

Finding NAI TALIM in the Vision of NPE 2020: Exploring the Resemblance

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ABSTRACT

The teachings of Mahatma Gandhi are famous worldwide and they revolve around the concepts of self – reliance, non-violence (ahimsa) and Satyagraha. He incorporated the ideas of self –reliance and non-violence in his educational philosophy. His philosophy of education is a harmonious blending of idealism, naturalism and pragmatism. The uniqueness of his “Nai Talim” was that education is to be given through village craft. The idea was to make the learning of a craft the centre piece of entire teaching programme. NPE 2020 resonate with none other than Gandhi’s ideas of education. This paper analysed vision of education laid down in NPE 2020 while discussing Gandhi’s ideas on education.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of the study document analysis was done in the initial stage of the work .Educational ideas of Gandhi was discussed in detail. NPE was analysed in light of the objectives of this paper. Further an attempt was made to explore the resemblance between Basic Education and vision of NPE 2020. A Google form was created including questions related to vision of NPE and its significance for teacher education in present scenario. Purposive sampling was done in which almost 90 people including students of teacher education programme, teacher educators and school teachers shared their feedback about NPE. The collected data was qualitatively analysed to reach the conclusion.

OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss and understand Gandhian philosophy of education
2. To study and understand the main postulates of NPE 2020
3. To explore the resemblance between Gandhi’s educational ideas and NPE 2020
4. To analyse and understand the collected data in view of the vision of NPE 2020

KEY WORDS: Nai Talim, Basic education, Craft centred education, self-sufficient education, NPE 2020

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I. INTRODUCTION

Gandhi’s approach towards education was very practical. His definition of education gives an insight into his philosophy of education. He had the vision of the National Education System with a worldview of a non-violent social system originally articulated in his *Hind Swaraj*. By true education he means an all –round drawing out of the best in child and man, mind ,body and spirit. For Gandhi mere literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means by which man and woman can be educated. Education should ensure dignity of labour as the process of learning and reduces the gap between mental and physical labour .His philosophy basically deals with the practical problems of life and their real life solution through the process of schooling/education. His experiments with truth and education were the instruments for the realisation of his ideals in life.

Gandhi realised the need for alternative education system in India when he returned from South Africa and travelled throughout the country. In his speech at the National Gujarati School on 18 Jan ,1917 he argued on aims of education beyond job and money ,prospectus, education in the school in the Indian language. Speaking on the second Gujarat Educational Conference on Oct22-23, 1917 Gandhi emphasised on medium of instruction and love and faith for mother tongue. Kumar(1997) wrote that; no one rejected colonial education as sharply and as completely as Gandhi did, nor did anyone else put forward an alternative as radical as the one he proposed’.

Gandhi was greatly influenced by the Russian social and religious reformer, Leo Tolstoy, and even declared him as the ‘teacher of mankind’, whose” solitary voice for peace was crying out in the wilderness. “(Tolstoy, Leo,1893)He adopted the ethical doctrines of the love of one’s neighbour, passion for truth, and non-resistance to evil from Tolstoy to mould his concept of ‘Satyagraha’.

Education not only moulds the new generation, but reflects a society's fundamental assumptions about itself and the individuals which compose it. The Wardha scheme of Education popularly known as Basic Education or Nai Talim occupies a unique place in the field of education in India. Basic education emphasizes on the acquisition of certain minimum knowledge and skills that every child is required to possess irrespective of caste, creed, colour and gender. The scheme was the first to develop an indigenous system of education in British India. This core of Gandhi's educational philosophy was not simply to introduce handicrafts as compulsory school subject, but to make the learning of a craft the centrepiece of the entire teaching programme. It simply implied restructuring of the sociology of school knowledge in India, where handiwork has been usually associated with the lowest group in the hierarchy of the class system. The social philosophy and the Basic Education curriculum was in favour on the child belonging to the lowest stratum of society.

