



Relevance of Gopabandhu Das's educational philosophy in the context of NEP 2020: A critical study

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Abstract

The present article examines the relevance of the educational thoughts of Gopabandhu Das with regard to NEP 2020. Gopabandhu Das believed that education is the means of developing good character, nationality, self-reliance, and social service within an individual. His educational philosophy deeply reflected on Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya, where education was connected with nature, society, practical and life-oriented learning, and service to others. Similarly, NEP 2020 focuses on holistic development, experiential learning, skill development, education, value-based education, and learner-centered education. This article indicates how Gopabandhu's educational thoughts can be applied in the present education system. This study also investigates that his educational ideas are practically relevant for achieving the aims of NEP 2020.

Keywords: Gopabandhu Das, educational thoughts, Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya, NEP 2020, value-based education, skill development education, holistic development

Introduction

"By education, I do not mean the teaching in school. Education is what was imparted in the ancient Indian institution and center of religion."

- Gopabandhu das

Education is a powerful means of shaping individuals and building a progressive society and nation. It's progress extends beyond the transmission of knowledge; it contributes to the formation of character, moral values, essential skills, social responsibility, and a sense of national identity. The development of Indian education has been influenced by the valuable thought and contribution of many eminent thinkers and educationalists. Among all distinguished leaders, Pandit Gopabandhu Das holds a prominent position in the development of education and society in Odisha.

Pandit Gopabandhu Das was a poet, educationalist, social reformer, nationalist, and visionary thinker who has made a significant contribution to transforming both the individual and society. For him, education is theoretical or bookish knowledge. He believed that true education should develop the learner's intellectual, moral, social, and practical skills, which will ultimately develop the community and nation. His significant contribution to education is Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya. It is an alternative model of education that connected learning with life, society, and nation.

In the present educational context, the national education policy 2020 aims to bring comprehensive reforms in the Indian education system. This policy emphasizes learner-centered, inclusive education; vocational education; value-added education; experiential and skill-based learning; mother tongue education; constitutional values; and overall development of the learner. These above key dimensions are closely related to the principle of Gopabandhu's educational philosophy. That's why his educational thoughts are highly relevant to the individual life context.

Gopabandhu Das's educational ideas have many similarities with the main principles of NEP 2020. He provided

importance to overall development, character building, learning by doing, vocational education, mother tongue education, and service for the nation and society. These ideas are also reflected in the objectives of NEP 2020. However, the needs and demands of education have changed with the changing economy, society, and technology. Therefore, Gopabandhu's educational philosophy cannot be directly adopted in its original form today. Instead, his ideas should be carefully studied, adopted, and modified to meet the changing needs and challenges of modern education.

The present study aims to investigate the relevance of Gopabandhu Das's educational philosophy in relation to NEP 2020. It focuses on the similarities and differences between Gopabandhu's educational thought and the major aims of NEP 2020. This study also investigates how his thoughts can be useful in developing value-based, inclusive, socially responsible, and holistic education in the present Indian educational context.

Literature review

Sarat Kumar Rout's study (2012) ^[1, 5], "Gopabandhu's Innovations and Experimentation in Educational Practices," published in the Journal of Indian Education by NCERT, examined the ideas and experimental practices of Gopabandhu Das and his Satyabadi, where education was viewed not only for acquiring knowledge but also for developing the personality of the students. This study is especially important for Gopabandhu educational practices such as free and universal education, open-air schooling, activity-centered learning community center education, practical education, and earning while learning. He suggested such a type of education should be provided to be closely connected with real-life society and the development of responsible citizens.

Biswamitra Purohit and Dr. Iswar Patel, in their study (2022) ^[2], "Relevance of Educational Philosophy of Gopabandhu Das in Present India Context," discusses the importance of Gopabandhu Das's educational thoughts in

modern India. In this study he emphasizes character building, moral education, practical education, self-reliance, and holistic development. It indicates that his educational ideas are still relevant in the 21st century.

Debaprasad Das (2024), in his study "Educational Thoughts of Utkal Mani Gopabandhu Das: Its Impacts on the Present Educational System," examines his major educational thoughts and relevance in the present educational system. He emphasizes in his study value education, character building, practical education, social service, and holistic development. It indicates that most of Gopabandhu's ideas remain useful in modern education.

Rajiba Lochan Mahapatra (2021), in his study "The Educational Locale of Pandit Gopabandhu Das: A Bird's-Eye View," examines Gopabandhu Das's educational thoughts and his educational experiment at Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya. It emphasizes national education, character building, social service, moral values, and practical learning. This study is highly relevant to NEP 2020 and contemporary education.

