

## NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020: FOUNDATION OF A NATION BASED ON ETHICS AND HUMAN VALUES

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### Abstract:

Education is the discipline that is concerned with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school-like environments as opposed to various non-formal and informal means of socialization like education through parent-child relationships.<sup>1</sup> Education can be thought of as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. In this sense, it is equivalent to what social scientists term socialization or enculturation, the process whereby an individual learns to adjust to a group (or society) and behave in a manner approved by the group (or society). It essentially represents the whole process of learning and is a central influence on the behaviour, beliefs, and actions of an individual.<sup>2</sup>

Education is designed to guide the children in learning a culture, moulding their behaviour in the ways of adulthood, and directing them towards their eventual role in society.

The present paper is an overview of the concept of education in India, traditional Indian system of education, introduction of Western Education through English medium by British colonisers and consequent damage caused to the Indian society and culture. The paper also looks at the prospects of foundation of a nation based on ethics and human values by implementing the principles and the Vision of the National Education Policy 2020.

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### The Indian Concept of Education:

Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest teachers born in modern India, the one who made the world realize the significance of Indian knowledge and raised its status to that of ‘Vishwa Guru’ declared, “ Education is not the amount of information that we put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, and character-making assimilation of ideas.”

He says:

“The ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-making. But, instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the outside. What use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The man who influences, who throws his magic, as it were, upon his fellow-beings, is a dynamo of power, and when that man is ready, he can do anything and everything he likes; that personality put upon anything will make it work.”<sup>3</sup>

In fact the ultimate goal of education according to our holy scriptures, the Upanishads, the essence of all our philosophical thought is self realization - Know thy Self. By knowing our selves we know others as well thereby leading to peaceful co-existence and a blissful world. Although this has been the ideal of our age old education system, our

traditional educational system was completely subverted by the introduction of western education through English medium with the sole intention of creating a class which would assist in establishment and consolidation of British rule in India.

In a letter written to Shrimati Mrinalini Bose from Deoghar (Vaidyanâth), on 23rd December, 1898, about “Our Present Social Problems”, Swami Vivekananda asks:

“...What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education. Now consider, is that education as a result of which the will, being continuously choked by force through generations, is well-nigh killed out; is that education under whose sway even the old ideas, let alone the new ones, are disappearing one by one; is that education which is slowly making man a machine? It is more blessed, in my opinion, even to go wrong, impelled by one’s free will and intelligence than to be good as an automaton. Again, can that be called society which is formed by an aggregate of men who are like lumps of clay, like lifeless machines, like heaped up pebbles? How can such society fare well? Were good possible, then instead of being slaves for hundreds of years, we would have been the greatest nation on earth, and this soil of India, instead of being a mine of stupidity, would have been the eternal fountain-head of learning.”<sup>4</sup> (From Complete Works, Volume IV)

#### **Baba Saheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar’s views on Education:**

The Father of our Constitution, the most education person in the world, Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar advocated, “Universalisation of the Primary Education is the basis for all-round national progress.... There must therefore be a Law for compulsory Primary Education”<sup>4</sup> **Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar** (Mahabaleshwar, May 6, 1929)

To visualize his dream Right to Education was enforced by **The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002** which inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine.

Baba Saheb was of the strong opinion that,

“The progress of any society depends on the progress of education in that society.”

– **Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar** (Manmad, 16 January 1949)<sup>3</sup>

On 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1954 he exhorted that,

“Students should go to every settlement and remove the ignorance and foolish beliefs of the people, only then people will get some benefit from their education. Using your knowledge only to pass the exam will not be enough. We should use our knowledge for the betterment and progress of our brothers and sisters; Only then will India prosper.

– **Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar** (Mahad, 2 May 1954)

Later he declared that,

“You got educated doesn’t mean everything is done. There is no doubt in the importance of education, but along with education, morality should also improve... Without morality, the value of education is zero.

– **Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar** (Mumbai, June 3, 1953)

Baba Saheb considered that

“Education is a sacred institution. Minds are cultured in school. Schools are a sacred place for making good citizens.” And that “Purpose of education is to moralize and socialise the people.”

**Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasises:**

“...that, which does not make a man worthy, does not teach equality and morality, is not true education. True education protects humanity in the society, becomes the support of livelihood, and teaches man the lesson of knowledge and equality. True education creates life in the society.”

**Aftermath of Macaulay’s Minutes: Cultural and Linguistic Imperialism**

With one stroke Macaulay in his Minutes of 1835 not only vehemently opposed and denounced the then education system based on Sanskrit and Arabic literatures but also argued in favour of the superiority of Western education.

Therefore, the earlier grant given through Charter Act of 1813 for education and printing of Sanskrit and Arabic literature was stopped and Western education through English medium was introduced.

The aim in Macaulay’s own words was,

*“...to form a class of person Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and in intellect...”*<sup>4</sup>

A keen observation shows that in about two hundred years of the western education through English medium, Macaulay’s words have come true and his policy has succeeded in completely changing most our youth, be it girls or boys and leading to the creeping-in of western culture of money-making as the sole goal of life and the philosophy of eat, drink and merry turning into the cancer that is eating away our society, nation as well as the culture.

**New Education Policy 2020:**

The principles of the National Educational Policy 2020 state that the purpose of education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive and plural society as envisaged by our constitution.

The fundamental principles that guide both the education system at large as well as the individual Institutions within it are:

1. Recognizing, identifying and fostering the unique capabilities of each student by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each students holistic development.
2. It advocates multidisciplinary and a holistic education.
3. Ethics and human and constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality and justice.
4. Promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning.
5. Life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork and resilience put in practice.
6. Creative and critical thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation.
7. Respect for diversity and local context in all curriculum, pedagogy and policy
8. A rootedness and pride in India and its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture, knowledge systems and tradition.

**The Vision of New Education Policy 2020:**

This National Education Policy envisions education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly transforming India that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The policy envisages that the curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must develop among the students deep sense of respect towards the fundamental duties and

constitutional values bonding with one's country, and conscious awareness of one's roles responsibilities in a changing world.

The vision of the policy is to instill among the learners deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought but also in spirit, intellect and deeds as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights sustainable development and living and Global well being, thereby reflecting a truly Global Citizen.<sup>5</sup>

### Education and its relevance to the Society, Nation and Culture:

साहित्य-संगीत कला विहीनः

साक्षात्पशुः पुच्छ विषाण हीनः

One of the most popular *subhashitas*, the great moral and ethical teachings in Sanskrit says that a person who is only after earning money, eating, drinking and expanding his family, the person who hasn't learnt literature, music and arts is like an animal without a tail and horns, because literature is the repository of knowledge. Music and other forms of art are considered to be mandatory for the development of one's personality. They not only teach us to be good human beings but are also known to help us maintain physical, mental and emotional well-being. Mastery in literature, music or dance are considered to highest forms of worship which enable the *sadhaka* to attain *yoga* i.e. oneness with God. Perhaps they develop divine qualities i.e. positive qualities conducive to peaceful co-existence.

People who are well read and well cultured know how to behave in a society, how to respect women, treat them on par because they are fully aware of the fact that, where the women are venerated Gods reside there, indicating that in the wellbeing of women alone lies the well-being of the society.

यत्र नार्यास्तु पूज्यन्ते,

रमन्ते तत्र देवताः

We respect our parents as they not only give us birth also take care great pains in bring us up. Hence they considered to be our first gurus and in Bhakti traditions like that of Vitthal they are giving priority over God himself as seen in the example of Pundhalik.

मातृ देवो भव

पितृ देवो भव

आचार्य देवो भव

Similarly, the legend of Lord Ganesh going around his Lord Shiva and Parvati as equal to going around the whole world or the examples of Shraavan Kumar and Sri Rama lay emphasis on the highest stature accorded to parents. If these stories are emulated, then there won't any need for old age homes and parents would live a happy life imparting moral values to their grand children. This would lead to the establishment of a peaceful and equitable society as envisaged by our New Education Policy 2020

Hence there is a need to focus on building character of our pupils, so they become responsible citizens, thereby leading to a just and equitable society contributing to development of a peaceful world based on our *Upanishadic* tenet of वसुधैव कुटुम्बकं.

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