
Revitalizing Mass Education: Swami Vivekananda's Vision and its Relevance to NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

Swami Vivekananda's enduring wisdom continues to shape contemporary education policies, resonating with his belief that true education empowers individuals to thrive independently. He advocated accessible education for all, viewing it as pivotal for a nation's holistic advancement. The National Education Policy 2020 serves as a comprehensive roadmap, aligning with Vivekananda's ideals by prioritizing the realization of human potential, fostering societal equity, and driving national progress. Swami Vivekananda's vision of mass education continues to resonate as a beacon of inspiration in the contemporary educational discourse, particularly within the framework of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India. His profound insights emphasized the transformative power of education to enable individuals to stand independently and contribute meaningfully to society. This study explores the relevance of Vivekananda's vision in revitalizing mass education, aligning it with the goals and objectives outlined in NEP 2020. Employing a qualitative approach, the research identifies key objectives: analysing Vivekananda's views on education, examining NEP 2020's provisions, identifying areas of alignment, and assessing the implications for educational reform. Findings underscore the resonance between Vivekananda's emphasis on holistic education and NEP 2020's goals of fostering equitable and inclusive learning environments. Through an examination of Vivekananda's principles and their integration into modern educational paradigms, this study seeks to elucidate the potential for enriching the educational landscape and advancing societal development.

Keywords: Mass education, Swami Vivekananda, National Education Policy 2020, Holistic learning, Inclusive education, Social development, Educational equity

INTRODUCTION

"Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms." Universal Declaration of Human Rights Preamble Article 26:1,2 (Chatterjee, 2011) A nation's foundation is its educational system. No country can advance without it. In order to achieve progress, every resident of a country needs to have a school education. According to the 2018 Annual States of Education Report (ASER), India is producing a new generation that struggles to read and write due to the kids' lack of fundamental reading and math abilities. To bring education to everyone, mass education programs should be strengthened.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To find out the concept and different aspects of mass education.
2. To find out the Swami Vivekananda's concept on mass education and its importance on Present education system.
3. To study the significance of mass education in India according to Swami Vivekananda.
4. To find out the aims of mass education and its relevance in the present day educational system under the new education policy 2020(NEP 2020)

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Education is one of the most important metrics for determining a nation's visible level of advancement. Swami Vivekananda was the first to emphasize the value of universal education.(D. R. Roy, 2021) The educational viewpoint of Swami Vivekananda highlights both the expansion and advancement of India's educational system after Independence as well as its glaring shortcomings, such as the over-reliance on memorization and recall in Western education. (N. Mondal, 2021) Swami Vivekananda says that education should foster morality and integrity of character as well as seek to create a peaceful, multiracial community. (S. N. Deshmukh & Mishra, n.d.) Swami Vivekananda was well-known around the world as the national saint of India, a social reformer, a leader in his convictions, a philosopher, and a champion of education. (P. Roy & Ghosh, 2015)

Vivekananda, an educationist, developed his idea of education as a result of studying the condition of Indians in both urban and rural areas. His personal experience and deep empathy for other people served as the foundation for it. The important idea that comes out of his exhortation in favour of education is that he wanted to raise and educate the masses because he believed that the progress of the country depended on the efforts of the people as a whole.(P. Roy & Ghosh, 2015) As a result, Vivekananda gave education reform a high priority so that everyone would have an equal opportunity to actively contribute to social and cultural change. To him, education ought to be a means of creating and sustaining humankind. (Dutta, 2019) Every aspect of life is experiencing a moral decline and degradation. Because of this, it is crucial to reconstruct our nation's educational policies as quickly as possible, beginning at the local level and by instilling Vivekananda's ideology of education (Basumatary & Thiumai, 2019)

Since it affects the future and destiny of its population, education is essential to the development of a country. The effects will be long-lasting in terms of the development and expansion of the nations and the citizens. (Pawan, 2020) It is impossible to ignore the importance and function of education in this day and age. The development and improvement can be seen if we compare the pre-and post-independence eras. There are several measures in the new National Education Policy 2020 that certainly will have an impact on all parties involved.(Pawan, 2020) In order to promote "quality education for all" and accomplish the objective of assisting the entire nation, the new education policy outlines numerous significant defects and operational problems that must be remedied. (Kumar et al., 2020). By 2030, India, a signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), will guarantee comprehensive and equitable access to high-quality education for all people. (Tiwari Manju & Yadav Jyoti, 2020) This study investigates the trends in India's primary, intermediate, and tertiary educational attainments. The nation's educational system needs to be restructured, and NEP 2020 is an important step in that direction. (Varma et al., 2021)

