

Vedic Education And Its Relevance In Modern Education In India: Prospect Of Nep 2020

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ABSTRACT:

In the study the significance or relevance of Vedic education system in contrast with modern system of education with legitimate discussions. The study at some points put forward some practical aspects and practices of Vedic education which can now also be considered for implementing formal or non-formal or informal mode of education in our nation. The study also suggested that the modern education system would need such a measure of study which supports the cultural ethnic education which is still continuing in various levels at various regions across the country such as forming a different branch of education known as “Vedic Science education”. This kind of initiatives would only benefit the country in long run for sustainable development keeping intact its cultural and traditional roots intact.

Keywords: Vedic system of education, Vedic science education, culture, tradition.

INTRODUCTION:

In modern perspective the rise of the demand in the aspects of education such as value education and education of ethics etc. lead in to study of this research article. As a nation to uphold and maintain its culture and traditions has become an important and vital thing in this changing era of cross-cultural existence. This has become more important also because of the fall in the human values in modern age. The use of various technologies and advancement in the society brought some serious changes in the minds of the youngsters and also to other stakeholders of the society. In this perspective the study on the relevance of Vedic system of education with reference to the NEP 2020 certainly would serve the purpose of the missing link which is to be addressed and reconsidered in the nation as one unit.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The Indian ancient system of education or Vedic System of Education was one of the earliest and richest systems of education in the world. The Vedic system of education has many aspects which should be followed even in today's contexts of educations for a stable, humanistic but yet a scientific society. Some of the aspects of the Vedic system of education are already incorporated in the NEP 2020 but still some are need to be considered in a needful way to preserve the Indian socio-cultural diversity with a sustainable development and prosperity of the society and also the nation.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Patel, N. (1994), in the study studied and compares the Western and the Vedic theories of education in the educational institution. The study observed the Vedic theory and practices of education, parallels with modern education theory: intelligence of the educators, assertiveness and control, creation of a safe learning environment, teaching of organized and relevant knowledge, Progressing Research, felicitating the education process; and found some aspects of education unique to Vedic theory such as personal standards of educators, educators perception towards student abilities, student responsibilities, students perception etc.

Rather, Z. A. (2015), in his study observed the significance of Vedic system of education in modern perspective. The researcher tried to convey the message that without moral education no change in the society can be done. The researcher also put emphasis on respecting and representing our Vedic culture as a culture of our ancestors inherited to us and we could preserve it by giving preference to character building, spiritualism, philosophy rather than wealth and materialism. Dutt, T. (2017), in the study learned that the salient features of Vedic and Post-Vedic education are: studentship, role of the teacher, curriculum, daily routine of students: practical educations, mental development, moral development; role of mother in education, duration of education, teacher as an intellectual and spiritual guide, convocation address, women education, *Varna* system and education system in society, educational achievements in the era, educational achievements

in the era. The study suggested that the Vedic and Post-Vedic education as a pious and important part of the society. Education was a mandatory for everyone in the society. The then education was to infuse the value *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* in the students.

Mefodeva, M. A. et. al. (2017), studies that the moral and spiritual education of a person enable him/ her to develop ideas about the root, origin, culture, heritage, traditions etc. However, constrains like Cast-system, Colonialism, Anglicism were acted as obstructions in imparting knowledge related to spiritual and moral education. However, due to the deep rooted cultural and traditional practices in the fields of spiritual and moral education helped revived those damages. The vitality of studying spiritual and moral education in India and abroad was the area of observance of the researcher in this study.

Bhatt, S. R. et.al (2018), in the study explored the relevance, importance and need of the Vedic education system in modern context. The Vedic literature was observed as a step ahead of modern context of education as it relates with the learning w.r.t. space, level and time. The Vedic system was considered as a learner centered approach meant for all-round development of the learner.

Fahy, J. (2018), the study observed the idea of ISKCON founded by Srila Pradhupada to spread Indian spirituality and also Indian culture to the west. Due to the spread of this idea many devotees and followers of ISKCON came to India, especially in Mayapur, West Bengal to follow the Vedic culture over four decades of time and making Mayapur a multi-national community area.

