
CONTRIBUTION OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHER GIJUBHAI BADHEKA IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION DURING THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

***Dr. Ashwani Kumar**

(HOD Mathematics and Statistic) Dronacharya PG College of Education Rait, Kangra HP.

Article Received: 24 April 2026

Article Revised: 14 May 2026

Published on: 03 June 2026

***Corresponding Author: Dr. Ashwani Kumar**

(HOD Mathematics and Statistic) Dronacharya PG College of Education Rait, Kangra HP.

DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.9971>

ABSTRACT

For the past decades, India has witnessed a drastic change in the field of early childhood care and education. Existing policies and programs in India had ensured considerable growth in investments together with improvements in children's school engagement. But the situation of ECCE during the pre-independence period remained dispersed, concentrated in cities, limited to specific regions of the nation, and only available to those who could afford them. Many philosophers have given their souls to develop a better education system in India. Gijubhai Badheka, Tarabai Modak, Gandhiji, and Tagore are some of the pioneers of the development of ECCE. The study aims to explore the contributions of Indian philosophers to Early Childhood Care and Education before the independence of India.

KEYWORDS: ECCE, education, philosophers, Montessori, preschool.

INTRODUCTION

A pioneer in the field of primary education, Gijubhai Badheka (1885-1939) has written extensively on issues of education, in general and education of children in particular. His contributions are very simple yet influential, and powerful. His thoughts on education especially those relating to the formative years of a child's growth and learning are of immense relevance even today. He opposed the colonial system of education practiced in India as he believed that in this system teachers had hardly any freedom to introduce new ideas or bring changes in a way as to inspire students to develop interest in learning. The education system concentrated too much on rules and regulations and there were no room for teachers or parents to bring creative changes in students. Though teachers are creators of

future citizens, they do not have any freedom to impart quality education to their wards. According to Gijubhai Badekha the difference in the background of learners and teachers is one of the key factors responsible for poor level of teaching and learning. He raised many pertinent questions with regard to children's education. His methodology is simple and honest and answers the innumerable questions raised by teachers, parents, students and larger society on education. Gijubhai Badheka wrote 223 books for kids and many more for teachers and parents. The first Indian educator to work in the field of early childhood education was Gijubhai Badheka. Giju Bhai established a training facility in Bhavnagar Dakshinamoorti, and Tarabai followed suit in Dadar Bombay.

They created a native educational system, combining Madam Montessori's scientific pedagogy and educational concepts with the fundamental Gandhian philosophy. In 1920, Gijubhai began his career as a preschool educator in the Gujarati town of Bhavnagar. Tarabai afterward joined him. Together, they created teacher resources and established a preschool teacher training program. Later, he established an organization for preschool instruction and wrote articles for it. Gijubhai Badheka and Tarabai Modak launched, Nutan Bal Shikshan Sangh in 1926 at the Dakshinamurti Foundation in Bhavnagar, Gujarat. It is a pioneer in the field of education for children. Its goal was to raise awareness of children's education throughout India.

When Anutai, a philosopher saw a copy of Tarabai Modak's monthly publication "Shikshan Patrika (Education Newsletter)," she became interested in children's education. Tarabai Modak asked Anutai whether she would be willing to work with the tribal people in Palghar when they first met in 1945. Tarabai intended to open a tribal children's experimental school. Anutai answered positively, charting her future destiny while doing so. In a tribal neighborhood in Bordi that was heavily forested, she established a Balwadi (playschool) with Tarabai Modak. No electricity, no roads, and no form of communication existed. But necessity prevailed over discomfort. There were eight tribal hamlets nearby and around one hundred kids who needed to go to school.

When Anutai discovered that the lack of food in the children's homes between the months of February to June was the cause of their significant absenteeism, she made arrangements to feed them at school. Thus, the Anganwadi concept—a foundational element of India's Integrated Child Development Scheme—was created (ICDS). With her devotion, diligence, and dedication, Anutai led by example and served as an inspiration to her colleagues. Her focus was solely on her mission. The "Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra," which began as a play

school for indigenous children, has developed over time into a center renowned for its experiments and inventions to give kids a worthwhile education.

