

Overview of The Ancient Education System in The Context of The Modern Era in NEP-2020

Shodh Siddhi

A Multidisciplinary & Multilingual Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal

Volume: 01 | Issue: 03 [July to September : 2025], pp. 12-16**Dr. Maganlal S. Molia**

Professor and Head
Department of Education
Saurashtra University
Rajkot (Gujarat) India

Abstract

NEP 2020 aims to make India's education system modern, holistic and world-class by integrating it with ancient Indian knowledge traditions. It presents ancient educational institutions like Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Valbhi as models of multidisciplinary and attracting global students. These institutions gave birth to great scholars like Charaka, Sushruta, Aryabhata, Panini, who contributed to mathematics, medicine, astronomy and yoga. The Indian education system has been world famous since the Vedic period. Indian culture has considered education as the fundamental element of life. In the modern era, India has implemented the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) showing a new direction in the field of education, which is trying to revive not only modern educational methods but also Vedic and ancient education methods. This research paper discusses the impact of the valuable elements of the ancient education system in NEP-2020 and its use, effects and its basic principles in the modern era. Along with this, suggestions for the future are also given by analyzing the current situation.

Keywords: NEP-2020, Ancient Education, Modern Education

Introduction

NEP 2020 aims to make India's education system modern, holistic and world-class by integrating ancient Indian knowledge traditions. It presents ancient educational institutions like Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Valbhi as models of multidisciplinary and attraction of global students. These institutions gave birth to great scholars like Charaka, Sushruta, Aryabhata, Panini, who contributed to mathematics, medicine, astronomy and yoga. The Indian education system has been world-famous since the Vedic period. Indian culture has considered education as the fundamental element of life. The education system that started with the Gurukul system has today transformed into a new style in the modern

era. The National Education Policy 2020 has attempted to give a new direction to the education system based on India's educational values. In this paper, we analyze how ancient education systems have been restored in NEP-2020 and what is their significance in the modern era.

History and Philosophy of Ancient Indian Education System

The ancient Indian education system was based on the Gurukul system. The Guru considered the disciple as his home and allowed him to live there and shaped his entire life. The main elements included self-reliance, sadhana, life values, discipline, self-discipline, spirituality and all-round development. Education was not limited to scriptures only but also included physical, intellectual, moral and practical knowledge.

The main subjects were principles, ethics, Sanskrit language, music, yoga, Vedic mathematics, crafts and meditation. The centers of knowledge like Taxila, Nalanda, Vallabhi and Vikramshila were the greatest knowledge centers of the time. The main purpose of education was to teach a way of life based on fundamental ideas.

In short, the main elements of the ancient system (according to NEP):

- Goal: Not just knowledge, but self-realization and salvation (Jnana, Prajna, Satya).
- Gurukul-like system: residential, moral value-based, experiential education.
- Multiplicity: 64 arts (from mathematics to art, vocational skills).

Example: "World-class institutions of ancient India such as Taxila, Nalanda... set the highest standards of multi-disciplinary curriculum and research."

National Education Policy 2020: Key Objectives and Vision

NEP-2020 is a comprehensive and visionary policy launched by the Government of India that introduces educational reforms in a new dimension after 34 years. Its main objective is – "To make education knowledge-based, value-based, knowledge-based and holistic."

Some of the key points of NEP-2020:

- Education through traditional languages and mother tongue
- Value-based and ethical education
- Emphasis on yoga, culture and Indian art/knowledge
- Lifelong learning
- Flexibility in curriculum and diversity in syllabus

NEP 2020 has attempted to adopt many elements of the Gurukul system – such as student-centred approach, Guru-Shishya tradition, and lifelong learning – in a modern way.

Integration (Modernization) in the Modern Era

NEP combines antiquity with the 5+3+3+4 structure, Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and technology which is shown in Table - 1.

Table – 1
Integration (Modernization) in the Modern Era

Aspect	Aspects Ancient system	Modern integration in NEP 2020
Curriculum	Multiple (Vedas, Upanishads, 64 arts)	IKS elective (Yoga, Ayurveda, Mathematics); Arts-integrated education; Multidisciplinary universities.
Medium	Sanskrit/Prakrit, mother tongue	Mother tongue (up to 5th-8th); Sanskrit/classical languages; Trilingual support.
Target	Self-development, morality	Holistic development (physical, emotional); Values (non-violence, religion).
Institutions	Takshila/Nalanda (3,000+ students)	Large multidisciplinary HEIs in every district; 50% GER till 2035.

