

EduInspire

- An International Peer Reviewed and Referred Journal



VOL: XI

ISSUE: I

JANUARY, 2024

Council for Teacher Education Foundation,
(CTEF, Gujarat Chapter)

Reflection of Educational Thought of Swami Dayananda Saraswati in NEP-2020

Prof. Mahesh Narayan Dixit

Department of Education, Faculty of Education (IASE)

Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad-380009

Email: maheshndixit@gujaratvidyapith.org

Abstract

There are several thinkers who have made great effort to shape the nation by their social, religious, political and educational works. Educational thought of these thinkers is consistently influencing to educational pollicises of India. National Educational Policy-2020 is also received significant inputs from the thought of these thinkers of India though they are not acknowledged by particular name but their thoughts are easily visible. Swami Dayanand Saraswati is one of them whose ideas of education and social works were rejuvenated Indian society at that time and has relevancy today too. Reflection of the educational thought of Swami Dayanad can be easily seen in NEP-2020. NEP-2020 is the first national education policy of 21st century of India. It intends to shape the destiny of nation in the light of modernity along with the deep root of Indian culture, traditions and ethos. For this, Indian knowledge system has been endorsed by this policy. It believes that the Indian knowledge system has great potential to achieve the policies' objectives. Swami Dayananda Saraswati was a distinguished and influential Hindu religious leader, scholar, and social reformer whose educational thoughts reflects in NEP-2020. He was fully convinced that the nation cannot prosper and get it full glory unless education spreads. He also advocates for the Indianization of whole education system. This paper is written to explore the reflections of educational thoughts of Dayananda Saraswati in NEP-2020.

Key words: Education, NEP-2020, Reflection of Educational Thoughts of Dayananda

Swami Dayananda Saraswati was a distinguished and influential Hindu religious leader, scholar, and social reformer. He was born on February 12, 1824, in a small village of Gujarat named Tankara. His childhood name was Mool Shankar. He later became renowned as Swami Dayananda

Saraswati after embracing the ascetic life. Mool Shankar's early education took place in his native village and later in Mathura and Varanasi, where he studied Sanskrit, the Vedas, and other traditional scriptures. From a young age, he showed an inclination toward spirituality and a deep desire for

understanding the true essence of religion. In 1849, at the age of 25, Mool Shankar took the vows of sannyasa (renunciation) and assumed the name Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Choosing a life of asceticism, he embarked on a journey of rigorous study, meditation, and self-discipline.

Brief introduction of his works: In 1875, Swami Dayananda Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj in Mumbai. The Arya Samaj aimed to rejuvenate and reform Hindu society based on the principles of the Vedas. The organization played a significant role in promoting social and religious reforms, advocating for Vedic teachings, and combating practices such as idol worship and caste discrimination. Swami Dayananda Saraswati was a creative writer and composed several influential works. His great writing work, "Satyarth Prakash" (The Light of Truth), is a comprehensive critique of various religious beliefs and a presentation of the Vedic philosophy. He also wrote commentaries on the Vedas, emphasizing their importance and their relevance to contemporary society. Swami Dayananda Saraswati vigorously opposed certain practices within Hinduism that he deemed as corruptions over time. He spoke against idol worship, polytheism, caste-

based discrimination, and rituals not supported by Vedic texts. His teachings emphasized monotheism, the authority of the Vedas, and the pursuit of knowledge through reason and understanding. His educational thoughts can be understood by his narration depicted in 'Satyarth Prakash' and the principals as well as Dayanand Anglo Vedic (DAV) schools' daily life. DAV schools are the live examples of his educational thought that are pursuing great endeavour to Indianize entire education system along with modernity which is the prime concern of NEP-2020.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati was a staunch advocate for education. He believes in providing education to all, irrespective of caste or gender. He worked towards the upliftment of the downtrodden, championing the cause of widows, and advocating for the equality of women. Swami Dayananda Saraswati's teachings and reforms left an ineradicable mark on Indian society. The Arya Samaj became a significant force for social and religious change. His emphasis on a rational and scientific approach to religion and his efforts to revive Vedic knowledge continue to influence thinkers and reformers in contemporary India.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati passed away on October 30, 1883, leaving behind a legacy of reform, education, and a revitalized interpretation of Vedic philosophy. His legacy has the important inputs and ways to successfully implement the NEP-2020. According to Dr. S. Radhakrishna, “among the markers of modern India who had played an important role in the spiritual uplift of people and kindled the fire of patriotism, in me, among them Swami Dayananda has occupied the chief place.”

