

# A Study of Student Teachers' Perception of Facilitating a Nai Talim Class

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**Abstract:** Education is harmonious development of a child's personality. To achieve this aim of education, Gandhiji proposed a holistic system of education which caters to development of physical, intellectual and spiritual aspects of a child through a curriculum focused on craft which prepared children for life. This approach is called as Nai Talim. The present study is an attempt to understand student teachers perception of facilitating a Nai Talim class. The study is based on a survey conducted on 46 student teachers who answered a rating scale developed by the researcher. The findings of the study indicate that the student teachers have a fulfilling and enriching experience in facilitating a Nai Talim Class

**Key Words:** Nai Talim, Student- teachers' perceptions.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

According to Gandhiji, education is all round drawing out of best in child and man- body, mind and soul.

Gandhiji believed that education that caters only at the intellectual development at the exclusion of physical and spiritual development is a poor lop sided education. True education of intellect can be only through proper exercise of bodily organs like eyes, nose, hands, feet, ears, etc. Development of body, mind and soul are an indivisible whole, all round development of mind can take place only when physical and spiritual faculties of the child are educated. It would be a fallacy to develop these faculties in piecemeal or independent of one another. Man is neither mere intellect, nor only animal body or soul alone, a proper harmonious development of all three is needed for a whole man. To achieve this aim of education he proposed a holistic approach to education where all aspects of an individual-physical, intellectual, spiritual were integrated in the curriculum with focus on hands on work which prepared children for life. This is Nai Talim- Nai means new and Talim means education. It is also known as Basic education. Nai Talim is conceived as education through handicrafts. The roots of this new education were deeper. The philosophy of basic education emerged from the belief that true education should be easily accessible to all and should be of use to all in their daily life. Such education was not derived from books nor was it dependent on it. Rather it was taken from the book of life which cost nothing and which could not be taken away from any one on earth at any cost.

Nai Talim is not just pedagogy, it is a philosophy. It believes in taking care of head, heart and hand- holistic development of the mind, soul and body. Its two components are:

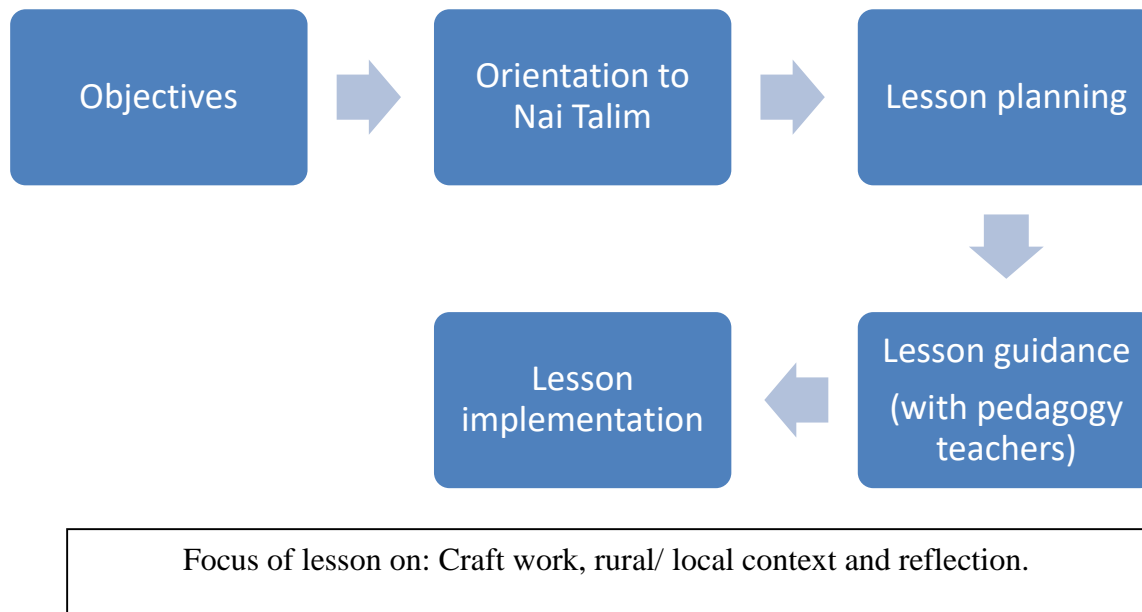
- Holistic development of children
- For non- violent, just, cooperative and sustainable society.

