

National Education Policy (NEP 2020): A Critical Analysis with Respect to the Reformation Aimed in Higher Education in India

Dr. Umeshchandra Yadav, Mr. Rohit Singh, Ms. Minu Ram Upadhyay, Mr. Pawar Anand Janardhan

Nirmala College of Commerce, Malad-East

Reckon Women's Degree College of Commerce, Nallasopara East

Researcher, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Student, Nirmala College of Commerce, Malad-East

Abstract: *National Education Policy 2020 is the premier education policy of the 21st century. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the sole positive development in the realm of education in India was the introduction of this strategy, which pledges to revolutionize the educational system of the country. Shift is inherent in the laws of nature; yet, this particular shift has been overdue for almost 35 years. The most recent comparable transformation in the realm of education occurred in 1986. For survival in this dynamic world, it is essential to adapt to the evolving circumstances. Similarly, in education, the evolving landscape of information and communication technology (ICT) and industry demands necessitates a transformation in our learning methodologies. The worldwide educational landscape is undergoing fast changes, experiencing a paradigm shift in the overall system.*

India deemed it essential to adapt to this transition, and efforts in this regard have been initiated under NEP 2020 to modernize the educational system in the country. The research is exclusively qualitative, relying entirely on secondary data sources. The secondary data sources utilized include books, journals, research articles, websites, newspapers, and various government publications. An analysis is conducted to examine the policy provisions and their potential impact on enhancing education at both the primary and tertiary levels. The study will examine the problems associated with implementing those provisions in lieu of the current educational system in India..

Keywords: National Education Policy, NEP 2020, Higher education, universities, challenges, reformation, opportunities, interdisciplinary approach

I. INTRODUCTION

India is one of the most populous countries in the world. Considering this fact, it is imperative to prioritize enhanced education and skill development related to human resource development. Education is an essential prerequisite that establishes the foundation for numerous aspects. It is essential for fostering human potential, establishing societal equity, and advancing national development. Numerous initiatives were undertaken periodically through the establishment of numerous committees and commissions, incorporating their recommendations into the education system. Subsequent to independence, India has implemented three national policies. The initial national education policy of India was established in 1968, followed by a second policy in 1986, which was subsequently amended in 1992. The third, which occurred in 2020, is attributed to Pankaj Thakur. Given its substantial population, India faces the problem of providing education for all and minimizing the dropout rate, as it involves not only enrolling children in school but also retaining them, which is a more significant undertaking. The fourth goal of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) intends to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. It is believed that the new National Education Policy 2020 will enable India to attain the objectives set forth in the policy by 2040. The policy aims emphasize the necessity of fair access to high-quality education for all individuals, regardless of their social or economic background. Consequently, significant



expectations are placed on NEP 2020 due to its emphasis on skill development, innovation, and problem-solving. The NEP has reduced the barriers between disciplines and emphasized the significance of interdisciplinarity and creativity. The policy anticipates a new framework of regulations to render the educational pedagogy more experimental, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, analytical, adaptable, enjoyable, and forward-thinking, thereby enabling the educated output to contribute to national economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific progress, cultural preservation, and national integration. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), ratified by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, delineates the goal for India's reformed education system. The new policy supersedes the former National Policy on Education, 1986.

The policy comprises a complete framework for basic education, higher education, and vocational courses in India. The policy seeks to transform the educational landscape in India.

B. Venkateshwarlu. The purpose of implementing this strategy is to address the deficiencies in the current educational system in India. This gap can only be addressed by incorporating fresh changes into India's education system. This has been accomplished through NEP 2020, which emphasizes innovation, skill development, equity, and quality in education. India aspires to have a premier education system by the year 2040. Globalization and market trends have already indicated the necessary adaptive modifications. The emphasis is no longer solely on information and education; skill, innovation, and market need are equally crucial in preparing students for future responsibilities. Consequently, it is imperative to transition towards the principle of reduced content and enhanced learning. Students ought to be instructed to engage as active learners, and their critical thinking skills should be cultivated. Education should cultivate character, equipping learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and empathetic, while simultaneously preparing them for rewarding and productive job. National Education Policy 2020.

Objectives of the paper

- To evaluate the policy provisions for school and higher education in India on their impact on the current educational system.
- To examine the challenges associated with the execution of this policy.
- To offer recommendations that may enhance the effective execution of NEP 2020.