Educational Thought of Dayananda

Saraswati: According to Dayanand, education which increases knowledge, civilization, religious spirit etc. and removes the defects of ignorance is called education. Dayananda was fully convinced that the nation cannot prosper unless education spreads. But our education system should not be a mere carbon copy of the western type of education, it should be deeply rooted with Indian ethos and culture. There should be a law to compel the parents to send every boy or girl who is eight years old to school. He not merely proposed educational thoughts just in theory but he outlined the structure and environment of school as Gurukuls too. He advocates that every boy

and every girl should be sent to Gurukuls where they stay with their gurus. All students should be treated equally whether he/she is the child of a king's or farmer. The ten basic principles of Arya Samaj provide the guideline for education too. In Styarth Prakash he wrote that the original source of all true knowledge and the things that are known through knowledge is God. Veda is the book of all true knowledge. Reading, teaching and listening to Vedas is the supreme religion of all Aryans. One should always be ready to accept the truth and abandon the untruth.

He firmly believes that all work should be done as per Dharma i.e. considering truth and falsehood. To do good to the world - the main objective of this society is to achieve physical, spiritual and social progress. Ignorance should be destroyed and knowledge should be increased. Everyone should not be satisfied with his own progress, but should understand his progress in the progress of all. All human beings should remain dependent in following social rules which are beneficial for all, and everyone should be free in every beneficial rule.

At a time when Hinduism was divided between the various schools of

philosophy and theology, Swami Dayanand went straight back to the Vedas as he considered them the most authoritative repository of knowledge and truth spoken in the "Words of God." His educational Ideas have not been made assisting and complementary in the Indian education system that Swami Dayanand Saraswati educational values are fully useful, practicable and relevant with a view to Indianization, nationalization and reconstruction of the presently prevalent Indian education system (Mishra, 2017). The above narration of Dayananda clearly seems similar when NEP-2020 desire to establish the entire education system based on Indian knowledge system and wants to orient next generation with Indian glory.

NEP 2020: An overview

National Education Policy-2020 is the first education policy of India to shape its destiny in 21st century. It aims to address several longstanding educational challenges in India. It is a comprehensive policy framework for the development of education in India and aims to bring about significant reforms in the education system and address various challenges that the sector faces. NEP-2020 focuses on the holistic development of students by encouraging a

multidisciplinary approach to education. NEP-2020 recognizes the importance of education and aims to provide a strong foundation for children's learning in their formative years. It emphasizes the development of cognitive, social, and emotional skills during early childhood. The policy places a significant emphasis on skill development and vocational education. The policy focuses on enhancing the quality of teachers by emphasizing continuous professional development, training, and support. It aims to attract and retain high-quality educators in the system. The policy addresses issues of inclusivity and aims to provide equal educational opportunities to all, irrespective of socio-economic background, gender, or other factors. The Indianization of whole education system is a prime concern of NEP-2020.

Reflections of Educational thought of Swami Dayananda Saraswathi in NEP-2020

National Education Policy-2020 is seen as a transformative and forward-looking document that seeks to address the evolving needs of the education sector in India and prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century with the proper linkages of Indian ethos, culture and heritage. The

National Education Policy-2020 emphasizes the concept of "Indianization" in several aspects of education. The term "Indianization" refers to the infusion of Indian culture, values, and traditions into the education system. NEP-2020 aims to reconnect education with the country's cultural roots while promoting a global perspective. It is very clearly narrated in the NEP-2020 that Indian knowledge system must be the foundation of entire education system. In this concern the proposed educational thought and works of Swami Dayananda Saraswati is very relevant and has the capacity to guide all stakeholder in Indianization of education as well as resolve the current social problems too.

According to Swami Dayanand, education imparts true and real knowledge about the matter, self-development and welfare of all living beings. Dayananda says, "A man without education is only a man in name. It is bound in duty of a man to get education, become virtuous, be free from malice and preach for all well-being of people advancing the cause of righteousness (Banu, 2023). NEP-2020 has been influenced by various educational thinkers, philosophers, and ideologies. Swami Dayananda is among those some great

thinkers, whose ideas and works reflects in it. Though the Swami Dayananda Saraswathi's name or his ideas are not explicitly mentioned in the official documents of NEP-2020, however, the reflection of the educational thought of Swamiji is clearly visible. A general overview of reflections of Swami Dayananda Saraswathi's educational thought in the NEP-2020, can be seen in following points.

1. Universal and Compulsory Education:

Swami Dayanand was a strong supporter of universal education in the country. He has elaborately discussed his ideas regarding education in the second and third chapter of Satyarth Prakash. He says "both state and society should make it compulsory upon all to send their children (both male and female) to school after the fifth or eighth year and it should be made a penal offence to keep a child at home after that age. He advocated equal rights for men and women in educational matters (Chand & Gaur, 2021). He believes that there should be a rule and arrangement from the state for that children whose parents are not able to provide regular education to his children. NEP-2020 also aligned with this notion and demands for free and compulsory education.

2. Indian culture and social reform as a foundation of education:

Social reform and cultural development are the prime component in NEP-2020 which can be consider as the prime reflection of Swami Dayanand's educational thought. Swamiji established Arya Samaj worked praiseworthy in the field of education. The establishment of education institutions, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of India, and the formation of the Gurukula Academy at Hardwar exemplify the very rightful eagerness of many Samajists to revive the ancient ideal and traditions of Hindu education (Singh, 2017). His works in the field of education are very fruitful for social reform and culture upliftment.

