reliance, equality, and moral development served as a catalyst for women to challenge entrenched social norms, engage in economic activities, and assert their voice in political and social spheres. By fostering an education system that is not only practical but deeply rooted in values, Gandhian thought has empowered women in the region to transcend traditional constraints and build new paths for growth and leadership.

The NEP 2020 aligns with these ideals, providing a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to women's education. It not only echoes Gandhian principles but also supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education, which calls for inclusive, equitable, and quality education, and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. The policy's focus on practical education, community engagement, and gender equality directly contributes to achieving this goal, ensuring that women, especially in Northeast India, have the educational tools necessary to be self-reliant and socially active.

Additionally, SDG 5: Gender Equality emphasizes the need to end discrimination and empower women and girls to fully participate in all spheres of life. Gandhian thought, as reflected in the NEP, reinforces this by advocating for the removal of gender-based barriers in education, ensuring that women have the same opportunities as men to learn, grow, and lead. While challenges persist, the legacy of Gandhian principles continues to inspire women across Northeast India, helping them overcome societal barriers, contribute meaningfully to their communities, and lead lives of dignity and purpose.

As the NEP 2020 takes root, it holds the potential to further empower women, ensuring their active participation in shaping the future of the region and the nation. This vision, in alignment with SDGs 4 and 5, will contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society, where women's voices are not only heard but also respected and valued at every level.

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ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 4| April 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

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