

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's Educational Vision and its Resonance with the National Education Policy 2020

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Abstract- This research paper critically examines Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's educational vision and its relevance to the National Education Policy 2020. Using qualitative content analysis on Malaviya's speeches, BHU archives, and NEP 2020 documents, the paper highlights how his emphasis on holistic education, cultural rootedness, and inclusive learning aligns with contemporary policy reforms. This paper explores the influence of Malaviya's ideas such as vocational training, multilingualism, ethical pedagogy, and the integration of Indian knowledge systems on the foundation of India's educational aspirations. The study identifies key parallels between Malaviya's vision and NEP 2020, particularly in their shared focus on character-building, interdisciplinary learning, and equitable access to education. By bridging historical and contemporary educational discourse, this study underscores the enduring relevance of Malaviya's humanistic approach in shaping India's educational future. The study contributes to the discourse on indigenous educational models and their relevance in modern policy frameworks. Findings suggest that Malaviya's ideas on education demonstrate that his emphasis on holistic development, skills enhancement, and teacher accountability remains critically relevant in 21st century world.

Index Terms- About Madan Mohan Malaviya, Educational Philosophy, NEP 2020, Holistic Education, Ethical Pedagogy

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a significant transformation in India's education sector, emphasizing holistic growth, multilingualism, and cultural rootedness, principles deeply embedded in the philosophy of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. Despite his monumental contributions, Malaviya's educational vision remains underexplored in contemporary policy discourse. This paper bridges that gap by analyzing how his ideals such as character-building education, vocational training, and the integration of

Indian knowledge systems align with NEP 2020's objectives (NEP 2020, Sec 4). Through a critical review of Malaviya's writings and NEP documents, the study argues for reviving his humanistic approach in modern pedagogy.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was not only a great freedom fighter but also a visionary educationist. Born on 25 December 1861 in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, Malaviya entered politics after delivering a thought-provoking speech at the second session of the Indian National Congress in Kolkata (1886). He served as Congress President four times between 1909 and 1933. His most enduring legacy is the establishment of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) on Vasant Panchami in 1916 (Singh, 2020), which remains the largest residential university in Asia and a symbol of academic excellence.

Beyond nation-building, Malaviyaji emphasized personality development and the promotion of Indian culture. His philosophy centred on the idea that character-building is fundamental to national progress. His educational vision reflected India's cultural heritage and aimed at a national renaissance. He envisioned an education system rooted in Indian values, harmonized with modern scientific knowledge. For him, humanism, patriotism, morality, and spirituality were integral to education. He skilfully adapted Western ideas to Indian traditions and implemented his vision through BHU.

Mahamana Malaviyaji's contribution to the Indian education system remains underexplored and insufficiently integrated into the mainstream discourse on education. Although more than a century has passed, his ideas on education continue to hold significant relevance in the contemporary context. While the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes inclusive education, holistic development, and the integration of Indian knowledge systems, there is limited research examining how these objectives correspond with Mahamana Malaviyaji's educational philosophy. His contributions have yet to receive the recognition they deserve within the framework of modern Indian educational reforms. Recent studies (Ahmad & Showkat, 2023; Pandey & Mohanty, 2024) have assessed Malaviya's institutional legacy, but

few have critically engaged with how his philosophical principles such as 'education for character' and 'holistic education' align with NEP 2020's goals of equity and inclusivity. Revisiting Malaviyaji's philosophy is not merely an academic exercise but a

Objectives of the study

- (1) To explore educational philosophy of Mahamana Madan Mohan Malaviya.
- (2) To examine the influence of Malaviya's idea of education on NEP 2020.

Methodology

This study employs qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) as its primary methodological framework to systematically examine the alignment between Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's educational philosophy and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The research is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include Malaviya's original speeches particularly his Banaras Hindu University convocation address of 1929, archival materials from the Mahamana Malaviya Mission, and official policy documents such as the NEP 2020 text. These were selected for their direct insight into Malaviya's educational thought and contemporary educational reforms. Secondary sources comprise scholarly articles, books, and historical analyses that contextualize the evolution of Indian education and offer interpretations of Malaviya's educational philosophy. The data were subjected to thematic coding to identify recurrent concepts and values, such as 'holistic education', 'character-building', and 'cultural pride'. These emergent themes were then systematically cross-referenced with the core principles and objectives outlined in the NEP 2020, enabling a comparative analysis of philosophical continuities and contemporary relevance. This methodology facilitated an interpretive, historically grounded understanding of how Malaviya's educational ideals intersect with the vision articulated in NEP 2020.

