



INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS INDIAN INSIGHTS FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA: AN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM AND NEP 2020 PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India represents a significant transformation in education, as it prioritises incorporating Indian knowledge systems, such as the Vedas, Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, into the curriculum. This policy promotes a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to learning by integrating traditional Indian wisdom with modern educational paradigms. In addition, the promotion of Indian languages, including Sanskrit, is emphasized in NEP 2020 to facilitate a more profound comprehension of classical texts. In addition, it underlines the significance of teacher training in Indian knowledge systems and promotes research in this area, thereby establishing a strong scholarly foundation. NEP 2020 endeavours to offer a globally relevant, culturally diverse, and balanced education by combining the timeless teachings of the Indian Knowledge system such as the Bhagavad Gita with contemporary education. This transformative aspect not only safeguards and advances India's intellectual heritage but also equips students to navigate and contribute to a world that is swiftly changing. With its profound philosophical teachings on ethics, duty, and righteousness, the Bhagavad Gita becomes a guidebook for developing moral and ethical values in students. This study examines how incorporating the Bhagavad Gita's educational philosophy and pedagogical components into school curricula can promote holistic student development and fulfil the aims of NEP 2020.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems, The Bhagavad Gita, National Education Policy 2020.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Mahabharata, an ancient Indian epic, contains the sacred Hindu scripture known as the Bhagavad Gita. It provides spiritual instructions, ethical guidance, and philosophical wisdom. The Gita addresses subjects such as duty, righteousness, selflessness, and reality as jnana yoga. It is not merely a collection of religious principles but a comprehensive lifestyle that influences moral values, self-discipline, decision-making, and the pursuit of meaning in life. The Gita is intricately linked to Dharma, a comprehensive life philosophy that encompasses spiritual, ethical, and moral dimensions (Kelkar & Mahajan, 2021). Currently, achieving value-oriented education among individuals is a huge difficulty. This difficulty is visible in schools, colleges, and universities, where wisdom, expertise, and dedication are lacking. The Bhagavad Gita not only retains importance in a country but also globally for its moral lessons and ethical acts. The valuable teachings of the Bhagavad Gita can upgrade the students' skills by integrating Karma, Jnana, and Bhakti Yoga into education. The Bhagavad Gita provides varying levels of learning based on individual objectives. In educational context, we can examine the relevance, goals, learning materials,

teaching techniques, curriculum, motivation, assessment processes, and roles of both learners and teachers. The Bhagavad Gita offers valuable insights into educational philosophy (Choudhary & Prabha, 2023). The Bhagavad Gita is taught as both an elective and regular subject at institutions worldwide, including India. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a medium of reform in India's educational framework, for fostering a more inclusive, holistic, and multidisciplinary approach to education. Among its many transformative elements, the policy underscores the integration of Indian knowledge systems. These ancient texts, renowned for their profound philosophical insights on duty, ethics, and the human condition, offers timeless wisdom that is highly relevant to contemporary educational goals. NEP 2020's inclusion of other Indian knowledge systems represents a new frontier in education that blends traditional wisdom with modern pedagogical practices. This approach provides a balanced and culturally enriched educational experience that prepares students to navigate the complexities of the modern world while staying grounded in their cultural roots. NEP 2020 reflects a broader vision to root education in India's rich cultural and intellectual heritage while equipping students with the skills necessary to thrive in a globalized world (Patel & Dave, 2024). By incorporating classical Indian texts into the curriculum, the policy enables students to have a deeper understanding of their cultural context and its universal values. This integration is not limited to the humanities but extends across various disciplines, fostering a multidisciplinary learning environment. NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on the promotion of Indian languages, including Sanskrit, which is integral to accessing and appreciating India's classical literature. The policy also highlights the requirement of comprehensive teacher training programs that equip educators with the knowledge and skills to effectively teach these ancient texts. Among these ancient Indian texts (Kumar, 2021) the Bhagavad Gita can be regarded as a valuable text for instilling ethical principles, critical thinking, and a sense of responsibility which are essential attributes for personal and professional development in the 21st century (Maharaj, 2021).

II. TRANSFORMATIVE ASPECTS OF NEP 2020

A comprehensive reform of the Indian educational system, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to establish a more flexible, inclusive, and all-encompassing framework (Venkateshwarlu, 2022). A comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to education, the encouragement of a variety of interests, and the development of critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities are important transforming elements. A strong pre-primary education framework and early childhood care and education (ECCE) are also prioritized in the agenda. Curriculum and pedagogical transformation are emphasised along with the importance of creativity, critical thinking, and experiential learning. In order to protect India's cultural legacy, the policy also highlights the integration of Indian knowledge systems, such as classical languages, literature, and philosophical writings. Early introduction to vocational education exposes students to practical experiences and internships that provide exposure to vocational skills. With demanding training programs and ongoing professional development opportunities, teacher training and professional development are given top priority. With an emphasis on holistic growth and the integration of technology, equity and inclusion are also prioritized.

