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## MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA'S PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL REFORMS: A VISION FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATION

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#### **Abstract:**

This paper examines Madan Mohan Malaviya's ideas of education and social reforms in the context of culturally responsive education in which he tried to combine tradition with modernity. Malaviya was prominent figure in India's nationalist and educational movements, promoted an educational system that blend Indian knowledge system with contemporary western scientific advancements. Beside promoting modern knowledge, he emphasized moral values, national integration, social reform, and cultural identity. His ideas of education and social reforms which promotes for inclusivity, cultural importance and ethical learning were closely aligns with the concept of culturally responsive education. This study examines the establishment of Banaras Hindu University by Malaviya ji and his accomplishments with the execution of his educational philosophy and social reforms. It also considers how his ideas can influence current discussions about integrating ethical learning, decolonizing education, and developing inclusive pedagogies. This paper explores and describes a framework which honour the cultural identity with global modernity by integrating Malviya's Ideas.

Keywords: Culturally Responsive Education, Malaviya's Ideas, Social reforms, Moral values, National Integration.

### Introduction

Postcolonial nations continue to struggle with the unresolved tension between indigenous and modern systems of education, making it a burning issue in academic circles. Indigenous knowledge systems were systematically repressed by the colonial education system in India, which was established under Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education (1835). Education system itself is the component of Culture. Education system which does not evolved from the culture, will create the identity crises and it also created an epistemological and cultural gap in education system (Malani et al., 2012; Vishwanathan, 1989). Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946) used his educational approach and social reforms, blended with modernity to fulfil the contemporary needs as well as to bridge the gap (Dharampal, 1983). His ideas of indigenous education integrated with global knowledge, reflected the combination of Vedic values and western scientific philosophy. It was unveiled in 1916 when he founded Banaras Hindu University (BHU,2016; Chaturvedi, 1984; Maini, n.d.; Bakshi, n.d.).

To equip the students with modern knowledge with their cultural identities for a globalised society, this paper highlighted that Malviya's ideology offers insightful guidance for modern culturally responsive education (Gay,2010; Gay,2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995). This study examines Malviya's writings, speeches and his institutional reforms to demonstrate the relevance of his views in contemporary education, especially in the context of decolonising curriculum and promoting inclusive pedagogies (Bhambra et al.,22018; Nandy1983).

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1. What are the Madan Mohan Malaviya's educational ideology and social reforms which foster a culturally responsive and inclusive society rooted in Indian Values?
- 2. How Malaviya's educational ideology and social reforms influence the contemporary educational policies and practices nurturing cultural responsiveness and social equity for modern-day needs?

## Methodology

Malaviya's ideology on education were examined in this study using qualitative research approach, and explore the relation with culturally responsive education. The primary sources like Malaviya's writings, speeches, private correspondence, and









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official documents from the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) archives, as well as government publications and educational regulations from the colonial era were used in study. Scholarly articles and biographies are secondary sources that provide critical viewpoints on his legacy. Hermeneutical philosophy is used to interpret Malaviya's key tenets, including social reforms, national education, and 'Dharma'.

A case study of BHU is conducted using qualitative methods to evaluate how Malaviya's vision was realized in the academic program and cultural milieu of the university. Thematic analysis used to uncover the recurrent themes in Indianization of education, moral education, and support for women's education in writing of Madan Mohan Malaviya. The theoretical framework of Culturally Responsive Education, as explained by academician Gay (2002), Gay (2010), and Ladson-Billings (1995), offers a conceptual framework to measure at what extent the Malaviya's idea of Sanskriti-based education as well as modern sciences in English medium aligns with current educational discourse on social justice, inclusivity, and indigenous knowledge.

## **Conceptual Framework**

This conceptual framework of the study places the educational philosophy of Madan Mohan Malaviya as a central paradigm which integrated Indian knowledge system and culture with modern education (Pandey,2013). Malviya's vision on education and social reforms reflected the principles of Culturally Responsive Education, which directing to create an inclusive, value-based educational environment (Dwivedi,2010).

