
ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY, 2020

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ABSTRACT

Education plays a pivotal role in the development of nation and its citizens. Education moulds an individual’s career, his mentality, psyche and helps him to establish a connection with the society. A child’s future is totally dependent on a country’s education policy. Since India's independence, the Union government has formed various educational policies to improve the education system and literacy level in the country. After almost three decades, a revolutionary change was brought to the Indian Education system by the formulation of National Education Policy 2020. It aims for a robust system that focuses directly on transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge hub, by providing high quality education to all.

The new policy aims to pave the way for transformational reforms in school education and higher education systems in the country. This was one of the major steps taking to bring a much-needed reform in the education system of the country. The NEP envisages creating synergies in the curriculum across Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to school and the higher education segments. The NEP stresses on creating a national curricular and pedagogical framework, which is competency-based, inclusive, innovative and focuses on comprehensive development of children. However, the policy brings a lot of concerns with it as well. The “Foundation Literacy and Numeracy Mission” leads to scepticism due to the under qualification of Aganwadi teachers. Also, bringing everyone under the umbrella of “Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Group” further hampers equity keeping in account the rise in violence against Muslims and Dalits.

The researchers will focus their study on Critical Analysis of the National Education Policy 2020, highlighting the need for its implementation, its merits and demerits, comparison with NEP 1986, SWOT Analysis of NEP 2020. Further, it makes an attempt to put across some

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suggestions by the researcher in order to make the policy citizen-friendly so as to smoothen the implication.

Keywords: Education, National Educational Policy, Right to Education

INTRODUCTION

It was a long wait of 34 years for the country to see a New Education Policy 2020. The drafting committee gave its final draft to the union cabinet for its approval and it was accepted and approved on the 29 of July 2020. The new policy aims to pave the way for transformational reforms in school education and higher education systems in the country. The National Education Policy 2020 looks into the education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat. It aims to sustain and take care of the existing vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, without having any discrimination of religion, gender, caste, or creed giving all equal platform to grow and develop. It is also a step making India a global knowledge superpower.

Unlike this boring approach, the new education policy focuses on providing interactive classes through an open- system of learning that is beyond books and examinations. It helps students in illuminating effective communication skills, team management, leadership and a handset of skills that are required. School curriculum is expected to imbibe the human value system and provide greater flexibility and expose students to acquire future skills in the areas of computation, coding, design thinking, digital literacy, ethical and moral reasoning etc.

The NEP 2020 is expected to put India on the track to attain goal four of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development by ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all in the next decade

NEED FOR FRAMING NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY, 2020 & COMPARISON OF NEP 2020 WITH THE PREVIOUS EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

The need for a new education policy was formulated because of the loopholes in the existing policy of imparting education. The old education system that we had before the commencement of the new education policy was more about imparting knowledge through books and numbers. was solely based on chapter wise lectures and routine evaluations

through examinations. It not just lowered the effectiveness but also made the classes boring. The major key reasons for a new national educational policy can be accredited to the following reasons:

1. High dropout rate in secondary and higher studies

The dropout levels in middle and secondary schools have been significant. It is something that is restraining India from becoming a developed country. If we look at the gross enrolment ratio for grades 6-8 it is 90.9% while for grades 9-10 and 11-12 it is merely 79.3% and 56.5%, respectively. Dropout rate in secondary and higher studies is a threat to the future of the country as the students will lack in skills, so eventually they won't be able to bring a massive change in the society or would be able to lead. The National Education Policy 2020 aims to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ration in preschool to secondary level by 2030

2. Introduction of internet and technology in education

In current times technology has changed the learning pattern. The statistics report has shown that only 37.6 million children across 16 states are continuing education through various education initiatives such as online classrooms and radio programmes etc. The Annual Status of Education Report (Rural), 2018 emphasised the harsh reality that in 596 government schools belonging to 619 districts, only 21.3 per cent of students had access to computers in their schools.

The National Statistical Office reports say that only 24% of Indian households have an internet facility. Almost 66% of India's population lives in rural areas and only a little over 15% amongst them have access to internet connections. The issue of Digital Access is a major hurdle in E – learning. This is where NEP steps up for the evaluation of India's education system.

3. Memorization vs. Education

Looking at the current education system, the focus has always been on gaining top rank. The current education system forces you to memorize things instead of learning. In reality if we see it does not matter how you much you have memorized so far what really matters is how much you have learned so far. Application of knowledge never existed in our education system. Poor learning outcomes have been a consistent concern in India as indicated by the Annual Status of Education Report. Primary schools have recorded poor literacy and numeracy outcomes. But now as the new education policy will focus would be more towards the application of knowledge in the field.

