

# Role of Holistic Education and Meditation in Facing Challenges of Atam Nirbhar Bharat

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**Abstract:** *Atam Nirbhar Bharat aims at making India Self - Reliant in all aspects of life. The journey from the present state to Atam Nirbhar Bharat will be offering new challenges. These challenges will be additional to the one's which India is facing today. They may be related to technology, education, management, education, medical or any other field. Education is the key sector that produces technocrats, teachers, managers, doctors, engineers, scientists and what not. NEP 2020 focuses on a paradigm shift from the policies of previous years. The UNESCO Report of Delors Committee (1996) also focuses on Holistic Education for the 21st Century. The goal of Holistic Education is to strengthen every aspect of the students, like physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual. The tradition of Holistic Education is rooted in Ancient Indian Education System, where the education was imparted in Gurukuls and students used to stay with the teachers. The NEP 2020 also proposes holistic and multidisciplinary education. Meditation is a powerful tool that helps to strengthen the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of a person.*

**Keywords:** Atam Nirbhar Bharat, Holistic Education, Meditation

## 1. Introduction

Honourable Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan commented about NEP, "The NEP will help prepare global citizens who will merge the best of tradition with the most modern and global outlook. These valuable human resources will shoulder collective responsibilities in the face of natural disasters & find solutions for issues that confront humanity" (AtmaNirbhar Bharat And Other NEP 2020 Highlights). Atam Nirbhar Bharat aims at making India Self - Reliant in all aspects of life. This initiative from the present Indian Government is quite appreciable. Since 2014 the Indian Government is using the term in different contexts. The ultimate goal of Atam Nirbhar Bharat will be offering its own challenges, opportunities and skill - sets. The blueprint of journey from the present state to Atam Nirbhar Bharat needs to be chalked out by keeping all the relevant factors in mind. These challenges will be additional to the one's which India is facing today. They may be related to technology, education, management, education, medical or any other field. Education is the key sector that produces technocrats, teachers, managers, doctors, engineers, scientists and what not. This means that the quality of education will indirectly affect the whole society and every profession. Ultimately it can be said that quality of education will affect the goal of Atam Nirbhar Bharat.

From time to time various commissions and committees have given recommendations for the improvement in the education sector at every level. The UNESCO Report of Delors Committee (1996) and National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of Government of India have given recommendations for the improvement in the education sector at different levels.

Delors Committee (1996) focuses on Holistic Education for the 21st Century. The goal of Holistic Education is to strengthen every aspect of the students, like physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual. The concept of Holistic Education and Meditation is not new to the Indian Education System. The tradition of Holistic Education is

rooted in Ancient Indian Education System, where the education was imparted in Gurukuls and students used to stay with the teachers. Since the students used to stay with the teachers, they were imparted every type of education that was essential for the students. The education was imparted to strengthen every aspect of the students, like physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual.

NEP 2020 focuses on a paradigm shift from the policies of previous years. The NEP 2020 also proposes holistic and multidisciplinary education. They will also help set the highest standards for multidisciplinary education across India. New targets are being given to the Higher Education Institutions. They will be focusing on research and innovation. Many suggestions have been given to the institutions; like focus on interdisciplinary research, start - ups, setting of new incubation centers, industry and academic linkages, and technology development centers. These guidelines are also for humanities and social sciences research. Given the scenario of epidemics and pandemics, it is critical that HEIs take the lead to undertake research in areas of infectious diseases, epidemiology, virology, diagnostics, instrumentation, vaccinology and other relevant areas. The NRF will function to help enable and support such a vibrant research and innovation culture across HEIs, research labs, and other research organizations. The NEP 2020 also proposes holistic and multidisciplinary education.

The Indian Government is very serious about the implementation of NEP 2020. NEP 2020 is working on designing a quality, affordable and accessible education system (Mukhrjee, 2021). The key highlights are:

- 1) Academic Bank of Credit with multiple entries and exit options in higher education.
- 2) Engineering education in Regional Languages.
- 3) Internationalisation of higher education
- 4) Language statues to Indian Sign Language
- 5) Introduction of Sign Language at Secondary School (Mukhrjee, 2021)

Though NEP 2020 is focusing on Atam Nirbhar Bharat; it has its own challenges. The challenges are related to the challenges related to existing factors and new challenges that may develop with the change of the system. This is the responsibility of the education sector to prepare the students for the future challenges. The future of the nation will depend upon the students; and they will be designed in the class - rooms by the education sector. For this, such tools are required that give best results in minimum time. Meditation is one of such tools that can affect many factors in a positive direction. Meditation is a powerful tool that helps to strengthen the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of a person.