SELF-SUPPORTING ASPECT OF THE SCHEME

Gandhiji emphasised a lot on the economic aspects of educational practice. The idea of Basic Education conceptualised education as "continuity of existence"- integration of education into the human environment. (Gandhi, 1938)

Gandhi valued self-sufficiency and autonomy. The basic idea of the scheme was that if the craft chosen is taught efficiently or thoroughly, it would enable the school to pay the cost of salaries of teachers. Gandhi's plan implied the end of the teacher's subservience to the prescribed textbooks and the curriculum. His plan was to give autonomy to the teacher in terms of choosing the subject matter and accord financial independence to educational institutions. At the same time his aim was to accord dignity of labour and ensure modest livelihood for the student after leaving school.

FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION FOR ALL

Basic education emphasizes on free and compulsory education for seven years. It is must for enabling children to acquire a minimum level of achievement in order to lead a self-reliant and civilized life. Now, finally in 2009, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 is passed by the parliament. It received the president assent on 26 August 2009. Now every child of the age of 6-14 years will have the right to free and compulsory education in a school till completion of her/his elementary education.

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

The education must be imparted through the medium of the mother tongue. Gandhi emphasised that mother tongue should be given central place in education system as a child learns best in his mother tongue. Teaching through a foreign language can make the learning difficult for the learner. He believed English can no longer serve the purpose of a connecting link between Indians and Hindi must inevitably take its place. Education in mother tongue can acquaint the child with his heritage ethical and moral values. Thus during the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1921, he called for a boycott of the colonial system of education.

EQUITY, INCLUSION AND IDEAL CITIZENSHIP

Gandhi believed that schools and education system should be an integral part of learning from early stage of schooling as adopting good practices in educational institutions can help in developing the idea of good citizenship in children. Understanding one's rights, duties and obligations are some of the basic qualities which needs to be learned by everyone in society. Education shall work toward making the society an inclusive one where each and every one should feel equally valued. Basic education aimed at giving the citizens of the future a keen sense of personal growth, dignity and efficiency and social services in a cooperative community.

ROLE OF TEACHER AND FLEXIBLE CURRICULUM

Gandhi strongly believed that teacher is the core of the education system. Teacher must touch the soul of the students through his teaching. Teacher should be adequately paid and should be given freedom to develop teaching content according to the need and aspirations of his pupils. There has to be flexibility in the curriculum and various activities can be used to facilitate the teaching-learning process. Locally available resources can be used as teaching learning material.

CORELATION AS A METHOD OF TEACHING

It was envisaged that correlation should be the guiding principle of teaching all subjects. Different subjects are to be taught making craft as the focal point of teaching-learning process. Gandhiji wanted an effective and natural correlation between the craft and other subjects and the coordination of various subjects. He wanted that "the whole process of education should be imparted through some handicrafts or industry".

EDUCATION POST INDEPENDENCE

Many notable attempts were made by governments post-Independence. In 1978, the Ministry of Education limited the role of Nai Talim in the form of craft-work alone to be covered through the Socially Useful Productive Work – or SUPW. Later, National Curriculum Framework 2005 included ‘work and education’ section, highlighting its utility in knowledge acquisition, skills formation and value creation. However, Nai Talim always remained a peripheral system and could never integrate with the mainstream education till recently. The reasons for the lack of mainstreaming of Nai Talim approach happened due to the ways in which this approach was perceived by consumers of education. With the changing structure and form of the society, there were changes in the expectations of outcomes of education

