

26. NEP 2020 and Ancient Indian Education System

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ABSTRACT

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) has focused to integrate the current education system into the ancient education system. Ancient Indian Education system focussed on the holistic development of students and learners by taking care of the inner and outer self of the individual seeking knowledge. This paper tries to emphasized on the NEP 2020 with special reference to Ancient Indian Education System

Keywords: NEP 2020, Ancient Indian Education System

Introduction

In today's Modern Education System we come across many terms like holistic, integrated, inclusive, differential, indigenous, interdisciplinary etc which has become a mantra for many modern set ups of education. But did it ever cross our mind that these terms were the very foundation on which Ancient Indian Education was based on.

Ancient Indian Education system focussed on the holistic development of students and learners by taking care of the inner and outer self of the individual seeking knowledge. From the time of the oldest of the Vedas - The Rigveda, education was imparted with a view for an overall development of moral, spiritual, intellectual and physical aspects of the students. Emphasis was laid on inculcating values like humility, truthfulness, discipline, self-reliance and respect for all creations. The concept of oneness with all the beings around us was introduced to children at a very early age. The Gurus in the Gurukuls and Ashrams made it mandatory to the students to understand the miniscule existence in the infinite universe and only when the Guru understood the student was ready then the journey of imparting knowledge began. Simple daily life skills were first taught to the students like cooking, cutting wood from the forests, grazing cattle, milking the cows, burning wood, carpentry, hunting, fishing and many more life skills were taught in the Gurukuls. Ancient Indian Education system was pragmatic, achievable and complementary to daily living.

From this Gurukul system of education arise the belief that holistic education can be obtained by being amidst nature! But as time passed these ancient systems of Gurukuls got institutionalized and then began the journey of getting educated in Universities also known as the Brick and Mortar universities. Nalanda University, Mithila University, Telehara University, SharadaPeeth Temple University to name a few of these brick and mortar universities. Students from across India and from Far East countries like China, Japan, Indonesia, Korea, Japan and West Asia made dangerous and difficult journeys just to learn from Indian scholars and teachers.

Education from the times of Gurukuls was imparted in Sanskrit and then later even in Pali. Students from other countries who seek to study in these Universities had to undergo intensive training in Sanskrit language only after which they were admitted to these Ancient Indian Universities. India's education system in ancient India was similar to what American and

European Universities are now! Students around the world are flocking these countries now to gain knowledge.

Repeated invasions and colonization destroyed Ancient Indian education system giving way to the modern way of Education which engulfed the whole nation like a wave by making English compulsory as it was the language of the rulers. The usages of Arabic, Pali and Sanskrit in educating the children were challenged by Macaulay in his resolution passed in 1834. The Resolution passed in March 1835 a year later eventually determined the aim, content and medium of instruction in India. Promotion of Western science and arts was acknowledged as the avowed object of the British Government in India. The single whole purpose of this kind of education was to create cheap and capable English-speaking servants serving the foreign rulers. (The History and Evolution of the Indian Education System.pdf)- Parth Purohit.

Finally, after burdening our students with this so-called modern education system, (thanks to colonization), after nearly 4 decades India has the third National Policy of Education namely the NEP 2020.

Highlights of NEP 2020:

- 1) Integral Education with a holistic development of the student
- 2) Multidisciplinary approach in line with the Ancient Indian Education System where students had the opportunity to learn *Chauthashti Kalas*– 64 arts/disciplines within their educational systems.
- 3) Learner centric system of education wherein the students learn and study at their own pace and ability.
- 4) Multiple entry and exit options
- 5) Credit bank for students
- 6) Adopting vocational education at the age of 11 years.
- 7) Learning and propagating Sanskrit and other Indian languages
- 8) Teacher education will be given highest priority with focus on intense training programs and a compulsory 3-year degree program.
- 9) It also is forming an idea of National Professional Standards for Teachers. Research will be overseen by a National Research Foundation.
- 10) National Mission for mentoring is envisaged keeping in mind the ancient system of Guru-shishya Parampara.
- 11) Focus will be on experiential learning through indigenous sports.
- 12) The highest recommendation of this policy is to create Higher Education Institutes clusters and multidisciplinary universities like the Universities in Ancient India.

Need for Research:

- 1) Little or no scope for overall personality development, ethical training, or moral development.
- 2) School and colleges devote very little time for physical activity
- 3) The most scientific language like Sanskrit which was the main language in Ancient Indian Education System is not taught in all schools and even if it's taught in some schools, it is introduced in primary and secondary sections of those schools.
- 4) In the quest for increasing the students IQ levels very little focus is given for increasing the EQ of a student.

- 5) Inculcating values and ethics through stories from ancient Indian scriptures is missing now. Stories and rhyme books are dominated by the foreign education systems.
- 6) Differential methods of education are missing, now it's one rule for all. The saying making a fish climb a tree holds true with the modern education system.
- 7) With the wake of modernization and the rat race in getting high marks suicide rates have gone up in young students AQ– the adversity quotient is very low in the youngsters of today. Inculcating habits and ways to overcome adversities and failures in life is completely missing in the current education system.

NEP 2020 aims at bringing about an integrated and holistic approach to education which was already there in Ancient Indian Education System.

