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The Journey of the Development of Indian Education in the Context of the NEP 2020: An Overview

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Abstract

The Indian knowledge system is an integral part of India's cultural, civilizational, social, intellectual and moral heritage. It preserves profound and sophisticated knowledge pertaining to various aspects of life including science, religion, philosophy, mathematics, astrology, education, culture, arts, literature, yoga, medicine, warfare and defence. The Indian knowledge system has been refined from time to time and is being polished. The National Education Policy 2020 has once again created chances for the preservation, promotion and transmission of the Indian knowledge tradition. This article deals with the transition of the Indian knowledge system from its origin (Vedic knowledge) to the present (National Education Policy 2020) and the growth path of contemporary India. This transformation focuses on the Vedic period, the Buddhist period, the mediaeval period, the educational efforts of the British government in colonial times, the educational efforts of Indians in colonial times, the formation of various committees and commissions and other important educational initiatives after independence. This narrative is of a historical character. Traditional wisdom, Vedic knowledge, understanding of the mediaeval, colonial and independent Indian educational system and how the National Education Policy 2020 can contribute to India's growth path toward becoming a Vishwaguru and a Vikasit Bharat@2047.

Keywords: *Vedic knowledge, Indian knowledge system, traditional knowledge, National Education Policy and colonial period.*

1. Introduction

The early Vedic period marks the cohesive form of Indian education which originated about 4500 years ago in the remote past. At this point education was in the hands of Brahmins. Hence some authors have termed the Vedic education as "Brahmanical education" and others as "Hindu education." The sages of ancient India knew well that education was the corner stone of all-round development of the individual, all-round improvement of society and multi-faceted progress of civilization. Thus, they created a praiseworthy system of education that not only maintained the outstanding Vedic literature but also created innovative thinkers in different disciplines of knowledge who now carry the head of India high with pride and honour. On this subject F.W. Thomas spoke glowingly of India. He wrote "Education in India is not a foreign plant. No other country has shown such an early and lasting love of knowledge"

Overview

A Brief Overview of Educational Developments in the Ancient and Mediaeval Period:- In ancient times "education' was not associated with bookish knowledge or a source of livelihood. Rather education was considered a light that encouraged a person to develop himself in all aspects, to lead a decent life and to obtain salvation. Hence the education was considered a light that directed people in other facets of life. In this connection the following statements of Dr. A.S. Altekar are noteworthy- "From the Vedic period to the present the main belief

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of Indians regarding education has been that education is a source of light that truly guides us in many areas of life." Education was described as light, insight, inner light, the vision of knowledge and the third eye of mankind. "Education was considered as a source of enlightenment and power which transforms and enables our nature through the progressive and harmonious development of our physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual powers & faculties" says Altekar. Vidyarambha Sanskar, Upanayana Sanskar and Samapavartan Sanskar are the gifts of Vedic education. Our Vedic education has given rise to the Gurukul education system which emphasizes teaching and learning in contact with nature and is committed to providing free and universal education. The individualized teaching-learning system and the classroom-leadership approach have also contributed to the gift of Vedic education. In the Vedic period Sanskrit and Prakrit were the main languages of teaching or instruction.

From the fifth century B.C. onwards Vedic or Brahmanical education began to exhibit signs of disintegration because it was unable to accommodate the changing necessities of life. Fortunately for India a century ago Mahatma Buddha arrived in this region aligned education with contemporary needs changed its framework and established Buddhist education. Dr. F.E. Kaye has written about this schooling: "Buddhist education prevailed for over 1500 years and developed a system of education that rivalled the Brahmanical system yet was similar to it in many respects." Education flourished in Buddhist monasteries. Pali was the medium of instruction throughout this period. During the Buddhist period world-level institutions like Nadia, Vallabhi, Jagaddalla, Kanchi, Mithila, Odantapuri, Vikramshila, Takshashila and Nalanda were created for higher education and attracting students from all across the country and overseas. During this period there was outstanding development in every branch of craft, profession, art, technique and medicine.

The Ten Shikha Padmini norms, Pabbajja Sanskara and Upasampada Sanskara are considered important achievements of this education. The Muslims ruled India for almost 550 years. Here they installed a new educational system. It can be dubbed the mediaeval Muslim system of education. Giving his perspective regarding this system Dr. Buck F.E. Kaye remarked "Muslim education was a foreign system transplanted to India and developed in its new land having very little connection with Brahmanical education." Maktabs & Madrasas created for promotion of Islam were the principal sites of instruction. The stress on secularism the introduction of military instruction, handicrafts, architecture and literature seem to have led to the beginning of practical instruction in religious education.

