

Reviving the Vedic Education System: Exploring its Relevance in the Context of NEP 2020

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Abstract:

The Vedic education system offers valuable insights that can enrich the educational reforms outlined in NEP 2020. By embracing the principles of holistic development, multidisciplinary learning, and experiential education, India can create a robust educational framework that prepares students for the challenges of the 21st century. In this paper we will discuss about the Vedic education system objectives with reference to NEP 2020 and also discuss the features, process of education and relevance of Vedic education system.

Keywords: Spiritual, Moral, Culture, Respect, Vedic Education, Values

Introduction:

The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 marks a significant milestone in India's educational landscape, aiming to transform the system to meet the needs of the 21st century. While modern education methodologies are crucial, there's also a growing interest in revisiting traditional systems like the Vedic education system. Rooted in ancient wisdom and knowledge, the Vedic system offers unique insights that could complement contemporary educational practices. In this paper, we delve into the essence of the Vedic education system and explore its relevance within the framework of NEP 2020.

Understanding the Vedic Education System:

The Vedic education system has its roots in ancient India and finds mention in texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, and other scriptures. Central to its philosophy is the holistic development of an individual encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions. Unlike modern education, which often focuses solely on academic achievements, the Vedic system emphasizes character building, moral values, and a deep understanding of the self and the universe.

"**Sanskara**" in the Vedic education system holds a profound significance, encapsulating the essence of moral, ethical, and spiritual values instilled in students throughout their educational journey. In the Vedic context, "Sanskara" refers to the process of shaping an individual's character, behaviour, and mind-set through various rites, rituals, teachings, and experiences.

Vidyaarambh Sanskar is a sacred and joyous occasion that celebrates the commencement of a child's educational journey, infusing it with spiritual blessings, cultural heritage, and familial support. It marks the beginning of a lifelong quest for knowledge, wisdom, and self-realization.

This sanskar is performed at the age when a child starts initial schooling- generally between 4 to 6 years. The Vidhyarambha sanskar is indeed the righteous initiation of knowledge. It is performed to initiate development of mind and to instill intellectual competence in a child.

In the context of early childhood care and education, Sanskaras are significant as they introduce children to cultural and religious traditions, values, and practices from a very young age. These rituals are often integrated into family life and provide opportunities for children to learn about their cultural heritage and social norms.

ॐ पावका नः सरस्वती, वाजेभिर्वाजिनीवती। यज्ञं वष्टुधियावसुः।

ॐ सरस्वत्यै नमः। आवाहयामि, स्थापयामि, ध्यायामि।

Sanskaras are often ritualistic in nature, involving ceremonies and rites performed at significant milestones in a student's educational journey. These rituals serve as transformative experiences, marking transitions from one stage of life to another and symbolizing growth, maturity, and spiritual evolution. Examples of such ceremonies include the initiation ceremony (Upanayana), the sacred thread ceremony (Yajnopavita), and the graduation ceremony (Samavartana).

Processes of education:

Education is concentrated in the three processes of Sravana, Manana and Niddhyaasana

Sravana-Means listened and understood. One should understand that this is not only hearing, hearing is different, and hearing is different. When the truth fell from the teacher's mouth, Sravana was listening to the truth. Technically speaking, knowledge is called Sruti or what the ear hears, not written content.

Mañana- The second knowledge process is called Manana, which means that the student must think about the meaning of the lessons his teacher verbally teaches him so that they can be fully absorbed. Manana is reflecting what we are listening to (Shravana). It is discussing the truth of the point of view. In this process, especially the Guru (Guru) will ask questions, students will answer, and discuss this in a small group.

Nidhyaasana- The third step is called "Nidhyaasana", which means that the student must fully understand the truth taught so that he can practice the truth instead of just explaining it in words; this becomes the realization of truth. Manan (reflection) was a method especially suitable for highly intelligent students.

Key Features of the Vedic Education System:

Gurukul System: In the Vedic era, education was primarily imparted in gurukuls, where students lived in close proximity to their gurus (teachers). This intimate setting facilitated personalized learning, fostering strong bonds between the guru and shishya (student).

Oral Tradition: Knowledge was transmitted orally from guru to shishya, emphasizing memorization and recitation. This method not only preserved the sacred texts but also honed the student's memory and oral skills.

Holistic Curriculum: The curriculum in Vedic education encompassed a wide array of subjects including mathematics, astronomy, linguistics, philosophy, ethics, and arts. This multidisciplinary approach aimed at nurturing well-rounded individuals with a deep understanding of various domains.