Selvamani, P. (2019), in the study discussed the Gurukula system of education and its main objectives as: social awareness, self-control, character development, intellectual development, character development, spiritual development and preservation of knowledge and culture. It was the only education system available at that time until the introduction of modern education system by the Colonizers. In the system the teacher is termed as *Gurudeva* and the student is termed as *Shishya*. Apart from various subjects taught in Gurukula system of education, the four Vedas were given maximum priority in the curriculum.

Tandon, M. (2019), in his study observed the Indus Valley Civilization, Vedic times and Ancient Indian practices of science. The study tried to present some information regarding the science education of ancient India without any bias or controversy, as it elicit its information from the Vedic texts from four Vedas. The study also evaluates the evolution of science in Ancient to Modern India for helping the readers and also for framing curriculum, pedagogy and assessment modules in the context of modern education. The study also provides partial information regarding the education systems prevalent in Buddhism, Islam and British Colonization.

Mangain, K. B. (2021), in the study explained that some salient features of Vedic education as implantation of religious and spiritual values, personality development and character formation, improvement of civic responsibilities and social values, information, points of education, strategies for instruction etc., whereas, the Modern education system was initiated by the recommendations of Sir Charles Wood's in 1854. The study also observed the CORONA and its impact on formal education globally and also discussed the virtual mode of education as the necessary mean for education.

Kumar, S. et. al (2021), in their study observed and studied the genealogy of Vedic literature divided into two major parts as *Shruti* and *Smriti*, which later sub-divided into various branches of study. The words *Dharma* (righteousness), *Karma* (doings), *Adhikara* (rights), *Kartavya* (duties), resonances, dissonances were discussed thoroughly and elaborately.

RESEARCH GAP:

In the mentioned literature no study of the Vedic system of education was presented in relevance with the NEP 2020, India.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM:

The study will highlight the relevance of Vedic system of education in modern Indian context and also put some major emphasis on the inclusion of various needful aspects of the Vedic era education system in the newly adopted NEP 2020.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- (i) To find out the relevance of Vedic system of education in modern Indian context.
- (ii) To find out the views of various Indian thinkers and philosophers in Indian context of education.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- (i) Is there any relevance of Vedic system of education in modern Indian context?
- (ii) Are there any significant views of Indian thinkers in the context of education?

RESEARCH DISCUSSION:

Vedic System of Education:

Scope:

In Vedic system of education the students were as known sent to their Guru Ashramas in general to learn their respective traits either in philosophy, political science, music, literature, science, Vedic Mathematics, Astronomy, Geography, Arts,

Martial Arts, War Skills or Crafts etc. All of the cited branches had many sub-branches, such as in music a student can learn dance, singing, playing Drums, Sitar etc., in war skills students can learn sword, javelin, bow and arrow skills etc. Sometimes the influential families such as Kings, Ministers, Generals of Army, landlords etc. hire the Gurus to their own house for teaching their kids. In Gurukula System or Vedic System of education boys as well as girls were allowed to study the subject they are good at or passionate about.

In NEP 2020 all aspects of education are available but it varies from place to place. As we know our nation is still developing, hence the infrastructure is also still developing, so not all the states of India are having similar access to education.

Multi-Disciplinary:

In the Vedic system of education the multi-disciplinary education system was followed that is why the Prince and the Princess of Mahabharata were taught war skills, science, political science, economics, mathematics, music, astrology etc. In NEP 2020 also the multi-disciplinary approach is undertaken that is why the term stream is now removed and now any student with mathematics as a subject from science and philosophy from arts can choose as his core subjects.

Value Education and Ethics:

It was very much prevalent in the Vedic era and as the Vedic lessons were embedded with value education and ethics, hence, the students would automatically grow practicing all these and the society was more tolerant, peaceful and reliable as compared to today's context. Due to the education in the Vedic era phrases like "*Atithi Deva Bhava*", meaning of which is guests are equal to God was taught and practiced. This philosophy was prevalent decades ago in various parts of the country, especially the North-East India. That is why the immigration in North-East India was never protested.