Culturally responsive education highlighted the importance of inclusive curriculum, developing teachers ' cultural competence, and nurturing strong, positive relationships between teachers and students (Abdalla & Moussa, 2024; Bassey, 2016). Gay,2002; highlights the importance of Integrating the student's cultural identities and their lived experiences in curriculum, which helps in nurturing academic achievement through pedagogical practices, and it also strengthen the diverse cultural perspectives. Culturally responsive education nurtures critical thinking, empathy, gratitude and cultural identity among students and inculcate the necessary skills needed to achieve in an increasingly interconnected and globalised society (Anyichie & Butler, 2023).

The Malaviya's culturally grounded educational model, which he implemented in BHU, have a substantial contribution in development of curriculum based on Indian knowledge system. His social reforms advocated for progressive society including women's education, caste equaity, promoting communal harmony (Chaudhary,n.d.; Jha & Jha, n.d.). The theoretical foundations of this framework highlighted the enduring significance of its core ideals, having valuable insights for shaping contemporary educational policy and practice specially in the domain of culturally responsive pedagogy, education for social justice, and nation-building initiatives.





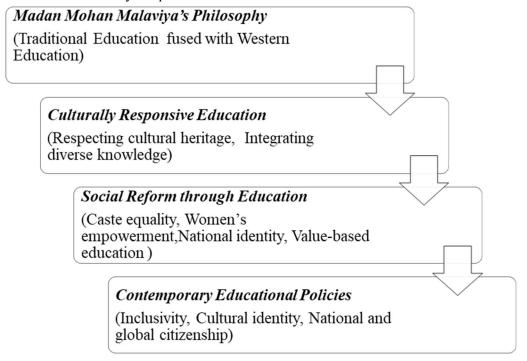




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Figure -1: Conceptual framework of Malaviya's educational philosophy in relation with Culturally Responsive Education



## Research question 1

What are the Madan Mohan Malaviya's educational ideology and social reforms which foster a culturally responsive and inclusive society rooted in Indian Values?

Madan Mohan Malaviya was social reformer and revolutionary educationist during the colonial period, who established an education system which have the ethos of Indian cultural values and blending of Indian knowledge system with scientific advancement. His education system tunefully integrated modern educational practices with traditional Indian educational practices, which was aligned with the concept of culturally responsive education. His education vision was based on the credence that the education should inculcate cultural identity, national integration and social responsibility. His educational approach aligned with the culturally responsive education in the following ways:

### 1.Fusion of tradition with modernity

- Cultural-rootedness: Malaviyaji embodies a profound consciousness and appreciation of one's cultural heritage, which significantly shapes an individual's identity, informs their behavior, and influences their worldview. He was too much admire for the Bhagwat Gita and emphasized the Upanishadic insight of "Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye" the true knowledge that liberates (Vishnu Puran 1.19.41). Inculcating for higher moral character he advocated for Dharma-Centric Education (Pandey,2020) and emphasises the mother tong with Sanskrit alongside English language for medium of Education (Kumar,2000).
- Scientific Temper: Malviya ji was deeply rooted in Indian cultural tradition, but he recognises the importance of modernity and science, therefore he established the different department of modern sciences and professional studies at BHU (Lakhotia,n.d.). At BHU he also facilitates to integrating western scientific thought within Indian philosophical background (Mishra, n.d.). he advocated Indian medicine system (Ayurveda), Mathematics and Astronomy along with modern discipline (Singh,n.d.; Mahamana Malviya Misson,2023, vol-IV).









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## 2. Value Education and social reforms