The environment in which education is offered affects its effectiveness, which is important for both human and economic growth. (Chetuwani Jaya, 2020). By changing a person's viewpoint and attitude, education can begin societal transformation. If it changes the way institutions and interpersonal relationships are connected, society may undergo a transition. The National Education Policy (NEP), which has the explicit aim of revamping the Indian educational system, appears to be progressive. (Chetuwani Jaya, 2020) The National Education Policy 2020 has been the subject of a general research by Aithal & Aithal. They noted that a country's school and college systems require a clear and forward-looking education policy since education promotes a nation's economic and social development. (Aithal & Aithal, 2020)

METHODOLOGY

The current study is philosophical and analytical in nature. Gathering, analysing, and interpreting data to draw findings and draw inferences is the process of analytical research. In this inquiry, no effort has been made to incorporate any statistical data. Thus, the study's methodology includes a discussion of mass education, Swami Vivekananda's vision of mass education, and its applicability to the present scenario of concerns in light of NEP 2020.

CONCEPT OF MASS EDUCATION:

The word "mass education" refers to the provision of education for all social groups, particularly the underprivileged or marginalised. Mass education is a term used to describe a state-run educational system that is often free and has as its goal providing all children in a society with at least a basic education. (Wikipedia) In India, the percentage of the total uneducated population that are illiterate is around 33 percent.(*Issues and Challenges in Indian Education*, n.d.) India's condition is exceedingly unfavourable, while advanced nations have nearly universal literacy rates. True education, or the enfoldment of a human being's (Atma-Vikasa) self, is the equal growth of the body, prana, mind, and intellect. If someone has had the chance to obtain this kind of education, we consider them to be properly educated and civilized, which also means that they are in good health, have plenty of energy, and are thoughtful and bright. A person with such education will also have a keen sense of pleasure and suffering, as well as an appreciation for beauty. A society will be more civilized

if there are more people with this capacity for perception and enjoyment of the finest things in life. ((Premeseshananda, 2019)

Mass education refers to educating the majority of our country's illiterate population. This program attempts to teach the illiterate the alphabet so they can read, write, and do some basic math. Through mass education, individuals learn what is right and wrong and become aware of their own rights and wrongs. In our nation, mass education is highly important. The majority of our population is illiterate. They lack reading and writing skills. They are unable to use scientific techniques to cultivate their land. They lack awareness of hygiene and sanitation. As a result, public education is crucial in our nation. Our people will be able to live in better conditions if they have a solid understanding of how to live comfortably. A man with an education is also beneficial to the nation. They are able to participate in development initiatives. The people will become responsible citizens. Consequently, our nation desperately needs a literacy program.

A nation's inhabitants ought to be used as a labour force. They should develop potential and creativity. This programme should be successful in a variety of ways. The programme should be implemented by both the government and the private organization. Everyone should collaborate with one another. Everyone's cooperation is necessary to eradicate illiteracy from the nation. This kind of programming is impossible without the assistance of the public. In this situation, the people should be motivated. The fact that our administration has worked hard to expand education among our people gives us great satisfaction. The required education centres should be established for the mass education project to be successful. Existing schools, mosques, clubs, yards, and other relevant locations should host education programs. Women can learn and attend night classes. The poor illiterate population should receive free books, Stories, and other educational supplies. In order to instruct elderly learners, education professionals or students should be involved. More motivation should be given to women. They make up a sizable portion of us. They must be included in this initiative. It should be possible for women to receive free higher education. A real start towards eradicating illiteracy in the nation is the mass education programme. To ensure the success of this plan, the public and the government must cooperate. If this is accomplished, ignorance will no longer be a scourge in our society. Their lives will be simple and comfortable.

BENEFITS OF MASS EDUCATION

Both individuals and society can gain greatly from mass education. Mass education may improve a nation's human capital, or the abilities and knowledge of its citizens. This can boost a nation's innovation, productivity, and economic growth. It can improve people's ability to move up or down the social ladder, or their social mobility. This can lessen social isolation, poverty, and inequality. Public education can encourage civic engagement and democratic principles among citizens, including their respect for human rights and diversity as well as their involvement in public affairs. Individuals can gain personal advantages from mass education, such as bettering their health, happiness, self-worth, and sense of fulfilment in life.

