

NEP 2020: A Modern Echo of Swami Vivekanand's Educational Philosophy

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Abstract:

"The new National Education Policy introduced by the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)-led central government was a step towards nation-building and was inspired by the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda," stated by honorable prime minister, Mr. Narendra Modi. According to him, the government is creating an ecosystem that will provide India's youth with more chances. Due to issues with the current educational system and youth population, the government has implemented the Swamiji's educational philosophy through NEP. This paper will concentrate on whether Vivekanand's educational philosophy is replicated in NEP 2020 and whether this replication has led to a greater emphasis on developing value-based educational initiatives or not. In today's cutthroat and fleeting world, young people are pursuing careers in addition to their studies. When they become financially strong, they believe that if one is financial stable then he/she holds the governing power leaving behind the basic learnings for human existence. This paper will sketch the impact of incomplete education with a thought that education should be imparted to the students or the youth on the basis of life skills, values, principles and cultural acquaintance to create a better adaptability to their environment for survival and successful reproduction.

Key Words: Swami Vivekanand, New Education Policy, Holistic Development, Indian Education System, Inclusivity, Character Building, Communal Violence.

Introduction:

Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind. Suggestion is the friction; which brings it out - Swami Vivekananda

Education in its genuine essence revolves around four principles: empathy, a solid ethical base, leadership accountability, and imaginative liberty. The process ought to enable learners to gain general knowledge, cultivate reasoning and judgment skills, and prepare themselves or others intellectually for adulthood. The genuine aim of education extends past simply acquiring knowledge. It encompasses a person's complete development, fostering creativity, analytical thinking, and the application of knowledge to solve real-world problems. To enable individuals to make significant contributions to society, genuine education aims to cultivate moral and ethical values, empathy, and a sense of social responsibility. It promotes individual growth and continuous education, equipping individuals with the skills and mindset necessary to effectively manage and adapt to an ever-evolving world.

1.1 Swami Vivekanand's Education Philosophy:

Swami Vivekanand, a prominent spiritual leader of India, inspired Indians to worship God in human guise while introducing the ancient Indian philosophy of Vedanta to the Western world. Narendranath Dutta who hailed from India, was the main disciple of the 19th-century mystic Ramakrishna and the founder of the Ramakrishna Mission. Swami Vivekananda is recognized for his important role in the Western adaptation of Vedanta and Yoga, along with promoting Hinduism as a worldwide religion. Swami Vivekananda placed equal importance on both spiritual and material growth in his educational theories and teachings. Swamiji believes the curriculum should aim for the comprehensive growth of the body, mind, and spirit. The capacity to be independent is the genuine measure of education. Vivekananda stated, "Education is not the amount of information we cram into your mind and allow to roam freely, undigested, throughout your life." The integration of ideas is essential for the growth of life, humanity, and personality. "We seek education that shapes character, enhances mental strength, broadens intellect, and empowers individuals to be self-reliant," declared

Vivekananda. Education must cultivate moral integrity and reveal our authentic selves. An individual's character is what they convey to others.

Vivekanand's educational philosophy centered on key principles: character formation, self-discovery, practical learning, overall development, education for building individuals, serving humanity, unity amid diversity, inspiration, and motivation. He believes that education ought to be provided to students in a manner that empowers them to surmount challenges and develop resilience, courage, and ethical principles

1.2 Modern Educational Philosophy:

With hi-tech development in the field of education, it has become mandatory for both teachers and students to match their skills along with it. The exposure of students with social media and various study apps; pedagogy is becoming more challenging. Hence it is the demand of today's time to surf on internet and develop the curriculum, teaching aids and methodology. The teaching learning process in today's time is more likely to be assessment oriented than value aided. Students at the higher education level take help of apps such as chatgpt, Grammarly, Quill Bot, Otter-Ai, Quizlet, Wolfram Alpha, Duolingo, Socratic, Artificial Intelligence, Google Scholar, Open AI, Zotero, Coursera, Undetectable.ai, ChatPDF etc. Although these AI apps have improved efficiency, adaptability, and student-centeredness by streamlining administrative procedures, customizing learning experiences, creating interactive settings, and offering insightful data; it has proved itself to be as knowledgeable as the information it has been trained on. But if an AI tool is biased, students may receive low grades based on their gender or race. In addition to bias, artificial intelligence may produce misinformation. The data that AI draws from may contain errors, be out-of-date, or spread misinformation. If a programme such as Chatgpt is trained on biased information, then when a student asks it a question, they could get a biased response, which can perpetuate stereotypes and social inequalities. Almost the 80% of the teacher-student ratio divulged that AI educational tools does not give 100% authenticity in answering the questions or providing content. As these tools are very much accessible to the students, they easily get to collect information and prepare for the exams. Students don't feel like sitting for the whole lecture and bunk the lectures with a belief that AI educational tools will help them out in understanding the content.