Experiential Learning: Learning wasn't confined to textbooks but involved practical experiences and experiments. Students were encouraged to explore nature, conduct observations, and draw conclusions

through direct engagement with the world around them. Experimental learning emphasis on real field exposure (like, internship).

Emphasis on Scriptures: The Vedic education system placed a strong emphasis on the study of sacred texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, and other philosophical and religious texts. Students were expected to memorize and understand the content of these texts, which formed the foundation of their education.

Sanskrit Language: Sanskrit was the primary medium of instruction in the Vedic education system. Students learned to read, write, and speak Sanskrit, which was considered the language of the gods and the repository of sacred knowledge. Sanskrit was not only a tool for communication but also a vehicle for preserving and transmitting ancient wisdom.

Value-Based Education: Ethics, morality, and values were integral components of Vedic education. Students were not only taught academic subjects but also instilled with virtues such as truthfulness, humility, compassion, righteousness, and devotion. The goal of education was not just intellectual growth but also moral and spiritual upliftment.

Relevance of Vedic Education in NEP 2020

Holistic Development: NEP 2020 emphasizes holistic development, aligning with the core principles of the Vedic education system. By incorporating elements like moral values, ethics, and life skills into the curriculum, the policy aims to nurture individuals capable of addressing the challenges of the modern world.

Multidisciplinary Learning: The Vedic system's emphasis on a multidisciplinary approach resonates with NEP 2020's vision of promoting interdisciplinary studies. By breaking down the silos between subjects, students can develop a comprehensive understanding of complex issues, fostering innovation and critical thinking.

Emphasis on Experiential Learning: NEP 2020 advocates for experiential learning methods to make education more engaging and practical. Drawing from the Vedic tradition, incorporating hands-on activities, field trips, and project-based learning can enhance students' learning experiences, making education more meaningful and relevant.

Teacher-Student Relationship: The gurukul model highlights the importance of the teacher-student relationship, which is integral to effective learning. NEP 2020 recognizes the significance of teacher training and support, aiming to empower educators to become facilitators of knowledge and mentors to their students.

Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a topic of significant interest and complexity. The NEP 2020, while focusing on various aspects of education reform, also emphasizes the importance of integrating traditional Indian knowledge systems into the modern educational framework. Here's an exploration of how reviving the Vedic education system aligns with the objectives of NEP 2020:

- **Preservation of Cultural Heritage:** One of the key objectives of NEP 2020 is to preserve and promote India's rich cultural heritage. Reviving the Vedic education system, which is deeply rooted in ancient Indian culture and traditions, aligns with this objective. By reintroducing Vedic teachings, rituals, languages, and philosophies into the education system, NEP 2020 can help preserve and promote India's cultural legacy.
- **Holistic Education:** The Vedic education system is known for its holistic approach to education, which encompasses physical, mental, and spiritual development. NEP 2020 also emphasizes a holistic

and multidisciplinary approach to learning, focusing on the overall development of students. By incorporating Vedic principles of holistic education, the NEP can enhance the quality of education and nurture well-rounded individuals.

- **Promotion of Sanskrit and Vernacular Languages:** The Vedic education system traditionally used Sanskrit as the primary medium of instruction. NEP 2020 advocates for the promotion of Sanskrit and vernacular languages in the education system to preserve linguistic diversity and cultural heritage. Reviving the Vedic education system can provide impetus to the study and propagation of Sanskrit, along with other regional languages.
- **Ethical and Moral Values:** Vedic education places a strong emphasis on ethical and moral values, teaching students principles of righteousness, compassion, and social responsibility. In a time when ethical dilemmas and moral ambiguities are prevalent, integrating Vedic teachings into the education system can help instil a sense of ethical awareness and responsibility among students, aligning with the ethical and moral values advocated by NEP 2020.
- **Promotion of Interdisciplinary Studies:** The Vedic education system encompasses a wide range of subjects, including mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and linguistics, among others. NEP 2020 encourages interdisciplinary studies and flexibility in curriculum design. By incorporating elements of Vedic knowledge into various subjects, the NEP can promote interdisciplinary learning and foster a deeper understanding of diverse fields of knowledge.

Conclusion:

The Vedic education system offers valuable insights into holistic learning, multidisciplinary education, and experiential learning, aligning with the objectives outlined in NEP 2020. By drawing inspiration from ancient wisdom while embracing modern methodologies, India can pave the way for a more inclusive, holistic, and transformative education system that prepares students to thrive in the 21st century and beyond.

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