

India's 2020 National Education Policy: A Multidisciplinary, Holistic, and Sustainable Approach

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Abstract: *The Indian government's groundbreaking educational endeavor is the National Education Policy 2020. The old borders of a country's educational system have vanished in today's postmodern, virtual world, becoming enhanced by a variety of global viewpoints. India has a distinguished history in this discipline and a rich educational legacy. Over time, the nature of education has changed in response to social, political, and economic problems. The New Education Policy 2020's multidisciplinary and comprehensive features will be investigated in this study. The researcher will examine how a holistic approach to education greatly enhances children's "all-round development" and evaluate the applicability of a multidisciplinary approach in the current educational system, particularly in light of global education. The study's conclusions will help readers comprehend the circumstances surrounding the government's implementation of NEP 2020. In addition to learning a little bit about the history of education, readers will receive insight into the development of educational policy. To communicate both the philosophy of life and the philosophy of education, the researcher has used a philosophical research approach. The study is distinctive because it acknowledges the need of a holistic approach in the contemporary curriculum and educational system. As survival is the ultimate purpose of education, this will allow readers to evaluate the significance of a diverse educational approach.*

Keywords: Knowledge, Veda, Philosophy, Humanity, Education, God

I. INTRODUCTION

Philosophy, science, art, and literature are just a few of the many fields that make up the vast and ancient Indian Knowledge System. It offers a profound explanation of reality, human existence, and the world and has its roots in the Vedas, Upanishads, and other ancient texts. With its eternal lessons and all-encompassing outlook on life, this knowledge system has profoundly influenced Indian culture and continues to inspire people worldwide. India, one of the world's oldest civilizations, has contributed significantly to the body of indigenous knowledge that is progressively becoming more widely acknowledged. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism are among the major religions that originated in India, which is home to 25% of the world's population. Around 600 BC, 62 new religions also appeared. Numerous disciplines, including physics, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, education, cosmology, architecture, metallurgy, visual and performing arts, and agriculture, have greatly benefited from this knowledge system. One of the oldest countries in the world, India has a rich and enduring cultural legacy. Vedic intellectual principles are the foundation of Indian culture's brilliance, which earned the nation the moniker "Vishwaguru". India's spiritual wealth has been greatly influenced by the Vedas. It is widely acknowledged that sages contributed to the development of this distinctive country through the Indian Knowledge Systems. The vast and rich Indian knowledge systems, which include six major Darshanas (philosophies), fourteen Vidyas (sources of knowledge), and sixty-four Kalas (specific arts and skills), are based on the Vedas. The six Darshanas give mature concepts and complex logic for comprehending and experiencing life, presenting a variety of viewpoints as open knowledge systems.



The four Vedas, four Upavedas, and six Vedangas make up the 14 Vidyas. "Kala" in Sanskrit means specialized skills or performing arts. These abilities were seen as crucial to the whole growth of a cultured person in ancient India. The diversity of Kalas is astounding, and many Vidyas and Kalas are still quite valuable today. This reflects the complexity of life in the twenty-first century, a time characterized by knowledge and information. India has a critical mindset that allows it to investigate the relevance of its cultural and intellectual heritage in the modern world.

Students' flexibility is fostered by this approach, which promotes deeper thinking, critical thinking, and focus on life goals. All students are taught values like seva (service), ahimsa (non-violence), satya (truth), nishkam karma (selfless action), shanti (peace), sacrifice, tolerance, diversity, pluralism, righteous conduct, gender sensitivity, respect for the environment, courtesy, patience, forgiveness, empathy, patriotism, a democratic outlook, integrity, responsibility, justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. These attributes are enhanced by the ongoing flow of Indian knowledge, which is like the Ganga. Experience, observation, experimentation, and thorough analysis have all contributed to the development of the Indian Knowledge System, which includes gyan (knowledge), Vigyan (science), and Jeevan Darshan (life philosophy). Indian Knowledge Systems are essentially philosophies of values that inherently imply a method of living because the philosophy of values is entwined with the philosophy of life. The National Education Policy 2020 places a strong emphasis on making education "learner-centered," which necessitates first awakening the learner's consciousness. According to HH Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, "Consciousness is the prime mover of life", and consciousness is where knowledge is organized.