Meditation is a mental exercise. Anyone can do it. There are nearly 200 types of meditations prevailing all over the world and one can choose anyone of them to get the benefits of meditation. The benefits of meditation are immense. In the modern times the need of introducing meditation practices at school level was first understood by the Western scholars. Meditation programs can influence learning, value inculcation, curriculum transaction and self - efficacy of students and teachers. Over the past 15 years, youth - meditation programs have been developed in countries such as England (Mindfulness in Schools Project, Dot B), the USA (Mindful Schools and Mind Up), Canada (Mindful Education), Israel (The Mindfulness Language) and India (The Alice Project) (Wicklegren, 2012). It is worthy to note that, in 2012, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning in USA allocated \$7 million to the development of curriculum that promotes social - emotional learning (Wicklegren, 2012). As such, it is expected that more meditation education programs will be developed and taught in schools. Many researchers have identified a wide range of effects of meditation practices on many variables such as physical fitness, anxiety, disease control, attention, concentration, achievement motivation, emotional stability and learning. The benefits of meditation range from reduction in the levels of anxiety to increasing well - being and reduction in psychological distress to improvement in cognition (Hall, 1999). Furthermore, many researchers have explored the effect of meditation on different dimensions of cognitive capabilities (working memory, long term memory, short term memory, reflexivity, conversation, cognitive biases, attention, cognitive flexibility, visual - spatial processing, executive functioning, verbal fluency), emotional intelligence and academic achievement. While Warner (2005), Chambers (2008), Zedian (2009), Chisea (2011), reported significant effects of meditation on working memory; Mesicampo (2007), Laurea (2009), Prakesh (2011) explored effects of meditation on long term memory and short term memory and reported significant effects of mindfulness meditation. Some of the researchers, like Mesicampo (2007), Chisea (2011), Misra (2013), Maraniak (2014), who investigated effects of meditation on memory; also reported similar results. Effects of meditation on attention were explored by Chambers, Moore (2009), Zedian, Bergsma (2011), Chisea (2011), Prakesh (2011), Misra (2013), Maranaik (2014) which was found significant. Other dimensions of Cognitive Capabilities that were found having significant effects of mindfulness meditation were: Reflexivity (Warner, 2005), conversation (Warner, 2005), cognitive flexibility (Moore, 2009), visio - spatial processing

(Zedian, 2009), executive functioning (Bergsma, 2009 Chisea, 2011), information processing speed (Prakesh, 2011), Verbal fluency (Masarnaik, 2014). Wenk - Sormaz (2005), Singh (2011), Shah (2015) investigated the effects of meditation on emotional intelligence. The results reported significant increase in emotional intelligence. Mesicampo (2007), Warne (2007), Lorderick (2009), Maraniak (2014) found that practice of meditation helps in emotional regulation. One study reported that meditation is helpful in boosting emotional competencies. Effect of meditation on academic achievement was explored by Hall (1999), Beachemin (2008), Nidich (2011), Manjushambika (2012), Waters (2014) and was reported significant effects in boosting academic achievement. Waters (2014) put forth a model of meditation in which he mentions that meditation first helps to develop cognitive capabilities and to regulate emotions. Afterwards, these in turn have their effects on well being, social competencies and academic achievement. Researches on meditation have transcended all the borders of continents, and disciplines. Meditation has been proved useful in the disciplines like health, psychology, management, physical education and education. It has been proved very effective in solving medical problems like high blood pressure, diabetes; psychological problems like depression, anxiety, tension, stress and improving attributes of personality; enhancing managerial efficiency, boosting physical efficiency of the players, and solving diverse problems related to education. Meditation has potential of solving problems of learning difficulty, underperformance in academic field, stress, anxiety and depression. In these circumstances, the age old practice of meditation seems to be one of the solutions that can be adopted by any individual. This indicates that meditation helps to face the challenges of life.

So, meditation is a powerful tool that helps to strengthen many aspects of person that are crucial to face the challenges of life. It can be practiced by anyone and anytime. Moreover, this is an important tool to strengthen oneself and face challenges of life. In addition to this, the benefits of meditation are cumulative. This can be used as a powerful tool to face the challenges in the journey of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan and make India Vishwa Guru once again.

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