Chittaranjan Misra (2021) studies alternatives in education: the Satyabadi model discusses the educational ideas of Gopabandhu and its contributions to Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya. Here he discusses how education prepares students for social service, human values and patriotism, equality, and national consciousness. Overall, this article makes it clear that Satyabadi was the alternative model of education in Odisha.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the similarities between Gopabandhu Das's educational ideas and NEP 2020.
2. To analyze the relevance of his ideas on value education, character building, holistic development, practical education, social service, and nationalism in NEP 2020.
3. To critically assess the present relevance of Gopabandhu Das's educational philosophy in the context of NEP 2020.

Methodology

In the present study, the researcher only used secondary and qualitative data collected from different books, articles, newspapers, and websites. All the data are qualitative and secondary; the researcher analyzed the data using thematic analysis, content analysis, and document analysis.

Educational thoughts of Gopabandhu Das:

One of the important educational thoughts of Gopabandhu Das is Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya. It was first started in 1909 with 19 students at Sakhigopal, Puri District, Odisha. This school was an open-air school surrounded by trees such as bakul, banyan, peepal, and chhuriana. Because the school was situated in a natural grove, it was popularly known as the "Grove School" and "Gupta Brindaban." Its system of education was also inspired by the ancient gurukul tradition, where students learned in a natural and peaceful environment. He suggested education is not only for acquiring knowledge but also focused on character building, discipline, physical development, social awareness, and moral values. This Satyabadi school followed some principles of the ancient gurukul system, particularly close interaction between teachers and students. Here students are encouraged to learn with observation, activities, and direct experience rather than depending only on textbooks. He also

believed that education should prepare students to serve society and the nation.

NEP 2020:

The national education policy (NEP 2020) is a crucial step taken by the govt. of India to improve and reform the education system. Which was approved on 29 July 2020.

It gives special emphasis on the overall development of learners rather than focusing only on academic achievement. It includes the development of knowledge, skills, attitude, critical thinking, values, ethics, and social responsibility. This policy recommended experiential learning, activity-based learning, vocational education, multilingualism, and the use of culture and regional languages.

This policy viewed that education should be connected with Indian culture, society, and everyday life. It places less importance on rote learning and always emphasizes learning through experience, practical skills, and understanding. It also spread diversity into different social and economical backgrounds, which ultimately created opportunities to be equal and inclusive for learners.

NEP 2020 is highly relevant to Gopabandhu's educational thoughts. In his philosophy, all-round development, character building, practical learning, learning through mother tongue, social service, and national building have been emphasized. Therefore, NEP 2020 offers a suitable framework to investigate how far

Gopabandhu's ideas are relevant in the present educational context. And also understand similarity aspects of the educational thoughts of Gopabandhu and NEP 2020.

Educational vision of Gopabandhu Das's a comparative perspective with NEP 2020:

Gopabandhu Das was the prominent leader and educationist in the Indian educational context. His educational thoughts are based on Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya, where he emphasizes not only bookish knowledge but also character development, discipline, self-reliance, social service, and holistic development. All his educational thoughts also significantly compare with NEP 2020, which considered holistic development, mother tongue education, activity-centered learning, value-based education, and national consciousness.

1. Holistic Development

Gopabandhu Das believed that education should focus on the overall development of the learners, including physical, mental, social, and character development. He didn't confine education as limited to bookish knowledge. NEP 2020 also gives importance to the holistic development of students, which includes the physical, intellectual, social, ethical, emotional, and creative abilities of the individual. Therefore, there is a clear connection between Gopabandhu's educational vision and the holistic approach of NEP 2020. His emphasis on the all-round development of learners is similar to the present policy's focus on developing intellectual abilities along with values, skills, character, and social responsibility. Thus, gopabandhu educational ideas continue to have significant relevance in contemporary education.

2. Experiential and activity-based learning

The Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya focuses on activity-based learning, or learning by doing. NEP 2020 similarly gives importance to experiential, activity-based, and competency-

based learning and also focuses on understanding skills rather than rote learning of students. The similarity indicates Gopabandhu put these ideas into practice through Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya, where NEP 2020 focuses on these similar techniques during the teaching-learning process. Thus, this experiential and activity-based learning has meaningful connections with teaching and learning methods suggested by NEP 2020.

3. Mother tongue education and culture:

Gopabandhu's educational vision was closely related to the language, culture, and social life of Odisha. NEP 2020 also has special recommendations for the mother tongue, regional language, and local language of the students, especially during the early years of education. Both approaches recognize that education becomes more meaningful when students learn with the mother tongue.

