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Integrating concerns of "Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam"in current teaching-learning practices

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Introduction:

Integrating the principles of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* ("the world is one family") into current teaching and learning practices involves fostering a sense of global interconnectedness, empathy, and environmental stewardship, largely facilitated by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India. This philosophy emphasizes that all beings are part of a single, interconnected family, moving education beyond mere academic achievement to include ethical, social, and cultural, and emotional growth. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is a philosophy that inculcates an understanding that the whole world is one family. It is a philosophy that tries to foster an understanding that the whole of humanity is one family. It is a social philosophy emanating from a spiritual understanding that the whole of humanity is made of one life energy. "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (often written as "Vasundhara Kutumbakam"), meaning "The World is One Family," is a profound concept rooted in ancient Indian philosophy, originating from the Mahopanishad. This idea emphasizes a vision of universal kinship, where the entire world is viewed as an interconnected family, transcending divisions of nationality, race, or religion. The term "Vasundhara" represents the Earth, and this concept advocates for a sense of shared responsibility toward each other and the planet. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is a foundational principle in Indian philosophy, particularly in the Vedanta tradition. It posits that the universe is interconnected and that all beings are part of one cosmic family. This idea emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life and the importance of compassion, empathy, and service towards others. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the ancient Indian concept that signifies the world as one family, holds profound implications for

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educational ethics. This philosophy fosters a global perspective, emphasizing interconnectedness, shared responsibility, and the holistic development of individuals as global citizens. This research article explores the application of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam in shaping educational ethics and laws, proposing a framework that aligns educational principles with the values of global unity, sustainability, and inclusive growth. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India is closely aligned with the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which emphasizes the idea of the world as one family. NEP 2020 envisions creating an education system that contributes to an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, fostering a sense of global citizenship, sustainability, and ethical responsibility among students.

Major approaches to integrating these concerns include:

Curriculum Redesign and Content Integration

Emphasizing Interconnectedness: Curricula are being redesigned to move away from parochial viewpoints, focusing instead on global challenges like climate change, poverty, and pandemics as shared issues.

Introduction of Ethical Modules: The philosophy is being incorporated into curricula, such as new chapters in NCERT Class 7 social science books, encouraging students to view humanity through a lens of unity.

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS): NEP 2020 promotes the inclusion of IKS, which teaches that nature is a sacred entity rather than just a resource for consumption, promoting ecological sustainability.

Pedagogical Shifts to Active Learning

Experiential Learning: Teachers are encouraged to use experiential learning to enhance empathy, such as project-based learning where students solve local problems with a global perspective.

Collaborative Projects: Schools are organizing community outreach and collaborative projects that break down social barriers.

Digital Interconnectedness: Using technology and digital learning to connect students with peers worldwide, fostering a sense of global community.

Promoting Cultural Inclusivity and Languages

Multilingualism: The promotion of Indian languages, as well as the teaching of foreign languages (Korean, Spanish, German, French, etc.), helps students appreciate diverse cultures and perspectives, aligning with the "one family" ethos.

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Intercultural/Interfaith Dialogue: Encouraging students to learn about different religions and cultures to foster empathy.

Focusing on Values and Life Skills

Empathy and Compassion Education: Integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) to teach kindness and reduce bullying.

Environmental Stewardship: Educating students on the interconnectedness of nature and the need for sustainable, eco-friendly lifestyles (e.g., LiFE—Lifestyle for Environment).

Gender Sensitization: Teaching students to treat all genders with respect, reducing inequality.

Teacher Training and Institutional Support

Teacher Training: Providing training to help educators promote the values of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, such as cultural sensitivity and active learning methodologies.

International Collaborations: Promoting partnerships between educational institutions to foster global exchange.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Sustainability : There is an inherent treasure of wisdom and information gained over centuries from practical empirical observations transmitted from one generation to the following generations that includes multiple environmental practices, which are linked to cultural norms and social protocols, and those contribute to shaping of the indigenous cultural identity. By means of these practices, which were fully functioning especially before colonization, communities are able to soundly use the environment and to respond and adapt to external changes, while maintaining resilience and the ability to evolve. Although the history of human on earth goes back to very many years before the colonization. As per Britannica, the term Anthropocentric world view is rooted deep in western religions and ethics. Nature came to be conceived as a mere object of exploitation and source of potential commodities, that is, something to be controlled and transformed, with the aid of technology, for productive or progressive or developmental reasons (Haila, 2000). Today's preservationist theories, which conceive human action only as a potential disturbance factor and naturalness as necessarily linked to wilderness, still maintain or even reinforce such a dualistic view. On the contrary, most indigenous cosmologies perceive everything in the universe as interconnected and interdependent. Nature and the human realm do not constitute separate domains, instead they are experienced with as sense a unity and mutual belonging. This human–nature relationship is usually depicted as symbiotic and based on reciprocity: from the natural environment indigenous people attain their subsistence and autonomy, at the same time contributing to its safeguarding. It may be

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easier to understand this relationship by focusing on a specific feature, namely the relationship between plants (e.g. sweetgrass) and humans, as described by the Potawatomi (Native North American) scholar and botanist Kimmerer (2013): With a long, long history of cultural use, sweetgrass has apparently become dependent on humans to create "disturbance" that stimulates its compensatory growth. Humans participate in a symbiosis in which sweetgrass provides its fragrant blades to the people and people, by harvesting, create the conditions for sweetgrass to flourish. (p. 164) Reciprocity is a matter of keeping the gift [from nature] in motion through self-perpetuating cycles of giving and receiving (. . .) Through reciprocity the gift is replenished. All of our flourishing is mutual. (pp. 165–166) Kimmerer makes it clear that reciprocity involves human active participation to the natural cycles. People should learn both how not to take too much—thus exceeding the plants' capacity "to share again"—and too little. It is in the balance point that resides the possibility to achieve a sustainable harvesting, something which corresponds to "the way we treat a plant with respect, by respectfully receiving its gift" (p. 165). Perhaps a somewhat nebulous concept on the surface, sacredness, from a Hindu perspective, stems from the idea that all of creation originates from the same Divine source, and so everyone and everything, including animals, nature, and even inanimate objects, are permeated by its presence.

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णममदंपर्ू णणत्पूर्णमुदच्यते।

पूर्णस्य पर्ू णमणदणय पूर्णमेवणवमिष्यते॥

ॐ िणम्तः िणम्तः िणम्तः ॥

Om Puurnnam-Adah Puurnnam-Idam Puurnnaat-Puurnnam-Udacyate |

Puurnnasya Puurnnam-Aadaaya Puurnnam-Eva-Avashissyate ||

Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ||

Challenges to Implementation

Despite its relevance, the implementation of these principles faces hurdles, including limited resources in some areas, language barriers, and a curriculum that is often too rigid or focused on examinations. Successful integration requires a collaborative effort to move from merely teaching the concept to living it within the school community.

Conclusion

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam emphasizes global interconnectedness, shaping educational ethics towards collective responsibility. NEP 2020 aligns with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, promoting global citizenship and ethical education in India's framework. Educational ethics should integrate sustainability, compassion, and social justice principles derived from Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. Curricula must address global challenges, fostering ethical decision-making

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and social responsibility among students. Experiential learning enhances empathy and compassion, integral to cultivating a sense of global family.

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