- 1) Sanskrit can be introduced also at the higher education level. A recent article in The times of India (attached below in Literature Review), quotes that in a scientific study MRI scans showed that reciting Sanskrit mantras increased the size of the brain associated with cognitive functions like memory and decision-making which was called the Sanskrit effect by Dr. James Hartzell a neuroscientist.
- 2) Yoga and meditation can be a part of the daily routine at colleges which will help them focus better and help them improve their attention capacity. Also reintroducing the classic form of 'punishment' which was meted out to us when we were younger but now vanished called the 'uthakbaithak' or 'thoppukaranam' can be reintroduced as a form of yoga. This very Indian scientific form of punishment is now offered in America as 'Super Brain Yoga' therapy for children with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).
- 3) Value based learning can be inculcated by citing stories from the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Panchatantra, Shrimad Bhagwat Gita. Introducing value based stories at an early age may address the Adversity Quotient which is very low amongst the youth of today. Coping with adversities and being resilient is an essential life skill which needs to be taught at an early age.

Aims:

Designing a student handbook with defined activities for implementing the curricular pedagogy defined in the NEP2020.

Objectives:

- Make learning very interactive and fun.
- Develop a feeling of pride in students towards Indian culture, values and traditions.
- A wholesome, holistic and integrated approach can be brought about in the current education system by implementing some of the things that were taught in Traditional Indian Education Systems.

Research Question:

NEP 2020 aims at bringing about an integrated and holistic approach to education which was already there in Traditional Indian Knowledge System.

Briefly we saw how the NEP 2020 is framed keeping in mind the Ancient Indian Education System. To make things easier and to bridge the gap in the policy formation and guidelines on

implementing, this research will focus on designing student handbook for promoting a holistic development of students.

De-limitations:

1. The Ancient Indian Education System is a very wide topic with many subjects under its wings. Only 3 varied topics will also have been mentioned in the NEP 2020 will be researched on which will lead towards a holistic and overall development of students.
2. The student handbook will be catering towards the age group of 16-18 years.

Limitations:

1. The time available is limited to study the research problem and to measure the change that might take place over time by implementing the above.

Methodology:

1. Basic research will be carried out on the existing reading materials on Ancient Indian Education System. The below literature review will be some of the materials for secondary research.
2. Interviewing students in the age group 17-18 with questionnaires. Interviewing experts in the field in Indian Knowledge systems and also interviewing some of the experts in the formulation of NEP 2020.

Research Contribution:

1. Language developments through Sanskrit which will help them pick other languages with ease.
2. Traditional Indian values and ethos through illustrated stories from traditional Indian scriptures.
3. Yoga exercises and meditation.

Conclusion:

A holistic approach blending the rich Indian culture and traditions with the modern education system will not only connect the younger generation to their culture but also will equip them with the necessary skill sets needed to be better human beings.

Reference

<https://leverageedu.com/blog/gurukul-education-system/> - This is a blog in the e-magazine called - Team Leverage Edu. It explains in brief the Indian Gurukul system of Education and its relevance in the current education system.

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/SARTHAQ_Part-1_updated.pdf This is a detailed New Education Policy -2020 implementation plan for school education - SARTHAQ (Students and Children's holistic advancement through Quality Education). The NEP envisions an education system rooted in Indian Ethos that contributes to the overall development of children which in turn will transform India into an Global Education superpower.

<https://leverageedu.com/blog/new-education-policy/> - This article on Leverage Edu carries a crisp and brief review of the NEP.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/desires-of-a-modern-indian/the-importance-of-the-gurukul-system-and-why-indian-education-needs-it/> - An article by Mr. Nikhil Chandwani writes about the Indian Gurukul system and why it's necessary to be implemented in the modern education system.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8A-mXW3DQjU> - An open discussion on Past, Present and Future of Education in India by Dr. Anil Sahasrabhude - 1) how our Indian education system collapsed from the 18th century to the 20th century due to British colonization. 2) Ancient Indian was the pioneer in various of education and how knowledge has been transferred from the Indian subcontinent to foreign countries and more knowledge has been added to it and we are just replicating this. 3) By decoding our Ancient Indian knowledge we will be building the confidence of Indian students.

India's Glorious scientific tradition by Suresh Soni - kindle edition -

https://www.google.co.in/books/edition/The_Educational_Heritage_of_Ancient_Indi/C1EvDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0 - in this book the author Sahana Singh talks about different kinds of learning environments which existed in Ancient India - like forest universities, temple universities and brick and mortar universities.

<https://esamskriti.com/e/Spirituality/Education/India-colon-s-NEP-2020-~-For-Integral-Education-1.aspx> - article by Dr. Sujit Roy who has written a gist of NEP 2020 and how it intends to bring in a holistic approach to education at all levels including the preschool years from ages 3 onwards, keeping in mind the ancient Indian education system of Guru-Shishyaparampara and many others Indian value based education systems.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M79C3dSB90A> - A 10 min video on Education in Ancient India.

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<https://ncert.nic.in/textbook/pdf/heih111.pdf>

<https://little-guru.com/blog-detail/why-should-your-child-learn-sanskrit-757707#:~:text=Improved%20critical%20thought%2C%20language%20comprehension,child's%20reading%20comprehension%20and%20speed.> - this article is about the benefits of learning Sanskrit in the early years.

<https://shikshan.org/nep-2020/curriculum-pedagogy/> - NEP 2020 –

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https://books.google.co.in/books?id=eMZuEAAAQBAJ&pg=PT87&num=14&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false - Revisiting the educational heritage of India - Author Sahana Singh

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/a-neuroscientist-explores-the-sanskrit-effect/>
