

# DEEN DAYAL UPADHYAYA'S VISION FOR AN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION SYSTEM

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## Abstract

*The paper delineates the coherent vision of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya about an indigenous education system mainly based on the cultural and intellectual legacy of Indian civilization. The critique of Westernized education by him, the focus on value-based learning, and his arguments regarding self-reliance in education are discussed. This study discusses the import of his ideas in light of recent changes in the field of education, especially the NEP 2020. It also discusses the other education systems that have existed in India, the inefficiencies of the government, and the emergence of self-reliance in education. The very long-term relevance of Upadhyaya's philosophy is enunciated via his contribution in terms of shaping educational policies in India.*

**Keywords:** Indigenous Education, Integral Humanism, Vocational Learning, National Education Policy, Cultural Preservation

## Introduction

Integral Humanism is the name of the philosophy of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya (1916-1968) — one of the best-known political thinkers and social philosophers in Indian philosophy, whose philosophy helps in the all-around development of human beings and society Upadhyaya (1965). He felt that education in India had to be grounded in indigenous knowledge traditions, values and self-reliance Thapar (2016). This essay looks at his ideas towards developing indigenous education and makes the case against colonial legacies while arguing for a model in accordance with Indian culture.

The Legacy of Colonialism and the Need for Indigenous Education Upadhyaya was fiercely opposed to the colonial educational system that the British colonial powers imposed on India because he felt it estranged Indians from their heritage. According to him, Macaulay's educational system *contaminated the minds* of Indian students with the Western viewpoint and caused them to lose touch with their cultural roots. Instead, he highlighted the value of an educational system that promotes independence, moral accountability, and patriotism.

## Review of Related Literature

The Indian civilization have been inventing, innovating, and educating themselves since the 5th century BC. Brahminic Gurukul and Islamic Madrasa methods gained prominence in the Indian subcontinent. Nevertheless, gender discrimination along with selective female killing has defined Indian standings through time. The first school set up entirely for girls was in British India in the year of 1848. By means of education as well as nation building, the Indian National Congress formed an unnatural nation that stood together to fight against British rule. However, India's Education for All initiative remains distant from the reality of genuinely equal and open opportunity to primary education (Mukherjee, 2015). Few schools that teach secondary and tertiary education have their own unique teaching techniques, and there is no doubt that these indigenous approaches are profoundly influenced by the different religious systems. This study seeks to analyse how these institutions have helped to integrate education, particularly at the secondary school level, systematically during the ancient, mediaeval, colonial, and post-independence phases. This study aims to explore the

differences and similarities of mid-level and higher education systems from the perspective of response to formalization of education in terms of feedback response to its positive and negative aspects. The evolution of these religious systems' regimes from prehistoric to post-independent times are reviewed with respect to (a) purpose, (b) method of teaching, and (c) teaching results (Sindhuja & Shama, 2021).

To tackle the complex nature of governance in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi put forth the paradigm of 'minimum government, maximum governance'. Unfortunately, the underprivileged and the disenfranchised remain invisible to governance. With its nine pillars, Digital India aims to uplift these ignored individuals: digitally, by providing them empowerment, and socially, by strengthening informed collective action where the process of people's participation in welfare governance and policymaking takes priority. Atmanirbhar Bharat conveys Deendayal Upadhyaya's antyodaya and Mahatma Gandhi's sarvodaya. The minimal role of governance is to enhance the ability of the people to participate in creating modern India (Ashok, 2022).

The present research paper deals with the influence of Deendayal Upadhyaya's philosophical notions on the formulation and objectives of India's National Education Policy (NEP). Deendayal Upadhyaya, with his doctrine of *Integral Humanism*, put forward the philosophy emphasizing the need for multidimensional development in a person and society, based on India's cultural and spiritual heritage. The innovative concept for education basically focuses on self-reliance, inclusivity, and moral development while marrying the traditional with the contemporary. These ideas of Upadhyaya concerning self-sufficiency, cultural relevance, and value-based education are explicated along the lines of the NEP's holistic orientation, - its promotion of Indian languages and even its proposal for vocational education. In addition, the philosophy behind guaranteeing access and equity under the NEP reflects Upadhyaya's vision where every section of society, including marginalised groups, must be given equal opportunity for education. This research investigates and highlights the continuing impact of Upadhyaya's thoughts in establishing that education builds a culturally vibrant and just society through a comparative analysis of his philosophy in education within the vital characteristics of the NEP. This study, therefore, establishes the continuing relevance of Upadhyaya's thought in the NEP within the context of his theoretical framework (Ranta et al., 2024).

Against the belief of general opinion of a self-reliant philosophy arising only because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this thematic paper argues that self-reliance is a more than a century-old concept, and it has incarnated itself into the modern form well before COVID-19. The paper has presented and analysed the various paradigms of self-reliance for the last 100 years, from Swadeshi & Swaraj movement, Gram Swaraj, Kumarappa's Model of Ecological Economics to Integral Humanism. The paper shows the hands of the concepts of modern self-reliance with the help of an analysis of international trade trends over the last 3 decades. After this analysis, the paper propagates the modern self-reliant theory and highlights how the Government of India has adapted this in the Indian context. The paper further elucidates on ten game-changing reform measures taken by the Government of India since the outbreak of the pandemic to move towards self-reliance. The paper has pointed out five challenges that would stand on India's pathway towards self-reliance and has offered way forwards on each of them so that Aatma Nirbharata evolves into reality (Nirbhar et al., 2021).