4. Education for social responsibility:

Gopabandhu strongly defines education as a means of serving society and rebuilding the nation. This type of education was provided in Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya. NEP 2020 also aims to develop responsible citizens, creating values and making them social leaders to take social responsibility. Both are not only focused on the individual but also on the process. Which creates a feeling of national purpose.

5. Practical and vocational education:

Gopabandhu tries to make a child self-reliant by providing education, which builds the practical preparation for life. NEP 2020 places importance on vocational education by integrating academic learning rather than giving only a separate stream. Gopabandhu viewed making children self-reliant through practical education as highly relevant to the present context in NEP 2020.

6. Teacher-student relationship:

In Gopabandhu's Satyabadi, the relationship between teachers and students is just like a father and son's close connection. Teachers are not only treated as instructors but also as examples and guides for students. NEP 2020 focused on the idea that teachers should be educational transformers, ones who try to adopt learner-centered and innovative pedagogical practices. Both views are giving teachers roles that majorly extend beyond bookish knowledge.

7. Community-cantered education:

Gopabandhu's school emphasized community education. Where students live together and learn cooperation, self-discipline, and social responsibility. NEP 2020 also places importance on that type of education, which connects the learners' real-life surroundings, community, and experiences. Here both are given importance to a community-centered education approach.

Relevance of Gopabandhu Das's educational thoughts in the present educational scenario

1. Holistic development of learners

Gopabandhu viewed education as a means of developing the complete personality of the learner. He emphasized education is not only the acquisition of knowledge but also developing intellectually, physically, morally, emotionally, and socially. This is also highly relevant in the present

education scenario. Which has moved beyond examination and text that directly link NEP 2020.

2. Importance of moral and value education

Gopabandhu gave special importance to character building, honesty, discipline, morality, and human values. These values are highly essential for helping students become ethical and socially conscious individuals. So, the value-added course has been given special importance in NEP 2020.

3. Education for social service

According to Gopabandhu, education should prepare individuals for the welfare of society. He emphasized that helping others, social responsibility, cooperation, empathy, and the sense of community participation are relevant in the present context.

4. Importance of mother tongue

Gopabandhu emphasize the regional local language and mother tongue in education. And NEP 2020 also keeps a special place for mother tongue through education for early childhood. This approach can make learning more meaningful and understandable.

5. Learning through practical experience

Gopabandhu did not support education through only books; students should also gain knowledge through their activities and practical experience. This idea is presently relevant in education. There is special importance to activity and experiment in NEP 2020.

6. Education as a means of national development

The aims the educational philosophy of Gopabandhu were to create an educated and socially responsible citizen who could contribute to the welfare and development of the nation. It is very much relevant because contemporary education extremely needs those types of socially and nationally responsible citizens.

7. Learning in connection with nature

In Gopabandhu Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya, a learning should occur as an natural consequence and an open-air environment. Today this idea can be relevant to environmental education, nature-based learning and sustainable development.

8. Teacher as an ideal or guide

Gopabandhu gave special place to teachers in their thoughts. He viewed that teachers not only teaching but also guiding and motivating the students for overall development.

9. Inclusive and accessible education

He suggests education to learners which is beyond the social boundary and narrow-minded. this concept is highly relevant as inclusive, equitable and accessible education in NEP 2020. These three aspects are a major concern in the new education policy.

10. Multidisciplinary and broad education

Gopabandhu's educational vision was not limited on bookish knowledge but also it supported the development of different aspects of personality and knowledge. this aspect in NEP 2020 as multidisciplinary education. Here students

choose different diverse backgrounds and subjects in their own choice and freedom.

11. Development of skill and self-reliance:

Gopabandhu believed that education should make a child self-reliant in the future. So, he was given different skills, vocational abilities, problem-solving capacity, and confidence among learners. These skills help learners to become a self-reliant person in the 21st century.

12. Development of social and national consciousness:

Gopabandhu wanted to create social and national consciousness among students so, that they can actively participate in different social works. And also, they have developed skills like social responsibility, cooperation and concern for the nation.

Conclusion

Overall, the educational thoughts of Gopabandhu Das have significant relevance in the present educational scenario. He emphasizes holistic development, moral values, social service, mother tongue education, practical experience learning, national development, learning through natural consequences, and self-reliance, which is deeply reflected with regard to NEP 2020. His educational thoughts say it should not only provide bookish knowledge but also prepare learners to become capable, responsible, and socially conscious individuals. However, Gopabandhu's ideas need to be modified according to the changing needs of present-day education. His thoughts can be linked with new fields such as digital learning, inclusive education, skill development, global awareness, and 21st-century skills. In this way, his educational thoughts can provide useful guidance for developing an education system that mostly focuses on the learners' overall growth, moral values, social responsibility, and practical skills in contemporary India.

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