Implication of NEP in Higher Education System

In India, several regulators of higher education will be consolidated into the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as a singular regulatory body for higher education institutions. The certification bodies, such as NAAC and NBA, will be replaced by a newly established National Certification Council (NAC). The National Research Foundation would provide funding for research and innovation in higher education. The NEP has established a multidisciplinary education paradigm for higher education institutions. These universities should have a campus with a minimum student enrolment of 3000. The deadline to achieve multidisciplinary status is 2030, with an anticipated enrolment of 3,000 students by 2040. Moreover, these Multidisciplinary Universities should concentrate on either research or teaching, thereby evolving into specialized institutions in one of these domains. The colleges have the option to attain autonomy and confer their own degrees, or they may choose to affiliate with an existing university. The NEP addresses strategies to enhance student enrolment across all types of educational institutions. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has been a significant concern in India; hence, the current education strategy emphasizes it. The NEP advocates for a comprehensive and diverse educational approach, with research increasingly being promoted starting at the undergraduate level. The current policy emphasizes the comprehensive development of a student through interdisciplinary and outcome-based education. A concept for a National Academic Bank of Credit aims to offer flexibility in degree acquisition and different entry-exit options across all educational levels. Multiple digital platforms will be initiated or existing ones will be enhanced to promote online learning and the digitalization of libraries.

The student-centered teaching and learning approach will be pivotal in NEP 2020, replacing the existing teacher-centered model. The evaluation paradigm will transition from a choice-based framework to a competency-based one. The evaluation and assessment methodology will transition from an end-semester examination system to a continuous assessment system. All higher education institutions must prioritize skill education. They must establish counselling



centers staffed with counsellors to address the mental well-being of kids. Conventional education is undergoing a significant shift as it will become market-driven henceforth. The Indian government aims to create world-class educational institutions and recruit numerous international students. Additionally, courses completed in overseas universities by a student would be accorded weight and deemed equal in India. This will afford students the choice to commence a degree overseas and subsequently complete it in India (National Education Policy 2020).

Some goals of NEP 2020

All policy stipulations will be executed by 2040. By 2030, a 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio from Pre-School to Secondary level will be attained.

Educators must be ready for evaluation revisions by 2030.

A uniform standard for education will be established in both private and public schools.

Foundational numeracy and basic literacy must be attained by Grade 3.

Achieving universal access to early childhood care and education by 2030.

Vocational training for a minimum of 50% of learners by 2025 (B. Venkateshwarlu, A Critical Study of NEP 2020: Issues, Approaches, Challenges, Opportunities, and Criticism).

Challenges in the execution of NEP 2020

The National Education Policy (2020) represents a transformative initiative aimed at enhancing India's education system. Considerable effort has been invested in formulating this policy, which is the culmination of extensive study, deliberations, and discussions, resulting in a comprehensive framework such as the NEP. However, there are several modifications in the effective execution of these reforms, which are as follows:

There is insufficient infrastructure and funds to implement such extensive reforms inside the system. The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes transforming India into a global education hub by prioritizing quality and dynamism. The policy aims to increase education sector expenditure to 6% of GDP as soon as possible. However, the data presents a starkly contrasting scenario. This is not the inaugural instance of discussions regarding the augmentation of investment in education. The economic survey of 2019-20 indicates that India allocates merely 3.1% of its GDP to the education sector, despite ongoing dialogues concerning expenditure patterns. Therefore, the foremost imperative is to prioritize education as a paramount concern and direct investments towards this objective.

It is evident from the policy documents that there will be an increased emphasis on the privatization of education. In a country like India, where the affordability of education remains a significant challenge, privatization appears to be a substantial obstacle to the execution of the program. While the NEP acknowledges the necessity for openness in fee structures, it fails to address how it will curtail the escalating fees of private institutions and ensure their operations prioritize utilitarianism over profit maximization.

The NEP 2020 does not address how the advantages of education would be extended to underprivileged segments of society. The policy text lacks specific inclusion of all societal segments, and it does not provide a roadmap for any corresponding actions.