Gandhiji was also troubled by the inadequacies of basic education. It includes the emphasis on memorization, the detachment of the curriculum from its surroundings, and its impossibility. Gandhiji provided a strong conceptual foundation for a new educational system called 'Nai-Talim' or Basic education in 1937, which did not address preschool education. Later, he concentrated on basic education, which is education for children younger than seven.

Children receive training in autonomy through basic education. When Gandhiji presented his Nai-Talim ideology to the nation in 1937, Aryanayakam was named the Secretary and Ashadevi the Joint Secretary of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, which has created to put Nai Talim into practice. Under their capable leadership, the Nai Talim concept came to fruition in full to the Nai Talim premises (Nai Talim Kuti2022). One of the four main resolutions created by Vardha Parishad states that throughout the entire time period, the center of education must be some kind of physical and productive work and that children's abilities should be developed.

Girijashanker Badheka, known as Gijubhai was born on November 15, 1835. He grew up in Bhavnagar, a city in the state of Gujarat. He had his early education at a primary school at Vala and later passed matriculation from Bhavnagar around 1905. He joined the Shamlals College, but did not complete his studies. In order to earn a living he went to East Africa in 1907. On his return in 1910 he studied law in Bombay. He started his practice in 1911 as a District Pleader and in 1912 he enrolled himself as a High Court Pleader. Gijubhai's maternal uncle Hargovind Pandya had a great influence in moulding his personality. He also came under the influence of S. P. Stevens, a solicitor for whom Gijubhai worked in East Africa. Stevens instilled in him respect for the values of self-help and reliance.

Gijubhai Badheka introduced the Montessori system of education in India. Following the birth of his son in 1923, he developed an interest in childhood education and development. He closely observed the child education classes conducted under the guidance of Motibhai Amin at Vaso in Gujarat. It is here that Gijubhai was presented a Gujarati book describing the method of Montessori methods of education. In 1915, he assisted in the establishment of Dakshinamurti (Bala Bhavan) and then started a hostel at Bhavnagar. In 1916, he gave up legal practice and joined the Dakshinamurti as Assistant Superintendent.

Montessori Education

The traditional approach to education prevailing today focuses on the transmission of knowledge to students from a set of prescribed books and curriculum. The Montessori approach focuses on natural development of the human being. Through Montessori education a child transforms into a complete human being and creates a comfortable zone for himself/herself, for society as well as for the entire humanity. The principle on which the Montessori mode of education is based is that children who are not interested in and bored or stressed out by the education that is being imparted are a liability to society and they contribute to their own mental illness as well as that of society.

Montessori education begins with the understanding that the role of an adult or a teacher is only to help unfold the hidden and inborn developmental powers of the child. From the earliest moments of life children are possessed with great constructive energies that guide the formation of their mind and the coordination of their bodies. The Montessori approach believes that the child must be guided in the path of reaching adulthood.

Contributions of Gijubhai Badekha

Gijubhai Badekha evolved a few key strategies to translate his visions into action. He systematically altered the entire scheme of colonial education and advocated an educational model suited to Indian environment and culture. The strategies which he advocated are shown below:

- Setting up Adhyapak Mandir
- Bringing out Shikshan Patrika
- Formulation of Nutan Blasikshan Sangh
- Creating literature for children
- Inclusion of marginalised groups in the institutions which he established.

Adhyapak Mandir: We have already seen that Gijubhai Badheka had given importance to teachers engaged with children in their formative years of learning. In the colonial system of education teachers had not placed stress on teacher training. In order to orient teachers to the ways of creative education, Gijubhai Badheka started the Adhyapak Mandir in Dakshinamurti in 1925. Later in 1936 Gijubhai Badheka left Daksinamurti due to differences of opinion and started an Adhyapak Mandir at Rajkot.