### **Nai Talim Model at Smt. Kapila Khandvala College of Education:**

At KKCE, a model of experiential learning through Nai Talim was developed mainly with the objective of developing knowledge of Nai Talim philosophy in student teachers and to prepare them to implement Nai Talim lessons in their internship schools. The phases of the model are as follows:

- Orientation to the philosophy of Nai Talim
- Sharing of an exemplar lesson plan based on Nai Talim principles
- Student engagement in planning of lesson based on Nai Talim principles.
- Guidance of lesson plans by pedagogy teachers
- Nai Talim lesson implementation by student teachers in their internship schools.
- Reflection by the student teacher and feedback by the supervisor post lesson.

The focus of every lesson was integration of craft based activity pertaining to local context with focus on reflective questions during the lesson and reflection after the lesson.



## 2. NEED FOR THE STUDY:

The idea of education according to Gandhiji laid equal emphasis on physical and spiritual development alongside intellectual development. But the question is the current education system developing all the aspects of a child's personality? When you ponder over this question, you may get a clear answer that the education system does to a great extent contribute to intellectual development. But is it catering to physical and spiritual development? This dilemma was encountered by Gandhiji many years ago. Therefore he proposed a holistic approach to education which took care of harmonious development of child's personality with focus on craft or hands on activity which prepared children for life. This type of education is relevant even in today's time as educated product of today's society may be intellectually polished but weak in physical endurance and undisciplined in spiritual prowess. If these children from the beginning are educated through some productive activity related to their daily life then these children will not only develop a fine healthy body but a vigorous intellect rooted in their day to day experiences. Such education prepares children not for a living but for their life.

Education that is based on useful and productive activity also is based upon various principles of curriculum development. Such curriculum is useful, related to daily life; child centered, based in their community and inculcates values too. Thus it becomes a scientific way of curriculum organization.

If we want to provide true education to future generation of our nation then we need to equip future teachers with the required knowledge. Thus it is important that the future teachers know the philosophy of Nai Talim and also are given opportunities to practice Nai Talim during School internship under the guidance of the teacher educators. This will help them to understand this philosophy deeply and practice it under expert guidance. From the academic year 2019- 20, every student teacher undergoing a B. Ed course from University of Mumbai is expected to implement some experiential learning lessons based on Gandhiji's Nai Talim principles. The researcher considered examining perceptions and experiences of student teachers about Nai Talim was essential. This would help the researcher in providing relevant and enriched experiences related to Nai Talim to the forthcoming batches of student teachers.

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study student teachers' understanding of the educational philosophy of Nai Talim.
- To study student teachers' perception of facilitating a lesson based on Nai Talim principles.
- To understand the challenges faced by the student teachers in implementing Nai Talim based lessons.
- To study student teachers' attitude towards implementing lessons based on Nai Talim in their future classrooms.
- To find out their overall experiences of implementing a Nai Talim lesson.

**4. METHODOLOGY:** The methodology used for the present study is survey. Data was collected from the student teachers using a rating scale, which was analysed and results are presented.

**5. SAMPLE:**

The sample for the study comprised of 46 student teachers pursuing second year of the B. Ed degree course from Smt. Kapila Khandvala College of Education affiliated to University of Mumbai. The sample was selected through purposive sampling technique.

**6. TOOL USED FOR THE STUDY:**

The tool used to collect data from the student teachers was prepared by the researcher herself. The tool is a rating scale comprising of 23 statements and two open ended questions. The scale used in the tool is four point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The statements in the tool pertained to:

- Student teachers’ understanding of the educational philosophy of Nai Talim.
- Student teachers’ perception of facilitating a lesson based on Nai Talim principles.
- The challenges faced by the student teachers in implementing Nai Talim based lessons.
- Student teachers’ attitude towards implementing lessons based on Nai Talim in their future classrooms.

**7. DATA ANALYSIS:**

The data collected for the present study was analysed in the descriptive way. Simple statistical technique of percentage was employed for the study.

**8. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS:**

In order to realize the objectives of the present study, the participants were asked to answer a four point rating scale comprising of 23 statements and 2 open ended questions.

TABLE 1  
 STUDENT TEACHERS’ UNDERSTANDING OF NAI TALIM

Sr. No.	Philosophy of Nai Talim	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	I believe that education should be useful to the daily life of students.	87	11	2	0
2	True Education should be through proper exercise of bodily organs like hands, eyes, nose, feet, ears, etc.	67	33	0	0
3	Lessons based on Nai Talim can contribute to holistic development of child’s personality.	58	42	0	0
4	Students are engaged learners when provided with Nai Talim experiences.	69	29	2	0
5	Nai Talim approach provides an opportunity to bring real life experiences in the classroom.	67	31	2	0
6	Nai Talim lesson helps bring together students and build social solidarity.	47	47	6	0
7	I consider dignity of labour to be an integral part and a means of intellectual growth of children.	42	51	7	0
8	A well planned work- activity can provide enriched learning experiences to the students.	69	31	0	0
9	I believe that this approach is relevant to education in present times.	38	60	2	0

