



Educational Manifestation of Balasaheb Deoras' Nationalist Vision

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Abstract:

This paper examines the educational implications of Balasaheb Deoras' nationalist vision, highlighting its reflections in India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Deoras, a prominent leader of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), emphasized social inclusivity, cultural nationalism, national development, and grassroots social transformation. His ideas advocate for an education system fostering national pride, social responsibility, and holistic development. The study explores how these principles can shape socially conscious individuals committed to the nation's progress, aligning with NEP 2020's goals of inclusive and patriotic education. The relevance of Deoras' thoughts to modern education underscores their enduring impact on India's educational landscape.

Keywords: Balasaheb Deoras, NEP 2020, Cultural Nationalism, Social Inclusivity, Holistic Development, Social Responsibility.

Introduction:

With the establishment of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in 1925, the process of development of the Sangh and its first balsevak Madhukar Dattatraya Deoras kept going together. Deoras turned into a nationalist and socialist personality just within a few years. In the year 1932, as a volunteer, he started playing his role by working in the interest of the society and the nation, and after a long work experience in this direction, in the year 1973, as a skilled organizer, he took command of the Sangh, became the third Sarsanghchalak of the Sangh and became popular as Balasaheb Deoras.

Balasaheb was a thinker and skilled organizer of the nationalist organization RSS. He was dutiful towards the country. The feeling of national interest and service to the country was full of them. He took command of the organization at a time when inequalities were spreading all over the country. Emergency was declared in the country by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 25 June 1975. An atmosphere of dread, fear and silence prevailed in the entire nation. Thousands of freedom fighters, top leaders were locked in jail bars. In such adverse circumstances, Balasaheb provided a new direction to the Sangh, the society and the country with his deep thinking, efficient guidance, determination and leadership (Gupta, 2018).

Since independence till now, significant developmental changes have occurred in every sphere of the country's social, economic, political, and industrial life, and the world of education has not been left unaffected. Today, after numerous transitions, the growth of Indian education has become into a patriotic and inclusive framework. This is known as National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The policy incorporated several nationalist ideologies and introduced significant reforms in the field of education. This article attempts to find out what are the major reflections of Deoras's nationalist ideology on NEP 2020. In this paper, the nationalist ideas of Balasaheb have been taken in the context of Indian nationalism. Although nationality, being a geographical term, sets only the upper limits, due to which the word nationality becomes narrow, while calling nationality as Indian nationality, its dignity increases and the expansion increases. As a result, in every countryman, feelings like to believe in the country, his motherland, save the cultural traditions, be proud and connected of the glorious past, and have respect for the great men. From this point of view, two main objectives of this research paper are:

1. To analyze the nationalist ideas of Balasaheb Deoras.
2. To highlight the relevance of Balasaheb's nationalist ideas in the world of education.

Balasaheb offered his opinions on numerous themes on a high level debate forum called 'Vasantvyakhyamala' (Vasant Lecture Series) from 1974 to 1987. His lectures covered a wide range of topics, including Hindutva, India's unity and

integrity, patriotism, nationalism, answers to social issues, minorityism and its appeasement, and so on. There is a clear glimpse of several themes incorporated in his nationalist philosophy, such as national role of individual and society, cultural nationalism, nationalism, national paradigm of development, and national self-awakening.

Nationalist thoughts of Balasaheb Deoras:

Balasaheb's thoughts has been discussed here under different domains:

1. National role of Individual and Society:

Balasaheb has described untouchability as a terrible mistake and quoted it as 'Lock, stock & barrel'. He said "Untouchability is a very sad and unfortunate aspect of inequality in our society. Thoughtful people are of the opinion that it did not exist even in very ancient times but in the flow of time, it became a stereotype after being included and analyzed like an uncalled for intrusion. Whatever may be the reality, but we must accept that untouchability is a grave error and its complete abolition is necessary. Eradication of social inequality must be the goal of all of us". This implies that there is no reason to create trouble or discriminate against Muslims and they should be treated at par with Hindus as they were historically treated in hindu kingdoms. It fosters the development of an inclusive society.

