



Azim Premji  
University

# Introduction to Nai Talim

*University Resource Centre*



## Introduction and Rationale

With the current global pandemic, there is a renewed interest in Gandhian ideas for alternatives to Industrialism. And any alternate vision of a Good Society will require its own education as put very aptly by John Dewey “*We will know what type of education to provide, if we know what type of society we want*”

With independence, India got locked into a race for Industrialism, like everyone else in the world, and Gandhi’s educational ideas called Nai Talim became irrelevant. The alternate school movement in India from 1990s has kept the Nai Talim spirit alive in various ways. Similar experiments are being carried out in several places in the world today.

We believe there are substantial number of teachers, educators, parents today who are searching for ideas, as they perceive the current educational system being unable to address the issues and problems arising in the world today.

A short course of 6 lectures which gives them the quick history, the basic idea and spirit of Nai Talim, some current experiments, and some new ideas, might induce many of them to start doing experiments themselves and a desire to find out more about Nai Talim.

## Objectives

- Understand Nai Talim ideas in the context of Gandhi's vision of good society and Hind Swaraj
- Understand the contemporary experience of Nai Talim ideas in practice, especially craft work in school education

## Pedagogy

2 hours of live lecture by the instructor in an online platform – with adequate breaks and time for discussion and class participation

## Assignments

Assignments are to be submitted by the participants to a group email id. Feedback will be provided on each of the submissions by the course anchor/ respective instructor

**Submission of all given assignments and attendance in all six classes are mandatory for participants to get a certificate.**

## Content

Based on the objectives above, the content is divided into the following six classes of two hours each. These classes could be held once or twice a week depending upon the convenience of the participants. Most probably they would be weekend classes with one class per week.

### ***Class 1: Gandhi's Nai Talim for a Gandhian Swaraj***

The class will start with Gandhi's formulation of Nai Talim in October 1937 at Wardha , showing how it was somewhat similar and yet distinct from other radical educational ideas of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. There will be focussed discussion on what it is and what it isn't. Then Gandhi's core idea of Swaraj or a Good Society will be discussed; how it was in opposition to the Industrialism desired by most educated Indians; how Nai Talim fitted into this dream of Swaraj. The class will end with a formulation of a Nai Talim Framework for today.

**Reading :** Sujit Sinha 2015 *"Nai Talim Today : Some Issues and Possibilities"* Learning Curve, Issue XXIV, March 2015

The reading will be given after the class

**Assignment:** write in 300 words “why do you think Nai Talim is relevant for today’s India?”

## **Class 2 : History of Nai Talim : 1938 – 2005**

It will start with Gandhi visiting and getting excited by Tagore’s experimental school “Siksha Satra” in 1926, and then requesting Tagore to send its two key person –the Aryanayakam couple to join him in Wardha in mid 1930s ; the excitement and experiments starting in 1938 and through the 1940s ; the post independence grand plans for Nai Talim; the various difficulties; Kothari Commission of 1968; dying Nai Talim; the “Work Education” or SUPW avatar; proposals to revive it in NCF 2005. There will be focussed discussions on why did Nai Talim fade away.

### **Reading**

1. Marjorie Sykes : 1988 . Excerpts from *The Story of Nai Talim: Fifty Years of Education at Sevagram, 1937-1987: a Record of Reflections*. Sevagram, Wardha:Nai Talim Samiti,
2. Veda Prakash : 1985. Excerpts from *Gandhian Basic Education as a Programme of Interdisciplinary Instruction at the Elementary Stage: Some Lessons of Experience*, *Special UPEL issue no . 2*, Paris : UNESCO, (ED.85/WS/28). 41-50.

### **Additional reading**

Oesterheld, J. (2007). *National Education as a Community Issue: The Muslim Response to the Wardha Scheme*. In K. Kumar, & J. Oesterheld, *Education and Social Change in South Asia* (pp. 156-195). Hyderabad: Orient Longman.

## **Class 3 : Ananda Niketan School , Sevagram , Wardha**

This class will give a quick history of Anand Niketan school from 1937 till 1972. Its restarting in 2005. Then it will go into some details of what is happening today in this school in terms of “education through work”. It will end with brief overview of efforts to spread some of the ideas in neighbouring govt schools.

Take home work

1. Reading
2. Watching Film

## Class 4: Understanding the Practice and Experience of Crafts-I

This class would focus on understanding crafts and craftwork in a modern society. Further it would discuss the practice of crafts and its implications on its practitioners and society. It would try to explore a craftsman's way of life.

1. Excerpts from Sennett, R. (2008). *The Craftsman*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
2. Gaur, N. (2018). An Experiment in Rural Education: The Revival of Anand Niketan. In K. Kumar, *Routledge Handbook of Education in India: Debates, Practices and Policies*. New Delhi: Routledge.

## Class 5: Understanding the Practice and Experience of Crafts-II

This class would discuss the practice of craftwork within a school. The educational experience of craftwork would be discussed in some detail. Can all kinds of crafts be used to provide an educational experience? What does one mean by experience? What kind of experience is educational?

### Reading List:

1. John Dewey : 1937 . Excerpts from *Experience and Education*. New York: Simon and Schuster

**Assignment:** Based on your location, identify a local craft that can be introduced in school. Give reasons for your selection of the craft. Suggest ways to introduce this craft in your school. How can this craft be linked to school subjects?

## Class 6: Concluding Class

This would be the concluding class, wherein the facilitators would try to bring together all aspects of Nai Talim discussed so far and reinforce the relationship between Gandhi's idea of Swaraj with Nai Talim. Finally, the course will conclude with discussions on small possibilities on what participants can do in their own schools or areas.

1. Anthony Parel: 2009. Excerpts from *Hind Swaraj and other writings*. New York: Simon and Schuster

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<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Introduction to Nai talim</b>
<b>Level</b>	ISCED Level 5
<b>Target Audience</b>	Open-enrolment program; designed for people who are working in education domain
<b>Mode of Delivery</b>	Online
<b>Total Hours of participation effort</b>	2x 6 = 12 hours of Online classes. 3X 5 = 15 hours of assignment work.
<b>Grading</b>	Certificate of participation
<b>Language of Transaction</b>	Bilingual - English and Hindi mode of instruction Readings in English; Assignment submission: English and Hindi
<b>Course Anchor</b>	Nazrul Haque
<b>Course Designers</b>	Pallavi Varma Patil, Sujit Sinha, Nidhi Gaur, Nazrul Haque, Bijoy Das
<b>Course Instructors</b>	Sujit Sinha, Pallavi Varma Patil, Nidhi Gaur, Sushama Sharma

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