



International Journal of Research in Academic World



Received: 02/January/2024

IJRAW: 2024; 3(2):67-68

Accepted: 01/February/2024

Gandhian Health Hygiene and Sanitation: A Psychological Perspective

*¹Dr. Arpita Kackar*¹Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Jai Narain Vyas University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

Abstract

Gandhi's philosophy encompassed various aspects of human life, including health, hygiene and sanitation. From a psychological perspective, Gandhi's emphasis on cleanliness, simplicity, and self-discipline can have profound effects on the individual's mental wellbeing and the overall community's psychological health. It can be understood through lens of his principles of self-discipline, self-restraint and self-reliance. Gandhi believed in the power of collective action and community participation. From a psychological standpoint community involvement fosters a sense of belonging, social cohesion and shared responsibility. In the context of health, hygiene and sanitation, community involvement encourages individuals to work together to promote hygiene practices, educate other and address sanitation challenges collectively. The research paper aims to incorporate the psychological perspectives into health, hygiene and sanitation practices, inspired by Gandhian principles. Adopting Gandhian principles can promote personal and community wellbeing. Following the principles of Gandhi individuals can cultivate a holistic approach to their wellbeing.

Keywords: Health, hygiene, sanitation, Gandhian principles, holistic health

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi is known across the world for his historic political reforms in liberating nations from colonial rule. His policies of Anti Imperialism on Violence, Swadeshi Movement, and Boycott movement are being considered today to be strong political strategies. He is looked upon as one of the greatest visionaries ever lived. Having been viewed across the world as a leading political leader, his principles on health are least explored. Indians gained freedom under the leadership of Gandhi Ji, but his dream of a clean India is still unfilled. Mahatma Gandhi said "Sanitation is more important than Independence." He made cleanliness and sanitation an integral part of Gandhian way of living. Cleanliness is most important for physical wellbeing and a healthy environment. It is essential for everyone to learn about health, hygiene and sanitation.

Recent scientific evidences and views of the modern health experts are in acceptance with that of Gandhian views. Gandhi ji believed and professed that prevention is better than cure. Majority of his principles such as personal hygiene, palatal self-control, vegetarianism and regular physical activity were based on prevention of illness. This article will explore Gandhi's interest in health, hygiene and sanitation and correlate the same with psychological perspective.

Hygiene is embedded in a wide and complex set of social values and sentiments. What we call hygiene is linked with concerns about privacy and intimacy, neatness, social prestige, convenience, respect and being civilized. Unhygienic, in contrast refers to poverty, shame, disgust and

invaded intimacy. In many cultures cleanliness is the pre-eminent metaphor to express positive appreciation. Clean=beautiful=attractive=good=civilized=respectable. In short, body cleanliness stands for physical and moral attractiveness whereas dirt symbolized physical and moral decay. Hygienic behavior, therefore, has more to do with impression management and showing respect to others than with prevention of disease. If we give our house a special cleaning when we expect visitors, we do not do so because we are worried about their health but because we want to make a good impression on them. Several studies have shown that people are much less motivated to carry out this act of hygiene when nobody is around to observe their good manners. Hygiene is positively correlated with disgust. Dirt can be disgusting; removing it is, therefore not only a social act but also a psychological and emotional one. Dirt is anything that cause psychological discomfort. Cleaning restores order. The qualification "out of place" should be merely understood as a physical or geographical indication (on the floor, or on the table). Of more importance is its relational aspect. The wine can still be in the glass and yet be dirty because someone else has drunk from it. The identity of that person is crucial for the emotional reaction. The decisive difference between people who do and do not cause is intimacy.

Disgust, according to some scientists, is a natural instinct-a product of our evolution-that protects us against disease. But that is too simple. Disgust is an impulse to restore order. It is an emotion that sets our boundaries and protects our intimate

privacy. Maintaining proper cleanliness and hygiene is also important for emotional wellbeing. Mental tension and anxiety have been related to cultural environments and lack of organization. Physical and mental health are inextricably linked and each will always have an impact on the other. A healthy body will nourish a healthy mind and the reverse is also true.

Sanitation and hygiene shape our personalities and strengthen our self-perception. We are empowered to be the best versions of ourselves by ensuring our homes, nutrition and lifestyle are sanitary, as well as ensuring correct personal hygiene care. By ensuring the possible physical and mental environment around us, we aid in our development. We are able to develop into well balanced individuals who seek to be the best versions of them and grow in an atmosphere that supports that goal. We will be able to concentrate better on our work or studies because we won't be distracted or limited. As a result, our output will rise helping us to obtain greater development and nourishment.