Aspect	Aspects Ancient system	Modern integration in NEP 2020
ECCE/Primary	Stories, games, arts	Sports-based; Ancient stories like Panchatantra.

Key Steps:

- **School Level:** IKS Inclusion in NCF; Experiential instead of rote learning.
- **Higher Education:** Academic Bank of Credits; IKS Research from NRF.
- **Teachers:** Guru-like respect; IKS training.
- **Inclusion:** Access for SEDGs (Backward Classes) through Digital/ODL.

Key Elements of Ancient Education and its Modern Application

The ancient Indian education system was built on several elements, such as:

- **Guru-Shishya Relationship:** In ancient times, the relationship between a teacher and a disciple was considered sacred. The Guru not only imparted knowledge about the subject, but also sowed the seeds of conduct, morality and self-confidence in the life of the disciple. In today's era, the "mentoring system" and "Student Support Centers" represent the same elements in a modern form.
- **Value-Based Education:** In ancient education, value-based education was at the forefront - truth, non-violence, compassion, forgiveness and spirituality. NEP-2020 has laid emphasis on "value-based education" and "organic development". This will not only make students employable but also a responsible citizen.
- **Use of mother tongue:** In the Gurukul system, education was imparted in the mother tongue or a language of understanding. NEP-2020 has also laid special emphasis that primary education should be imparted in the mother tongue or regional language.
- **Coexistence and natural dialogue:** Education in Gurukul was imparted close to nature. Students studied under the shade of trees, on the banks of rivers or in a peaceful environment. Today's 'green campuses', 'outdoor learning' and 'ecological education' support the same ideology.

Use of ancient education system in the modern era

In the modern era, despite technology, scientific approach and global network, there is a loss of life values. In this situation, the ancient education system of India becomes important.

- **Holistic Approach:** NEP-2020 has tried to combine physical, mental, intellectual and emotional aspects for the all-round development of students. This method is similar to the elements of ancient education.
- **Life Skills and Personality Development:** NEP-2020 has emphasized on teaching "life skills" and "21st century skills". In the Gurukul system, there was also an emphasis on preparing for practical life - including cooking yourself. Hygiene, service work, etc. were taught.
- **Cooperative Learning Method:** Just as in Gurukul, children of different ages could study together, in NEP-2020 too, methods like multi-age grouping, club learning, project-based learning have been given a place.
- **Inclusion of Yoga and Meditation:** The ancient method included yoga, pranayama and meditation. In NEP-2020 too, there is a suggestion to include yoga in the curriculum for mental health along with physical health.

Current Situation: Problems at the grassroots level in India's education system

While the objective of NEP-2020 is very high and promising, on the other hand, many challenges are faced during its implementation.

- **System failures:** The education system is still exam-centric and based on memorization. Due to lack of training of teachers, the elements of NEP remain unimplemented.

- **Educational inequality:** The difference between urban and rural areas, the difference between government and private schools keeps the objective of NEP incomplete.
- **Lack of physical and human resource accumulation:** It is necessary to provide training to teachers in a timely manner to implement the ancient education system in a modern form. But even today, many teachers do not have sufficient knowledge about NEP-2020.
- **Language and medium problem:** Despite implementing the objective of education through mother tongue, English medium continues to be given more importance in many states, which contradicts the spirit of NEP.

Thus, in the above three sections, we understood how the elements of ancient education are being woven into NEP-2020 and what are the challenges in its implementation today.

- Importance of ancient education values in modern times,
- Case studies/activities,
- Global comparison and outlook

Importance of ancient education values in modern times

In today's scientific era of the 21st century, the direction and pace of education is changing rapidly. However, the need for human values, moral basis and conscious outlook in life is constantly increasing. Here the elements of ancient education system become very important.