Shikshan Patrika: It was a Gujarati monthly started in 1925 by Gijubhai Badheka, particularly focusing attention on the existing system of education. He used to write critical articles which had created a 'sensation in the whole of Gujarat'. This institution had especially created a great deal of awareness in parents in particular, and others in general on the need for a holistic education for children. In this endeavour he received a great deal of support from Tarabai Modak, known as the 'Montessori Mother'. Through this monthly magazine, Gijubhai Badheka advocated a new system of child education and explained the advantages that would accrue to children. In order to strengthen the system of education he was advocating and also attract educationists, teachers, parents and the general public, in 1925 a conference was organised at Bhavnagar. After three years, i.e. in 1928 a conference of a similar nature was organised at Ahmedabad. **Children's Literature:** Besides these writings, Gijubhai Badheka also concentrated his attention on children's literature such as short stories, nursery rhymes, and adventure travel tales. Though his work focused mainly on education of children, Badheka also concentrated on adult education. He started an Adult Education Campaign in 1930.

Gijubhai Badheka authored more than 200 books. Since he gave an emphasis to the easy ways by which children could be educated without stress, he used 'travel' and 'humour' to appeal to their teachers and parents. His views were expressed through short stories, rhymes, songs, plays, books, pamphlets and newspaper articles. His writing style was unique in nature and used the narrative medium in a way as if he was speaking to them. Most of his books were written in the Gujarati language and a few were written in Hindi.

Nutan Bal Shikshan Sangh: In 1926 along with Tarabai Modak, Gijubhai Badheka formed Nutan Bal Shikshan Sangh. They also introduced various low cost educational aids and apparatuses for children because they believed that knowledge could be gained more effectively through games and other co-curricular activities. They extensively propagated their model of children's education throughout India, especially in the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and in the Saurashtra region.

Badheka was of the view that teachers alone are not responsible for educating children, but it should be a participatory process including parents, educationists, guardians and teachers.

Vanarsena: Inspired by the cultural history of India, Gijubhai Badheka formed a group which he called 'Vanarsena'. This was a battalion of child satyagrahis. Under the leadership of

Gijubhai, Nanabhai Bhatt and Harbhai Trivedi the Dakshinamurti institution emerged as a training school for dedicated freedom fighters.

Dakshinamurti Balmandir: As the name itself suggests the nursery section at the Dakshinamurti institution was called Balmandir. In 1915 Gijubhai Badheka assisted in drafting the constitution of Dakshinamurti. He also started a hostel at Bhavnagar. In 1916 he decided to leave the legal profession and joined Dakshinamurti as Assistant Superintendent and later went on to become the Principal (Acharya) of this institution.

Gijubhai initially trained his son by using the techniques of Montessori education. It was only when he was convinced that it was stress free and gave the learners the freedom to explore that he decided to adopt it in the larger school settings. As a result Dakshinamurti Balamandir, a pre-primary school came into being in August 1920. Later Nanabhai Bhat, Haribhai Trivedi and Gijubhai Badheka built the Shree Dakshinamurti Vinay Mandir School in Bhavnagar.

Inclusive Education

Gijubhai invited Dalits to enter the Dakshinamurti institution. He was also responsible for the resettlement of farmer families who had abandoned their homes during the Bardoli Satyagraha. The school which he founded exists even to this day in the small town of Bhavnagar, where teachers follow Gijubhai Badekha's method of teaching. It is an important place for educationists, teachers and all those interested in novel methods of education.

Gijubhai Badekha's Views on Education

Before understanding his views on education, we have to analyse the circumstances that led to Gijubhai having a totally different viewpoint on education. His contributions to education in general, and the teaching- learning process in particular are immense. He Infact gave a new shape and definition to education. He was not happy about the system of education especially the way teaching and learning took place in schools. He was influenced by Maria Montessorie, an educationist and thinker from Italy and liberally used the educational philosophies of Frobell, Dalton and others. Though he borrowed ideas from the west, he systematically oriented these thoughts to suit Indian conditions. His system of education was indigenous in nature and suited to the Indian socio-cultural fabric.

Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Education

Rejecting the existing system of education as ‘the old survile system’ Badekha devised methods of teaching-learning which concentrated on languages and the arts. Moving away from routine examinations and scores, Badekha encouraged children to ‘explore’ and learn for ‘self-development’. He first tried these new methods with his son, and then went on to experiment it with others. Gijubhai Badekha believed in experiments and first-hand-experience. He knew that experimentation was not an easy task but did not give up. In his book Divaswapna he observed “That’s exactly why I want to have first-hand experience; I want to base my conclusions on reality.”

