

## EDUCATION AS HUMAN CAPITAL: INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

\*Gayathri Unnikrishnan

### Abstract

Education is a basic building block of human capital. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is a technique that can be used to strengthen human capital through education. IKS can be effectively implemented through a culturally responsive pedagogy. NEP 2020 demands reforms in curriculum and pedagogy in all subjects in Higher Educational Institutions. The prevailing curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation tools are to be revised with massive participation from all stakeholders, especially teachers. This study is an attempt to suggest a new approach in pedagogical transactions to help build better human capital. The findings include the introduction of CRP, inclusion of IKS content in curriculum as solutions to the neo colonial epistemology in force in HEIs in general.

**Key words:-** Indian Knowledge Systems, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Human Capital, NEP 2020

Education is the base for human capital formation of a country. Aiming at the enhancement of opportunities for education, its quality, accessibility etc., we have set various development goals. Among the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations, SDG4 aims at 'ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning

opportunities for all'. The policies stated in NEP 2020 is aligned with this goal by drawing sustenance from India's intangible culture and value systems.

### Significance and Scope of the Study

In this context, it is significant to understand the measures that can be adopted to enhance quality education and strengthen the human capital formation in the country. The scope of research into

*\*Gayathri Unnikrishnan, Assistant Professor, N.S.S. Hindu College, Changanacherry, Kottayam, Kerala.*

CRP includes opening up new solutions to student alienation in classrooms, low level of participative and experimental learning and low pass percentage at undergraduate level.

### Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to suggest a qualitative framework for implementing equity and quality in education as envisaged in NEP 2020, which is expected to help improve quality education and thereby strengthen the human capital formation in the country.

### Methodology of the Study

This study is a qualitative exploration into the ways in which education as a base for building human capital can be strengthened. The scope of pedagogical reforms involving CRP and IKS were explored based on the major existing literature in the field.

“Education must move towards less content and more towards learning about how to think critically and solve problems, how to be creative and multidisciplinary, and how to innovate, adapt and absorb new material in novel and changing fields. Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experimental, holistic, integrated inquiry driven, discovery oriented, learner-centered, discussion based, flexible and of course enjoyable” (GoI, 2020).

The above objectives are possible when a reform driven approach is reflected in the education system. Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is recognized as a scientific system that deserve quality research attention. IKS is contextual with

a familiar framework encouraging experimental and holistic enquiry.

The aim of education is to instill knowledge of India and its varied social cultural and technological needs, its knowledge traditions and ethical frameworks, as proclaimed by the policy document (GoI, 2020). The important challenge is to unearth the sources of excellence in the scientific tradition that produced a Charaka or an Aryabhata, Chanakya or Panini.

### Indian Knowledge Systems

The term Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) is indicative of the scientific perspectives and practices in knowledge acquisition and knowledge transmission rooted in Indian heritage. The volumes on IKS edited by Kapil Kapoor from IAS, Shimla defines the term and argues for the development of it as an independent multidisciplinary academic subject.

Kapil Kapoor identifies fields in IKS as Philosophy, Architecture, Grammar, Mathematics, Astronomy, Metrics, Sociology (Dharma Shastra), Economy and Polity, Ethics (Neethi Sastra), Geography, Logic, Military Science, Metallurgy, Mining, Shipbuilding, Politics, Biology and Veterinary Science. “*The tradition in India has 18 major vidyas or sciences and 64 kalas or applied disciplines. (The 18 vidyas are the four Vedas, the four subsidiary Vedas (Ayurveda, Dhanur veda, Gandharvarva veda, Silpa), Purana, Nyaya, Mimamsa, Dharmasastra and Vedanga, the six auxiliary sciences, Phonetics, Grammar, Metre, Astronomy, Ritual and Philosophy*” (Kapoor K & Singh, Avadhesh Kumar, Indian Knowledge Systems Vol 1, IAS, Shimla.)

The Ministry of Education has been able to establish a Department of Indian Knowledge Systems to encourage scientific studies, which are appropriate and relevant for the nation. The curriculum, with the introduction of a multidisciplinary approach is to be made flexible by incorporating the local challenges as well for perusal. Citizenship education, integral development of the individual are sidelined in the prevailing system and therefore the creative linking of culture and epistemology through IKS could possibly bring out the best from the education system.

### **Classroom Discourse**

The overall discourse in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in India is heavily influenced by Western academia that cripples the sensibility of the teacher and the learner which creates a classroom culture of mutual suspicion and distrust. Many of the theories in humanities and social sciences are rooted in an ideological Eurocentricity which distances the learner from his context. Research in IKS is significant at a time when globalization gives way for glocalization, the reverse process of globalization wherein the locality and its practice turns into a global practice as in the case of Yoga. This idea of reinstating the intangible culture of the Nation is likely to be misinterpreted as anachronistic as well as jingoistic by the post modern theorists. Drawing from the IKS whether it be nature conservation strategies or human development, the academician meets the demands of a world moving towards glocalization.

