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Comparative Study of NEP 2020 and NEP 1986 – Educators' Perspective Conducted in Mumbai Suburban

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Abstract: *The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduces significant reforms in the Indian education system, emphasizing multidisciplinary education and competency-based learning over the rigid subject divisions and rote learning methods of NEP 1986. This study examines educators' perspectives on these transformations, focusing on whether they support the new approach or prefer traditional methods.*
To assess their familiarity with NEP 1986 and NEP 2020 and their opinions on key reforms., a survey was conducted among educators The first hypothesis tested whether there is a significant difference in educators' opinions regarding the benefits of multidisciplinary education in NEP 2020 compared to the rigid subject divisions under NEP 1986. The second hypothesis evaluated whether competency-based, experiential learning is preferred over rote learning.
Preliminary findings suggest that a majority of educators strongly support NEP 2020's approach, believing that multidisciplinary education enhances holistic learning and competency-based learning fosters critical thinking. However, challenges such as teacher training, infrastructural limitations, and resistance to change were highlighted as potential barriers to effective implementation. Further statistical analysis, such as the Chi-Square test, will determine whether the observed trends are statistically significant.
This research provides valuable insights into educators' acceptance of NEP 2020 and highlights key areas requiring policy attention to ensure successful implementation

Keywords: NEP 2020

I. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a important role in shaping the future of a nation, and in India, the policies governing the education sector have undergone significant transformations over the years. Among the most notable reforms are the National Policy on Education (NEP) of 1986 and the recently implemented NEP 2020. Both policies were designed to address the changing needs of the education system, but they reflect different historical contexts, educational priorities, and pedagogical approaches. The NEP 1986 aimed at providing a comprehensive framework to promote universal education, improve access to quality schooling, and enhance the educational infrastructure, with a focus on national integration and the preservation of cultural diversity.

Whereas, the NEP 2020 marks a paradigm shift, emphasising a more contemporary approach that seeks to address the challenges of the 21st century, emphasizing holistic development, critical thinking, interdisciplinary learning, and the integration of technology into the learning process. The 2020 policy focuses on transforming the education system to foster creativity, skills, and an understanding of global dynamics, while ensuring inclusivity and equity.

This research paper aims to conduct a comparative study of the NEP 1986 and NEP 2020, focusing on the perspectives of educators who play a crucial role in the implementation of these policies. By examining how the policies have evolved and their implications for teaching practices, curriculum development, and learning outcomes, this paper seeks

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to understand the extent to which the educational objectives have been met, the challenges faced by educators, and the opportunities these policies present for the future of education in India. We hope to provide valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of both policies from the viewpoint of the educators who are at the heart of India's educational transformation, through this analysis,

Review of Literature (ROL) on Comparative Study of NEP 2020 and NEP 1986 – Educators' Perspective

Sharma, 1990 NEP 1986 primarily focused on access to education, social equity, and literacy, with a strong emphasis on centralization and government control .In contrast, NEP 2020 presents a learner-centric, flexible, and holistic educational framework aimed at fostering critical thinking and creativity (Rao, 2021). Educators acknowledge NEP 2020 as a progressive step towards global standards but highlight the need for effective execution at grassroots levels (Mishra, 2022).

Singh, 2023The curriculum under NEP 1986 was rigid, theoretical, and exam-driven, limiting creative and skill-based learning (Gupta, 1995). NEP 2020, however, emphasizes competency-based learning, multidisciplinary education, and vocational training from early stages (Kumar, 2020). Educators appreciate this shift but raise concerns about the transition process, assessment modifications, and teacher preparedness .

Shukla, 2022NEP 1986 recognized the need for teacher training but lacked structured implementation strategies, leading to inconsistencies in teacher quality (Verma, 2005). NEP 2020 introduces the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST), aiming for continuous professional development and multidisciplinary training (Patel, 2021). Studies indicate that educators welcome these changes but highlight concerns regarding the availability of training resources, especially in rural areas .

Mehta, 2023 While NEP 1986 aimed at educational inclusion, NEP 2020 expands efforts by promoting gender equality, regional language learning, and support for marginalized communities (Chopra, 2021). Researchers argue that NEP 2020's focus on mother tongue-based instruction in early education aligns with cognitive development theories (Nair, 2022). However, educators express mixed opinions, as implementation challenges in multilingual settings may impact learning outcomes.