II. ADDRESSING THE FIRST OBJECTIVE

To explore educational philosophy of Mahamana Madan Mohan Malaviya.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's educational philosophy presents a unique synthesis of seemingly divergent paradigms: Gandhian swadeshi and Dewey's experiential learning. While Mahatma Gandhi rejected colonial education entirely, Malaviya sought to indigenize and reform it from within. This is exemplified in the founding of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), which integrated both traditional disciplines like Sanskrit and modern sciences such as engineering. This hybrid model anticipates the 'global with local' approach of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, although the latter lacks the spiritual and moral foundation that anchored Malaviya's vision. Malaviya proposed a transformative model where traditional knowledge systems could enrich and reshape modern education, rather than merely oppose it.

Philosophically, Malaviya's educational thought was both idealistic and realistic, mirroring his broader worldview. He championed a liberal, inclusive, and contextually adaptive educational model. Education, for Malaviya, was not merely a

necessity, his emphasis on ethical education, cultural rootedness, and equitable access offers actionable insights for addressing contemporary challenges in India's education system.

vehicle for spiritual self-realization, but also a tool for material advancement and national development. He strongly believed in the importance of both knowledge of ancient Indian philosophy, Vedas, and Upanishads, and modern sciences and industries for societal progress. His educational ideals called for adjustments based on the country's socio-cultural context, historical moment, and practical needs. In bridging Indian traditional thought and modern pragmatism, Malaviya's emphasis on character-building aligns with Dewey's (1938) experiential learning, while his advocacy for cultural rootedness echoes Tagore's vision of education as a means of self-realization (Dasgupta, 2004). Unlike Gandhi's Nai Talim, which prioritized manual labor, Malaviya envisioned a syncretic educational model, blending Vedic wisdom with contemporary sciences a theoretical duality that makes his philosophy particularly relevant to 21st century educational reforms like NEP 2020.

At its core, Malaviya's educational vision emphasized inclusivity, accessibility, and social responsibility. For him, the purpose of education extended beyond academic instruction to the awakening of a spirit of service within communities. His philosophy calls upon educational institutions not only to produce technically skilled graduates but to cultivate culturally conscious, morally responsible, and socially committed citizens. In the present era, Banaras Hindu University stands as a testament to this enduring vision not merely as Asia's largest residential university but as a global academic community rooted in Indian ethos and cultural pride.

Malaviya's emphasis on vocational education and practical lifelong learning further aligns his educational thought with contemporary global education ideals while retaining India's philosophical and cultural identity. His ideas continue to hold relevance as Indian education navigates the challenges of globalization, cultural identity, and social equity in the 21st century.

Aims of Education:

Malaviya's aims of education operated at three levels:

- 1) Individual: Dharma (ethics), Artha (livelihood), Moksha (self-realization).
- 2) Societal: Eradication of caste/class barriers through mass literacy.
- 3) National: 'Swaraj through Shiksha' education as anti-colonial resistance.

NEP 2020 replicates this three-way focus but replaces 'Moksha' with 'global citizenship', reflecting more holistic and multidisciplinary education (NEP 2020, Sec 11.1).

Curriculum Design in Malaviya's Educational Philosophy:

Mahamana Malaviyaji envisioned a curriculum deeply rooted in the culture, life philosophy, and social fabric of the nation. He believed that education should reflect the values, traditions, and intellectual heritage of the country. Accordingly, he made the study of Sanskrit and Indian culture compulsory at Banaras Hindu

University (BHU), placing significant emphasis on religious and moral education as integral to holistic development. The university was structured to offer a comprehensive and multidisciplinary education system, incorporating departments dedicated to Vedic studies, medical sciences, natural sciences, arts, and agricultural education. This diverse academic framework ensured that students could pursue knowledge in both classical Indian disciplines and modern scientific fields. Subjects offered included religion, philosophy, astrology, chemistry, physics, botany, medicine, mathematics, history, geography, politics, economics, technology, industry, agriculture, trade, commerce, languages, art, and music for creating a truly inclusive educational environment.

Madan Mohan Malaviya also placed a strong focus on moral and ethical education, practical learning, spiritual development, physical training, and cultural education. He recognized the value of artistic subjects and integrated them meaningfully into the curriculum. Additionally, he advocated for the teaching of languages through oral and communicative methods, promoting the study of English and other foreign languages not as ends in themselves, but as tools to enrich and support the development of Indian literature, science, and language traditions.