- Man-Making Education: Malaviya's Philosophy of Education have much importance for character building, discipline and social responsibility over only intellectual development. It seems the influence of Vivekanand's Man-Making Education on his educational ideology (Sunderam, 1948; Jaffrelot, 2021). He also promoted the human values such as seva (Altruistic approach), self-discipline and leadership for national development (Parmanand, 1985; Pandey, 2013).
- Inclusivity and Social Reforms: Malviya ji was a nationalist leader and endorsed the interreligious harmony, he collaborated the Leaders like Jinnah (Mishra, n.d.). He was also among the first to emphasise that the future of India will not be Hindus or Muslims but Hindus and Muslim. Then, of course, perhaps as a person who sought to build bridges, first between the moderate and the extreme views in the Congress (1905-08) and later between the Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim organisations (Gupta, 1978). He also emphasis to equal justice for all communities for building a strong and united India, without considering whether majority community or minority community (Gupta, 1978). Malviya ji advocated the social reforms and inclusivity through promoting the interreligious harmony and unity among religious communities.
- Women's Education: In colonial India the female literacy was very low, Malviyaji realises the importance of the female education and emphasises on girl's education and co-education (Jha& Jha,n.d.). He integrated literature, science and vocational training into the women's education curricula to include them to contribute in the society (Pandey, 2013; Malani et al., n.d.).
- Caste Reforms: Malviya ji collaborated with reformers like Jyotiba Phule and Mahatma Gandhi(Gupta, 1978) and in BHU he introduced scholarships for marginalised students(BHU,2016). His social reforms however moderate but at least he started the Inclusivity within the tradition in India(pandey, 2015). His revolutionary ideas were challenged the orthodox restrictions in society and supported the inclusivity.
- Economic Self-Reliance: Malviya ji emphasised the vocational education through technical and industrial training to prepare skilled youth for swadeshi economic empowerment. He rejected the colonial system of education which focuses on bureaucratic training to prepare the clerk for absorption in colonial administration (Pandey, 2015; Kumar, 1991; Chaudhary, n.d.).

### 3. Research and Teacher Quality

Malviya's ideas on education grounded on belief that research is the apex of the education and highlighted the importance of developing teachers as reflective practitioners. He stated before the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1927 "Research is the highest stage of Education" and "No man can be a good teacher unless he carries on research himself" (Mahamana Malviya Mission, 2023, pp291,314). Research empowered teachers can create Inclusive learning environments to cater for diverse socio-economic and cultural background of students. Research oriented teaching is inherently responsive which cater the learner's demographics and social issues. Therefore, the research-oriented teachers become an instrument for empowerment and social reforms.

### 4. Banaras Hindu University: Execution of Culturally Responsive Education

Malviya ji had established the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in 1916 to implement his educational ideas to make it the intellectual and spiritual hub if India, he synthesised the ancient Indian education system with modern scientific advancement (Malik, 2022). Unlike the contemporary colonial Universities which focuses the western epistemology, negating the ancient Indian Education System, BHU was planned as a "Bharatiya Vidya Peeth" (Indian seat of Learning) where Vedic scholarship coexisted with Laboratories and workshops (Mahamana Malviya Mission, Vol-5,2023; Kumar, 2000). His approach reflects the culturally responsive education, which included the Indian cultural heritage, languages and epistemologies in the learning process. Malviya's Ideas of Education, where integration of ancient Indian









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education system with modern education system exists and emphasis on integration of curriculum, cultural components, learner's cultural identities along with academic achievement (Gay,2010: Ladson-Billings,1995). Hence, BHU was the role model for educational institutions to honour the indigenous cultural heritage and integrate it in the educational system while embracing global knowledge system.

# 5. Indian Knowledge Systems: Reviving Indigenous Heritage

Malviya's ideology of education grounded on credence of Indian cultural heritage and knowledge system should be the core of education rather than blindly following the western education system. BHU have revolutionary changes and established departments which integrated Indian knowledge system with western system of education.

- Sanskrit & Vedic Studies; The Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya was established, and it became a centre for *Nyaya* (logic), *Minamsa* (philosophy) and *Vedanta*, attracting scholars worldwide (Kumar,2000). The colonial education system that treated Sanskrit as a dying language, BHU integrated it with modern linguistics and comparative literature (Pandey,n.d.).
- Ayurveda & Yogic Sciences; The Faculty of Ayurveda established in 1927, was among the first to systematize traditional medicine with scientific research (Lakhotia,n.d.; Dwivedi,2010). Malaviya insisted to studied Ayurveda alongside Allopathy (modern medicine), anticipating today's integrated approach of medicine (Mishra,n.d.).
- Dharma & Ethics; Malaviya ji dedicated himself to spreading Hindu culture and "Sanatan Dharma" and for upholding it he founded "Bharat Dharma Mahamandal". His Sanatan Dharma had inclusive approach which embracing universal Hindu ideals and holistic towards other religion without considering sectarian division (Malik,2022). In BHU the courses taught related to Indian ethics, governance (Artha shastra) and social system to cultivate nation-building with moral grounding (Pandey,n.d.).