How far IKS is likely to address SDGs depends on the strategies in

implementation. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is one such strategy that may help human development through education. Investing in human capital through education will help develop the nation's manpower.

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP)**

The term culture is defined in terms of a community's perspective, practice and products. What the member of a community think and value constitutes his perspective and the practices include his/her behavior, traditions etc. The term culture refers to the products of a culture like dress, food etc. Edward T Hall (1976) presented the iceberg model of culture wherein the exposed part is the visible culture and submerged part covers the shallow culture and the deep culture. The deep culture is the internal culture of an individual which consists of values, attitudes, concepts of right and wrong in life, sense of meaning in life etc.

Without insight into the nature of culture and cultural identity, knowledge transmission could be difficult. For an inclusive and equitable education system, cultural identity of the student needs to be recognized and valued. Therefore CRP is of great significance in a multilingual country like India. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) defines CRP as "an approach that empowers students intellectually, socially and emotionally by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes". In CRP the teacher creates appropriate learning environment that is reflective of the learner's socio-cultural and linguistic nature. CRP will also try to adapt the

curriculum in such a way that the topics for discussion are linked to the learner's context. Howard (2006) mentions seven principles for CRP in managing the personal culture, classroom culture and school culture. He mentions the personality of the teacher, the learning environment, cultural ways of learning, respect for student's identity, in a culturally responsive context.

CRP is relevant from schools to colleges in India, as diversity of students in a class or school is very much part of the educational scenario. In CRP curriculum content is developed according to the culturally informed needs of students. Gay who coined the term CRP, explains how a teacher's personality needs constant scrutiny as he may bring his own preconceived notions into the classroom. Promotion of the self esteem of the learner from a difficult domestic background is also part of the CRP agenda. Matias (2013) asserts that the CR teacher teaches through the strengths of the student. He values the individuality of the student and tries to connect with the family to provide emotional support. The integrated approach pronounced in NEP 2020 can be successfully implemented by framing a curriculum and pedagogy, drawing from Indian Knowledge Systems. Therefore IKS and CRP will help to promote human capital development in a potentially self reliant India.

### **Conclusion**

The seven principles of CRP according to Howard (2016) are teacher-

student relationship, culturally familiar learning environment, respect for the interrelationship between culture, cognition, acceptance of diversity, acknowledgement of student identity, honouring of collective identity and balance of fairness and love.

NEP envisages access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability and these principles can be achieved by drawing sustenance from IKS based on the seven principles of CRP mentioned by Howard. The main features of NEP framework like multidisciplinary approach (respect for inter-disciplinarity), promotion of Indian languages (identity), knowledge of India (familiar learning environment) are all tangential to the features of CRP explained by Howard. Therefore it is recommended that training in CRP and IKS through special orientation programmes for all teachers working at all levels of the educational structure will help in total quality management in education. Since quality improvement in education is essential to enhance the human capital, these measures will help in building up a better human capital base in the country.

Education helps in the development of human capital and IKS and CRP can be used to strengthen the teaching learning process and promote the creativity and potential of the students. CRP is the best option in a multidisciplinary enquiry in classrooms. CRP is relevant in promoting human capital in the ambit of welfare economics and the theories of Amartya Sen.

**References**

1. Edward T Hall (1976) *Beyond Culture, Anchor.*
2. Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. American Educational Research Journal, 32(3), 465-491. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465>*
3. Howard, G. (2006). *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools (2nd ed).* New York: Teachers College Press.
4. Gay, G. (2010) *Culturally Responsive Teaching-Theory, Research and Practice, 2nd edition, Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York and London*
5. Government of India (2020), *National Education Policy 2020, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.*
6. Kapoor K& Singh, Avadsh Kumar, *Indian Knowledge Systems Vol 1, ILAS, Shimla.*

**STATEMENT ABOUT THE OWNERSHIP AND OTHER PARTICULARS  
ABOUT THE MANAGEMENT RESEARCHER**

*Form IV (See Rule 8)*

- |                               |   |  |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Place of Publication       | : | Trivandrum, Kerala   |
| 2. Period of Publication      | : | Quarterly  |
| 3. Printer's Name and Address | : | Navadhara Printers<br>Sreekaryam, Trivandrum - 695 017   |
| 4. Editor's Name and Address  | : | Dr. C.V. Jayamani<br>TC 8/123, Pooja, Kavil Lane<br>Cheruvakal, Sreekaryam<br>Trivandrum - 695 017 |
| 5. Ownership                  | : | Institute of Management Development<br>and Research, Convent Road, Trivandrum                      |

I, Prof. S. Krishnan Nair, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Sd/-)

Prof. S. Krishnan Nair

Publisher