



A PERSPECTIVES ON VOCATIONALISM OF MAHAPURUSA SRIMANTA SANKARADEVA AND NEW EDUCATION POLICY, 2020

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ABSTRACT :

Vocationalism is an educational philosophy or approach to teaching that claims the content of the curriculum must be governed by its occupational utility. Vocational education is concerned with the training on vocation. It is related to productivity Srimanta Sankaradeva used education to bring about social reforms in the Assamese community at the time. Sankaradeva's education not only bring societal improvements, his education had contributed a lot in the field of economy too through vocationalism For economic upliftment, Sankaradeva wanted that everyone must get a job not only to earn his livelihood but also to perform socio-religious obligation. Sankaradeva emphasized on a balanced growth of man ie both economically and spiritually. Therefore, economic life of a person got importance in his religious order. The devotees of his order were asked to continue their economic activities so that they didn't become burden on others. Attaining economic independence was another objective of his mission, so that the people could lead a meaningful life. For this, he introduced vocational education for self-sufficiency. So the concept of vocationalism is not a new one, it has emerged during the time of Sankaradeva. In the New Education policy, 2020 too, vocational education is greatly focussed. The NEP 2020 aims that at least 50% of learners shall have vocational exposures through school and higher education. The NEP 2020 revealed that there will be no hard separation between the vocational and academic streams. So, every child is supposed to learn at least one vocation and be exposed to several more.

Therefore objective of the paper will be to make a study on reimagining vocational education through vocationalism of Srimanta Sankaradeva The methodology of this paper will be descriptive in nature.

Keywords: Vocational education, New EducationPolicy, Srimanta Sankaradeva.

I. Introduction:

Vocationalism is an educational philosophy or approach to teaching that claims the content of the curriculum must be governed by its occupational utility. Moore and Hickoxs stated that, "In the contemporary world, a better educated and trained workforce is an obligatory pre requisite for any economy that wishes to complete at the level of high quality, 'value added'



products. (Moore and Hickoxs, 1991)[1]. Vocational education refers to a system or course of study which prepares an individual for jobs that are based on manual or practical activities. It is related to productivity. Vocational education is traditionally non-academic in nature and it is totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation.

One of the greatest saints of Medieval India, Srimanta Sankaradeva (1449-1568 A.D.) has left his mark in the history of mankind. An epoch making personality Sankaradeva played his role as a saviour of humanity, more particularly in the eastern parts of Bharatavarsa the vast region, known as Asama-Kamrupa-Kamata of the 15th and the 16th centuries. In Assam, the great saint poet Srimanta Sankaradeva initiated the Bhakti movement. Sankaradeva propounded a religious system in the light of the Bhakti cult of India, based on the Bhagavata Purana. It is known as the Neo-Vaishnavism- the Bhakti cult of Assam or Assam Vaishnavism. Madhavadeva, the disciple of Sankaradeva assisted him in preaching the Bhakti cult. Sankaradevas faith has come to be known as “Eka Sarana Hari Nama Dharma”, as it teaches devotion to one God only. Sankaradeva was a versatile genius-a capable administrator, an intellectual, a social reformer, a spiritual guru of millions, a visionary, an artist, a literature, a celebrated scholar, a linguist with sound knowledge and understanding of Assamese, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Brajvali, Maitheli etc. He was also an educationist, a musical master, an actor cum playwright, secularism and classless society and above all a unifier of the people of diverse races, tribes and religions. Sankaradeva had the observation that man’s religious life cannot exist in total isolation. Man in a social animal. His religious life is totally linked with his social status. This in turn depends upon his economic position. An economically beaten or exploited person cannot be expected to have a dignified social life. A healthy religious life is firmly founded on man’s healthy social and economic life. Sankaradeva established Namghar (Prayer Hall) which served the purpose of village courts. They were units under some central Than-Satra or worker independently. An important contribution of the Than or Satra is that the devotees affiliated to any such unit are encouraged to take up some vocational occupation. The expertise of the vocation is traditionally imparted by the older members of the Than or Satra- Such vocations include handicrafts like wood carving, cane and bamboo works, Sancipat preparation, mask making, illustrations of manuscripts, painting etc. Sankaradeva introduced vocational education for self-sufficiency. Attaining economic independence was another objective of his mission so