III. THE PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

The Hindu philosophy tract Bhagavad Gita strongly emphasises comprehensive education that fosters progress on all levels-intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. Holistic development, self-realization and self-knowledge, moral and ethical education, contextual learning, the teacher's role, inquiry and critical thinking, duty and responsibility, mindfulness and concentration, adaptability and resilience, and lifelong learning are important pedagogical elements (Bala, 2022). The Gita encourages a comprehensive approach to education that strikes a balance between action, knowledge, and devotion. It highlights self-awareness and personal development, as well as self-realization and self-knowledge. Additionally, it prioritizes moral and ethical education, stressing virtues like obligation, righteousness, integrity, and honesty. With an emphasis on the teacher-student relationship and the value of supporting teacher-student interaction, the Gita encourages experiential learning and problem-based learning methodologies (Maharaj, 2021). A more moral, ethical, and resilient generation of students can be raised by implementing these lessons into modern schooling. The pedagogical aspects of the Bhagavad Gita are:

3.1. Action with Detachment /Nishkama Karma/ Desireless Duty/ Vairagya/ Selfless Action

Nishkama Karma, as contained the verse 2.47, a Bhagavad Gita teaching, underscores the importance of performing responsibilities without regard for personal gain or results, with an emphasis on the action itself rather than its results (Divya & Aswathy, 2022).

3.2. Dharma /Sense of Duty and Responsibility

The Bhagavad Gita underlines the central themes of duty as mentioned in verse 3.35, righteousness, and moral law, providing guidance to individuals on how to conduct their lives in accordance with their moral obligations and responsibilities.

3.3. Self-Realization and Inner Development

The Bhagavad Gita enables the individual to integrate reflective practices into lessons, encouraging students to connect academic learning with personal growth (Balambika, 2014) and to Provide opportunities for self-assessment and goal-setting to promote a sense of purpose and direction (SBG verse:5.25).

3.4. Service to Others (Seva)

Seva, or selfless service, is a significant aspect of *Karma Yoga*. The core pedagogy involves encouraging learners to engage in acts of service for the well-being of others, society, or the world at large. This fosters a sense of compassion, empathy, and social responsibility (SBG verse 3.25).

3.5. Mindfulness and Awareness (Dhyana)

The practice of *Karma Yoga* involves being mindful and aware of one's thoughts, intentions, and actions. Learners are encouraged to cultivate self-awareness and be present in the moment, avoiding distractions and maintaining focus on the task at hand (SBG verse 6.7).

3.6. Pedagogy of Inclusivity and Equanimity/ *samatvam*

Karma Yoga promotes inclusivity and equality. Learners are taught to treat all beings with respect and compassion, recognizing the divine presence in everyone (Balambika,2014) and understanding the interconnectedness of all life (SBG verse:2.48).

3.7. Bhakti/ Devotion/Work is Worship

Karma Yoga fosters a sense of surrender and devotion to the divine through the practice of selfless action. A more profound connection with the divine is established by the realization that one is merely an instrument in the hands of a higher power (SBG verse 8.22).

3.8. Continuous Learning and Growth

Karma Yoga promotes a philosophy of constant learning and self-improvement. Learners are encouraged to think about their acts, learn from their experiences, and grow spiritually as they engage in selfless service (SBG verse 2.50).

3.9. Integrity and Ethics

The Bhagavad Gita emphasizes the value of ethical behaviour and integrity in all deeds. Karma Yoga's primary methodology fosters a strong moral compass and encourages students to act in accordance with universal principles such as truth, honesty, and righteousness.

3.10. Tyaga/ Renunciation of Fruits of Action

Karma Yoga emphasizes submitting the results of one's actions to a higher power or transcendent entity, acknowledging the limited influence of one's own abilities in shaping these outcomes. By adopting this approach, practitioners are able to liberate themselves from the worries associated with both success and failure (SBG verse 12.12).

3.11. Yoga of Action

Karma Yoga is commonly known as the 'Yoga of Action' or the 'Yoga of Selfless Service.' It promotes the idea that individuals can achieve spiritual enlightenment by engaging in devoted and selfless acts of service, considering it as a means to obtain emancipation (SBG verse 3.3).