A Brief Overview of Educational Developments during the Colonial Period:

Soon after the arrival of European trader's Christian missionaries also came to India. The missionaries were more interested in converting Indians to their religion than in establishing schools of a European type. But it was a priority of them. This priority was explained by the famous missionary Dr. D.O. Allen who wrote "Educational institutions afforded missionaries an opportunity to connect in touch with Indians and to acquaint them with their religious principles." To capitalize on this opportunity missionaries constructed schools in different parts of India and began to provide education in a Western manner. This is the reason that the missionaries are called the promoters of modern education in India. In this respect the following words of Nurullah and Nayak are worth quoting: "The missionaries have the privilege of propagating the contemporary system of education in India." In this spirit Carey, Ward and Marshman created the Serampore Trio in 1808. Warren Hastings created the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781 which provided seven years of Arabic instruction. In year 1791 Jonathan Duncan establishes the Banaras Sanskrit College. Later its Lord Wellesley constructed Fort William College in Kolkata in year 1800 and Raja Ram Mohan Roy established Hindu College in year 1817.

Elphinstone established Pune Sanskrit College in year1818. In the middle of all these developments the Charter of 1813 came out to providing a fresh turn to the history of Indian education. Questions of accountability for Indian instructors arose under Article- 43 of the Charter of 1813 and the Oriental-Western Controversy was settled by Lord Auckland in year 1839. Macaulay's Declaration presenting the notion of downward filtration and Charles Grant's Five-Point Plan was issued on 2nd February 1835.

The time between year 1833 and 1853 is known as the period of the anglicization of education in the history of Indian education. The period was followed by the widely discussed Wood Declaration of 19 July 1854 which was mostly based on building up education departments. It explains for the first time the development of an education department in India, the establishment of universities, the grant-in-aid system, the creation of graded schools and teacher training. In this connection A.N. Basu adds "This Declaration is regarded as the foundation stone of Indian education." It is claimed that it laid the foundation of our present education system. The Indian Education Commission or Hunter Commission was established in year 1882 and asked for an education system from primary to higher education with emphasis on the quality of education. In year 1901 the Shimla Education Conference was conducted and the Indian Universities Commission was created in year 1902 under the chairmanship of Thomas Raleigh.

In year 1904 the government passed the Indian Universities Act and produced a proposal on education policy. In year 1910 the Curzon established the Central Education Department and the Archaeological Department in India. Indians were also instrumental in promoting education in all of these efforts. The National Council of Education was set up on 15 August 1906 under the chairmanship of Shri Gurudas Banerjee. The Bharatiya Nari Vishwavidyalaya was created by Keshav Karve, Vanasthali Vidyapeeth by Hiralal Shastri, Gujarat Vidyapeeth by Gandhi ji and the Indian Institute of Science by the Tata family. In year 1910 the long-expected Gokhale Education Bill was passed.

The Calcutta University Commission was appointed in year 1917 under the chairmanship of Michael Sadler. The principal issue of the commission was the suggestion for the separation of intermediate education from university education. Meanwhile Indians were also making their own attempts, such as the creation of Banaras Hindu University in 1916 by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and the founding of Jamia Millia Islamia University Aligarh in year 1920 by Maulana Muhammad Ali which was moved to Delhi in year 1925. Tagore founded Shantiniketan in year 1921 and Visva-Bharati on 6 May 1922. In year 1929 the Hartong Committee was established which called attention to the wastage and stagnation in basic education. In year 1936 the Committee of wood-Abbott was formed to suggest a division of the school curriculum into general and vocational. At the same time Indians were doing their own work for Indian education. In year 1937 the Wardha Education Conference was organized under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi leading to the creation of two committees (one in year1937 and another in year 1938) chaired by Zakir Hussain which laid the foundation for basic education that remains significant in our country today.

In year 1938 the B.G. Khair Committee was formed to study basic education and in year 1939 the Hindustani Talim Sangh was established. The Sargent Commission was constituted in year 1944 just after the Second World War to improve education in India and submit its suggestions for the following 40 years. The plan proposed adult and technical education (polytechnics). British education had fostered modern knowledge and science in India. It had suppressed and disregarded Indian knowledge from all sides considering it inferior.

A Brief Overview of Educational Developments after Independence

On 4 November 1948 the University Education Commission was established in presided over by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. This commission investigated over 20 topics and presented its findings on August 25, 1949. The commission deliberated on multiple aspects of higher education and put forth its suggestions. Among these the creation of rural universities and the formation of the UGC and NCC were especially significant. On September 23, 1952 the Indian government established the Secondary Education Commission chaired by Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras. The commission aimed to investigate and document every facet of secondary education in India during that period as well as to propose recommendations for its restructuring and improvement.

This commission proposed numerous significant and extensive recommendations about the reform of secondary education. To address the requirements of independent India the commission incorporated the development of new educational goals the diversification of curricula, the creation of multipurpose schools, the establishment of technological educational institutions, the structure for teacher training and reforms in examinations. The Government of India constituted the Sanskrit Commission led by Suniti Kumar Dave to advance Sanskrit education and safeguard manuscripts.