that the people could lead a meaningful life. So, the concept of vocationalism is not a new one, it had emerged during the time of Sankaradeva. In the New Education policy, 2020 too, vocational education is greatly focussed. The NEP 2020 is a comprehensive policy document that extensively discusses the revamping of vocational education. The NEP 2020 aims that atleast 50% of learners shall have vocational exposures through school and higher education.[²] The NEP 2020 put emphasis on both the demand and supply sides of vocational education and makes an effort to alleviate it.

II.Objectives of the Study:

In this paper, a humble attempt has been made to reimagine vocational education in NEP 2020 through vocationalism of Srimanta Sankaradeva.

III. Methodology:

The methodology of the paper is descriptive in nature. The data is collected from secondary sources. The secondary source is collected from various articles in different journals and magazines. Materials from various websites are also used.

IV. Discussion:

At present time, vocational education is of great importance as it prepares students for their jobs. Vocational education is basically practical oriented in which one gains skills and experience directly linked to a career in future. The demand for vocational professionals is requires more than ever in various industries such as retail business, tourism, information technology as well as traditional crafts and cottage industries. The vocational training programmes in Assam are mainly offered by Industrial training Institute (I.T.I.) as full time programme which are basically in engineering trade. State technical Education Board, Colleges and Universities also offer part time as well full time vocational career oriented courses to student. By learning and focussing on a specific trade, students have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the trade allowing them to build an exciting career in a new field. The NEP 2020 recommends Vocational Education will be integrated into all school and higher education institutions in a phased manner over the next decade.' NEP 2020's thrust is majorly on vocational



and skill education of students to prepare employable youth. Implementing the NEP mandate in May 2020, CBSE declared adoption of Competency based Education. The competency based curriculum focuses and real world skills and competency development. Lessons are designed around competencies that are needed for a particular profession, instructional material had real-world case studies and work place simulations for critical thinking and creative problem solving.

4.1: Vocational education has been reimagined in NEP 2020 through the vocationalism of Srimanta Sankardeva in the sphere of establishing cottage industries:

NEP 2020 proposed that students need real life workplace expose. Students need vocational education and skill training from their schools. The training can be started from Class VI with exposure to different workplace including factories, banks, retail stores and local cottage industries. In a recent webinar on reforms proposed by NEP 2020, in vocational education and skill building in schools, Dr. Biswajit Saha, Director, training and skills, CBSE advised the school, Management and Principal to reach out to the local industries and business in neighbourhood and forge linkages with them to give their learners a feel of the present day workplace. He quotes NEP 2020 saying this should begin on early class VI with ‘ten bagless days’ of exposure to present day workplace such as industrial manufacturing units, banks, retail stores, service industries and local cottage industries.^[3] The cottage industry is generally unorganised and falls under the category of small scale industry. Sankaradeva, in the 16th century had made the idea of cottage industry by involving the unemployed people and showed them a way of earning money to continue their livelihood. This is beautifully illustrated by his designing and on in job supervision of the weaving work of the famous Vrindabani Bastra. The Vrindabani Bastra in its pristine form is not only reflective of the extraordinary adroitness of Sankaradeva as the designer-weaver non-pareil, but also carries the glory of Asomiya weavers, who could weave ‘dreams in the looms’. It was undoubtedly one of the greatest gifts of the great Master to the global community, for which India as a whole should feel proud.^[4] Spinning and weaving, like agriculture were common occupations of the people during the time of



Sankaradeva.^[5] Brass and Bell Metal Industry was promoted by his initiative of different kinds of 'Taal' or cymbals which are commonly used in Naam Kirtan at Satra and Namghars, public ceremonies, private households etc. which survives till now. Brass and Bell Metal Industry falls within the cottage industry, NEP 2020 has greatly stressed importance to establish these industries which will provide employment to a sizable number of population. Cane and bamboo, pottery, woodcraft etc. as cottage industry flourished due to patronage extended by Sankaradeva and his followers the 'Hari-Bhakatas' or disciples of Hari, used to engage themselves in many economic activities within the Satra or Namghar premises. They themselves used to make colourful pera or boxes, 'singhasan' or throne, palanquin or, khatola, 'tamuli pira', 'barpira' religious paintings, designing of manikut, pati made of ivory etc.^[6] These crafts oriented course are widely reflected in NEP 2020.