3. Holistic Development: Swami Dayananda emphasized holistic development, encompassing physical, mental, and moral aspects. NEP-2020 also promotes a holistic approach, aiming to develop cognitive, socio-emotional, and practical skills in students.

4. Importance of Moral and Ethical Values: Swami Dayananda stressed the importance of moral and ethical values in education. NEP-2020 similarly underscores the integration of ethical and moral reasoning in education to foster responsible

citizenship. It promotes the understanding and appreciation of India's rich cultural and philosophical heritage, aiming to instils a sense of pride and responsibility among students.

5. Indian languages as a Medium of Instruction: NEP-2020 emphasises mother tongue as a medium of instruction at least up to secondary level and also encourages the study of classical languages like Sanskrit, Tamil and Malayalam. Swami Dayananda Saraswati also advocated to use Indian language basically Sanskrit and Hindi as a medium of instruction.

6. Vedic Knowledge: Swami Dayananda advocated for the inclusion of Vedic knowledge in the curriculum. Being a Vedic Scholar of great repute, he attaches great importance to study of the Vedas, Vedanta, Upanishadas and Scriptures and he says that high- minded sages have put in their books intricate subjects in a very easy form. This advantage cannot be derived from the books of petty- minded authors. The object of sages is to put difficult things in an easy form, so that common people may get the maximum good from the minimum labour (Yadav, 2021). While NEP-2020 does not specifically mention Vedic knowledge, though it supports to introduce Indian

knowledge system that is basically derived from the Vedas, Sub-Vedas, and other ancient literature. NEP-2020 wants the integration of traditional Indian knowledge systems, including Ayurveda, Yoga, and traditional arts and sciences, into the mainstream education curriculum. It also supports a multidisciplinary approach that was the core of ancient education system which was firmly promoted by Swamiji.

7. Promotion of Indian Languages: The policy stresses the importance of mother tongue or local language as the medium of instruction in the early stages of education. It aims to preserve and promote the linguistic diversity of India. This move is seen as a way to connect students with their cultural and linguistic heritage. This lingual concern clearly seems as a reflection of educational thought of Swami Dayananda.

8. Teacher Training and Professional Development: Swami Dayananda highlighted the importance of qualified and dedicated teachers. He always seen teachers as the centre in education process. Therefore he was much concerned with the teacher's moral character and knowledge. NEP-2020 emphasizes the need for quality teacher training and continuous professional development, recognizing the crucial role of

educators in shaping the learning environment.

Conclusion: Swami Dayanand Saraswati has made a beautiful coordination of ancient and modern Indian ideals in his educational plan. keeping education separate from superstitions, economic disparities, religious narrow-mindedness and caste-based restrictions, he makes it possible for men and women of all castes to get education and enjoy equal rights. Directly or indirectly these objectives are already accepted in NEP-2020 too. Above discussed eight points also explain the reflection of Swami Dayanand Saraswati's educational thought in NEP-2020.

References

Banu, A. N. (2023). Swami Dayananda Saraswati's perspective on education: analysing the key principles and philosophies of education and exploring their relevance and applicability in contemporary educational practices, *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science* (Peer-Reviewed, Open Access, Fully Refereed International Journal) Vol.05(12), pp.650-654.

- Retrieved from chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclef indmkaj/https://www.irjmets.com/uploadedfiles/paper/issue_12_december_2023/47136/final/fin_irjmets1702109549.pdf
- Chand, S. & Gaur N. (2021). Education system under Arya Samaj “Ansh - Journal of History” A Peer Reviewed International Refereed Online Journal, Vol. 03(02), pp. 43-49. Retrieved from <https://ansh.ichrc.co.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/EDUCATION-SYSTEM-UNDER-ARYA-SAMAJ-Nidhi.pdf>
- Mishra, P. k. (2017). A study of educational ideas of swami Dayanand Saraswati in present era, *Jyotirmay Research Journal of Education*, Vol. 5 (2), pp. 110-116.
- Singh, K. (2015). Dayananda Saraswati's Educational Philosophy, Social and Political Ideas. *International Educational E-Journal, {Quarterly}*, ISSN 2277-2456, Volume-IV, Issue-IV. Pp. 89-96. Retrieved on 10th January 2023 from chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclef indmkaj/<https://www.oirj.org/ejournal/oct-nov-dec2015/16.pdf>
- Yadav, C. D. (2021). Dayanand Saraswati's Educational Philosophy and Importance of His Thoughts in The Modern Era, Shodhshauryam, International Scientific Refereed Research Journal, Vol 4(3) pp. 198-207.

Paper Received : 21st November, 2023

Paper Reviewed : 28th November, 2023

Paper Published : 1st January, 2024