### 6. Modern Disciplines: Bridging Tradition and Modern Technology

Malaviya's BHU deeply rooted in Indian thought and the same time it also ensured to implement development of modern science and technology in their curriculum. "India cannot regain her prosperity until the study and application of the modern science becomes, so to speak naturalized in the country and that science cannot become a national possession so long as it has to be studied through the medium of a foreign language." (Somaskandan, nd).

Engineering & Technology the College of Engineering (1919) focused on civil, mechanical, and electrical engineering to support Swadeshi industrialization (Lakhotia,n.d.;Singh, n.d.)). Research in metallurgy and hydroelectricity aligned with India's self-reliance goals (Singh,n.d.). In the first convocation of the university which was held on January 17, 1919, The vice-chancellor Sir P. S. Sivaswam Aiyar in his convocation address echoed Malayviya's sentiments only when he said "The dawn of a new era of Industrial development is in sight and it is the duty of Hindu University to prepare young men for it" (BHU,2016;Singh, nd).

Medicine & Sciences the Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS) combined Ayurveda with modern medicine, a novel approach in pre-Independence India (Mishra,n.d). Laboratories for physics, chemistry, and botany were established with Indian industrialists. (Malviya Mission, Vol.V,2023).

Malaviya's ideology of Education is reflected in his BHU which is prominent for culturally responsive education in action, it honours Indian Indigenous knowledge, blending tradition with modern innovation in curriculum, using native languages in Teaching-Learning and connecting education to societal needs. This approach makes learning more meaningful to Indian students and eventually contribute to national development and cultural preservation.









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## 7. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Nationalist Pedagogy

The idea to establish BHU was not for just an academic institution but to sensitise the students about the exploitation in colonial rule and prepare them to struggle for freedom. In education Malaviya ji underlines on India's rich cultural heritage and its contribution to astronomy, mathematics, statecraft, medicine etc. and resisted the colonial hegemony and avoided the British historiography (Kumar,2000; Somaskandan,n.d.). Malaviya ji in BHU frequently invited the nationalist leaders as Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore, Tilak and others to deliver lectures, encouraging political consciousness and nationalism among students (Jaffrelot,2021). The environment in BHU was supported to swadeshi values and encourages them to adopt the indigenously manufactured products, wear khadi and boycott foreign products (Sunderam,1948; BHU,2016; Chaudhary). BHU have their own printing press, it published the nationalist literature in Hindi and Sanskrit to spread the nationalist message in large scale and countered the colonial propaganda (BHU,2016). The published literature from BHU printing press also highlighted that traditional and the modernity are not opposite, it can be side by side for progression (BHU,2016).

Malaviya's educational model focuses that Indian rich cultural heritage should be the core of curriculum with the supplement of western education model to enrich the education and prepare the students for global perspective. His educational approach prudently balancing spiritually with modern scientific outlook to preserve cultural identity while nurturing progress and resisting blind westernisation. These approaches will inculcate and equipped the students with modern skills and traditional wisdom to contribute meaningfully to society (Somaskandan,n.d.). His inclusive and balanced philosophy offered a middle path between traditional and modernity, which is of culturally responsive education and still relevant in today's education. BHU model of culturally responsive education influences the later development of educational policies which emphasis on Indian Knowledge System (IKS), revival of ancient traditional medical system, bringing the Sanskrit in mainstream education and incorporating it in premier technological institutes such as IITs and IIMs.

Malaviya's educational philosophy is a timeless illustration of culturally responsive education which blended the Indian cultural heritage with modern scientific progress. His education system nurtured ethical, moral values, social responsibility and prepare nationally conscious individuals by harmonizing tradition with modernity. BHU where the Malaviya ji executed his vision for fostering inclusivity, interreligious harmony and balancing between spiritual and scientific learning are still relevant and continue to influence contemporary educational reforms like National Education Policy 2020. It reaffirmed that true education shapes character, preserve and carry on the cultural heritage, making society inclusive and promote progressive thought for nation building.

## **Research Question 2**

How Malaviya's educational vision and social reforms influence the contemporary educational policies and practices nurturing cultural responsiveness and social equity for modern-day needs?

The educational philosophy of Malaviya rooted in ideals of Indian cultural heritage, ethical values and inclusive education are still influencing the contemporary educational discourse. Malaviya educational principles as blending of tradition with modernity, character building, nation-building through enlightened citizenship has offer insights to contemporary societies to deals with the challenges of fostering cultural responsiveness and social equity.