There were nine statements pertaining to philosophy of Nai Talim which were asked to the participants. 98 % of the student teachers believed that the education imparted to the students should be useful and applicable to their daily life. However 2% of the participants disagreed to this belief. Similarly, 100 % of the student teachers approved of the idea that true education is through proper exercise of bodily organs and also believed that Nai Talim lessons contribute to holistic development of children. This showed their belief in involving maximum senses of the students in the learning process where students are active learners and not just passive listeners. 98% of the student teachers affirmed that Nai Talim approach brings real life experiences in the classroom and engages the learners with 2% of the participants disagreed to these statements. Answering the question of whether work related activity provides enriched learning experiences to the students, 100% of the respondents supported it. 93 % of the student teachers considered dignity of labour as integral to Nai Talim and important for intellectual development of students however 7% of the

respondents differed from this idea. Responding to the statement of whether this approach of education is relevant even in present times 98% of the student teachers agreed to it but 2% disagreed to the same.

**TABLE 2**  
**STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF FACILITATING A NAI TALIM CLASS**

Sr. No.	Facilitation of Nai Talim class	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
10	Nai Talim lesson lead to integration of Physical work with intellectual learning.	58	36	6	0
11	Nai Talim lesson facilitated development of social values (co-operation, team work, tolerance, etc.) in students.	78	20	2	0
12	Students enjoyed learning in a Nai Talim classroom.	73	25	2	0
19	Learning together in group sensitized students towards gender equality.	33	58	7	2
20	Teaching through Nai Talim was a fulfilling experience.	49	49	2	0
22	Nai Talim is a necessary training for teachers in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.	56	42	2	0
23	Nai Talim develops multiple intelligence.	69	29	0	2

In order to study student teachers' perception of facilitating a Nai Talim class, 7 questions were asked. Responding to the first question, 94% of the student teachers agreed that Nai Talim lessons lead to integration of physical work with focus on intellectual learning, while 6% rejected it. The respondents were asked whether Nai Talim lessons facilitated development of social values to which 98% of the participants agreed whereas a negligible 2 % disagreed. Likewise, 98% of the student teachers agreed that Nai Talim lesson gave joyful learning experiences to students and was a fulfilling experience for the student teachers whereas 2 % disagreed to this. Answering the idea whether learning together in a group in Nai Talim class sensitized students towards gender equality, 81 % felt that it did so but 9 % of the students didn't support this idea.

**TABLE 3**  
**CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENT TEACHERS**

Sr. No.	Challenges	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
13	Selection of a topic for a Nai Talim lesson was a demanding task.	58	34	4	4
14	It was challenging to integrate Nai Talim principles in teaching	47	38	13	2
15	I was able to manage classroom discipline while facilitating a Nai Talim class.	22	53	23	2
16	It was a difficult task to manage group work in the limited space of an urban classroom.	27	45	24	4
17	It is time consuming to take a lesson through this approach.	38	51	11	0
18	I could connect philosophy with the activity incorporated.	22	65	13	0

There were 6 statements associated with the challenges faced by student teachers in a Nai Talim lesson. Beginning with whether selection of a topic for Nai Talim lesson was a demanding task, 92% of the participants found it demanding whereas 8 % didn't find it so. 85% of the student teachers experienced challenges in integrating Nai Talim principles in teaching however 15% of the student teachers didn't experience any challenge in this regard. While answering a question on management of classroom discipline of a Nai Talim class, 75% of the participants experienced agreed that it was difficult to manage whereas 25% of the participants didn't experience any such difficulty. Similarly, 72% of the student teachers found it a difficult task to manage group work in the limited space of an urban classroom while 28% of the student teachers refuted this thought. 89% of the respondents agreed that Nai Talim lesson was a time consuming approach whereas 11% disagreed to the same. When asked about whether they could connect philosophy with the activity incorporated, 87% of the student teachers agreed that they could do so however 13% of the student teachers weren't successful in doing so.