2. Cultural Nationalism:

Balasaheb has defined cultural nationalism in his lectures with great pride. He believes that cultural nationalism is such a branch of nationalism which is seen as a shared culture of the communities living in the nation. His perspective on cultural nationalism emphasizes the importance of honoring the heritage and traditions of the country and transferring them to future generations. He expressed "The world also believes that we have things that are useful to the world". There are many aspects of Indian culture that are considered valuable not only within the country but also recognized by the world. There are certain elements within Indian heritage and traditions that hold significance and are worthy of admiration. Balasaheb believed that these aspects have contributed to the country's reputation and have something valuable to offer to the world. Furthermore, Balasaheb expressed pride in a particular period of history when the people of the country displayed qualities such as dignity, bravery, and effort. This can be interpreted as an appreciation for the achievements and virtues of the past. It reflects a sense of national pride and a belief in the cultural richness of the country. He felt the importance of upholding and cherishing cultural traditions and the positive contributions they make, both within India and on a global scale.

3. National Understanding:

Balasaheb emphatically explains the understanding of the nation by the people, saying "we Indians are neither conservative, nor traditionalist, nor revivalist, nor status quoist. We are also aware of the various problems in the society. We also have a vision about them. But our thinking is different from other people's thinking. For the so-called progressives, who consider themselves very progressive, it is a very simple matter for them – seeing any social problem, they become progressive by abusing and blaming everything about India and supporting Russia, America, Western Europe. We are not like this. (Deoras, 2015)".

It means that every Indian living in India should have awareness towards the nation. The sense of affinity towards the national character should be awakened. At the same time, keeping strong faith in the worship of national interest, there should be inner consciousness and insight of patriotism. Only then a healthy India will be built, on whose foundation only all-round and progressive development of the nation is possible.

4. National Pattern of Development:

"The approach to Sangh work is constructive. Today the Sangh is doing thousands of development works in many areas. Swayamsevaks are engaged in these works. We believe that politics, nation and society are important parts of life but they are not the be all and end all of national life. That's why whoever wants to do politics, do it. We will bring change in the society by staying away from politics." (Deoras, 2015).

Balasaheb emphasized that the Sangh follows a constructive approach in its activities and initiatives. Instead of focusing solely on criticism or opposition, the Sangh takes an active role in implementing development projects that aim to uplift various aspects of society. The Sangh is involved in numerous development works in various areas. These works span across social, economic, and educational sectors with the goal of making a positive impact on people's lives and contributing to the overall progress of the nation. Swayamsewaks, the volunteers of the Sangh, actively participate in these development works. They dedicate their time and efforts to the betterment of society, aligning with the Sangh's vision of selfless service.

Balasaheb believed that politics, the nation, and society are crucial aspects of life, but they are not the sole focus of national life. While politics plays a role in governance and policy-making, it is not the only way to bring about change or impact society positively. Thus, he emphasized that the Sangh's primary focus is not on participating in electoral politics or seeking political power. Instead, they aim to bring about transformation in society through non-political means. By staying away from formal politics, the Sangh can concentrate on grassroots efforts, social projects, and community development. By addressing societal issues directly and taking a holistic approach, they can make a lasting impact on the well-being of the community.

5. Awakening of National Identity:

Balasaheb had serious concern about the social evils prevailing across the country which were not only mainly responsible for the British arrival in India but also prevalent in the Indian society even today such as faulty leadership, unorganized society, misbehavior among common people etc. That's why the Sangh work with these responsibilities to remove the faults of the common man, develop leadership potential and organize the society.

Analyzing Balasaheb's concerns, it would come out that the awakening of national identity focuses on the fact that we should understand the diverse nature of the nation. Understand those faults also due to which the British ruled us. We should do all the efforts to remove those faults. At the same time, by organizing the society, inculcating the sense of unity, integrity & togetherness of the country, contributing to the progress of the society and the nation, we must establish India on the international horizon.