The inquiry explores how Malaviya's educational philosophy influences contemporary educational policies and practices, specially in the context of today's demand for equity, diversity, progressive social transformation and pluralistic societies.

### 1. Malaviya's relevance in Contemporary Education: Bridging Tradition and Modernity

Malaviya's educational philosophy, which was implemented in BHU remains appropriate in today's debates on decolonisation of education, culturally responsive education and ethical education. India's educational reforms seek to redefine itself to suit the globalised needs as well as in culturally rooted framework, Malaviya's vision provides a balanced











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and sustainable model of education system to maintain cultural identity as well as to achieve excellence in science and technology.

Decolonising Education: Retrieving Indigenous Knowledge

The Colonial education system, designed to spread British education system to inculcate British culture among English educated Indian to make them loyal to British crown. "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, -a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." (Macaulay, 1835, pp-9), which systematically disregarded the rich Indian Knowledge (Malani at.el., 2012; Kumar, 2000). Still the Indian education system overemphasized English centric, treat Sanskrit, Ayurveda and Indian Philosophy as optional rather than core disciplines (Pandey, 2013; Mishra, n.d.).

Malaviya ji had offered an alternative to existing education system which has indigenizing the Curriculum. Malaviya's BHU model demonstrated how education could decolonize without rejecting modernity. He integrated Indian mathematics, metallurgy, and philosophy (Nyaya, Vedanta) into formal curricula (Lakhotia, n.d.; singh,n.d. Dwivedi,2010). In the present scenario his concept of indigenisation of curriculum reflected in the National Education Policy 2020, which also emphasises for Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in higher education (Kumar, 2024). BHU curriculum included the western sciences and technology but it contextualized them with needs of Indian as engineering for infrastructure development, establishing the agriculture college to teach western centric science and technology with existing Indian knowledge system of agriculture science to reduce western centric dominance and make it more acceptable to Indians. (Mahamana Malviya Mission, 2023, Vol.V; Kumar, 2024). Modern development of educational institutions in India such as IITs, IIMs are now offering the courses in Indian Knowledge system in Sanskrit (Kumar, 2024). Ministry of education of Indian government have also pushing the IKS and established the separate division in education ministry.

### 2. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP): Education rooted in identity

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) claims that students learn best when their cultural backgrounds are respected in classroom. Malaviya's model of education anticipated it in the following ways -

- Incorporating Local Languages and Traditions BHU adopted the Hindi and Sanskrit alongside English for medium of instruction, preventing linguistic alienation (BHU,2016). The BHU model for the language of teaching -learning as reflected in NEP2020 emphasizes the medium of instruction up to class5 should be in the mother-tongue (NEP2020).
- Fostering Pride in Cultural Identity Malaviya's "Dharma and Ethics" courses taught students to critique colonialism without rejecting global knowledge (Jaffrelot, 2021; Mahamana Malaviya Mission. 2023 Vol. 9. p-13). Present Universities under the implementation of NEP2020, uses similar frameworks to teach subaltern histories.
- Case Study: BHU's Sanskrit Revival While universities based on colonial education system treated Sanskrit as obsolete, BHU had started to educate scholars in Vedic astronomy's relevance to modern astrophysics in Sanskrit (Mahamana Malaviya Mission, 2023, Vol.9. p-10). In the prospectus of proposed Hindu University, it was clearly mentioned to make the Vedas and Samahita will be the part of curriculum and to publish critical editions of Upanishads with scientific commentaries (Mahamana Malaviya Mission, 2023, Vol.9. p-15).

### 3. Educating for Virtue: Countering Market-Driven Learning

Present Education system has prioritized job-market demands over character -building, stressing rote learning rather than critical approach along with ethical compromises in professions such as corporate fraud, medical malpractice etc. (Nussbaum, 2010). Malaviya's dharma-based model of education, which was implemented in BHU, argued that education must cultivate virtue (dharma). He introduces compulsory courses on Bhagavad Gita's ethics, secularism and Gandhi's











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satyagraha (Mahamana Malaviya Mission, 2023, Vol.9, pp15-16). He also emphasized selfless service (seva) to society, providing BHU students with opportunities to run free clinics, adult literacy camps, and rural development projects (Mahamana Malaviya Mission, 2023, Vol. 9, p. 301). Malaviya believed that balanced material-spiritual growth was paramount in education. Thus, unlike purely capitalist or socialist models Malaviya's model nurtured professionalism with social conscience (Mishra, n.d.; Singh,2014). Malaviya's ideology on ethical and value-based education has influenced NEP 2020, which also emphasizes value-based education. Maney Universities and Institutions have introduced the humanistic curriculum and emphasises on ethical oriented programmes.