Divaswapna is a treatise in which Gijubhai Badekha delineates the features of his educational experiment. In his experiment lies his new method of teaching. Pandya (2008) who has been translating the works of Gijubhai observed that in the 19 years till his untimely death in 1939, Gijubhai worked incessantly, contributing a lifetime of work in the area of children ‘s’ literature and education. He left behind a legacy of prolific writing (nearly 200 publications for children, youth, parents and educators). His best known work is Divaswapna (meaning day dreams). First published in 1939 in Gujarati it is an original contribution to progressive ideas on pedagogy.

Gijubhai Badekha adopted several new techniques in teaching which many teachers were not keen on adopting. Through these new methods children developed creativity, speaking and writing skills, disciplined behaviour and learnt to appreciate the need to maintain hygiene and cleanliness. The emphasis in Badekha’s model was on ‘self-realization’ and ‘self-development’.

It is true that primary education is most important and gives a strong foundation for children. Primary teachers need to be dedicated and understand the value of translating theories into action. For Badekha education started with practical aspects and then ended with the development of theories. Gijubhai therefore can be called a reflective teacher whose theory of learning and teaching was simple and based on experimentation. He was critical about learning for gain, rewards and rank. He emphasised:

- Learning for the sake of knowing,
- Learning for the sake for happiness and the satisfaction of knowing.
- Learning for the sake of development and not for the sake of rewards or ranking

Peer influence: Educationists often highlighted the influence of peer groups in the learning process. Usually children learn from their peers and are influenced more easily by peers than their teachers. They usually learn many lessons through participation and involvement in activities of common interest. They imbibe various skills such as planning, team work, work execution skills and leadership qualities through peer groups. While mingling with peer groups, they evaluate their weaknesses and strengths and incorporate corrections in their behaviour.

Teachers' attitude towards Children

Teachers' attitude towards children is of great importance because students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Teachers should have a humanistic and empathic attitude towards children. Teachers should be facilitators and not authoritative. Teacher should be liked and respected by students. Children should not have the fear to approach their teachers. They should love and appreciate their teachers' attitude and enjoy the experience of learning.

Challenges encountered by Gijubhai Badekha

Though Gijubhai Badekha introduced a novel method of teaching through experiment, he had to face many challenges. Some of these are analysed in the section that follows.

Conventional Teaching Methods

Pupils were exposed to learning alphabets, numbers, and tables as a routine process. In this process of learning there was no zeal, interest and love towards learning.

Mechanical Memorization

Teachers insist that students memorise lessons rather than understand the concepts. Memorisation often breaks the flow of learning. Badekha had divergent opinions on memorisation. He felt that it killed children's creativity.

Punishment

The general belief is that fear of punishment makes students learn. Punishment was part and parcel of the teaching process in schools. Badekha opposed the idea of punishment and believed that learning must be an enjoyable experience. He strongly opposed the system of ranks and rewards. According to him, one should have an inner sense of satisfaction after learning. Thus, there is no room for sanctions or punishments in his method of education.

Personal Cleanliness and Physical Fitness

Personal cleanliness and physical fitness were given least preference in educational practice. Badekha strongly advocated personal cleanliness and said that physical fitness must be at the basis of a good learning process. He believed that adherence to personal hygiene would bring about social discipline.

Divaswapna

Though he has written extensively on children's education and needs, Gijubhai's major work 'Divaswapna' merits special mention as an outstanding contribution on this theme. This book explains the processes that are involved in a child's education. Published in 1932 in Gujarati, Divaswapna has been translated into other Indian languages. The book is broadly divided into four main parts, these being:

- The Experiment Begins
- The Progress of Experiment
- At the End of the Term
- The Last Gathering

The book introduced new concepts and experiments. The challenges in introducing new concepts and experiments and the results of the experiments have also been narrated in detail. Initially Gijubhai experimented these concepts and methods with his son and later tried the same with fourth grade children.

The Experiment Begins

The first part of the book is titled 'The experiment begins'. In this chapter the author experiments with failure. The entire experimentation concentrates on the failure of a ward to grasp a lesson. Gijubhai narrates an experience when on the very first day of teaching, he realised that he could not succeed in getting a positive response to his plans. Students were not concentrating and they were not attentive in his class. Gijubhai Badekha believed that the most essential quality that children require to cultivate is the interest in learning.