Educational Significance-

Balasaheb clarifies the reality of Hindu society and says that India is not just a piece of land, it is our motherland, and we are emotionally attached to it (Hebalkar, 2017). This is our identity. Due to our forgetting this, today every person has become ego centered and selfish. It is our moral duty to protect our motherland, make it strong and successful. For this, all the citizens should move ahead step by step while living together, erasing the distinction between high and low and caste tradition. In this way, education becomes a necessary basic tool for national emotional appeal. A means through which political unity, change in social status and economic progress takes place. Education develops the spirit of sacrifice in the students and abandons the selfish spirit, therefore, not only by raising slogans of nationalism and motherland, but by essentially teaching all the students about democratic nationalism, the qualities of self-restraint, obedience, discipline, dutifulness, etc. should be developed in the students to remain tied to their roots. Balasaheb's emphasis on being constructive lays the importance of proactively contributing to society. It encourages students and learners to think beyond criticism and disagreement and to work on practical solutions to societal challenges. This instills in the students a feeling of duty and active citizenship, pushing them to take the initiative and strive for positive change. The Sangh's participation in several development activities in the social, economic, and educational spheres emphasizes the significance of holistic development. Education should not just concentrate on academics, but also on developing well-rounded individuals capable of contributing to all parts of society. As emphasised in NEP 2020, educational institutions must include community service, social initiatives, and practical learning opportunities into their curricula. The active participation in selfless services and volunteering activities inculcate value to selfless service and inspire students to engage in community service activities, fostering empathy. Balasaheb started the practice of 'Ghosh' (band) and 'group singing' (Anand, 2020). National Poet Shri Sohan Lal Dwivedi's song - 'Khada Himalaya bata raha hai, daro na aandhi pani se, datte raho apne path par sab kashti hai tufano mein!', was part of one of his group songs. The essence of this song is that every person should always be alert towards the goal. No matter how many obstacles are in front of us, we can reach the goal only by overcoming those obstacles. Education has the ability to instill valuable life lessons and values in students. The qualities like perseverance, resilience, courage, and teamwork, are essential for their personal and academic development. These values connect them to their cultural roots, fostering a sense of pride in their heritage and literature. Social transformation through non-political means, as said by Balasaheb, remind learners that formal politics is not the only way to achieve changes. The collective efforts at the grassroots level to address local issues and challenges can be equally impactful. This understanding can lead students to explore community engagements, social entrepreneurship, and other avenues for positive societal changes. Education should provide students with the skills and information they need to recognise and address problems in their communities, therefore improving their general well-being and growth. Balasaheb also highlighted the importance of character development and values such as selflessness, dedication, and responsibility. Value education programs help students develop a strong moral compass and a sense of purpose in contributing to society. Anand (2020) quoted Balasaheb "An ideal Sangh-Shakha is the one from where a large number of youth come forward to serve the society and dedicate their time to it." The meaning of this quote is that Balasaheb considered service to the country paramount and was in favor of giving them a non-discriminatory education to inculcate the spirit of service to the country among the students. For which he considered social harmony essential. For this, a large-scale service project was started to remove untouchability and bring more and more backward and neglected people to the same level. He believed that everyone should get the right to education to save the country from mutual quarrels, accusations and counter-accusations, selfish tendencies, factionalism, indiscipline and attack on the root of democracy. Only an educated person, imbued with discipline, self-restraint, dutifulness, intelligence, contemplation and patriotism, will come forward to remove social evils. Without education, there will be neither freedom from these evils nor expected change. Balasaheb believed in active learning. He was of the opinion that learning should be reflected in our conduct and behavior. He used to request the countrymen that nothing will happen by giving blank speeches, but there should be a feeling of doing something for the country. To develop this feeling of nationalism, he emphasized on educating the people. According to him education should not be merely theoretical but should bring about permanent change in their behaviour. For this, he insisted on learning by doing more and more work and after teaching in the class, children should be given the opportunity to do the same work. When children do the work themselves, their interest increases and they actively participate and work with dedication. These students gradually start giving a new direction to the society and the nation. They wish for the longevity of the society and the country and keep moving forward on the path of development.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the educational significance of Balasaheb's vision lies in fostering a sense of social responsibility, encouraging holistic development, promoting selfless service, and inspiring students to make a positive impact on society through non-political and grassroots efforts. These principles can shape well-rounded and socially conscious individuals who are committed to the betterment of their communities and the nation.

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