The emphasis in the current educational system is mainly on imparting objective knowledge, with less attention paid to raising the learner's consciousness, improving their mind-body coordination, or increasing their receptiveness to information through their senses and intellect. The National Education Policy aims to develop in students a deep sense of pride in being Indian, not only in their thoughts but also in their spirit, intelligence, and behaviour. In order to transform students into genuine global citizens, it also seeks to build knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and values that support a responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development, and global well-being. The demand for knowledge and specialized skills has increased as a result of India's economic liberalization in 1991 and subsequent strong economic expansion. Unveiled on July 29, 2020, the National Education Policy 2020 is a comprehensive document that covers every aspect of modern education. In terms of the future, it highlights how higher education contributes to the creation of knowledge resources, which are crucial for expanding education and directing societal advancement over time.

Objectives:

1. To comprehend the importance of a holistic approach to children's "all-round development."
2. To evaluate a multidisciplinary approach's applicability in modern Indian education.
3. To assess NEP 2020's compatibility with the history and customs of traditional education.
4. To investigate NEP 2020's contemporary features in light of international education.
5. To learn more about the traditional Indian knowledge system.
6. To become knowledgeable about a variety of sources, including the Gita, Upanishads, and Vedas.
7. To investigate methods for incorporating the Indian Knowledge System into postsecondary education.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Finding, analysing and assessing research reports, informal observations, and viewpoints relevant to the subject are all part of a study of related literature. The fundamental basis for all further effort is provided by this literature. Understanding what others have previously investigated in the pertinent topic is necessary to gain insight into a research challenge. The author might specify the scope of their study by reviewing related literature. A review is defined by Webster's Dictionary (1987) as "to reexamine, study critically, conduct a general survey, and critique".

Often summed up as "Be a man," Swami Vivekananda's teachings highlighted the importance of human development in his faith. According to him, different religions are only different routes to the same underlying reality, and all religions essentially teach the same concepts.



The current study's methodology: Any study must have an appropriate methodology since it enables the author to plan in accordance with their own strategy and facilitates the successful completion of the research. Any study's methodology is its blueprint. In order to obtain precise and pertinent data regarding the current state of phenomena, this study used a descriptive method. In a descriptive study, current conditions are described, analysed, and interpreted. A variety of books, journals, and references were used to gather secondary material.

III. DISCUSSION

The old Gurukul educational system served as the foundation for the Bharatiya Jnan Parampara, or Indian Knowledge System. Shortly after the Upanayan ceremony, students were sent to Gurukuls or the residences of "Acharyas" for their education. These pupils, referred to as Shishyas, lived chaste and pure lives, served the Acharya, and gained knowledge in accordance with their Guru's teachings. Gurukuls functioned autonomously, unaffected by or controlled by the government. In addition to studying the Vedas, Upanishads, and epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, the Shishyas were expected to carry out certain tasks. It was expected of the students to serve their Guru and keep the Gurukul tidy. Under trees, the Guru taught a variety of Vedic slokas and promoted spiritual growth during morning and evening lessons. Campuses of ancient Indian universities, such as Takshashila and Nalanda, served as interdisciplinary hubs with a wide range of specialized fields of study. The breadth, range, and rigor of the education provided at these universities were noteworthy. Curiosity, inquiry, dialogue, discourses, debates, critical thinking, rationality, and evidence-based procedures were all incorporated into the pedagogical approach (Aithal 2015).

