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## **Report on the Program**

**Shiksha Ka Bhartiyakaran**  
**Speaker: Shri Mukul Kanitkar**

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Link : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ycy2EHyxBkg>



**REGIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION**  
(National Council of Educational Research and Training)

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ODISHA**



**Mukul Kanitkar** is an erudite author, orator, secretary of Vivekananda International Foundation; Visiting Faculty, Department of Commerce, Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad University Vadodara, Department of Management IIT Mumbai. Shri Mukul Kanitkar is the Akhil Bharatiya Joint Organizing Secretary of Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal, an organization

dedicated to evolve indigenous model of education. He has has penned down numerous books on Indian tradition, culture and education. He has conducted innumerable workshops on personality development, and research for National Resurgence in IIT Delhi, IIT Roorkee, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, Delhi University, MS University Vadodara etc. He has trained and motivated 29,973 School students to perform Mass Surya namaskar at Gwalior in 2005 to create a world record duly entered in the Guinness World Records. Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal has developed a Comprehensive draft on Integrated and Holistic Education policy for Bharat.

Sri Mukul Kanitker talked about the modern school system in India which completely destroyed the rich indigenous education system of India; which was comprehensive in nature and was promoting the holistic development of students. From the time of Rig-Veda onwards, our ancient education system evolved over the period and focused on the holistic development of the individual by taking care of both the inner and the outer self. The system focused on the moral, physical, spiritual and intellectual aspects of life. Both formal and informal ways of education system existed. Teaching was largely oral and students remembered and meditated upon what was taught in the class. It was never examination oriented or book centric. Education in India has a heritage of being pragmatic, achievable and complementary to life.

Going back to the history of modern education system in India he pointed out that it has its origins in the colonial system of education that was shaped between the 1830s and 1870s. Centrality of the textbook and examinations, and a highly centralised system of education administration (within a federal structure, centralised at the level of each state), are some of the features that can be traced to the colonial system. Although there was a widespread presence of village teachers engaged with literacy and numeracy instruction though restricted to higher castes and males only, as well as centres for “shastric learning” (Sanskrit and Arabic), which could be considered as an indigenous system, the British system supplanted these “schools” or centres of learning and cut off state support or patronage that they had previously enjoyed. The curriculum of the colonial school system included Western knowledge, the English language, and “(colonial) citizenship” and excluded all forms of indigenous knowledge. The new system was accessible to all castes and communities and over time also addressed the education of girls; however, it was never intended to be a universal education system. Much of the spread of the system is to some degree accounted for by government effort in some parts of India, but also that of Christian missionaries, local rulers who promoted education in their princely states, social reformers, and finally, the involvement of the private sector. The twin interests of social reform through enlightenment, knowledge, and education, as well as the lure of employment through Western education, drove the expansion of the system. During this period the idea of national systems of education and compulsory schooling and curricular and pedagogic imaginations were also developing in the colonial European countries. Debates and developments in Europe found their reflection in the colonies and curricular and pedagogic innovation and development in the colonies sometimes preceded and informed progressive changes in Europe. Indigenous centres for shastric learning continued but on a much smaller scale and with limited sources of patronage. The indigenous village teacher has now become a government servant. Pedagogies approaches to learning now took the form of repetition and memorisation by an

obedient student. “Textbook culture” took the root displacing the age old indigenous knowledge which was focusing on overall development of the capability of a student. The idea of the “guru” and the need for legitimate learning to be mediated by the guru in the indigenous knowledge systems and in popular folklore was completely destroyed by the modern system of education.

The phase in which Indian nationalism emerged leading to the anti-colonial nationalist movement (1890s to 1940s), may be regarded as the first phase of education reform. Reforms largely came as a reaction to the colonial rejection of indigenous knowledge and identity, but also by the need for social reform, modern ideas, and the benefits of science, which were a part of the colonial curriculum. Four distinctive reactions, from the late 1890s and early 1900s onwards, can be summarised as follows. Firstly, Swami Vivekanand, who articulated a vision of education for character-building and confidence by drawing on indigenous Vedantic philosophy and practice was an early voice and influence. A second response was formulated by Rabindranath Tagore, a celebrated poet, who reacted to the alienating nature of colonial education, and sought to build an alternative system that drew on art and related to nature as its core. Tagore was linked to humanistic education movements in Europe around the same time. A third response came from Jyotirao Phule, whose focus was on the education of the Dalits and women and who argued for an education that was more relevant to rural contexts. The fourth response was from Gandhi, who also formulated an anti-colonial education vision that placed work and the learning of crafts at its core, in place of a curriculum that was academic and bookish. The indigenous education system in India supported self-reliance and was relevant to a range of traditional lifestyles and occupations and not oriented to government employment. Education was imparted for cultural and linguistic continuity and integration into, rather than alienation, during this period education for self-confidence and character rather than servility, and universal access through which social reform could be achieved, were dominant concerns. As Indians gained control over education policy, particularly in the post-independence period from 1947 onwards, the policymakers did take note of these to form a national system of education, though not without contestation, but were eventually subverted, assuming tokenistic forms within the mainstream. So what continued was a highly differentiated system of education with a strong academic orientation, and with English-medium schooling offered by non-government or private actors as the most desirable education.