CHALLENGES AGAINST THE MASS EDUCATION

A few obstacles to the advancement of education in India include a lack of funding, widespread illiteracy, brain drain, resource waste, outdated curricula (Pratham, 2019) The advancement of education is fundamentally hampered by the lack of adequate resources. Due to weak economic conditions, the majority of educational institutions require financial backing, science apparatus, libraries, etc. As a result, the required results cannot be obtained. In India, attending college and specialised institutes has proven to be expensive. Advanced education privatization has contributed to the rise of opportunistic, avaricious businesspeople. Higher education today is much more expensive. Due to the emphasis on education in English, English is used as the primary teaching language, which prevents children from gaining basic literacy and numeracy skills. Then extra English-language curriculum is added on top of that, which mostly affects children from government schools and lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Native Indian languages cannot access standard distributions. In educational institutions, practical knowledge is completely disregarded in favour of theory and texts. Due to a lack of practical experience, some pupils forget what they studied after passing the exam. In India, instructors and parents place more emphasis on passing exams than on providing pupils with a high-quality education. Education also turns into a race. There is still a very long way to go before students in schools, colleges, and universities receive education that is focused on teaching them practical skills and information. (*Access Denied: A Counterintuitive Approach to the Education System in India*, n.d.) Our primary education is delivered with a great deal of problems. Numerous elementary schools are devoid of basic amenities including drinking water, furniture, books, urinals, power, and many others. Numerous elementary schools only have one teacher, and many more are completely teacher less. Therefore, the high drop-off rate is cause for alarm. The current higher education system in the nation has to be revamped right away. In education, both quantity and quality must be ensured. Outdated curricula are being used to educate students. Numerous scientific and technological

advancements are being achieved in India. Therefore, it is necessary to upgrade graduate and postgraduate courses to reflect current technological trends. (*Issues and Challenges in Indian Education*, n.d.)

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CONCEPT ON MASS EDUCATION:

Swami Vivekananda had a wonderful vision for India's general education system. He thought that education was the way to help the weak and the needy and make India a powerful and progressive country. The poor, uneducated, and downtrodden masses of India are to be reached and uplifted through mass education, according to Swami Vivekananda. He thought that the majority of the population, the masses, needed to be educated and given more power in order for the country to move forward. As he stated, "A nation is advanced in proportion to the spread of education and intelligence among the masses," he was a fervent supporter of this cause. (MAHESHWARY V K, 2016)

Through man-making education, which would instil self-confidence, self-reliance, and moral ideals in them, he aimed to develop each child's uniqueness and personality. "We want that education," he remarked, "that develops character, strengthens the mind, broadens the intellect, and prepares one to stand on one's own two feet." (P. Roy & Ghosh, 2015) He emphasized on promoting multilingualism and Indian languages in education, as he stressed that the end and aim of all training is to make the man grow.. (MAHESHWARY V K, bansal s, n.d.) He envisioned a holistic and integrated education that would include physical, mental, moral, and spiritual aspects Education isn't the quantity of material that is crammed into your head and left to run wildly there undigested for the rest of your life, he declared. Assimilation of ideas must be life-giving, man-making, and character-forming. According to him if anybody have internalized five ideas and made them a part of their life and character, they are more educated than anyone who knows every book in the world by heart. (Sharma, 2016) (Radha, 2019)

According to Swami Vivekananda, a country's progress is directly correlated with the population's access to education and intelligence. The concentration of all national knowledge and intelligence in the hands of a tiny set of individuals has been the main contributing reason to India's decline. In order for us to start rising once more, the public needs to be informed. The only service that can be offered is to educate our lower classes so they can discover their individuality. They are to be given concepts. He promoted the inclusion of career education and skill development in secondary and postsecondary education. Every person should acquire training in a trade or industry during their school years, he asserted. He understood the need of local government and community involvement in promoting widespread education. He emphasized the education of the lower class for developing their personality. They need to have their minds expanded and their eyes opened to the events taking place in the world, after which they will figure out how to find redemption for themselves.

He emphasised the value of technical education, industrial training, and instruction in local languages in order to address these socioeconomic concerns. He firmly believed that universal education and intelligence lead to national advancement. He therefore sought to protect India's spiritual heritage while also boosting the country's economic development.

Man-making- mission: Swami Vivekananda described education as the expression of the perfection inherent in man. Through education, he hoped to help the pupils develop their moral character, personalities, and strengths. (N. Deshmukh, n.d.)

Uplifting the masses: The masses of the impoverished and oppressed, who were ignored and taken advantage of by society, needed knowledge, and he wished to provide it to them. He aimed to equip them with knowledge, abilities, and self-assurance so they might better themselves and the country as a whole.

Education from door to door: He argued in favour of a widespread education program that would be accessible to every home and hamlet. He intended to spread knowledge and culture among the populace using a variety of techniques, including preaching, teaching, books, newspapers, etc.

Preaching and teaching: He emphasized the importance of preachers and instructors in the general education process. He wanted them to be inspired, devoted, and selfless. He asked them to reach out to the masses and show love and compassion to them.

Caste system and untouchability: He condemned untouchability and the caste system as vices that prevented the masses from growing. His goal was to end such societal problems through transformation and education. He aimed to instil a spirit of fairness, unity, and harmony among all facets of society.

