
Book Review

Shiksha: Bharatiya Paripekshya

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A book entitled ***Shiksha: A Bharatiya Perspective*** opens with a quote from the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, “स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः”, which gives the essence of self-study as the core principle of learning. The term “स्वाध्याय” (*Swaadhyaya*) refers to self-study, and it is considered the highest principle of learning in Indian philosophies. The opening quote from the *Taittiriya Upanishad* in this book highlights that true education begins with one’s inquiry and introspection. The book delves into the profound depths of ancient Indian educational philosophy and is also woven with threads of spirituality, science, language, and holistic human development. This book explores how education was conceptualised and practiced in ancient Bharat and it also focuses on how its principles can be understood and applied in today’s world. With the backdrop of modern educational challenges and the recent *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020*, *Shiksha - A Bharatiya Perspective* seeks to reinvigorate the primacy of education, the spirit of self-study, continuous learning, and the integration of spiritual wisdom with scientific inquiry. This review offers an analysis of the book, its thematic richness, structural design, and its application in educational paradigms.

Overview and Context

The chapters are well organised from historical perspective, definition of Shiksha, philosophical foundation, social contexts, linguistic framework, health and education (Ayurveda) curriculum and pedagogy, Acharya (A model teacher) and their training, arts and sciences, assessments, Indian research methodology, goal of education, educational models of Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi. In short it is an encyclopedic reference book on *Bharatiya* Education. This will surely be a useful guide to all those who want to understand and implement NEP 2020. At its core, this book is an inquiry into the history of the

process of learning in Bharat. The work opens by revisiting the words of Maharishi Kanāda:

“*Yato abhyudayaniḥ śreyasasiddhiḥ sa dharmah*”

(The means through which both Abhyudaya (material prosperity) and *niḥśreyasa* (spiritual welfare), are attained is called *Dharma*.) This aphorism encapsulates the dual objective of education in ancient Bharat: The Pursuit of both worldly progress and spiritual enlightenment. The author tries to connect ancient wisdom with modern imperatives, most notably the need to counter the dependency on Western paradigms. The book situates itself as both a scholarly investigation and a call for a shift in the educational paradigm. Further, it connects the goal of NEP 2020 with potential practices drawn from the accumulated knowledge of experience. One of the book’s significant strengths is its rigorous engagement with primary sources. The book starts from the Vedic sources such as *RigVeda*, *Upanishads* and other later texts and concludes with the various models propounded by Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. The book has plenty of references from every field of knowledge. One such example of pedagogy is from *Mundaka Upanishad*, where the sage *Shaunak* inquires *Rishi Angira* about the means to know everything, a dialogue that defines knowledge into *Para Vidya* (knowledge of the ultimate reality) and *Apara Vidya* (knowledge leading to worldly benefits). It underscores the central thesis of *Shiksha* that true education must transcend academic instruction to embrace the cultivation of inner wisdom.

Integration of Spirituality and Science

A recurring theme in *Shiksha* is the call for an integrated approach that marries the spiritual and the scientific temper. This observation is pivotal in the book’s argument that Bharat’s development should be driven by indigenous talent, innovations, and the revival of its ancient educational ethos. Chapter *Bhartiya Shiksha ka Darshnik Paripekshya*, explores how education must be rooted in one’s cultural and philosophical traditions to foster originality and self-reliance.

Bharatiya Linguistic Traditions

Another vital theme that *Shiksha* explores is the power of language in the educational process. The text eloquently revisits ancient linguistic philosophies, citing *Bhartruhari* and other scholars who

asserted that language is the primary source of human cognition and knowledge. The book makes a persuasive case for the necessity of using the local language as the medium of instruction, a principle enshrined in *Bharat's Constitution (Article 350)* and highlighted in the NEP 2020. This argument is thoroughly examined in 'BHASHA SHASTRIYA PARIPEKSHYA' and highlights the cognitive benefits of learning in one's mother tongue.

Strengths and Scholarly Contributions

Shiksha stands out for its interdisciplinary pedagogical approach—merging philosophy, linguistics, science, health and education—creating a holistic perspective that is rarely seen in contemporary educational literature. By drawing on a wide array of sources and presenting them in a cohesive narrative, the book succeeds in bridging the gap between ancient wisdom and modern educational challenges.

Relevance to Contemporary Education and National Policy

One of the most compelling aspects of this book is its direct engagement with contemporary educational policy, particularly the NEP 2020. The book draws a clear line between the ancient *Bharatiya* educational traditions and the modern mandates for holistic development and multilingual education as prescribed in the policy. The discussion in 'प्राचीन भारत में शिक्षा-दर्शन' effectively connects ancient pedagogy with modern educational reform efforts. Book in its historical treatise, is a visionary work that challenges the current generation to reimagine the role of Education in National Development. By asserting that the *Nations are being built in Classrooms*, the book calls upon educators, parents, and policymakers to awaken the latent creative energies within every child. The book is not without challenges either. Frequent use of Sanskrit terms, while preserving authenticity, may present a barrier for readers who are not well-versed in classical *Bharatiya* literature. The ambitious scope of the work, attempting to cover centuries of educational thought and practices, sometimes leads to an uneven narrative flow.

Summary

In conclusion, the book is a masterfully articulated work that serves as both a scholarly resource and a practical guide for rethinking education in Bharat. Its exhaustive exploration of ancient *Bharatiya*

educational traditions, combined with a thoughtful engagement with modern policy imperatives, makes it an indispensable text for anyone interested in the future of education. Book *Shiksha – A Bharatiya Perspective*, is a significant contribution to the discourse on education. It challenges us to look beyond the confines of modernity and to rediscover a wisdom that is as ancient as it is relevant. This book is not merely a retrospective on ancient educational practices; it is a forward-looking manifesto that dares to envision a new era of education—one that is deeply rooted in cultural identity, yet dynamically responsive to the needs of a rapidly changing world. *Shiksha* book is a landmark in educational paradigm, seamlessly blending the profound wisdom of ancient Bharatiya philosophy with the evolving demands of contemporary educational reforms. Its meticulous research, comprehensive scope, and visionary insights position it as a seminal text for anyone committed to the future of education. It is an indispensable contribution to the ongoing dialogue on education reform—a work that invites us to rediscover our roots, celebrate our heritage, and harness the enduring wisdom of the past to build a brighter, more enlightened future.

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