Madan Mohan Malaviya organized subjects in the curriculum based on their practical utility and relevance to individual and national life. His curricular vision was thus not only broad and inclusive but also deeply purposeful, balancing traditional wisdom with modern knowledge for the comprehensive development of students and the nation.

Malaviya's Pedagogical Approach: A Synthesis of Tradition and Modernity:

Malaviya's pedagogical framework harmonized traditional Indian and progressive Western methods, reflecting his commitment to epistemic pluralism. While he revered sravana (listening), manana (reflection), and nididhyasana (meditation) the core Vedic learning techniques, which he pragmatically integrated contemporary approaches. As an educator himself, he skilfully blended ancient wisdom with contemporary methods to create a balanced and progressive teaching approach. According to Ahmad & Showkat (2023) and Pandey & Mohanty (2024), Malaviya integrated various instructional strategies, including as;

- Experiential Learning: Aligning with Dewey's principles, he emphasized learning by doing in BHU's technical curriculum (Ahmad & Showkat, 2023).
- Self-Directed Learning: Encouraged intellectual independence through Sanskrit shastric pedagogy.
- Cooperative Learning: Fostered peer collaboration, mirroring the gurukula tradition.
- Activity-Based Exploration: Combined Vedic yajna (ritual praxis) with laboratory sciences (Pandey & Mohanty, 2024).

This hybrid approach fostered both intellectual growth and moral character, aligning traditional values with modern educational demands.

Role of the Teacher:

Malaviyaji held a highly idealistic and culturally rooted vision of the teacher's role. He believed that a teacher's personality profoundly influences students, shaping their character and intellect. His ideal was modelled on the ancient Guru tradition, where teachers embodied virtues like care, purity of thought, simplicity, and moral integrity. Malaviyaji regarded the mother as a child's first and most influential teacher, famously noting that it was a mother's influence that shaped great leaders like Abraham Lincoln. Following this, he placed the school teacher as the next most important guide in a person's life.

His philosophy upheld the principle of 'simple living and high thinking' for educators. He emphasized that in every civilized society, teachers play a central role in national development and moral regeneration. As he wrote, "In almost all civilized countries, the role of a teacher in the national development of the country is considered very high. It is undisputed that he is the best servant of the state" (Collected Works, Vol. X, p.197).

For Malaviya, teachers were not merely instructors but nation-builders, responsible for nurturing values like love of learning, social service, patriotism, and human dignity. He envisioned them as religious, truthful, disciplined, compassionate, and visionary leaders, which mirroring the stature of ancient Gurus who guided both students and society.

Vocational Training: Life Skill Education for Livelihood:

Long before vocational education gained prominence in India's policy discourse, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) had institutionalized skill-based training as early as 1916, under the visionary leadership of Madan Mohan Malaviya. Recognizing education as a dual instrument of intellectual empowerment and economic self-sufficiency, Malaviya integrated vocational training into BHU's foundational curriculum. The university offered programs in weaving, carpentry, agriculture, and handicrafts, complementing traditional academic disciplines. These initiatives were strategically designed to equip students with practical, livelihood-sustaining skills, particularly targeting rural and semi-urban communities.

BHU's agriculture department (established in the 1920s) blended modern scientific techniques with indigenous farming knowledge, enabling graduates to enhance productivity in agrarian economies. Similarly, its focus on cottage industries, such as silk weaving and pottery, which reflected Malaviya's commitment to Swadeshi (self-reliance) and rural economic upliftment. This early model underscored his belief that education must address real-world socio-economic challenges while preserving cultural heritage.

Today, more than a century later, BHU's early vocational initiatives find strong resonance in the NEP 2020 vision, which calls for integrating skill development into the mainstream education system from Grade 6 onwards (NEP 2020, Sec 16.3). The university's present-day vocational courses, ranging from computer applications and renewable energy technologies to traditional crafts and healthcare services which reflect this enduring commitment.

A 2023 study by Ahmad and Showkat highlighted that student who underwent vocational training at BHU reported higher employability rates compared to those from conventional academic streams. Furthermore, BHU's collaboration with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has expanded

access to certification programs in emerging sectors such as healthcare, logistics, and technology, effectively bridging the gap between academic education and industry requirements.

However, challenges persist, notably the need to modernize vocational pedagogy and strengthen industry-academic partnerships. Malaviya's original model which rooted in community engagement, ethical craftsmanship, and culturally anchored skill-building, offers a valuable blueprint for addressing these gaps. It ensures that the vocational education ecosystem envisioned under NEP 2020 remains inclusive, socially relevant, and culturally connected to India's diverse heritage.