The policy's comprehensiveness necessitates collaboration among numerous stakeholders in a closely coordinated manner. The changes resulting from the policy's implementation will have a substantial impact and extensive reach. Consequently, fostering cooperation and acceptance among all stakeholders in such a large framework is a challenging endeavor. The policy document discusses the establishment of foreign colleges in India. However, the extent to which this will address India's issues is questionable, as the significant financial investment required for setting up these institutions will likely be recouped through elevated fees and associated charges, thereby increasing the financial burden on students and complicating their enrolment in such institutions. (Vishvanathan 2023)

The NEP proposed that the mother tongue shall serve as the medium of instruction until the fifth grade. Preferably until class 8 and beyond, wherever feasible. However, it has a detrimental aspect, as it will exacerbate the disparities between students proficient in English or Hindi and those lacking such knowledge. Furthermore, standardizing reading materials will be challenging in the absence of a script, rendering it a laborious endeavor. It will necessitate substantial



investments, and the potential benefits from this investment appear minimal, raising the possibility of widening the divide within the education system.

NEP 2020 emphasizes experimentation in pedagogy, as foundational years of education have instigated a paradigm shift in learning, which is a positive change. However, this necessitates proficiently prepared educators to guarantee that this experimentation aligns effectively with the kids; only then may strategic enhancements in the curriculum be realized for the benefit of the pupils. The training of instructors to adapt to flexible methodologies is essential, however currently insufficient. (Soni 2020)

Interdisciplinarity in higher education necessitates a paradigm shift; many have acknowledged the movement towards integrating interdisciplinary learning. This approach will provide learners with a diverse array of experiences and perspectives regarding the myriad phenomena surrounding them. However, implementing such a transformation demands significant alterations. The Indian educational system has been compartmentalized for decades, and adapting to the concept of multidisciplinary will require both cultural and behavioural changes. Professors and learners alike must cultivate respect and curiosity for acquiring knowledge from various disciplines, avoiding insularity. Establishing a conducive environment for this change may take 20 to 30 years.

Further discussion on findings:

The investigation of the opportunities and problems associated with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 suggests that it is poised to transform the whole landscape of education in the country. However, certain recommendations in the NEP appear to be less pragmatic and excessively ambitious. While acknowledging the efforts of policymakers, it can be asserted that this is a unique vision capable of transforming the educational system in India and establishing the country as an educational hub. However, we must acknowledge that addressing fundamental issues is imperative before we can pursue greater objectives. Emphasis should be placed on teacher training, the integration of technology in education, cultivating student learning, augmenting investment in education, and maintaining dropout rates within acceptable ranges. Once these matters are addressed, we can pursue loftier objectives. Nonetheless, it is also a fact that if we, as a nation, do not advocate for these changes and restrict our focus to fundamental issues. We shall lag behind other countries that are already pursuing new developments in education and consistently aiming for better achievements in this domain. Suggestions that can enhance the effective execution of the NEP include:

Sufficient awareness must be established among all parties involved in the successful implementation of the Policy.

Coordination among the central government, state authorities, and local entities must be enhanced to ensure the success of this strategy.

Timely feedback from parents, students, and industry will facilitate the successful implementation of the policy.

Increased emphasis should be placed on the training of educators to cultivate the necessary skills within them. The same applies to the students.

Increased investment should be allocated to education to ensure this approach effectively enhances the overall educational landscape in India.

II. CONCLUSION

NEP 2020 is a document regarded with considerable hope and optimism for effecting a paradigm shift in the nation's education system. Change is the fundamental principle of nature, and it is essential to adapt to the evolving environment. The antiquated education system and practices are no longer pertinent in contemporary society. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the necessity of integrating ICT into the teaching and learning process. It is imperative for our country to equip students and educators with this expertise to enhance the entire learning experience. Continuing with an obsolete education system has become futile. The Indian government must implement significant modifications to the higher education curriculum to meet the global demand for skilled labor. Consequently, the execution of NEP 2020 will provide a significant difficulty. NEP 2020 is predominantly a progressive document, demonstrating a solid understanding of the current socio-economic context and the potential to address future difficulties.



The policy appears to be a thoughtfully conceived and authentic endeavor to reform the Indian Educational System. This approach emphasizes the incorporation of professional education in higher education institutions for skill development and job creation. It is reasonable to assert that NEP 2020 has established a definitive framework for India 2.0, and if executed effectively, it had the potential to transform India into a global educational hub by 2030. The nation's future is significantly influenced by the quality of education provided inside that state. NEP 2020 represents a beacon of optimism in that regard. India must guarantee that the commitments made are not merely theoretical but are actualized, which can only be achieved via the efficient implementation of its provisions and adequate coordination among all parties.

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