Gandhian health, hygiene and sanitation principles reflected his profound understanding of human behavior motivation and the connection between physical and mental wellbeing. Gandhi ji emphasized the importance of self-discipline and self-control in maintaining personal hygiene and sanitation. From a psychological standpoint, self-discipline is closely linked to will power and the ability to resist immediate gratification for long term benefits. By cultivating these traits, individuals can adhere to health practices consistently. Gandhian principles highlighted the significance of community living and social influence. Psychologically human behavior is greatly influenced by the norms of expectations of the community. By promoting health, hygiene and sanitation level, Gandhi Ji recognized the power of social reinforcement in sustaining these practices. Gandhi's emphasis on self-reliance and voluntary participation in health hygiene and sanitation initiatives aligns with principles of intrinsic motivation. Psychologically when individuals feel a sense of autonomy and control over their actions, they are more likely to adopt sustainable behavior changes willingly. Maintaining hygiene and sanitation can have positive effects on cognitive functioning and emotional well-being. A clean and organized environment can lead to improved focus, clarity of thought and reduced load. Additionally, by preventing the spread of diseases, individuals experience a sense of security and reduced fear, contributing to better emotional health. Gandhi ji focus on living in harmony with nature and promoting sustainable practices is aligned with the principles of environmental psychology. Being connected to nature and living in clean surrounding has been associated with improved mental health and increased emotions. Gandhi's approach to health and sanitation was not only about empowering individuals and communities. Psychologically empowerment and sense of dignity are crucial for fostering a positive self-image, which can lead to improved mental well-being and over all life satisfaction.

By understanding and incorporating these perspectives, we can appreciate the holistic approach which Gandhi ji took towards promoting health and wellbeing in individuals and communities.

Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi's impact on the world extends beyond his political achievements, encompassing a profound understanding of health, hygiene, and sanitation. While he is widely celebrated for leading nations to freedom through non-

violent means, his teachings on cleanliness and well-being remain relevant today. Gandhi's assertion that "Sanitation is more important than Independence" underscores the importance he placed on hygiene as an integral aspect of human life. Gandhi's principles align with contemporary scientific perspectives, emphasizing the preventive aspects of health. His focus on personal hygiene, self-discipline, and community participation reflects a nuanced understanding of human behavior and motivation. The correlation between cleanliness and positive attributes in various cultures underscores the psychological and social significance of hygiene. It is not merely a means of preventing disease but also a reflection of societal values and individual self-perception. The psychological aspects of hygiene go beyond physical health, delving into emotional well-being. Gandhi recognized the interconnection between physical and mental health, advocating for a balanced lifestyle. Maintaining a clean and organized environment positively influences cognitive functioning, emotional stability, and a sense of security. Moreover, Gandhi's emphasis on living in harmony with nature aligns with environmental psychology principles. Connecting with nature and promoting sustainable practices contribute to improved mental health and emotional well-being. Gandhi's holistic approach to health empowers individuals and communities, fostering a positive self-image and a sense of dignity. By incorporating his teachings into our understanding of well-being, we can embrace a comprehensive perspective that addresses physical, psychological, and environmental aspects of health. Gandhi's legacy extends beyond political realms, leaving us with enduring principles for achieving a healthier and more balanced world.

References

1. Gandhi, M. K. (1920). *Swadeshi Movement: A Call for Self-Reliance*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
2. Gandhi, M. K. (1922). *Young India*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
3. Gandhi, M. K. (1928). *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
4. Gandhi, M. K. (1930). *The Dandi March*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
5. Gandhi, M. K. (1932). *Non-violence in Peace and War*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
6. Gandhi, M. K. (1940). *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
7. Gandhi, M. K. (1942). *Quit India*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
8. Gandhi, M. K. (1946). *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
9. Gandhi, M. K. (1957). *The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
10. Gandhi, M. K. (1960). *Key to Health*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
11. Gandhi, M. K. (1962). *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Beacon Press.
12. Gandhi, M. K. (1968). *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (Vol. 50-98)*. New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.
13. McFarland, D. A. (2003). Gandhi's Social Vision: The Case of Constructive Programme. *Sociological Theory*, 21(2), 121-140.
14. Porter, R. (2000). *The Cambridge History of Medicine*. Cambridge University Press.
15. Vohra, A. (2002). *Health and Development in India: A Sociocultural Perspective*. Sage Publications.