But in modern context due to the use of various online and offline media and the advancements in technology, communication and downfall of moral values and ethics in the society, people have become less tolerant and reliable. Also, due to the rapid change of demography and geo-politics, the ethnic North-Eastern communities are becoming intolerant towards this concept. But the new education policy is also emphasizing the moral values and practice of ethics in real life scenarios making some good signs in bringing back tolerance and peace in the society.

Equality:

Generally boys are allowed to learn martial arts, war skills, political science, astronomy, science, Vedic Mathematics etc. and girls are into music, literature, arts etc. But there is no compulsion or limitation about the subjects and gender in Vedic era as because in the Ramayana also it was mentioned that one of the mothers of *Bhagwan* Rama i.e. Mother "*Kaikayee*" went with her husband "*Dasaratha*" in a war and saved his life in that war and as a gift to save her husband's life she was given three wills to ask her husband at any point of her life and for one of that wills *Bhagwan* Rama was exiled into the *Banbasa*. Moreover, in medieval period also many women warriors were mentioned in history of India, one of them is Rani Laxmi Bai. Her role in war against Mughals is itself is a proof that in India women were allowed to learn war skills also.

In NEP 2020 the girls and boys are given equal weightage in all fields of education. In fact girls are given certain facilities to promote female education in modern India.

Mode of Education:

In Vedic system of education, the education was done in a combination of formal, informal and non-formal mode of education. When the students are with their Guru in the *Ashrama* after the breakfast then they had to go with the stipulated syllabus of the assigned or chosen subject. Both theory and practical classes were taken. More focus was on practical. After their stipulated classes in the *Guru Ashramas* the students had to help their Guru in his *Ashramas* day to day life activities, even in the collection of food grains also the students had to beg or had to work as instructed by their Guru. In that way they learnt the life skills associated and also by the time of collection of food grains they had to use the skills or lessons those were taught by their Guru in the *Ashramas*. After these if there was any significant issue or matter that they faced then they would share that with their *Gurudeva* and the *Gurudeva* explains and clarifies the matter. Thus they learn through non-formal mode. Apart from that one good example of informal mode of education was the example of "*Ekalavya*" from Mahabharata. As he by sitting and practicing in front of the statue of "*Drunacharya*" learnt his archery and other war skills at that time explains the presence of informal mode of education, where the syllabus was the rules set by *Drunacharya* and those roles were told to him by the spies of "*Jayadratha*" as *Ekalavya* was the son of the General of Army of *Jayadratha* and *Jayadratha* as a core opponent of "*Hastinapur*" kept on spying on the heirs of *Hastinapur* and simultaneously preparing *Ekalavya* to counter them, which when came to notice to *Drunacharya*, he unsieged *Ekalavya* by cutting his thumb as "*Gurudakshina*".

In new education policy the focus is on the formal mode of education and for learning life skills and other related skills also formal mode of education is preferred.

Eco-Friendly Behavior:

The Vedic system of education was more into nature or eco-friendly. The Vedic system taught the people to respect water, plants, animals, insects etc. which is directly for saving the food chain and the environment itself. In Vedic system of education people worship water as “Mata Ganga”, so that no pollutant or garbage was to throw inside the water. People were not allowed to pass urine or toilet in the rivers or ponds or any sources of water, leaving the water as pure as it is. So, the drinkable water was more available as of now. “Banyan tree” was worshipped and was not allowed to cut, and today it is scientifically proven that the Banyan tree produces more oxygen as compared to other trees. Hills were also worshipped as “*Bhagwana*”, stopping landslides. Earth was also considered as mother and was used with respect for any purpose, stopping soil pollution. Those were the values those were taught in Vedic system of education, not only formally but in non-formal mode of Vedic education. These kinds of practices are still visible in the ethnic groups of the nation. The NEP 2020 is also focusing on eco-friendly behavior education in the youth to prevent global warming and pollution of all kinds.