For instance, Charaka developed methodical techniques for comprehending biological alterations, cause-and-effect connections, and evidence-based medicine. Sushruta is recognized as the world's first surgeon. Indian educator, philosopher, economist, jurist, and royal advisor Kautilya is widely known for his influential political economy book Artha Shastra. The Astadhyayi, written by Panini, is still utilized in machine translation because of its intricate grammatical principles. The idea of zero is Aryabhata's most significant contribution. These illustrations hardly scratch the surface of Indian civilization's intellectual heritage. Spiritual knowledge is the foundation of the Vedas, the oldest and most profound source of Indian knowledge systems. The Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sam Veda, and Atharva Veda are the four texts that make up the Vedas. These writings are regarded as timeless and unwritten. It is not implied that Rig Veda or Yajur Veda are only books when they are referred to the Vedas. An entire library might be filled with the vast amount of information contained in each Veda. The Vedas are the only force that can unite us with God in ways beyond our comprehension or draw us nearer to the Almighty. Every human spirit has an innate love for the Divine, Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, as well as a desire to achieve these objectives. These endeavours are motivated by the spiritual embodiments found in the life of sages. During a speech on "Education for Peace" in January 2005, Bishop Thomas Dabre quoted Sant Tukaram, who stated that saintly people put a lot of effort into charity and live for the good of the world. They place the happiness of others alongside their own, and their riches is compassion for all living things. God's followers reject prejudice as unholy and recognize the divine presence in the universe. Recognizing that we are all a part of one body and having no disdain for any living being is the ultimate meaning of worship. Indian philosophers have written commentary on the Upanishads since they are fundamental to Indian philosophy. The Upanishads are considered Vedanta by some philosophers.

The word "Upanishad" describes knowledge that eliminates ignorance and draws individuals who are seeking freedom nearer to God. It stands for wisdom that transcends human ignorance, releases people from material attachments, and leads them to the pinnacle of divine happiness. Shankaracharya claims that the Upanishads emphasize Brahma-jnana, or the knowledge of God, which allows one to attain redemption by comprehending the nature of birth and death. The Upanishads are known as Vedanta because this information is also known as Secret information. The Idea of God According to the Upanishads, Brahma is the ultimate knowledge, eternity, and truth. There is no existence outside of Brahma; it is the only reality. A real seer (Gyani) is someone who sees Brahma in all of creation, according to the Kathopanishad. The source of ultimate light and the creator of the universe is Brahma. The sun, moon, and planets are only illuminated by Brahma; they do not produce light on their own (Aithal 2023).



Concept of Soul:

The soul is thought to be imperishable, fearless, and immortal in the Upanishads. It is different from the mind, intellect, and ego, as well as from life and the tangible world. The soul is all-pervading, eternal, unrestricted, and transcends the physical world. It is crucial to remember that the soul gives the mouth, intellect, eyes, and ears the ability to carry out their respective tasks. From the tips of the nails to the top of the head, the spirit itself is completely serene, immortal, and free. The soul directs all of the senses. As a component of Vedic literature and culture, the Gita embodies the core of religious doctrine and can be thought of as containing all of the scriptures. It is a singular storehouse of limitless thoughts and feelings. While Lokmanya Tilak sees the Gita mainly as a manual for Karma yoga, Shankaracharya advocates Bhakti yoga as it is expressed in the Gita. Shruti, Smriti, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and other ancient books all make mention to the Sankhya philosophy, which was founded by the sage Kapil and is one of India's oldest ideologies. Kapil is regarded as Lord Vishnu's incarnation in ancient literature. Sankhya has been regarded by scholars as either heavenly wisdom or the idea of numbers. Sankhya is interpreted by some as pertaining to the 25 components and by others as containing divine knowledge. Figure 1 below illustrates the relationship between spirit, soul, and body. Sankhya philosophy holds that the human body is composed of both physical and sensory organs. The harmonious arrangement of the mind (Manas), ego (Ahankar), or self-consciousness and intellect, constitutes the human inner self. Maharshi Patanjali was the founder of the yoga philosophy. It is also referred to as Patanjali philosophy by others. It is an extremely scientific way of thinking. Every philosophy acknowledges its significance. Figure 1.