3.12. Dedication and Accountability

The Gita teaches students how to regulate stress and emotions, which promotes well-being. It encourages empathy, respect, fairness, self-actualization, ethics, critical thinking, resilience, cultural values, and fraternity. In times of sectarianism, intolerance, and social upheaval, the Gita promotes

resilience. Teachings on moral fortitude, duty, wisdom, and compassion counteract violence, indifference, and lack of empathy by making people more dedicated and accountable (Kunwar et al., 2024).

IV. INTEGRATION OF THE TIMELESS PRINCIPLES OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA IN NEP 2020

The Gita is an immutable scripture that fosters a sense of unity among humanity by imparting lessons on spiritual liberation, self-awareness, and dharma. It encompasses the infinite ideas, passions, and emotions that constitute our universal spirit, which have an impact on a variety of aspects of existence. The Gita's wisdom is enduring and influences all facets of life in a variety of ways. The primary objective of education is to provide children with a genuine sense of purpose in life and to impart knowledge that stimulates the intellect. The essence of all teachings and philosophies is contained in the Gita, which facilitates self-understanding and provides unadulterated knowledge (Kunwar et al., 2024).

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 endeavours to establish a comprehensive, ethical, and reflective approach to education in India by incorporating the principles (Singh, & Baghel, 2020) contained in ancient Indian texts such as the Bhagavad Gita. The policy prioritizes a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses academic learning, physical education, ethical development, and emotional well-being. It also underscores the importance of ethical and value-based education, which teaches responsibility, integrity, and respect for others. The policy promotes inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, and self-knowledge and self-realization. It underscores the importance of instructors as mentors and guides, thereby cultivating supportive learning environments. The policy underscores the importance of duty and responsibility, encouraging diligent work and dedication. Additionally, it fosters emotional resilience and mindfulness, which in turn enhances mental health and overall well-being. The policy ensures that education continues throughout one's existence by advocating for lifelong learning and self-improvement. NEP 2020 enhances the educational experience while preserving India's cultural and philosophical heritage by incorporating the principles of the Bhagavad Gita (Bhatt, 2023). This integration embodies the best of both traditional and contemporary educational philosophies, enabling students to confront contemporary challenges with wisdom, resilience, and a strong moral foundation.

V. DISCUSSION

In order to foster comprehensive development, the Indian government is incorporating Indian knowledge systems into the school curriculum (Dhakal, 2022). The Bhagavad Gita is a fundamental component in the development of students' mental health, as it promotes self-awareness, equanimity, and resilience. This method encourages learners to confront life's obstacles with grace and fortitude, thereby fostering academic excellence and comprehensive personal development. The Bhagavad Gita also fosters a broader perspective and a deeper appreciation for cultural origins, thereby contributing to the preservation and revival of culture (Maharaj, 2021). By incorporating the Bhagavad Gita into education, we can promote the preservation and dissemination of our cultural heritage, thereby fostering a more harmonious and enlightened society, and promoting the well-being of individuals. By adopting the timeless wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita, we can establish a future in which education not only enlightens the intellect but also nourishes the soul, equipping individuals to navigate the intricacies of the contemporary world with grace and resilience (Das & Rai, 2024). The educational development of education can be understood in the Rishi route and the science and technology route. The Rishi route guides the individual to see reality from new perspectives and explore knowledge from the Indian traditional knowledge system leading to the Nirvana point as the science and technology route also guides to the Nirvana point, 'convergence of religions, science and spirituality' (Sharma, 2003). The Nirvana point is the foundation of the modern advancement of integrative Indian insights and technology (Sharma, 2001). Thus NEP 2020 can lead the stakeholders to the ultimate success through the Nirvana point, a foundation laid by the philosophical and pedagogical principles of the Bhagavad Gita, which has been portrayed in Figure 1.