Mutual Respect and Brotherhood:

The Vedic system of education was such that it treats the world as a single family. In its one phrase “*Basudeva Kutumbakam*”, explains it clearly that the world is one single family of all plants, animals, living and non-living entities. The NEP 2020 is also thriving to develop such mentality and sentiments to the young generation of the nation to become a global power and a leader.

Teachings on *Dharma* or Righteousness:

Vedic education also promotes *Dharma* or Righteousness. Righteousness irrespective person, time and space were given more focus. That is why in Mahabharata the Pandavas and the Kauravas were cousin brothers but due to the Kauravas followed the path of piousness that is why the Pandavas fought against them to establish *Dharma* or righteousness. The NEP 2020 is also towards in the direction of righteousness and it would be beneficial for the Indian society rather going for various religious traps prevalent in the society.

Sustainable and All Round Development:

The Vedic system of education was there for bringing sustainable development for the nation. That is why the sages or *Munihrishis* like Sushrut in Medicine, Aryabhatta in Mathematics and philosophy, Patanjali in Yoga and physical education developed so many scientifically proven theories, principles and practices that even in today’s context also their theories and practices were a step ahead. The NEP 2020 rather than ignoring the contribution of those sages, *Munihrishis* or researchers should try to extend various domains of study to find new ways to lead the world by connecting our roots to our origin.

Physical Education and Yoga:

In Vedic System of education, the physical education and yoga was given similar importance with other subjects. As health was given equal or even more priority in ancient India, the science of physical education and yoga was so advanced that it still has all the answers to the modern diseases also. The NEP 2020 is also inclined towards the physical and yoga education due to its scientific benefits. This is also due to the presentation of benefits of physical and yoga education by various present day saints of India such as Baba Ramdev. The Yoga and Pranayams are indeed beneficial for stress management of the students especially in higher education.

Non-Formal Education:

In today’s context of education if we see the Vedic system of education then it was majorly dependent upon the non-formal mode of education. In this system the kids are raised by the parents and the society in a way which is now known as hands on learning. The kids from the family itself taught about the lessons of hygiene not theoretically but literally they practice at home. The love and respect for elders belonging from any race, community and religion, siblings, harmonious co-existence, tolerance etc. are taught in such a way that the kids won’t become intolerant to anyone in the society. That is why the existence of so many religions in India is possible though it was a land of Santani’s or ethnic Indians. Even in Sanatanis also everyone is allowed to worship any God or no God, there is no compulsion or restriction or any complaint from anyone. Even in a single family also it is seen that the family members are worshipping different Gods as the way of their life is giving them religious democracy. Worshipping same God from different communities or different Gods from same community or same family is a normal thing for the people of India since the Vedic era. This kind of practices is still prevalent in majority of the communities and ethnic communities in India. This is possible only because of the lessons of tolerance taught in the families and the societies.

The non-formal mode of education is majorly seen in India in this modern age also in the mode of cultural practices and the education system for the major cultural practices across various states, communities and regions of India is still going on. E.g. the cultural practices like “*Dhol play*” or “*Dhak play*”; or dance forms such as “*Odyssey*”, “*Bharat Natyam*”, “*Kathakali*”, “*Bihu Dance*”, “*Manipuri Dance*”, “*Rasleela*”, “*Rakhalleela*”, “*Nauka Bilas*”, “*Dhamail*”; or singings like

“Kirtan songs”, “Aarti songs”, “Bihu songs”, “Borgeet”, “Classical songs”; or in physical education also “Kalaripattu”, “Thangta”, “free style wrestling” etc. were majorly taught and practiced in non-formal and informal mode of education either at the house of the *Gurus* or at the house of the *Shishya* like *Gurukula* system of education. These kinds of practices are majorly seen in the ethnic communities of India in various regions in modern days also. Some of the stated forms of cultural practices are now adopting modern system of formal system of education and some institutions are providing certificate, diploma, bachelor degree and Post Graduate level courses for the same.