Figure 1: Relation between Spirit, Soul and Body

Spirit, Soul, and Body Relationship According to this concept, a sound body is the only place where a sound mind (soul) may exist. The mental attitude becomes pious when the mind is pure. Controlling one's desires and objectives is the goal of yoga. Controlling one's lust and cravings is the only way to reach the state of yoga. To catch a glimpse of God, yoga meditation is essential. One philosophy that adheres to the great four points is Buddhism. Figure 2 below illustrates these four points. Four outstanding aspects of Buddhism has traditionally placed a strong emphasis on achieving Nirvana, or salvation. As a material and motivating factor, Gautam Buddha saw that rigorous penance was useless and even harmful.



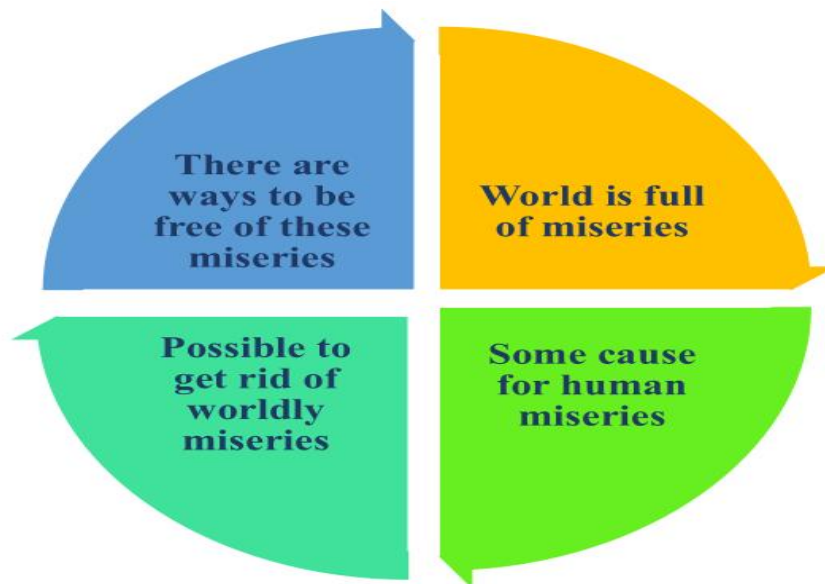


Figure 2: Important steps of Buddhism

Students' self-reliance should be fostered through education. Dedicating one's life to the welfare of others should be the goal of education. In the end, a quality education should lead people to salvation or independence.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (World Family): This verse effectively expresses the concept of "One World, One Family" (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam). The spiritual unity of all things is the only way to realize the idea of universal brotherhood. This concept has long been championed by mystics and sages. The idea of a worldwide society based on spiritual philosophy is said to have originated in the Vedas, one of the world's oldest literary works. "Adinah syama saradah satam" means "may we live for a hundred years with dignity," according to the Vedas. Later, the idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakama broad vision for all humanity evolved from the lofty ideal of familial harmony. The Atharva Veda eloquently expresses the idea of creating a worldwide family. The goal of the National Education Policy-2020 is to develop decent people. Through academic and extracurricular activities, this policy provides a thorough framework that includes both physical and non-physical aspects (Aithal et al., 2023). NEP-2020, which is based on timeless principles, states that the purpose of education is to create people who can think and act rationally and who have traits like empathy, compassion, courage, resilience, scientific temper, and creative imagination, all of which are based on strong ethical values (Kurahde 2020).