NATIONAL POLICY OF EDUCATION 2020

INTRODUCTION

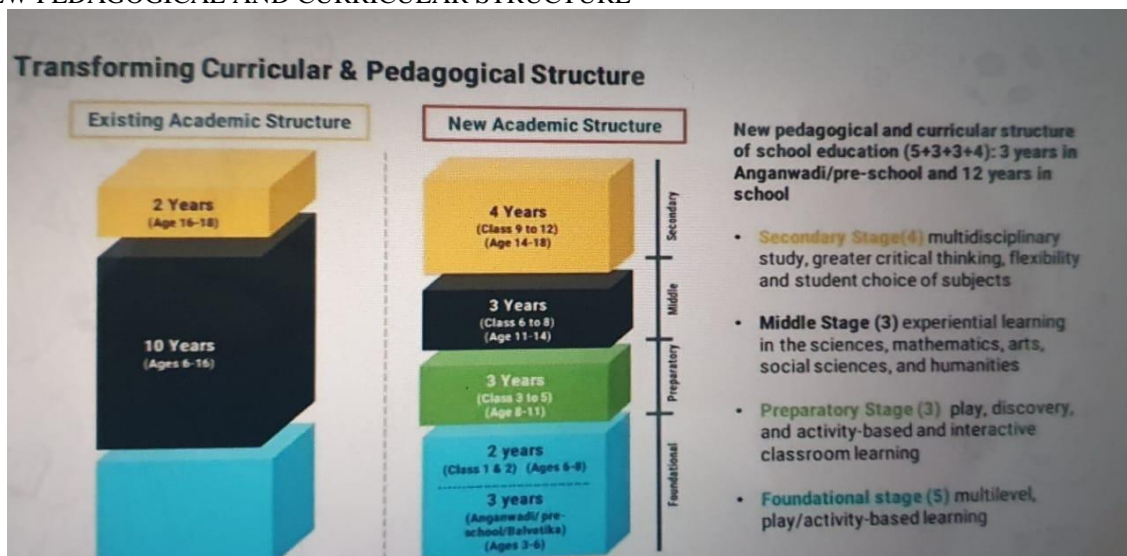
The National Education Policy, 2020 is the first new education policy to be introduced in India in the 21st century, replaces 34 years of NPE, 1986. The implementation of previous policies on education has focused largely on issues of access and equity but with the changing employment and global ecosystem, it is becoming increasingly critical that children not only learn, but more importantly learn how to learn. Education thus, must move towards less content and more towards learning about how to be innovative. NPE aims of holistic productivity, equitable and inclusive access to the higher quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background with an increased Gross Enrolment Ratio of 50% by 2035. NPE 2020 aims to develop:

- good human beings capable of rational thought and actions, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination.
- a good education institution in which every student feels welcomed and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, where a wide range of learning experiences are offered and where good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students.

VISION

• NPE envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high quality education to all and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The vision of the policy is to instil among the learners a deep rooted pride in being INDIAN, not only in thought but also in spirit, intellect and deeds as well as developing knowledge, skill values, sustainable development and living thereby reflecting a truly global citizen. Pedagogy evolve to make education more experiential, holistic integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery oriented, learner entered, discussion based, flexible and enjoyable. Curriculum includes basic art and craft, games, sports, language, literature, culture and values etc. These would be included to develop all aspects and capabilities of learners and make education more well- rounded useful and fulfilling to the learner

NEW PEDAGOGICAL AND CURRICULAR STRUCTURE



The 10+2 structure of school curricula is to be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure corresponding to ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14 and 14-18 years respectively. It will include 12 years of schooling and 3 years of anganwadi and pre-schooling. In private schools this pre-schooling was already present as pre-nursery, L.K.G and U.K.G. So this pre-schooling would be beneficial for all socio-economically disadvantaged

students .It gives opportunity to every youngchildren to access and further enable them to participate and flourish in educationalsystem throughout their lives.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

The Foundation of learning (ECCE)Objective: Every child in the age range of 3-6 years has access to free, safe, high quality, developmentally appropriate care and education by 2025.The Policy emphasizes the criticality of early childhood education and thepersistence of its advantages throughout an individual’s life.

- It indicate the critical importance of appropriate care and stimulation ofthe brain in early years in order to ensure healthy brain development andgrowth.
- It consist of flexible , multi-level, play based, activity based, comprising ofalphabets, numbers , outdoor and outdoor play also focus on socialcapacities i.e. good behaviour, sensitivity, cleanliness etc. Significantexpansion and strengthening of facilities for early childhood education willhappen through a multi-pronged approach contingent on local needs,geography and existing infrastructure.
- The overall aim of ECCE will be to attain optimal outcomes in the domainsof physical and motor development, cognitive development, socio-emotional development, culture/artistic development and development ofcommunication and early language, literacy and numeracy.
- Anganwadis centres/pre-school will have a well-ventilated, well-designedchild-friendly and well-constructed building with an enshrined learningenvironment.
- A curricular and pedagogical framework for early childhood educationintended for both educators and parents, will be developed. TheFramework will comprise guidelines for appropriate cognitive stimulation of0-3 year olds and educational guidelines for 3-8 year olds.
- Current Anganwadis teachers will be trained through a systematic effort inaccordance with the curricular/pedagogical framework developed by NCERT.➤ THE integration of school with pre -school/Anganwadis, to attend schoolfuctions in order to smooth the path from ANGANWADI to school whichenriched the learning environment.