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS): Reviving Indigenous Wisdom:

The integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the curriculum of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) reflects Madan Mohan Malaviya's far-sighted commitment to safeguarding and advancing India's intellectual and cultural heritage. At a time when colonial education policies systematically marginalized indigenous knowledge traditions, BHU emerged as a pioneering institution dedicated to preserving and promoting disciplines such as Sanskrit, Ayurveda, Vedic mathematics, yoga, and Indian philosophy. The establishment of the Sanskrit Vidyā Dharmā Vijnan Department in 1918 marked a significant intervention in higher education, offering formal academic programs that combined the study of classical texts with emerging trends in modern scholarship. Notably, BHU's Faculty of Ayurveda innovatively merged ancient medicinal wisdom with contemporary pharmacological research, equipping graduates with the ability to practice evidence-based traditional medicine. Similarly, the university's early emphasis on Vedic mathematics introduced problem-solving methodologies that later gained international recognition for their pedagogical and cognitive value. BHU continues to lead through initiatives such as the Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems, which conducts interdisciplinary research on temple architecture, ancient metallurgy, ecological sustainability, and consciousness studies rooted in India's classical intellectual traditions.

Malaviya's original educational philosophy treated IKS not as vestiges of a bygone era but as dynamic, evolving systems of knowledge capable of addressing contemporary challenges. His advocacy for what he termed "scientific spirituality" where disciplines like yoga and meditation were studied alongside physics, chemistry, and economics anticipated NEP 2020's emphasis on holistic and multidisciplinary education. BHU's contemporary programs in Yoga and Consciousness Studies, which now attract international scholars, exemplify the sustained global relevance and adaptability of IKS traditions.

However, systemic barriers, including the absence of standardized teacher training programs in IKS disciplines, limited funding, and uneven institutional support, continue to hinder the widespread adoption of such knowledge systems within the formal education sector.

III. ADDRESSING THE SECOND OBJECTIVE

To examine the influence of Malaviya's idea of education on NEP 2020.

National Education Policy (2020) states that, "The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper, and National Education Policy 2020 5 creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution" (MHRD., 2021, p. 4).

As per the document the vision of this policy is stated as "This National Education Policy envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The Policy envisages that the curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must develop among the students a deep sense of respect towards the Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values, bonding with one's country, and a conscious awareness of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world" (MHRD., 2021, p. 6). The vision of the Policy is to connect among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen. (MHRD., 2021, p. 6).

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's conviction "for the nation's progress, education must reach every section of the society", resonates with NEP 2020's commitment to education for all. His belief that along with modern education, vocational skill should be an integral part of learning. Malaviya's held the deep respect for the India's cultural heritage and felt that education should connect a sense of national pride and stated "A nation's identity lies in the cultural heritage".

National Education Policy clearly reflects the educational philosophy of Madan Mohan Malaviya in its principles. Majorly NEP 2020 included the "Multidisciplinary and holistic education, Creativity and critical thinking, ethics and human & constitutional value, life skills, promoting multilingualism and the power of language, extensive use of technology, full equity and inclusion, a rootedness and pride in India" (MHRD., 2021, p. 5). Apart from principles incorporation National education policy emphasize more on "Promotion of Indian languages, Arts, Culture, Use of Technology and its Integration" (MHRD., 2021, pp. 53-56) which is clearly associated with the ideas and thoughts of Madan Mohan Malaviya.

For Malaviya, education was 'charaiveti' that is a perpetual journey - a fusion of 'vidya' (knowledge) and 'vinay' (humility). He rejected the colonial 'banking model' (Freire, 1970) of rote learning, instead encouraging for 'shiksha sanskar' means education with moral embedding. This mirrors NEP 2020's rejection of '10+2' rigidity in favor of '5+3+3+4' holistic development. His definition, however, uniquely tied individual growth to national service a vision evident in BHU's motto: 'विद्याऽमृतमश्वते' means Knowledge imparts immortality.

Malaviya's Holistic Education Philosophy and Its Resonance in NEP 2020:

Malaviya's vision emphasized on intellectual, physical, and moral as trifold development of students should be the core of education. He believed that true education should transcend mere academic achievement, fostering not only intellectual growth but also physical well-being through activities like sports and yoga, and ethical character, rooted in India's cultural and spiritual traditions. This comprehensive approach finds a clear resonance in India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The policy explicitly advocates for the holistic development of learners by incorporating sports, arts, and vocational education into the mainstream curriculum. Through its 5+3+3+4 curriculum structure, NEP 2020 mandates physical education as a core component and encourages the seamless integration of curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. This alignment reflects Malaviya's enduring belief in balanced, value-based education that nurtures well-rounded, responsible, and capable individuals.