Gijubhai also realised that children must develop a sense of love for learning and he believed that it should be a natural process. He narrates his experience with his students in the first class in the following words – "Boys, I said, we won't have class anymore today. We shall meet tomorrow. You can have the day off today. At the words 'day off' the boys rushed out

of the class shouting 'holiday'. They ran out, jumping..... The headmaster came out of his room and accosted me! How dare you let the pupils off! There are still two hours to go, he said, frowning. He was very angry.You can't

let the pupils off without permission, said the headmaster sternly. If the pupils of the class are let off, those in other classes would be disturbed and won't study..... Sir! I said, Everyone has been resorting to beating while teaching and the obvious results of this method are that the children have become uncouth, rude, restless and disturbed. During their four years of education here the boys have, as I have marked, learnt only this: to shout and hiss at the teachers and to clap and stamp! They don't like school. See how happily they ran off as soon as they were told it was a day off for them! The headmaster could not deny the truth of this. Is that so? he said. Well, we'll see what you do about it" .

Initially Badheka had a tough time and faced the wrath of his colleagues and administrators. He was against the use of the mechanical memorisation technique which was practiced by students and encouraged by teachers. He preferred to use a different method which involved narration of interesting stories and exciting games.

Gijubhai started telling stories in his classes. Children were engrossed in these stories and started showing interest in classes as well as in the teacher. As days passed on they started requesting Gijubhai to narrate more stories and children who were running out of class started staying back even after class hours. Gijubhai narrates an incident thus – “Out,” I said, “the school is over. Now be off! “No, we won't,” shouted a few. “We are ready to sit till late in the evening if you continue the story”.

Story telling is the best method of sustaining not only the interest of students but also building a rapport between pupils and the teacher. In due course of time children started developing a sort of orderliness in the class as well as in their activities. Students were attracted and interested in these methods and understood concepts used in the class in a more meaningful manner. Though initially Badheka encountered failures, it did not deter his determination of imparting real knowledge to students. During his experiment he faced many social as well as bureaucratic hurdles. With a positive mind and positive outlook he continued his experiments.

About Exams

According to Gijubhai Badheka children need to prepare for exams, but exams are not everything. They should be allowed to read as well as play games. He did not show any interest in paper-pencil based tasks. His Divaswapna is discusses the triple ideas of failure,

disgrace and solutions. He never used to adhere to a strict time table and his novel experiment of educating children stretched throughout the day. A day's teaching was divided into activities, games and stories. Teachers have to use their instinct and feel the pulse of their pupils and then decide what technique should be used to impart knowledge to them. Divaswapna is a treatise on best teaching practices that could be adopted in different classroom situations.

Badheka also dealt with parents' role in education. Parents should sense the requirements of the child and identify the interest and zeal of children. Teachers can make life meaningful, both for teachers and students by devising new educational experiments.

In the formal process of learning, textbooks and syllabus are the two pre-requisites, and both students and teachers meticulously follow these. Badekha did not give any importance to textbooks and syllabus. According to him, through games one can get real education. In his Divaswapna he writes that "Games are real education. Great powers are born on the playground. Games mean character building (p.20).

Badeka's ideas on imparting value education to children as against religious indoctrination could be observed in his words " ... "we should try to leave religion. Parents must try and teachers must try. We could tell children stories from the Puranas, and the Upanishadas, whenever there is a reference to these in their textbooks. Let us tell them stories of saints just as we tell them stories of historical personages. ...let us not make our children to memorize and recite holy verses! Let us not teach religious dogmas and scriptures and the like in the name of moral instruction..." p.44

Library

Gijubhai's plan of having a library in his class became a failure to begin with, but later emerged as a success. Children were interested in listening to stories as well as in telling stories. They had no chance of reading any story books but read only textbooks. So Gijubhai thought of setting up a library within the class.