The NEP 2020 should thought about the practices those are still prevalent in India in its culture and traditions and implement some plan of actions to revive all these systematically in an organized way.

Ayurveda:

In the Vedic system of education the medicinal science was known as Ayurveda and the treatment to any disease was done by using various herbs and medicines made from the plant leaves or natural resources.

The modern system of education though has the privilege of both the modern medicines and Ayurveda, but the Ayurveda is underrated in our nation. It should be boosted more to get better and effective results.

Medicinal Practices:

In each and every community belonging to various religions of India many ethnic medicinal practices are visible but are fading away due to lack of infrastructure and nourishment it needed to flourish. One of such medicinal practices is used in the cure of “Pox”, “Small Pox” or “Chicken Pox”, as the ethnic medicines of India is capable of curing this diseases as compared to the modern medicines made from chemicals. Even today’s Physiotherapy treatment for curing paralyzed or partially paralyzed patients is also a part of Vedic Yoga, Meditation and Pranayams.

The NEP 2020 should bring forward some major changes in the system of education to include all these under a branch of education under one umbrella naming it as “Vedic Science Education”.

Life of Person as Per Vedic System:

As per Vedic system of education, the life of a person is divided into four stages, namely: “*Brahmacharyasya*”, “*Grihasthya*”, “*Banprashtha*” and “*Sanyas*”. As per these stages of life, a person in “*Brahmacharyasya*” has to be there in the Gurukula or in the observance of the Guru to learn the needful lessons for leading his life ahead. After completion this stage, the next is “*Grihasthya*”, in this stage the person gets married as per their respective culture and will be there to obey his duties in his family till his/ her children becomes eligible enough to take over the responsibilities at home. The next stage is “*Banprashtha*”, where the person giving away his responsibilities to his/ her predecessors and also leaving behind all the attachments associated with the family, friends and relatives, go away from his home for serving the society and lives the life of a saint or sage in forest but remains associated with society for its development by sharing his lifelong experiences. Lastly in “*Sanyas*” the person goes into the deep forest for spiritual attainment of the ultimate truth or God. The time management as a whole in Vedic era so much organized that till the achievement of his maturity in both emotional and physical he/ she remains in observance and guidance of his/ her *Gurudeva*. After attaining his maturity level only, he/she goes for further stages of life.

In modern system of education, especially in the institutions where hostel facilities are available, the students do follow the Vedic system of education but partially. As after that period of boarding or hostel life, persons go for living his family life and never go for “*Sanyas*” creating a major gap in the system, as the experiences of those persons are not availed by the society. But thanks to the rise of some social organizations at every level, regions and religions in the society, where the expertise and experiences of the retired employees are taken advantage of by giving them a chance in the related organizations. The NEP 2020 should take this concept of seriously and use the resources and the experiences of those persons for the betterment of the society and the nation in a more organized way.

Conclusion:

It was found in the study that the Vedic-system of education was not merely a system of education but it’s a culture and tradition of the Indians that is inherited by our ancestors. It is one of the strongest means which connects us to our originality and the roots. It not only teaches us formal education but also teaches us the most needful aspects such as value and ethics in this modern age to keep the society stable and sustainable and also humanistic. The Vedic system of education is not only a cultural heritage but it also is scientific and dynamic and significantly needed in modern day education. Specially, the NEP 2020 should include some significant aspects of Vedic system of education for achieving its goal keeping intact the Indian ethnic values in the society.

Suggestions for Further Study:

- (i) The practice of various cultural practices existing in India which are not yet enlisted for study should be studied in more details to bring forward some organized structure for practicing and learning all these systematically.
- (ii) The NEP should include new branches of education as Vedic Science Education.

- (iii) Physical education especially Yoga and Pranayams should be made mandatory for all level of students especially for the students pursuing higher education for their stress management.

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