Malaviya's founding of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) exemplified his commitment to blending modern science with Indian knowledge systems (IKS), such as Vedanta and Ayurveda, to foster cultural pride and ethical citizenship. The policy mandates the inclusion of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) across curriculum, reviving traditional disciplines like philosophy and classical arts. Initiatives like Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) aim to replicate BHU's model by combining STEM with humanities, as envisioned by Malaviya. The "ethical reasoning" competency in NEP's assessment framework reflects Malaviya's emphasis on moral education. The following Figure 1 elaborate the influence of Malaviya's vision on NEP 2020.

Component of Malaviya's Vision	NEP 2020 Alignment	Union/Disagreement
Holistic education (character + skills)	Sec 4.4: "Development of cognitive and non-cognitive capacities"	Strong union
Vernacular-medium instruction	Sec 4.11: "Home language/mother tongue as primary medium"	Union, but NEP is more flexible
Vocational training	Sec 16.3: "Integration of vocational education from Grade 6"	Direct adoption
Cultural rootedness	Sec 4.27: "Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) to be embedded in curriculum"	Malaviya was more prescriptive

Figure: 1 Component of Malaviya's Vision vs. NEP 2020

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's educational philosophy exhibits remarkable convergence with the current National Education Policy 2020, particularly in four fundamental areas. Regarding holistic education, Malaviya's emphasis on character-building alongside skill development finds clear resonance in NEP's Section 4.4, which advocates for the "development of cognitive and non-cognitive capacities." This represents a strong union, as both frameworks recognize education as a means to cultivate both intellectual and moral growth. The vernacular-medium instruction principle shows partial alignment while Malaviya staunchly advocated education in mother tongues to preserve cultural identity, NEP's Section 4.11 adopts a more flexible approach by recommending the home language as the primary medium "wherever possible," accommodating India's linguistic diversity without mandating uniformity. Malaviyaji also said that "National

education cannot reach the highest peak of its excellence until the mother tongue of the people is not established in its rightful place as the medium of education and usage for the general public" (Collected Works, Vol. X, p.194).

Vocational training demonstrates direct adoption, with NEP's Section 16.3 echoing Malaviya's century-old vision by calling for "integration of vocational education from Grade 6." This continuity underscores the enduring relevance of his practical, employment-oriented approach. However, differences emerge in cultural rootedness. While NEP's Section 4.27 proposes embedding Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in curricula, Malaviya's implementation was more prescriptive, establishing dedicated departments for Vedic studies at BHU. This contrast highlights how NEP adapts Malaviya's ideals to contemporary educational pluralism while maintaining their essence. The comparative analysis reveals that NEP 2020 successfully incorporates Malaviya's core principles, though with necessary modifications for 21st-century applicability, demonstrating both the timelessness of his vision and the policy's evolutionary approach to traditional educational values.

IV. CONCLUSION

A great educator, he founded Banaras Hindu University to spread knowledge in science, technology, and other fields while also focusing on building strong character in students by including religion and ethics in education. Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviyaji served as the Vice Chancellor of the university from 1919 to 1938. All-round development of life was the basic mantra of Malaviyaji's education philosophy. He wanted that there should be such a system of education for the students that they can strengthen and develop their physical, intellectual, and emotional powers and in future they can earn their living truthfully and honestly through some profession, artistic and can live a beautiful life, become respectable and trustworthy in society.

Madan Mohan Malaviya highlighted character building as the keystone of holistic education. His philosophy underscored the integration of moral values, cultural heritage, and academic excellence, shaping individuals into responsible citizens. Malaviya advocated for interdisciplinary education, recognizing the interconnectedness of knowledge domains and the need for a well-rounded curriculum. NEP 2020's foundational principles resonate deeply with Malaviya's educational philosophy. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is more focused on holistic development, teaching-learning in mother tongue, skill enhancement, and character formation aligns with Malaviya's vision, fostering a learning environment that nurtures not only academic proficiency but also ethical integrity and societal consciousness. Malaviya's educational philosophy rooted in ethical pedagogy, cultural preservation, and equitable access foreshadowed NEP 2020's vision by nearly a century. This study demonstrates that his emphasis on holistic development, vocational training, and teacher accountability remains critically relevant. Future research could explore how Malaviya's models are being implemented in NEP-aligned curriculum, particularly in rural India. By re-centering indigenous thinkers like Malaviya, policymakers can ensure that India's educational reforms are both progressive and culturally coherent.

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