The authorities did not support Badheka's endeavour. Parents and social customs of the land also become a hindrance. But he was aware that the trio – teachers, students and parents together could help the child develop a wholesome personality. Even if one did not evince interest, the task of education would be incomplete. Hence he arranged for parents meetings. However, Badheka received a very poor response because it was commonly believed that educating a child was the sole responsibility of a teacher and that is the reason why children were sent to school.

Gijubhai faced many challenges and failures in his experiment, but he never felt let down and always kept looking for alternative methods. In the system of education existing in India where school was meant only for studying, Gijubhai made a break by imparting value education through stories, games and plays. He realised that all the students in his class had a keen interest in reading story books, but only a few had actually read them. They had all however, read their text books. Since he knew that if they were given access to story books they would definitely start reading them, Gijubhai took the initiative to do the same.

The Progress of Experiment

Gijubhai believed that fear is the major hindrance for the development of a child. Removing fear and planting confidence leads to natural learning and development. In the second part 'progress of experiment' Gijubhai Badekha decided to give dictation to children who initially relented and even opposed his decision. "A couple of them said, Please let us have a look at the passage that you intend to dictate so that we may not make mistakes" (p.20). He conceded to the demands of the children.

Children no doubt learn and memorise many things, but very rarely do they ask the questions 'why' and 'how'. Gijubhai inculcated the skills to probe beyond what was taught in the classroom.

For Gijubhai, education was for promoting personality development and not for ranking students. Thus, he opposed the orthodox method of ranking. He argued that every child has his/her level of capacity and ability. He says, 'If beating makes one learn, everyone should be beaten everyday!'

According to Gijubhai if students are not interested in learning they should not be forced but left free. Students are interested only in certain types of activities. Every child is unique and has its own likes and dislikes. The likes should be developed and dislikes should be left out. Children, he felt must be encouraged only to gain mastery over subjects in which they are interested.

Learning various subjects by using the same method may not be equally effective. Gijubhai preferred to teach history through storytelling. He believed that children would remember an event much better if it was narrated in a story form rather than being forced to remember it only for the sake of exams.

At the End of the Term

Gijubhai strongly acknowledged that any activity or learning can be successful only if a student understood it. Once during Gijubhai's period of experimentation, there was a social gathering, and students had to perform plays, sing songs and also other co-curricular activities. Children of Gijubhai's class performed better than others because they had the freedom to do what they enjoyed.

Gijubhai strongly opposed the system of rote memorization. He also said that any knowledge acquired with interest and love needs no reward or praise as the knowledge itself and the satisfaction it brings act as rewards. Gijubhai always applied interesting methods for teaching children. He taught grammar and geography in a manner that would generate interest and make students feel that they were having fun. 'Learn through play' was his teaching strategy. He did not use formal methods of teaching. Instead he taught grammar in the form of card games and languages in the form of a game called Antakadi and geography through field visits.

Badheka neither feared examinations nor worried about students' ranks or their passes and failures. He says, 'I had no reason to be worried. I had told the pupils,' you will do exactly as you do every day. You are, of course, going to pass the examination; but we want to show others what we have been doing'.

Gijubhai felt that besides fixed syllabus and fixed textbooks children must be taught to develop their knowledge using different sources. Children need to be taught orderliness, discipline and hygiene along with academic subjects. Common games played in the streets too can be played at school if they lead to orderliness. Children learn many new games and concepts through plays. Badheka also taught his students to collect specimens from nature so as to make them understand its diversities.

Gijubhai never judged the capacities of students by assigning ranks. He felt that ranking or grading only resulted in creating feelings of ill will and jealousy and led to unhealthy competition among children. Learning for pleasure and with pleasure was his motto. Imbibing these qualities, his class children even brought out a class monthly magazine which gave an expression to their interests and talents.

Part Four: Last Gathering

Gijubhai was a simple man and a strongly determined person. During his experiment his colleagues and authorities opposed and criticised him. But it did not shake his determination to experiment and his quest for new methods of child development went on relentlessly. His

colleagues used to comment that his success was due to his English medium education, as a result of which he was not afraid of losing his job. But Gijubhai argued that ‘One must have enthusiasm, self-confidence and unswerving dedication to the cause. Experiments do not succeed merely because one knows English. That is a lame excuse one resorts to when one doesn’t want to work. The main thing is the intuition to innovate and that comes from the yearning of one’s soul for a cause.’