Indian civilization has a rich history of knowledge, spanning from Vedas to Sri Aurobindo. The Mundakopanisad divides organized knowledge into paramatma and worldly knowledge, with disciplines like philosophy, architecture, and mathematics. Ancient Indian masters, Kautilya and Bhīṣma, followed realpolitik (Brig AP Singh, 2022).

## Analysis of the Reviewed Literature

The reviewed literature is examined and classed in order to improve knowledge.

### Historical Context of Education

Table 1 gives historical context of education.

**Table 1 Historical Context of Education**

Aspect	Key Insights
<b>Ancient and Medieval Education</b>	The literature highlights India's longstanding education traditions, including Gurukul and Madrasa systems (Mukherjee, 2015).
<b>Colonial Influence</b>	Gender discrimination and colonial policies shaped Indian education, with the first girls' school established in 1848.
<b>Education and Nation-Building</b>	Education played a crucial role in uniting the nation against British rule and fostering national identity.

### Governance and Educational Challenges

Table 2 gives governance and educational challenges.

**Table 2 Governance and Educational Challenges**

Issue	Analysis
Governance inefficiencies	The study critiques governance inefficiencies and the disconnect between policy and ground realities.
Digital India & Atmanirbhar Bharat	These initiatives aim to empower marginalized communities through digital access and self-reliance (Ashok, 2022).

### Influence of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya

Table 3 gives governance and educational challenges.

**Table 3 Influence of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya**

Aspect	Key insights
Integral Humanism & NEP 2020	The impact of Integral Humanism on NEP 2020 is explored, particularly in self-reliance, inclusivity, and moral development (Ranta et al., 2024).
Alignment With NEP 2020	His vision aligns with the NEP's emphasis on vocational training, cultural heritage, and equal access.

### Self-Reliance and Economic Models

Table 4 gives Self-Reliance and Economic Models.

**Table 4 Self-Reliance and Economic Models**

Concept	Key Insights
Historical Roots	The literature challenges the idea that self-reliance emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, instead tracing its roots to Swadeshi, Gram Swaraj, and Integral Humanism (Nirbhar et al., 2021).
Education & Economic Growth	Economic self-sufficiency is linked to educational reforms and national development.

## Philosophical and Cultural Knowledge Systems

Table 5 gives Philosophical and cultural knowledge systems.

**Table 5 Philosophical and Cultural Knowledge Systems**

Aspect	Key Insights
Ancient Indian Knowledge	Indian civilization has a rich history of knowledge, spanning from Vedas to Sri Aurobindo.
Philosophical Traditions	Ancient Indian masters, including Kautilya and Bhīṣma, contributed to realpolitik and knowledge systems (Brig AP Singh, 2022).
Relevance Today	Traditional knowledge plays a role in contemporary education and governance.

## Key Principles of Upadhyaya's Vision for Education

Table 6 elaborates the key principles of Upadhyaya's vision for education.

**Table 6 Key Principles of Upadhyaya's Vision for Education**

Principle	Description
Values-based education and holistic education	Promoting the education that nurture moral character, principles, holistic education and holistic development integrating intellect, spirituality, and physical aspects of the learning process. Prime Minister Narendra Modi advocates for 'minimum government and maximum governance' in India, focusing on digital empowerment and empowering marginalized sections. Digital India aims to increase participation in policy formulation and welfare, reflecting Mahatma Gandhi's sarvodaya and Deendayal Upadhyaya's antyodaya philosophy (Ashok, 2022).
Teaching in Mother Tongue	Upadhyaya says that when the mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction there is preservation of linguistic and cultural identities, boosting comprehension capacity and propelling cognitive development.
Skill Acquisition and Self Employment	His objectives included promotion of self-employment and vocational skill development and claimed that skills taught through vocational education should enable the society to become self-reliant.
Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems	He also supported the teaching in schools of Indian traditional systems like Ayurveda and other branches of traditional science.
Community Participation	Upadhyaya strongly advocated education for the community by the community. The Upadhyaya denounced the over centralized system of education and stressed the need to establish self-governing educational organizations at the local level to cater for local priorities.
Decentralization of Education	Opposed a highly centralized education model and instead promoted localized, community-driven educational institutions that cater to regional needs.

Upadhyaya, in his philosophies of education, is in consonance with NEP 2020 and other recent reforms. His aim is in coherence with the provisions of the policy on a multidisciplinary approach to education, instruction in the mother tongue, skill development, and value-oriented education. NEP

2020 takes into consideration the indigenous knowledge system and vocational training, harking back to the determinations of Upadhyaya of swadeshi and cultural preservation. Indeed, the ideals he stood for flow continuously into the contemporary reforms in education.

## Conclusion

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya's objectives concerning an indigenous education system still weigh greatly upon the discussion about India's educational landscape. He basically outlined the steps to building a self-sufficient and morally enlightened society or community through a broad-based education value-oriented, skill-oriented, and culturally based. Furthermore, it has to do with how self-sufficiency and vocational education influenced both the NEP 2020. His ideology is also still relevant today, in view of the historical evolution of the Indian education system, governance issues, and self-reliance movements. As India delves into educational reforms, his vision renders insight into the construction-based cultural legacy with achievements made in contemporary times.

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