Reddy, 2023, NEP 1986 emphasized increasing higher education institutions, whereas NEP 2020 promotes autonomy, interdisciplinary research, and a credit-based system (Joshi, 2018). Studies highlight that NEP 2020's aim to restructure higher education aligns with global trends, but disparities in infrastructure and faculty training pose challenges (Desai, 2022). Educators stress the need for adequate funding and policy alignment to ensure smooth transitions.

(Raj, 2023,NEP 1986 followed a traditional exam-centric approach, focusing on rote memorization and standardized testing (Kapoor, 1992). In contrast, NEP 2020 introduces formative assessments, competency-based learning, and a holistic report card system (Sharma, 2021). Educators believe these reforms will enhance conceptual understanding but emphasize the need for proper teacher training and infrastructural support for their implementation.

Mishra, 2023,NEP 1986 had limited provisions for technology integration due to the lack of digital infrastructure at the time (Agarwal, 2000). NEP 2020, however, emphasizes digital learning, online education platforms, and the use of Artificial Intelligence in education (Saxena, 2021). While educators appreciate the push for digital education, they highlight concerns regarding the digital divide, especially in rural and underprivileged areas .

Joshi, 2023NEP 1986 recognized vocational education but did not implement structured skill-based programs effectively (Menon, 1998). NEP 2020 integrates vocational training from the school level, promoting experiential learning, internships, and entrepreneurship (Rao, 2022). Studies suggest that educators view this as a crucial step in bridging the employability gap, though challenges such as industry collaboration and faculty readiness remain .

OBJECTIVES:

- To assess the effect of multidisciplinary education under NEP 2020 compared to NEP 1986.
- To assess the effectiveness of the multi-exit and entry system in higher education
- To determine whether NEP 2020 is more practical and effective than NEP 1986

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HYPOTHESES

- Ho: There is no significant difference in educators' opinions on the benefits of multidisciplinary education under NEP 2020 compared to the rigid subject divisions under NEP 1986.
- H1: Educators significantly favor NEP 2020's focus on multidisciplinary education over the rigid subject divisions of NEP 1986.
- Ho: There is no significant preference among educators regarding the shift from rote learning (NEP 1986) to competency-based learning (NEP 2020).
- H1: Educators significantly prefer competency-based, experiential, and inquiry-driven learning over rote learning methods

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a **Descriptive Research Design**, focusing on systematically analyzing and presenting characteristics, behaviors, and patterns within the selected population. Descriptive research is appropriate for studies that aim to observe and document trends without manipulating variables.

Research Approach

A **quantitative approach** is used to ensure objectivity and accuracy in analyzing the relationship between categorical variables. The study utilizes statistical techniques to assess associations and trends, making the findings more reliable and generalizable.

Data Collection Method

Primary data is collected through structured surveys/questionnaires (or any other method applicable to your study). The instrument is designed to capture relevant categorical variables, ensuring comprehensive data collection for analysis.

Sampling Method & Sample Size

A total of **108 valid cases** are considered for analysis. A suitable sampling technique (random sampling, stratified sampling, or convenience sampling) is used to select participants, ensuring a representative sample.

Data Analysis Method

The study applies a **Chi-Square Test for Independence** to examine the association between two categorical variables. The test results include:

Pearson Chi-Square Value: 15.429
Degrees of Freedom (df): 2
p-value: < 0.001 (indicating statistical significance)
Likelihood Ratio: 16.145
These results confirm a significant relationship between the studied variables.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Gender: * Do you think NEP 2020's focus on multidisciplinary education is beneficial for students compared to the more rigid subject divisions under NEP 1986?	108	100.0%	0	0.0%	108	100.0%

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Gender: * Do you think NEP 2020's focus on multidisciplinary education is beneficial for students compared to the more rigid subject divisions under NEP 1986? Cross tabulation

			Do you think NEP 2020's focus on multidisciplinary education is beneficial for students compared to the more rigid subject divisions under NEP 1986?			
			Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Total
Gender:	Female	Count	36	9	18	63
		Expected Count	26.3	10.5	26.3	63.0
	Male	Count	9	9	27	45
		Expected Count	18.8	7.5	18.8	45.0
Total		Count	45	18	45	108
		Expected Count	45.0	18.0	45.0	108.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.429[a]	2	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	16.145	2	<.001
N of Valid Cases	108		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.50.			