Gijubhai had his own views on the educational system. He believed that it is the absolute duty and responsibility of the teacher to check if children were learning out of zest and desire. Rejecting the examination education system he used to say ‘ Pupils come to school with an inner urge to learn when they are taught by teachers who know the art of teaching and are enthusiastic about it.’

Gijubhai strongly believed that “Teachers should themselves be the examiners. They know, more than anyone else, the abilities of their pupils and reasons for their weak performance. They can best judge whether a pupil is fit for promotion or not. Gijubhai believed that children have different levels of learning capacities. Some are interested to learn, others are not; a few others are only interested in certain subjects. He was of the opinion that those who are not interested in formal schooling must be removed from these formal settings and sent to pursue their interests.

He argued that subjects should be introduced on the basis of children’s age and their grasping ability. For instance subjects like geography cannot be understood by reading. Yet Gijubhai had developed interest among students in geography by showing them routes in maps and playing a game called ‘let us travel’ in which every student imagined that he was on a journey and learnt the routes by making plans for travelling, making notes on places worth visiting and the unique features of those places.

Educational Philosophy of Gijubhai Badekha

Badheka’s philosophy of education is unique. He gave utmost importance to a child’s happiness, health, pleasure and peace rather than mechanical learning using ‘heaven’ as a base. Badheka outlined his ideas in the following manner:

1. Heaven is in the happiness of children
2. Heaven is the health of children
3. Heaven is a pleasure
4. Heaven is the playful innocence of children

5. Heaven lies in the songs and playful humming of child

Gijubhai basically adopted a humanistic approach. Humanism is mainly rooted in the self-concept of a child. According to him, a child should feel good about himself/herself first. If a child has a positive understanding of self, it will certainly improve its capacities. A child also tries to understand its weaknesses and try to improve. He advocated that learning is not an end by itself; it is a means to achieve the zenith of self development. This particular concept is called 'self-actualization'.

According to Gijubhai Badekha, intrinsic rewards are more powerful and effective than extrinsic rewards. A child should feel the need of education. The child should be self-motivated rather than being lured by prizes, medals, stars, ranks or positions.

CONCLUSION

Education is a lifelong process. However, formative education is the foundation for further learning and lifelong learning. Freedom in the learning space is the point that Bhadeka stressed. He criticised conventional methods of education which were constricted by bureaucratic hurdles. He rejected a system of education that did not give freedom to children to learn in a 'free' and 'natural' environment, especially in the formative years. He was impressed by the Montessori system of education and took the bold step of experimentation with alternate ways of knowledge transmission.

Through the special institutions he created Badeka carried forward his initiatives, overcoming resistance from educational administration and colleges.

Badheka's writings both in Gujarati and Hindi contained his views which were simple, practical and straight forward. The entire focus of his learning process was on experimentation which involved games, stories and other cultural activities as the means of transmitting knowledge. Opposing the system of determining capacities by ranks and examinations, Badheka emphasised on creating an environment in the classroom that encouraged students to 'explore' rather than meekly following what the teacher said. Gijubhai's book Divaswapna contained the tenets of his approaches to education and even today stands as a testimony to alternate paradigms in educational theory and practice.

REFERENCES

1. Badekha, Gijubhai (1981). Apna Balasahityakaro. Kumakuma Prakasana.
2. Balavaso Ara: Sethani Kampani.(1985).

3. Ramakatha Granthamala:(1985). Ganpathi Bapa. Ara: Sethani Kampani.
4. Prakashan. (2004). Kishorekathao. (set of 4 Books) (Gujarati).
5. Gurjar (2012). Divaswapna. Gurjar Sahitya Prakashan.
6. Janak, Makavana & Kamelesh Mandir (2013). Gijubhai Badekha ka Mulyankar Epubbud, LLC.
7. Mehta, Yeshwant and Shradda Trivedi (2012). Gijubhai Badekha, Shreshta Balvarto Gurjar Prakashan
8. Surti, Aabid (2011). Gijubhai ka Guildasta (set of 20 books in Hindi). New Delhi: National Book Trust of India.