TABLE 4  
 STUDENT TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS NAI TALIM IN FUTURE CLASSROOMS

Sr. No.		SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
21	As a teacher I would like to implement lessons based on Nai Talim in my future classroom.	53	43	4	0

When asked about their response about their willingness to implement lessons based on Nai Talim in their future classrooms 96% of the students teachers agreed with only 4% of the student teachers showed disagreement. In order to address the objective of finding out their overall experience of implementing a Nai Talim lesson, two open ended questions were asked. The purpose of asking these questions was to know student teacher's personal experience of teaching a class through Nai Talim approach and also to study their opinion of this approach. The first question was to understand their experience of teaching a Nai Talim lesson. On analysing their response to this question it was found that the experience of majority of the student teachers of teaching a Nai Talim lesson was a satisfying one. The expression used by majority of students to share their experience was as follows:

- To most of the student teachers facilitating a Nai Talim class was a fulfilling, enriching, fruitful and enjoyable experience. Student teachers shared that this approach resulted in meaningful involvement of students in the teaching learning process.
- Many student teachers enjoyed teaching through Nai Talim approach. They found it interesting not only as teachers but it also aroused curiosity in students as learners.
- Some student teachers shared that though the approach was a time consuming one. It was worthwhile to teach as students were actively involved in learning and they learned through their own experience.
- It was expressed by some student teachers that this approach helped them to implement their creative ideas as teachers. It further provides space to all the students for involvement and provides joyful learning experiences as well as gave enough freedom of expression.
- It helped the teachers connect philosophy with the activity conducted in the class.
- Few challenges faced by some student teachers while facilitating a Nai Talim class were:
  - Difficulty in classroom management
  - Selection of topic for a Nai Talim lesson was a struggle.
  - Handling group work was a demanding task.
  - Time consuming approach
  - Taking a lesson in History and Language was found challenging by some.
- It was found to be an extremely fulfilling experience by some with high level of engagement and enjoyment. It helped them beautifully to attain lesson outcomes.

The second question asked was to take opinion of future teachers on Nai Talim approach to education. Examination of their response to this question provided the researcher with an insight into their beliefs about Nai Talim. Most of the student teachers responded with affirmative opinions on Nai Talim. Some of the key responses received are as follows:

- It is a relevant approach to education in present time as it actively engages students and leads to effective learning.
- It is a much needed approach for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. The present day learners are involved in digital learning but they need to be connected to arts, craft and their motherland. Nai Talim approach facilitates this connection thus it needs to be incorporation in education.
- Nai Talim provides joyful learning experiences and leads to development of social values like cooperation and team work.
- Teachers must implement this approach in teaching as it is interesting, meaningful and leads to holistic development of students.
- Some students voiced their concern that though it is interesting and meaningful approach however artificial forcing of activity with learning points can be an issue. At this place student teachers may be guided well so that they can meaningfully connect philosophy to practice.
- Some students shared that though it involves challenges in terms of topic selection, time, etc. yet it is a worthwhile approach to bring in classroom as it facilitates qualitative learning.

## 9. CONCLUSION:

- Facilitating a Nai Talim class is a fulfilling and enriching experience to many student teachers. Thus it will be worthwhile for the teacher education institutes to orient student teachers to the philosophy of Nai Talim and train them in implementing a lesson based on Nai Talim principles.
- The study revealed that student teachers have extremely satisfying experiences as facilitators of Nai Talim classroom. Because students are actively involved and meaningfully engaged. This further suggests that the future teachers are oriented to Nai Talim and encouraged to take Nai Talim lessons in school.
- The results of the study bring to light that there are some challenges experienced by the student teachers in implementing a Nai Talim lesson. However the positive emotions experienced by student teachers give them confidence to competently deal with the challenges. The student teachers if given timely and required guidance with respect to the challenges faced, they will be in a better position to overcome it.
- The present study thus suggests that training student teachers in the philosophy and pedagogy of Nai Talim is a valuable investment. When the future teachers are trained in Nai Talim they will be equipped with necessary knowledge and skills to implement lessons based on Nai Talim principles in their schools. They can thus become exemplars for even other teachers (their future colleagues) to try out this approach in their classroom. In this way, we will be able to bring Gandhiji's dream of Nai Talim into practice to a large extent.

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## Author's Biography:

Dr. Megha D'souza is a postgraduate in Commerce and Education, she is a gold medallist in M. Ed examination. She has been teaching papers pertaining to philosophical foundations of Education, pedagogy of Economics and Environmental Education. She has 14 years of experience primarily as a teacher educator. She has research experience of more than 10 years. Her doctoral research is in the area of Positive Education and is keenly interested in developing well-being skills in students.

As a teacher she believes in being enthusiastic and committed to teaching. She is passionate about making her lessons interesting and enjoyable for her students which results in valuable student engagement. She firmly believes in establishing strong relationship with students and considers her network as her net worth.

As a mother of two young kids, she dreams of a future where kids are leading a healthy lifestyle that comprises of unstructured physical play and healthy eating habits. She wishes to influence students and parents in this area.