Holistic Knowledge: The epistemology of Indian knowledge systems, like Vedanta, is a crucial component. The Bhagavad Gita (13.3) highlights the need of comprehending both the body, or the outside world, and the inner self, or the body's knower. Traditional knowledge-based education recognizes two kinds of knowledge: Apara, which is limited to the physical world, and para, which relates to higher dimensions of existence. These two types of knowledge are thought to be complementary, and when combined, they produce a thorough and encompassing understanding (Singh 2024, Singh 2024). All knowledge pertaining to the empirical world that is investigated and confirmed by observation is included in Apara vidya, which is connected to the material sciences. On the other hand, para vidya, which is associated with spiritual sciences, entails comprehending the self and higher facets of existence, which may have an impact on empirical research in the material sciences. Thus, it makes sense to use Apara vidya to investigate more profound aspects of existence (Sah 2024). The Gurukul setting has historically encouraged the growth of both. There are solutions to overcome these hardships. Is it possible to end worldly suffering? A few reasons why people suffer. In order to help students reach their maximum potential, it aligns with two broad domains: outward skills and interior values. The world is full of miseries (Aithal et al. 2015). Higher education is seen as a hub for knowledge production, with students gaining understanding from a variety of disciplines (Singh & Singh 2023, Singh 2024).

The following measures are proposed to enhance knowledge production:



1. **Using a Swadeshi Approach to Design the Higher Education System:** With the National Education Policy 2020, the Indian government hopes to bring the country's educational system into compliance with international norms. But it's important to keep an open mind and keep learning new things. Creating a Swadeshi (indigenous) Higher Education System in place of Western models is one way to do this.
2. **The Gurukula system:** The Gurukula system is well known for its Guru-Shishya tradition, which involved the continual, one-on-one transmission of knowledge. According to this tradition, the followers have an obligation to learn as much as they can from the Guru, who is regarded as the embodiment of knowledge. Today's educators should maximize their potential and focus on advancing civil society and nation-building. Like the old Gurus, they must serve as mentors and facilitators (Kanungo, 2020).
3. **Problem of Quantity against Quality:** Since there are no set boundaries or standards, there is a large disparity in the number of institutions and universities in India. India needs over 1,500 institutions, according to the National Knowledge Commission (NKC). Regarding the ideal number of universities, there isn't a consistent guideline. NEP-2020 is in favour of fewer colleges. There are currently about 40,000 colleges connected to different universities nationwide, but this figure is predicted to drop to roughly one-fourth. The number of higher education institutions must be decided by a clear policy (Singh & Singh 2023).

IV. FINDINGS

1. The nature of the multidisciplinary approach in education will be understood by the reader.
2. The reader will understand the value of an all-encompassing approach to education.
3. The reader will learn more about the depth and legacy of Indian education.
4. Promoting holistic development is the aim of education.
5. It is anticipated that NEP 2020 will have a significant impact on how education develops in the future.
6. NEP 2020 plans for the future while respecting traditional values.
7. In terms of international education norms, NEP 2020 is progressive.
8. NEP 2020 offers recommendations for solving practical issues.
9. NEP 2020 highlights how crucial it is for students to develop their skills.
10. The reader will comprehend how NEP 2020 relates to contemporary Indian education.

V. CONCLUSION

Inspired by Sanathana Dharma and in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the projected Indian school education system offers a comprehensive strategy for creating well-rounded people. This system places a great emphasis on spiritual awareness, general development, sustainable ideals, scientific understanding, and a deep connection to Indian traditions. It is based on moral values and seeks to advance moral government and leadership. This educational approach aims to transform the educational landscape by fusing contemporary methods with traditional knowledge and Indian cultural heritage. Every philosophy places a strong emphasis on spiritual growth. The goal of education is to help pupils realize God or Brahma by arousing their spiritual consciousness. Teachers' ought to be their pupils' friends and spiritual guides. In order to promote human growth, the National Education Policy 2020 promotes the inclusion of spiritual themes in the curriculum. Universities have implemented Value-Added Courses (VAC), such as theoretical and practical yoga instruction, to guarantee the survival of Indian culture and heritage and strengthen India's standing as a Viswaguru (global teacher). Universities are anticipated to provide more courses in the future. It is believed that God, the universe's creator, also acts as its guardian and destroyer, and that these actions happen spontaneously and without conscious thought.

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