– and frequently associated with “quality”. However that quality education could not be made universal due to inadequate funding. The 1960s may be regarded as heralding the growth of science education in India, along with “scientific” curriculum development. The education policy formally linked the spread of education, and in particular of science, to national development. In the 1970s, new developments took shape in voluntary agencies and people’s science movements, which sought to bring a new understanding of what it means to learn science: by doing science, as well as harnessing science for development and taking science into rural India. University scientists worked in rural middle schools developing a science curriculum that completely rejected text bookish knowledge and emphasised learning by doing, thinking, and reasoning. These efforts extended from science to social science and primary school curricula between the 1980s and the early part of the 1990s. The 1960s and

1970s were also the period in which Bloom cast a powerful influence on curriculum development and teacher education – with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supporting Indian scholars to study under Bloom. Bloom’s approach to curriculum development was influential the world over. The same period also saw the emergence of new cognitive theories of learning in the West. However, these did not enter into mainstream Indian education: India’s curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher education missed the “cognitive revolution” that was taking place in the rest of the world. Instead the behavioural-objectives approach in India drew on a behavioural-psychology base in teacher education and introduced new “scientific” orthodoxies into education. The teacher-centred approach to instruction that drew on Bloom and behaviourism did not challenge traditional textbook curriculum. From the mid-1980s onwards the curriculum and pedagogy in Indian schools have been increasingly influenced by central government initiatives and supported by civil society activism. The initial phase was largely driven by the central government’s Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) under the National Policy on Education 1986, which heralded the National Literacy Mission and increased access to education through Operation Blackboard and large-scale non-formal education schemes. An important development in this phase was the entry of international aid and loans for primary education, which allowed for increased central influence through “mission mode” programmes to increase access and quality. These centrally sponsored schemes in mission mode have progressively enabled the inclusion and spread of child-centred ideas and social justice educational themes and concerns. The early stages of these developments were possible because of openings created by the aided District Primary Education Programmes (DPEP), which enabled revising of primary-level textbooks and in-service teacher training towards more “joyful” pedagogies, and altering teachers’ mind-sets and attitudes towards marginalised communities and gender issues. Curricular and pedagogic responses to support inclusion of marginalised communities and girls, the need for far greater context specificity and inclusion of the child’s language and experience in the curriculum, entered into administrative concerns and “quality” talk. Large-scale initiatives began to link the question of access to school to curricula and pedagogy in addition to infrastructure and recruitment of teachers. The DPEP and subsequent Sarva Siksha Abhiyan programme, have increasingly oriented curricular and pedagogic considerations towards the issues of inclusion and equity. These large-scale centrally sponsored initiatives have generally favoured a movement towards a child-centred curriculum. However, in programming for “quality” there is a palpable tension between favouring the achievement of basic literacy and numeracy through greater teacher accountability and micro-managed mastery-learning curricula, and favouring professionalization of the teacher, teacher professional development and resource support, and more constructivist curricula. It must be acknowledged that between 2000 and 2014, these efforts almost exclusively concern the government schooling system, which has become equated with the question of education of the children of the poor. A parallel development has been to question the ability of the state to provide quality education, and suggest that private providers provide better value for money and are more capable of producing and ensuring “quality”. There is a growing presence of privately provided services to schools, from curriculum and teachers to testing, not only in the rich private schools, but also in private schools that cater to the poor and to government. In this range of private schools

which are English medium, we still find forms of the exam-oriented, textbook cultures adapted to new imperatives of competitive examinations. We may regard the large-scale programmes as holding implications mainly for the government schooling system and for the poor, and for primary schools. Since 2000, there have also been more sweeping developments and changes. The development of a National Curriculum Framework and related textbook development have become more noticeable in the public eye and influence the whole of school education (not only education of the children of the poor/government schools), and revealing deep ideological differences within Indian society and the political character of curriculum-making and curriculum change. The 2000 curriculum favoured Hindutva nationalism with implications not only for history but for science and mathematics, with the inclusion of non-Western contributions and including astrology as a science. The 2005 curriculum attempts not only to undo this “saffronisation” but also to question the persistence of rote, continued fear and failure to be countered by teaching for understanding and meaning-making, providing for “local contexts” and the inclusion of critical perspectives in curricula. The 2009 Right to Education Act has further ushered in changes in evaluation through continuous comprehensive evaluation (CEE), the implications of which are just beginning to be felt in the schooling system.

These are major developments affecting all strata and stages of school and teacher education. It is useful to remember that the school system in India (including the government, private, and aided schools) is highly differentiated and stratified – not only in terms of its clientele groups, but also in terms of curricular and pedagogic forms. In this complexly differentiated space, the various and varied curricular and pedagogic themes that have been discussed so far, and others that have not been discussed, such as vocationalisation, tribal children’s education, special education, religious learning, heritage crafts and alternative education, can all be found. They not only coexist but also influence and alter each other and use various political, bureaucratic, corporate, religious and civil society levers to influence, engage with, or remain immune from national structures and processes of change or reform. Following the Right to Education Act, we seem to have entered into a period of ideological intensifications that will be decisive for the ability of the Indian state to bring in a national system of education that includes a curriculum and pedagogy. Whether this national system will be homogenising and standardising or supportive of plurality with social justice remains to be seen or imagined.

Increasingly, there has been a global shift toward recognizing and understanding Indigenous models of education as a viable and legitimate form of education. There are many different educational systems throughout the world, some that are more predominant and widely accepted. However, members of Indigenous communities celebrate diversity in learning and see this global support for teaching traditional forms of knowledge as a success. Indigenous ways of knowing, learning, instructing, teaching, and training have been viewed by many postmodern scholars as important for ensuring that students and teachers, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous, are able to benefit from education in a culturally sensitive manner that draws upon, utilizes, promotes, and enhances awareness of Indigenous traditions, beyond the standard Western curriculum of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The programme was attended by faculty members, students of different programme of the Institute.