Chi-Square Test Results and Interpretation

The Chi-Square test for independence is used to determine whether there is a significant association between two categorical variables. In this case, the output provides key statistical values that help us analyze the relationship between these variables.

Key Values from the Output:

Pearson Chi-Square Value: 15.429

Degrees of Freedom (df): 2

Asymptotic Significance (p-value): < 0.001

Likelihood Ratio: 16.145

Number of Valid Cases: 108

Expected Count Check: No cells have expected counts less than 5, with the minimum expected count being 7.50.

Interpretation:

The Pearson Chi-Square test statistic (15.429) measures the level of association between the two categorical variables. The degrees of freedom (df = 2) suggest that one or both variables have three levels. The test assumptions are met since no expected counts fall below 5, ensuring the validity of the test results.

A crucial value to consider is the **p-value (< 0.001)**, which indicates whether the observed association is statistically significant. Since this value is well below the conventional threshold of 0.05, we **reject the null hypothesis**. This means there is strong statistical evidence of a significant relationship between the two categorical variables.

Additionally, the **Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square (16.145)** supports the Pearson Chi-Square result, further reinforcing the significance of the association.

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Limitations and Research Gap

Limitations of the Study

Despite the significance of the findings, the study has certain limitations:

Limited Sample Size – The study includes only **108 valid cases**, which may not fully represent a larger population. A bigger sample could enhance the reliability and generalizability of the results.

Descriptive Nature of the Study – Since this research follows a **descriptive research design**, it focuses on identifying associations rather than establishing causal relationships between variables. Further experimental or longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights.

Dependence on Chi-Square Test – While the **Chi-Square Test for Independence** effectively identifies associations between categorical variables, it does not measure the strength of relationships. Additional statistical tests, such as **Cramér's V**, could provide a better understanding of effect size.

Potential Response Bias – If the data collection method relied on surveys or questionnaires, there is a possibility of response bias, where participants may provide socially desirable answers rather than truthful responses.

Lack of Qualitative Insights – The study follows a **quantitative approach**, which means it does not capture deeper insights such as participants' motivations, perceptions, or contextual factors that qualitative research could explore.

Research Gap

Need for Causal Analysis – While this study confirms a significant association between categorical variables, it does not determine **cause-and-effect relationships**. Future research could use experimental or longitudinal designs to address this gap.

Effect Size and Practical Significance – The study identifies a statistical relationship but does not analyze the **strength or impact** of this association. Future studies can include **Cramér's V or odds ratio** to measure the effect size.

Broader Population Representation – Expanding the sample size and including diverse demographics could improve the generalizability of findings.

Incorporation of Mixed Methods – Combining **qualitative and quantitative** approaches could provide deeper insights into the reasons behind the observed associations.

These limitations and gaps highlight opportunities for future research to build upon the findings and strengthen the understanding of the topic.

II. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyse the association between two categorical variables using a Descriptive Research Design and a Chi-Square Test for Independence. The findings indicate a statistically significant relationship between the studied variables, as evidenced by the Pearson Chi-Square value (15.429, df = 2, $p < 0.001$). The results suggest that the variables are not independent and that their distribution deviates from what would be expected under the null hypothesis.

While the study successfully identifies an association, it does not establish causality. The research is limited by its sample size (108 cases), reliance on quantitative methods, and the absence of effect size measurement. Additionally, factors such as response bias and the lack of qualitative insights may impact the findings.

Future studies should address these gaps by employing larger sample sizes, mixed-method approaches, and additional statistical techniques (e.g., Cramér's V) to assess effect size. Expanding the research scope can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between these variables.

In conclusion, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by confirming a significant relationship between the studied variables. However, further research is needed to explore causal links, measure the strength of associations, and enhance the generalizability of the findings.

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