The Indian government set up a new Education Commission in year 1964. Professor D.S. Kothari who was the Chairman of the University Grants Commission was responsible for it. This commission was established to counsel the Government of India regarding the national character of education and the overarching principles and policies for its advancement across all levels and dimensions. On June 29, 1966 the commission submitted its report entitled ‘Education and National Progress’ to the then Education Minister of India Shri M. Chhagla.

This commission was extensive and addressed all facets of education, including educational and national objectives, the framework and quality of education, the condition of teacher training, student demographics and workforce, equitable access to educational opportunities, the proliferation of school education, curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, assessment and guidance, tertiary education, women's education, adult learning, science instruction, agricultural studies, vocational & technical education and engineering. The report asserted that educational institutions are shaping the nation's future.

In accordance with the Kothari Commission's suggestions the Government of India promulgated the National Policy on Education as a governmental decision on July 24, 1968 thus establishing India's inaugural National Education Policy. The second National Policy on Education was proclaimed in year 1986 when India recognized the necessity for a fundamental transformation of its educational framework to tackle concerns like socialism, secularism, democracy and professional ethics to safeguard traditional values. This educational policy for the inaugural time highlighted the national education framework, mass education, adult education, vocational training & management education and others. In its resolution from 1990 the Government of India established a committee to evaluate the National Education Policy of 1986.

This committee is renowned in the archives of Indian education as the National Education Policy Review Committee/Ramamurti Review Committee of year 1990. This committee introduced its recommendations for the first time regarding matters like early childhood education and vocational guidance. This evaluation document was named ‘Towards an Enlightened Society’.

In year 1948 a Finance Committee on Educational Development was established, chaired by B.G. Kher to evaluate the Sargent Report and in year 1951 another Committee on the Administration of Primary Education was also created under Kher Saheb's leadership. Similarly from time to time, other committees were formed such as the

Basic Education Assessment Committee 1955-56 under the chairmanship of Shri G. Ramachandran, the Rural Education Committee 1957 under the chairmanship of Shri B. Mukherjee, the Post Basic School and Multipurpose School Integration Committee 1957 under the chairmanship of Dr. P.D. Shukla, the Shri Prakash Committee 1959 under the chairmanship of Shri Prakash the then Governor of Bombay, the Student Indiscipline Committee 1960 under the chairmanship of Shri Dewan Anand Kumar, the Physical Education Coordination Committee 1959 under the supervision of Dr. Hridaynath Kunzru.

The Child Care Committee (1961), the Dr. Sampurnand Committee for National Integration (1961), the School Textbook Committee (1966) under the chairmanship of K.G. Syeden and the Rural Higher Education Committee (1967) under the chairmanship of G. Ramachandran. In year 1983 the National Commission on Teachers was established which chaired by D.P. Chattopadhyay to focus on school education and in year 1985 the National Commission on Teachers was created under the leadership of Professor Rais Ahmed to address university education.

On March 1, 1992 the Yashpal Committee was established chaired by former UGC Chairman Professor Yashpal Ji. It presented its report, 'Education without Burden' to the MHRD Minister on 15 July 1993. It proposed the initiation of a television series named Shiksha Darshan along with a 1:30 teacher-student ratio, the elimination of homework, decentralized curriculum formulation, a prohibition on rote memorization and an emphasis on concept-oriented education. The Public Health and Family Welfare Act which went into effect in 1995 added a new element. It introduced a novel aspect to the education of children with special needs. On June 13, 2005 the National Knowledge Commission was established chaired by Sam Pitroda to offer recommendations for fostering a dynamic knowledge-driven society.

The NCF-2005 for school education was established in 2005 while the NCFTE-2009 for teacher education was introduced in 2009. The Right to Education Act was enacted in year 2009 and has been effective since 1 April 2010. Education has progressed significantly due to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) initiated in year 2000, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) launched in year 2009, the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) established in year 2013 and the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan introduced in year 2018. The RPWD Act of 2016 has fortified the educational opportunities for children with disabilities by safeguarding their rights.

The National Education Policy 2020 reflects the contemporary educational landscape in India:-

The third National Education Policy Formulation Committee of India was established under the leadership of K. Kasturirangan culminating in the National Education Policy 2020. The formulation of this educational policy aims to address the diverse needs of learners and promote holistic development across all levels of education. By emphasizing critical thinking, creativity, the integration of technology, the policy seeks to transform the educational landscape and make learning more accessible and inclusive for every student.