- **Revival of human values:** In today's era, a person is becoming worthless amidst material progress. The aim of "Value-based education" through NEP-2020 is that students are not only prepared for career. But also for personality and morality.
- **Spirituality and inner peace:** Ancient India emphasized spirituality in education. In today's era, elements of yoga, meditation and self-reflection have become indispensable against increasing depression, suicide, stress etc.
- **Harmony and collectivism:** Education should not be only for competition, but for cooperation. In the Gurukul system, lessons of coexistence, co-eating, co-study and co-living are taught. In NEP too, collectivism is cultivated through group learning and co-curricular activities.
- **Skill-based education:** In the ancient education system, students used to learn some skill from the very beginning. In today's time, "Skill Development", "Vocational Education", "Livelihood-focused curriculum" bring the same elements alive in a modern way.

Case studies: Examples of implementation of NEP-2020 and ancient elements

- **Kefalon Schools:** Madhya Pradesh: Some Kefalon schools in Madhya Pradesh include yoga, art, crafts and moral education in the curriculum based on NEP-2020. Activities like Gurukul are showcased in the school festival.
- **'Vidya Bharati' schools:** Schools of Vidya Bharati organization give priority to Indian tradition, culture, yoga, Sanskrit language and spiritual learning in education. Here the Guru-Shishya tradition is kept alive with modern methods.
- **'Ekalavya-Shalas' and NEP applicable framework:** Where education is provided in the mother tongue in minority communities, the language policy of NEP is successfully implemented in those schools.
- **Bal Gurukul in Rishikesh district of Uttarakhand:** In this Gurukul, students learn Vedas, meditation, yoga as well as physical science and English in the traditional way. Here the blend of modern and ancient education is seen in a very excellent way.

Global Comparison and Perspective

The unique quality of the ancient Indian education system is that it was value-based, vibrant and holistic. Many global educational systems are adopting India's principles today.

- **Finnish Education System:** In Finland, all-round development of students, freedom for the teacher. Examination-free curriculum and value-based education system are given importance – which is no different from our Gurukul system.
- **Moral Education in Japan:** In Japan, students are taught lessons of morality, social service, and discipline from the beginning – these same elements have been revived in NEP 2020.
- **Montessori Method:** Dr. Maria Montessori has created her educational model with a self-disciplined and child-friendly method like Gurukul. The interesting and inventive style of children has also been encouraged in NEP.

Directions and Suggestions for the Future

NEP-2020 is an educational document that gives a new direction to the future India. But to implement it effectively, the following important suggestions need to be followed:

- **Teacher training and sensitization:** Teachers need to be trained not only in subject knowledge but also in value-based education and teacher-student spirit. "Train the trainer" model can be more effective.
- **Developing mother tongue based curriculum:** The language policy of NEP-2020 should be implemented effectively. High quality study material should be made available in local language in every state.
- **Promoting Yoga and Meditation:** Regular yoga and meditation sessions in schools and colleges should ensure mental health and peaceful studies of students.
- **Expansion of basic infrastructure facilities:** It is necessary to provide technical and educational facilities (online media, library, lab) in rural and backward areas for the implementation of NEP.
- **Connection between society and education:** To make the spirit of NEP meaningful, it is necessary to make society a partner in education. "School Management Committees". It should be supported by means like "Parent-Teacher Dialogue".

Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020 is not just a policy that talks about a new curriculum or framework, but it is an attempt to revive education based on Indian culture and values. In this research, we found that the elements of the Gurukul system such as - discipline, Guru-Shishya relationship, self-discipline, originality. Coexistence, yoga and spirituality are as important today as they were in the Vedic era. NEP-2020 tries to revive each such element. We can implement this policy properly. Then in the future, Indian students can become skilled, cultured and valuable citizens at the global level.

References

1. Government of India. (2020). National Education Policy 2020. Ministry of Human Resource Development. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.in>
2. Joshi, D. (2021). Value-Based Education in the Light of NEP 2020. International Journal of Indian Education, 18(3), 45-53.
3. Kumar, A. (2023). Integration of Gurukul System in Modern Education. Educational Research Review, 20(1), 75-84.
4. Ministry of Education. (2021). Implementation Handbook of NEP 2020. Government of India.
5. Nanda, S. (2022). Yoga, Ethics and Modern Curriculum. Bharatiya Shikshan Sansthan Publications.
6. Sharma, R. (2019). Ancient Indian Education System and Its Relevance Today. Journal of Indian Culture and Education, 14(2), 112-118.
7. UNESCO. (2020). Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