Secular Education: He argued in favour of a secular education that would respect all faiths and promote ethical standards. Along with science and technology, he sought to teach the pupils about morality, ethics, and spirituality.

National Integration: Through education, he hoped to instil in people of all ages a sense of patriotism and national identity. He desired to bring them together around a shared culture, history, and destiny. He hoped to motivate people to work for the betterment of humanity and India.

Physical and health Education: He emphasised the value of public health and physical education programmes. Through a healthy diet, exercise, and medical attention, he hoped to improve their physical health, hygiene, and general well-being.

Swami Vivekananda placed a strong emphasis on man-making education. He described education as a manifestation of human perfection.(A. Mondal & Mete, 2012). He thought that education should be more than merely a repository of facts; it should be something more profound and sustaining. (Kumar Behera & Professor, 2018) He aimed to make learners depend on their intrinsic spiritual strength and help them recognize their own divine nature. (Radha, 2019) . He aimed to raise a new generation of self-sufficient, patriotic, charitable, and spiritually enlightened men and women.(Gupta, 2021)

MASS EDUCATION AND NEP2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) is a document that describes the aspirations and objectives of India's educational system. By 2030, the most recent NEP, which was approved in 2020, wants to completely overhaul India's educational system. The goal of mass education is to make education accessible to all societal groups, but especially to those who are underprivileged or marginalized. A few NEP 2020 sections deal with the concept of mass education. It seeks to guarantee equal access to education for all people at all levels, from preschool to higher education, thus lowering dropout rates. (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). It places a strong emphasis on encouraging multilingualism and the use of Indian languages, and it advises using the mother tongue or native language as the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably Grade 8 and beyond.(*LMultilingualism*, n.d.) All children, especially those from socially and economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs), are envisioned to get an equitable and inclusive education.

Additionally, it suggests creating Special Education Zones for underprivileged areas and groups as well as a distinct Gender Inclusion Fund. (Lissen & Bautista, 2021). It promotes the inclusion of career education and skill development in both secondary and higher education. Additionally, as a crucial component of the higher education system, it promotes the internationalization of education and professional training. (TANMAY, n.d.).NEP 2020 also gives freedom for switching from a demanding HE programme to a diverse undergraduate education. To improve student experiences, give professors and institutions autonomy while also modernizing the curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation, and student support systems. Through merit-based appointments and career development based on teaching, research, and service, we may reaffirm the integrity of academic and institutional leadership roles. Creating a set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) that serve as a standard reference also improve the quality of mass education.

Establishing a higher education (HE) system with significant, interdisciplinary universities and colleges, at least one of which is in or close to each district, and more HEIs across India that offer their programmes in regional/Indian languages are the main components of the NEP 2020 that deal with mass education. No matter their origin, geography, or skill level, these provisions are designed to improve the quality and accessibility of education for all students. NEP 2020 also acknowledges the importance of local government and community involvement in promoting mass education. (Chetuwani Jaya, 2020). However, there are some issues and obstacles in putting NEP 2020 into practise, such as the accessibility of sufficient resources, facilities, and qualified instructors to support the new curricular and pedagogical framework (Anand & Souza, 2019) imposing a three-language formula nationwide, especially in areas where there is linguistic diversity or resistance, is both feasible and desirable. (Chetuwani Jaya, 2020) multiple entry/exit choices and academic credit banks' possible effects on the coherence and quality of higher education (*NEP 2020 Ignores Crisis in Education among the Marginalised Majority in Rural India | The Indian Express*, n.d.).and NEP 2020's compliance with the current legal and constitutional framework for education, such as the Right to Education Act of 2009 (Chakrabarty).

FINDINGS

Swami Vivekananda's concept on Mass education is still relevant in our nation. The New Education Policy with its clear vision and honest efforts, supported the idea of mass education through its various initiatives. National Knowledge Network, E-Pathshala, SWAYAM PRABHA, DIKSHA are few examples of such initiatives for promoting mass education. Making financial plans receptive to the requirements of the schools and the students are very important for the promotion of mass education and the overall progress of the nation.

CONCLUSION

Quality and pertinence are the main issues with each level of education in India. India faces significant challenges in meeting the demands of a contemporary, expanding labour force. Appropriate curricula, qualified teachers, student financial aid, and proper facilities are a few of the needs that India's education system must address. The inability to satisfy the various linguistic, social, regional, and local educational needs of such a big country presents additional difficulties. This is a particularly good time for stakeholders to commit to the expansion of India's educational system to its masses

because to recent improvements in Indian educational policies. Therefore, the government should make significant changes to our educational system in order to overcome the obstacles and for the betterment of the citizen.

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