1.3 Factors Responsible for Alleviating the Education System:

The world is experiencing fast and significant changes in all areas of life. To keep up with the rapidly changing knowledge and technological landscape, it is not just important to learn, but also to learn how to learn. According to the teachings of Swamiji, education needs to move away from simply teaching facts and towards fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and skills that span multiple disciplines. It also needs to develop the ability to innovate, adapt, and absorb new information in various and evolving fields. Education should become more engaging, thorough, integrated, based on inquiry, focused on the learner, based on discussion, flexible, and ultimately more enjoyable as teaching methods continue to evolve. To fully develop all aspects of a learner and make education more complete, beneficial, and meaningful, the curriculum should include not only science and mathematics but also the arts and crafts, humanities, games, sports and physical activities, languages, literature, culture, and values. Developing character is also essential, as it helps students become moral, thoughtful, empathetic, and caring individuals, better prepared for meaningful and rewarding work. Major changes are needed across all levels of education, from early childhood to higher education, to improve the quality, fairness, and honesty of the system, and to bridge the gap between current learning results and what is needed in the future.

The problems that existed in the previous education system before the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP), the education system in many countries, including India, faced several significant challenges:

- **Rigid Curriculum:** The curriculum was often inflexible and focused heavily on rote learning, leaving little room for creativity or critical thinking.
- **Outdated Pedagogy:** Teaching methods were generally traditional, emphasizing memorization over understanding, which hindered deep learning.
- **Inequality:** There were substantial disparities in access to quality education based on geography, socioeconomic status, and gender, leading to unequal opportunities.
- **Lack of Skill Development:** The focus was predominantly on academic knowledge, with minimal emphasis on vocational training or skills development, making students less prepared for the job market.

- **High Dropout Rates:** Many students, especially in marginalized communities, dropped out due to financial constraints, lack of engagement, or a perception that education was irrelevant to their lives.
- **Teacher Shortages and Training Issues:** There was a shortage of qualified teachers, and existing educators often lacked proper training in modern teaching methodologies.
- **Examination Stress:** The education system placed excessive emphasis on high-stakes examinations, leading to stress and anxiety among students.
- **Limited Use of Technology:** There was minimal integration of technology in teaching and learning processes, which restricted access to resources and innovative teaching practices.
- **Neglect of Holistic Development:** There was insufficient focus on the overall development of students, including emotional, social, and physical well-being.
- **Lack of Parental and Community Involvement:** Education often took place in isolation from the community, resulting in a disconnect between what students learned and real-world applications.

1.4 Echoes of Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy in NEP 2020

The NEP 2020 mirrors Swami Vivekananda's educational principles in several ways, demonstrating the lasting relevance of his vision:

- **Holistic Development:** Both NEP 2020 and Vivekananda's educational philosophy stress the importance of all-round development. NEP's focus on multidisciplinary education—blending sciences, arts, and physical education—resonates with Vivekananda's belief in the integration of body, mind, and spirit. This is a shift from the traditional exam-centric system to one that promotes balanced growth, aligning closely with Vivekananda's idea of nurturing the complete individual.
- **Character and Ethical Development:** NEP's emphasis on ethics, empathy, and life skills reflects Vivekananda's belief that education should build character and instill values. The National Education Policy's (NEP) focus on ethics, empathy, and life skills strongly reflects Swami Vivekananda's vision that the true purpose of education is not merely acquiring information but building character and nurturing values. Vivekananda believed that education should develop strength, compassion, and integrity—qualities that shape responsible citizens. For instance, NEP's emphasis on experiential learning, community service, and value-based education helps students connect moral principles with real-life situations, fostering empathy and social responsibility. Just as Vivekananda envisioned education as a means to awaken the innate divinity within each individual, the NEP strives to create learners who are not only intellectually capable but also morally grounded and emotionally intelligent. For Vivekananda, the purpose of education was the development of moral strength, and NEP's focus on character-building through value-based education is a modern manifestation of this vision.
- **Inclusivity and Equity:** Vivekananda's call for universal education, particularly for the marginalized, finds resonance in NEP's commitment to equity and inclusivity. The policy's provisions for disadvantaged groups, including scholarships, digital access, and financial support, align with his vision of empowering the underprivileged through education. Swami Vivekananda's call for universal education was rooted in his deep belief that true progress could only be achieved when knowledge reached every section of society, especially the poor and marginalized. He saw education as the great equalizer—an empowering force that could uplift individuals and transform the nation. This vision finds a strong echo in the National Education Policy's (NEP) commitment to equity and inclusivity, which aims to ensure that no child is left behind due to social, economic, or regional disparities. Through initiatives like scholarships, gender inclusion funds, and flexible learning pathways, the NEP works to bring quality education to the underprivileged, mirroring Vivekananda's dream of an education system that serves all, regardless of background. In essence, both Vivekananda's philosophy and the NEP seek to build an India where education becomes a right, not a privilege—a means to awaken potential and promote social harmony.
- **Vocational Education:** Vivekananda's emphasis on practical and vocational learning is clearly echoed in NEP's focus on skill development and vocational training. By integrating vocational education with mainstream schooling, NEP aligns with Vivekananda's call for self-reliance and economic independence. Swami Vivekananda strongly emphasized practical and vocational learning, believing that education should prepare individuals not just for examinations but for life itself. He urged that students be trained in skills that promote self-reliance, productivity, and dignity of labor. This timeless vision finds a clear reflection in the National Education Policy's (NEP) focus on skill development and vocational training, which aims to bridge the gap between education and employability. In today's

rapidly changing world, where innovation and entrepreneurship drive progress, the NEP's integration of vocational courses, internships, and experiential learning from an early age resonates deeply with Vivekananda's idea of "education for life." By combining academic knowledge with hands-on experience, the NEP strives to create a generation of confident, skilled, and self-sufficient youth—fulfilling Vivekananda's dream of education that empowers both the mind and the hand.

➤ **Indian Values in a Global Context:** Just as Vivekananda believed in combining India's spiritual wisdom with modern knowledge, NEP aims to balance Indian cultural heritage with global educational standards. It encourages students to stay rooted in their cultural identity while being prepared for global challenges. The National Education Policy (NEP) carries forward this vision by promoting a holistic curriculum that balances cultural rootedness with global relevance. Today's syllabus includes courses on Indian knowledge systems, yoga, and value education alongside cutting-edge subjects like artificial intelligence, coding, and data science. Teaching methods have also evolved—integrating traditional wisdom through storytelling, moral education, and mindfulness practices with modern pedagogies such as experiential learning, digital literacy, and multidisciplinary studies. This blend helps students appreciate India's heritage while preparing them to compete in a globalized world. In essence, the NEP embodies Vivekananda's ideal of an education that nurtures both the heart and the intellect—grounded in values, yet forward-looking and globally competent.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020, while being a forward-looking and globally relevant reform, deeply resonates with the educational ideals of Swami Vivekananda. By emphasizing holistic development, character-building, inclusivity, and vocational education, NEP 2020 brings to life the essence of Vivekananda's vision for a robust and compassionate education system. As India strives to build a knowledge economy in the 21st century, the confluence of these two frameworks suggests that modern educational reforms can indeed draw inspiration from age-old wisdom. In conclusion, **NEP 2020 stands as a modern embodiment of Swami Vivekananda's timeless educational philosophy**, bridging the gap between ancient wisdom and contemporary aspirations. It transforms education from mere academic pursuit into a holistic process of character-building, skill development, and value formation. By emphasizing ethics, inclusivity, creativity, and self-reliance, the policy mirrors Vivekananda's vision of empowering individuals to realize their fullest potential and serve humanity with purpose. In today's rapidly evolving world, NEP 2020 not only revitalizes the spirit of Indian education but also reaffirms Vivekananda's belief that true education is the harmonious development of body, mind, and soul—preparing learners to lead with knowledge, compassion, and integrity.

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