ECCE is not available to most young children, particularly children fromeconomically disadvantaged families .Almost 85% of a child’s cumulative braindevelopment and growth occurs prior to the age of 6. Inclusion of this system willhelp children of early age to attain optimal outcomes in the various development.

The division of pedagogical system has been done with an intension to include thechildren of early education with the age group 3-5 into formal education and alsoto include this stage of education into the school curriculum as per Globalstandard which was not done earlier. The story books with picture and signs, toysand activity based learning of the private nursery and LHG classes alwaysexcluded the poor family who could not afford all this but now new pedagogicaland curriculum structure of schools education has been developed with flexible,multilevel, play based ,activity based and inquiry based learning for all. TheRightto Education Act 2009 would also be extended to assure availability of free andcompulsory quality education for all 3–6 year olds, rather than starting from 6years old.

ROLE OF TEACHER

The NPE 2020 acknowledges the role of a teacher in shaping the future of the nation. It also acknowledges the dwindling status of teachers in the society and outlines reasons for the same. To bridge this gap it looks to ensure that outstanding students enter the teaching profession, especially from rural area. A large number of merit based scholarships shall be instituted across the country for studying the 4- year integrated B.Ed. program; itreads. It talks about preferential employment in the local area of the candidate after successful completion of B.Ed. program. It will further solve the problem of shortage of teachers in rural areas. Basic Education tooadvocated for participation of the local community and visualised communities as primary owner of schools. However, over a period of time, societal values underwent a lot of change in which schools became the responsibility of the government and its administration.The NPE 2020 talks of developing mechanisms to motivate local residents to join the education system and contribute to the nation building exercise through education.

CLOSE LOOK AT BASIC EDUCATION AND NPE 2020

1. Nai Talim approach emphasised on the importance of education through any productive work that we do in our everyday life (learning by doing). However, with the changing dynamics of the society, work itself got categorised into many categories, namely blue-collared work versus white-collared work.The macro and micro-level factors such as social, economic, political, cultural factors led to change in connotation of work itself. The hierarchy within the work systems became more rigid than what it was earlier. Manual work continued to remain inferior to mental work.

However, the NPE 2020 rectifies this by proposing importance of making children 'learn how to learn'. It also mentions the exposure of skills and use of one's hand to learn skills such as gardening and working with clay.

It suggests having 'no hard separation' of contents between curricular versus extra-curricular or co-curricular and emphasises treating all the extra-curricular subjects – yoga, woodwork, gardening and electric work as subjects per se.

2. Nai Talim approach focussed on imparting education in mother tongue based on the logic that familiarity in language being used in home as well as school would help the child to see the school as a natural extension of home.

However, westernisation of education and the attraction of the society towards learning English language, projected this model as the one that could be used for rural population only.

The NPE emphasises the importance of three-language formula for every child and encourages children to be multilingual. It also acknowledges the importance of beginning of learning in mother tongue/local language in the 'foundational stage'. It acknowledges that a proficiency in English language is seen as a marker of high education among those looking for employment. It lays emphasis on developing an appreciation of Indian culture, an aspect of which is local/regional languages.

3. Nai Talim focussed on nurturing multiple skills in a child based on her/his interest. This required customisation of productive work and education to suit the natural flair of the child. However, the current education system remains focused on standardisation in the format of content and delivery of the curriculum. The NPE addresses this concern and suggests providing flexibility to students in choosing courses based on the interest of the child. It proposes flexibility in the assessment methods used by the schools. It also proposes promoting 'gifted/special children' through different scholarship programmes.

4. Nai Tamil approach presented a concept of learning that went beyond textbooks. But for this to be achieved teachers have to be pro- students. They need to understand the need and aspirations of their students in a comprehensive way. However, over a period of time, teachers were often employed to teach multiple subjects. The burden on them to complete the syllabus made it difficult to focus on the needs of every child. Also, reputation of teachers in the society underwent a change, making it difficult for teachers to support this format of learning.

Instead of blaming teachers for poor learning outcomes in Indian classrooms the NPE 2020 holds these dismal conditions of teacher education recruitment, deployment and service conditions of teacher quality and motivation. Recognising the power of teacher NPE 2020 has put in place systemic reforms that would help 'teaching' emerges as an attractive profession of choice for bright and talented young minds.