To follow the NEP 2020, the colleges has opened various add on certificate courses. The aim of these programmes is to enhance and enrich the students learning experience in the college. It also enables the students to bring about a more holistic approach to learning as well as to cultivate and develop the necessary skills for various vocation and careers. Moreover, the students have better understanding of issued present day industry challanges and also facilitate the students to gain and develop innovative and creative skills through a wide range of course offering. Some of them are cutting and knitting course, food production, certificate course in Physical education, Certificate course n beautification etc. Sankaradeva in the 15th century showed in different path of vocation to the people so that they could earn their own livelihood.

4.2: Vocational education has been reimaged in NEP 2020 through the vocationalism of Srimanta Sankaradeva in the sphere of music and performing arts :

Performing arts are arts or skills that require a performance in front of a public audience. Examples are acting, singing and dancing. The other forms of performing arts include opera, theatre, magic or illusion performance, mine, spoken word, recitation and public speaking. The NEP 2020 had given a fillip to the field of music and performing arts besides enabling a



curriculum framework for academic studies in educational institutions. Nagesh V. Bhattakote, Vice-Chancellor of the Varsity said, NEP was a major step forward in providing a course curriculum and academic framework for students of music and performing arts. He pointed out that the NEP has made it mandatory to offer courses and electives in music and performing arts at various levels of education and this will be a game changer for students of music and other forms of performing arts.[7]

The notion of music and performing arts is nothing new. It dates back to 15th century. It was produced by Sankaradeva. Sankaradeva created the Kavya Geet mainly for audio implication and Natya for visual implication. Sankaradeva produced the Ankiya Naat through the Brajvali language. Sankaradeva wrote as many as seven ankiya naats, including of course, Chinhayatra, which is lost, never to be found in any form. Other six plays include Kaliadaman, Patniprasad, Keligopal, Rukminiharan, Parijatharan and Ram Vijoy. Nine plays are ascribed to Madhavadeba. They are Arjun Bhanjan, Chordhara, Bhumiletowa, Pimporagusowa, Bhojanbhar, Brahmamohan, Ras, Bhusanharan and Ketorakhela. His plays are described as Jumura. Such plays were played within the satras regularly.⁸ To perform a drama some musical instruments are required like Khol and Taal, which were prepared under the supervision of Sankaradeva. Besides dramatist, the saint was a great lyrical composer too that includes, Bargeet, Bhatimas, Poyers etc. Music plays a significant role in the Neo-Vaishnavite movement, laying much emphasis on Shravana (listening), and Kirtana (singing) from among nine forms of Bhakti. Besides these, the saint too composed the Sankari dance in Assam. He created Sankari Nritya as an accompaniment to the Ankiya Naat which were usually performed in the satras. As the tradition developed and grew within the satras, the dance form came to be called satriya though the most appropriate nomenclature would definitely be Sankari Nritya. At present, the Universities of Assam viz the Assam University, Silchar, Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya, Guwahati unit, Dibrugarh University, Asom Sattriya Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, Jorhat affiliated to Dibrugarh University are offering the course of performing arts. There are many universities in India which provide Bachelor of Performing arts (BPA) and Master of



Performing Arts (MPA) while providing good value. According to NEP 2020, it is mandatory for all the Universities to introduce the course of performing Arts as an academic discipline within the University system.

V. Conclusion:

Thus, vocational education has been reimagined in NEP 2020 through the vocationalism of SrimantaSankaradeva in the sphere of cottage industry and music and performing arts. As NEP 2020 has targeted to include vocational education in curriculum, it will be really helpful for the upcoming students to engage themselves in various jobs and earn their livelihood.

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