Malaviya's educational philosophy still relevant in contemporary India, its implementation in BHU is a role model to blend tradition with modernity in a balanced way for Progressive society. His vision to decolonised education through integrating the traditional education system to foster culturally responsive pedagogy, which stressing ethical and value-based education closely aligns with the goal of NEP2020. In the contemporary technology driven globalised world, India has redefined its educational priorities which focuses on culturally rooted, humanistic and socially conscious education for nurturing intellect and character both. The Malaviya's model of education can fulfil the educational need of India in contemporary world. The goals of present National Education Policy 2020 closely align with the Malaviya's model of Education, which foster culturally responsive education with the integration of indigenous knowledge, and emphasises on ethical and value-based education. As India redefines its educational priorities in technology-driven globalised world, Malaviya's culturally rooted, humanistic and socially conscious model continues to provide a meaningful structure for developing an educational system that nurture both intellect and character.

### Conclusion

The 21st century is dominating the global interconnectedness, where the technological advancements, rapid digital information transmission are playing the major role (Zorba,2020). These dynamics facilitate extensive intercultural exchanges beyond physical boundaries (Koc-Damgaci & Aydin,2018). Malaviya's educational philosophy offers the educational framework to deal the contemporary educational needs for progress. His model demonstrates how the tradition and modernity can be synergised to develop an educational system that maintain cultural identity, ethically grounded, socially transformative and future-ready (Pandey,2013). As 21st Century India grapples with globalization-induced identity crises, commercialization of education, and erosion of ethical values, Malaviya's principles provide a sustainable middle path (Malani at.al, 2012).

Malviya's vision highlighted Cultural Responsiveness without Insularity, Malaviya proved that institutions like BHU could teach Vedanta alongside robotics and Sanskrit computational linguistics (Dwivedi,2010). This rejects the false binary between "traditional vs. modern" education. His educational vision has Contemporary application as NEP 2020's emphasis on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) which reflects the balance between oriental and western education (Kumar,2024). His insistence on dharma (righteousness), seva (service), and national pride countered colonial education's utilitarian, extractive mindset (Kumar,2000), which reflects that the education should be for character building, not just for careers. Hence value-based education introduces in schools and universities specially in medical and engineering courses for character building (Nussbaum,2016).

Malaviya actively promoted the education for women's and marginalised (Dalit) to implement the social justice. He firmly believes that 'Sanatan Dharma' itself provides the scope for progressive changes within India's cultural framework (Jaffrelot,2021). Caste-sensitive pedagogy and gender-inclusive curricula in Indian classrooms are inevitable (Pandey,2013) and are the demand of present societies.

Malaviya's philosophy of education and social reforms resonate beyond India, it offers an insight for postcolonial nations to decolonise their educational system, maintain their cultural heritage, balancing minority identities and harmonious acceptance of multicultural societies. The same time accept the scientific advancement and integrate it with their traditional knowledge system and become the part of global world.









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## Malviya's ideas for educational implications:

- Integrate IKS into mainstream syllabi as Ayurveda in medicine, and Arthashastra in management and so on for other Indian ancient texts.
- Promote multilingual education (Sanskrit/Hindi/regional languages with global languages), it is also mentioned in NEP2020.
- Design assessments evaluating ethical reasoning alongside academic skills. Now the present Government have started the initiative Skill India Programme.
- Partner with local communities to make education socially relevant (Chaudhary,n.d.).

The contemporary era, Malaviya's middle path of education serves as a guiding principle to proving that true progress lies not only in materialist world, but it also helps the human being to feel happy and proud of their identities. Therefore, blending of tradition and modernity is inevitable. Malaviya's contributions highlighted that education not only enlighten the mind but also nurture the soul as well as the source of social changes for strengthen the nation.

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