The process commenced in 2015 under the Committee for Evaluation of the New Education Policy which was led by T.S.R. Subrahmanyam and presented its findings on 7 May 2016. In June 2017 the Ministry of Human Resource Development established the Committee for the Draft National Education Policy led by former ISRO Director K. Kasturirangan. On 31 May 2019 Ramesh Pokhriyal and Sanjay Dhatre received the report. It has been operational since 29 July 2020. The National Education Policy 2020 is a ground breaking educational framework implemented after a hiatus of 34 years. This policy comprises four major components, 27 sections and 308 items. It will tackle five principal challenges- access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability.

The policy will highlight the importance of comprehensive multidisciplinary education. This policy aims to fulfil SDG Goal 4- to establish a dynamic and just knowledge society via education. The strategy advocates for a 5+3+3+4 educational framework in lieu of the 10+2 system and prioritizes instruction in the home language, focuses on comprehension over memorization, promotes adaptable higher education (multidisciplinary) and aims for a 50% gross enrolment ratio in higher education by year 2035. It emphasizes 21st-century competencies like programming & innovation instituted by the Ministry of Education. NEP 2020 introduces a revised educational framework (5+3+3+4) with grades 3-8 (foundation stage), 8-11 (preparatory stage), 11-14 (middle stage) and 14-18 (secondary stage) in lieu of the traditional 10+2 system.

To further education in the native tongue or local dialect the medium of instruction will be the mother tongue or regional language until grade 5th (ideally grade 8th) thereby removing linguistic obstacles. The concept of multiple entry / exits is advocated in higher education allowing students to attain a certificate after one year, a diploma after two years, a degree after three years and a research degree after four years completion. To achieve the aspiration of a developed India we have devised a strategy for skill enhancement and interdisciplinary education emphasizing vocational training (beginning in grade 6), coding and critical analysis without a strict division between the arts and sciences. Every student will possess an individual repository of academic credits.

We have deliberated on creating a multidisciplinary institute by the year 2040. Strategies to enhance the assessment procedure for evaluating student advancement have been disseminated. Student report cards will henceforth be determined using a comprehensive 360-degree evaluation carried out by the students, their peers and educators. To guarantee access to technical expertise and facilitate unobstructed educational possibilities, the promotion of technical, inclusive and digital education will be prioritized, particularly for students in remote areas and those with disabilities. Open and distant education is being advocated. A criteria-driven credit system is being implemented in lieu of a choice-driven credit system. A transformative alteration has been implemented in educator preparation to render teacher education interdisciplinary. A four-year integrated Bachelor of Education degree will be required for educators. To advance educational research enhance quality and guarantee universal access the objective for educational spending is presently set at 6% of GDP. The policy adheres to a flexible yet stringent framework for effective execution.

Discussion

The Indian educational framework is among the most ancient and affluent globally. It had its zenith during the Vedic era. The inquiry-response technique the class leadership frame work and the Shravana-Manan-Nidhidyasana from this era continue to hold importance today. The expertise of artisans during the Buddhist era and the founding of prestigious universities are pivotal. The mediaeval era witnessed advancements in architectural design and vocational education. During the colonial era conventional Indian education declined as novel educational methods emerged. Education was institutionalized and placed under governmental authority. Multiple initiatives disseminated English education and European knowledge in India.

This schooling converted Indian wisdom into global knowledge. Post-independence Indians needed to implement necessary reforms in their education to enable India to compete with and excel in global knowledge. To achieve this objective three significant commissions—Radhakrishnan, Mudaliar and Kothari—were established, with two National Education Policies (1968 and 1986). The government urgently initiated three initiatives SSA, RMSA and RUSA to enhance educational accessibility and efficiency and an extensive educational campaign is currently underway. The NCF-2005 and NCFTE-2009 were implemented to revamp the curriculum. The RTE-2009 was enacted to guarantee that education is a fundamental right for everyone. The PWD Act of 1995 was enacted to

facilitate the education of children with disabilities, while the RPWD Act of 2016 was established to safeguard their rights.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- Structural Overhaul- The 5+3+3+4 framework substitutes the old 10+2 system to mix early childhood education and formal schooling.
- Assessment Reform- Rote-based testing changes to competency-based evaluation.
- Flexible Degrees- Higher education facilitates multiple entry and exit points sponsored by a digital Academic Bank of Credits.
- Skill Integration- Vocational training and 10-day bag less internships starts early in school and it's beginning from Class 6.
- Native Instruction- The policy encourages early learning by inspiring the mother tongue or regional language as the medium of education until Class 5.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020 has provided a fresh impetus to Indian education. It is now ready to initiate significant changes. It has the potential to resolve five significant obstacles confronting Indian education. Comprising 4 sections, 27 chapters and 308 points it addresses nearly all facets of Indian education serving as a formidable instrument for realizing a developed India by 2047. It will undoubtedly embark on the journey to global leadership by using its ancient wisdom and integrating contemporary insights.

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