Innovative teaching methods adopted by teachers to improve the learning outcomes will be recognised, documented and shared widely as recommended practices.

ANALYSES OF DATA

On analysing the data collected through Google form it is evident that NPE 2020 is based on the foundational pillars of access, affordability, equity, quality and accountability which would further help students in developing scientific temper. It welcomed every child beyond their caste, class, religion, creed to make learning more meaningful which would directly impact on learner's outcomes and development. It set about to change cramming facts and figures by promoting a "critical thinking" approach to learning and making students to draw their own conclusions after discussion on facts and not just providing information and expecting them to memorize answers. With this change, the next few decades will see a rise of more culture and art-focused professions, and a mind-set shift from "engineering, law or medicine" to be able to safely pursue a passion. NPE also included the main aspect in which the children's education should be in such a way that the learner's personality would develop holistically, the curriculum should be child centred and include hands-on activities which should be directly taken from the children's immediate environment and further developing them into good human being. It is quite unlike from previous educational policies that aimed to focus on developing an individual with patriotism.

Many of the respondent view National Policy of Education 2020 in light of the purpose it claims to achieve "full human potential, develop an equitable and just society" but it would rather fail to cater to the need of rural India's marginalized community who in so many ways are rendered into being subjects rather than citizens. Analysing the data further reveals that, many respondents agree and appreciate the New Curricular and Pedagogical structure which essentially brings into the children of the age group of 3-6 years in focus, who were not covered in existing structure, which begins only at grade 1. This curriculum will provide ample opportunities to students for critical thinking, hands on experience, vocational crafts and to choose the subjects of their choice specially in secondary stage.

One of the major point of NPE largely discussed and strongly felt by respondents was that in promoting the study of regional languages, the importance of English is neglected. By ignoring this, the policy

has laid out a 'language trap', which can create social inequality and impede economic growth due to loss of demographic dividend.

The policy reiterates the thought that quality is dependent upon the quality of the teacher. If implemented properly it will render the school governance more effective and efficient while facilitating the sharing of resources through school infrastructure.

II. CONCLUSION

The NPE aims to operationalize the entire policy in the decade of 2030 to 2040. It aims at imparting 21st century skills to children in which creativity, scientific temper, multilingualism, social responsibility among others are important so that children evolve as "engaged, productive and contributing citizens for building equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution". It also acknowledges the importance of creating a supportive ecosystem for teachers, and for the community to contribute to the best of their potential.

Gandhi's conception of basic education was concerned with learning that was associated with daily life which is the basis for informal education to survive. Though Basic Education focussed on the individual but reliant on co-operation between individuals. Gandhi aimed at producing useful citizens for a democracy by means of education. He dreamt of an ideal society with ideal citizens and dignified individuals. Harmonious development of all powers and faculties was the chief goal of his scheme of education as this was the mean to achieve and attain the goal. His philosophy of education still holds a promise for a better tomorrow in the modern world of rapid scientific and technological advances. His views on early childhood education are quite relevant to present day scenario too. His Basic Education or Nai Talim is novel, innovative and indigenous too. Gandhi proposed structural measures to prevent the possibility of stratification, segregation or exploitation of any kind in the social organisation of his vision. His philosophy of education is a harmonious blending of idealism, naturalism and pragmatism.

The NPE 2020 resonates with Gandhi's educational ideas proposed through Basic Education in 1937. The Basic Education pertained to education to be imparted to a child from 7 to 14 years. It had two broad components-Pre Basic and Post Basic education.

The timeline of NPE 5+3+3+4 broadly corresponds to the Gandhian scheme of basic education. The emphasis of NEP on mother tongue finds resonance with similar ideas of Gandhi. The focus of NPE on values echoes Gandhi's emphasis on character building. Although Basic Education could never integrate with the mainstream education system till now, but this scheme of education is unparalleled and unique among other educational schemes. However the vision of education in NPE 2020 recognised the relevance of Gandhi's educational thoughts as it clearly reflects inclusion of some of the main elements of Basic Education. A study of Gandhi's educational ideas of education and the NPE 2020 clearly reflects remarkable resemblance.

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