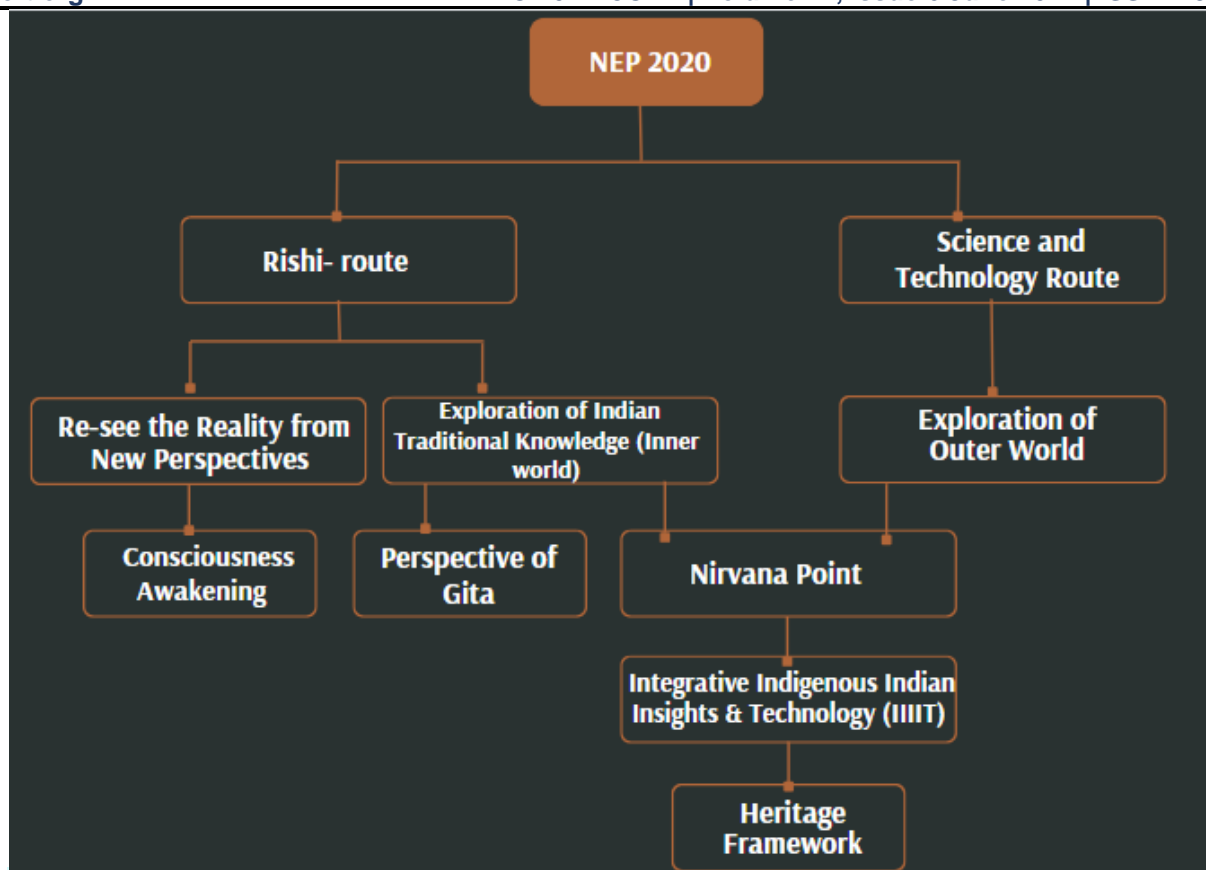


Figure 1 NEP 2020 and Nirvana Point

VI. CONCLUSION

The study shows that the Gita can help students acquire self-realization, self-discipline, and selflessness. Gita can improve academic and personal success by fostering purpose, resilience, and ethics in schools. It improves self-control, attention, determination, and compassion via intellectual, moral, emotional, and spiritual development. The Gita's emphasis on mindfulness and self-reflection helps pupils' mental and emotional well-being. Integration supports school goals and can be improved with technology. Addressing varied religious and cultural backgrounds and providing teacher training are problems.

The Bhagavad Gita is a cornerstone of the Indian knowledge system, providing everlasting wisdom that combines philosophy, ethics, spirituality, and cultural values. Its teachings continue to motivate and direct people in their personal, social, and spiritual lives. NEP 2020 also highlights knowledge based in India, including its rich, diverse, ancient and present culture, knowledge systems, and customs. The accurate and scientific inclusion of Indian knowledge in school curricula wherever relevant, including tribal knowledge, indigenous and traditional ways of learning, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, yoga, architecture, medicine, agriculture, engineering, linguistics, literature, sports, games, as well as governance, polity, and conservation, is becoming increasingly important in today's world. To emphasise students' critical abilities and to exercise all elements of growth, the necessity of learning through a multidisciplinary and multicultural approach should be included. This perspective can be learned from Indian knowledge, particularly the Bhagavad Gita, and applied in pedagogy to ensure the successful execution of the suggestions outlined in NEP-2020. The current study focuses on critically analysing the current and future needs of the Indian knowledge system, namely the Bhagavad Gita in the current curriculum, as indicated in NEP 2020.

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