4. Teacher – Student Relation

Concept of teaching has drastically been changed over the period of time it has become a way to earn money more than a duty. In every academic year the focus always stays towards the completion of syllabus and students are being forced to stick their eyes only on notes and textbooks. This is where we realize that learning does not play any part here. But we cannot put teacher or students for that matter at fault. It is our inadequate education system that is inebriating the student teacher relation.

5. Mismatch between Knowledge and Skills

There has been a persistent mismatch between the knowledge and skills imparted in degree courses and the job requirements. The National Education Policy 2020 aims to integrate vocational education in schools and higher education institutions in a phased manner. Making the education more structured, the policy recommends conducting a proper skill gap analysis and mapping of local opportunities to assign those vocational courses which are relevant to the particular area. Further, the policy also stresses upon the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSFQ) which will help in assessing the prior learning of the students enrolled and hence, will help in the reintegration of the dropouts in the mainstream education. The policy also aims to overcome the social status

6. Equitable and Inclusive education

Certain sections of the society do not have access to education due to various reasons. They become excluded which leads to wastage of the potential of the youth of the nation. The NEP 2020 aims to address this growing inequality in the current education system.

Thus, the new education policy has been designed and developed to stimulate the passion for experimental learning that would be based on critical thinking and to make India self-reliant in field of employment opportunities.

COMPARISON OF NEP, 2020 WITH THE PREVIOUS EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

The concept of National System of Education lays emphasis on elimination of disparities in education system and improvement of quality of publicly funded schools. Change in the structure of education comes from reforms made at each education policy.

1. National Education Policy (1966)

In India, the Social Work Education was commenced in the year 1936, with the establishment of Tata Institute of Social Sciences. In the post-independence reforms, education was given

prominence. In the year 1966, first education policy was announced, under the stewardship of Kothari Commission (1964-66) under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, which is called as a “Radical Restructuring” and aimed at equal education opportunities in order to achieve complete education with national integration.

2. National Education Policy (1986)

The National Education Policy of 1986 was announced under the governance of Prime Minister P.V.Narsimha Rao, and was implemented in the year 1992. The National Education Policy of 1986 aimed at promoting minority education, education for women equality, education of SC, ST and backward sections and emphasis was more given towards equal education opportunities and education to all sections of the society. This new education policy has given highest priority in solving the problem of school dropouts and adopts an array of meticulously formulated strategies based on micro planning and applied at the grass-root levels of all over the country. A national mission was launched for the achievement of this NEP 1986. A step towards “Operational Blackboard” has initiated to improve the accommodation and facilities in primary schools in rural as well as urban areas.

The NEP of 1966 emphasized on equal education to all and the NEP of 1986 gave prominence to women education and promoting minorities’ education and reducing dropouts from the schools.

The Gap

The previous education policies lay down a good vision towards building the nation taking into account the prioritized areas of the society approaching towards a developed nation. There is a lot of change in the society now, when compared to 1986, which is having a variation of 34 years with vast reforms, advancements, transformation and many other changes w.r.t. technology, business, education, competition, attitudes of people towards job opportunities and so on.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF NEP 2020

National Education Policy 2020 has provided a hopeful vision for the better development of future education. The researchers have analysed the positive and negative changes brought by COVID – 19 in educational sector. This part of paper also focuses on how the new opportunities could be created in learning sector.

Strengths

- The policy has strengthened the basic foundation of education by re-envisioning the school curriculum from the 10+2 model to 5+3+3+4 for the holistic development of a child. The concept and basic learning of a child starts at the primary level.
- The introduction of flexibility in selecting various combinations of subjects would enable students to study and progress at their own pace.
- The allocation to the education sector in GDP from 4.43% to 6% of GDP is a welcome step. The policy targets Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education to be increased to 50% (currently 26.3%) by 2035 and Universal literacy by 2025 for primary schools.
- Assessment will shift to a formative style that encourages higher-order thinking skills, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity, which is a great step moving away from rote learning practiced in our schools.
- The focus on the suitable infrastructure development at schools to make access easier for children with disability and inclusive classrooms are an appropriate measure to create a conducive environment in totality.
- The teaching of contemporary subjects at middle and secondary stages: Artificial Intelligence, Design Thinking, Holistic Health, Organic Living, Environmental Education, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is another feature in the cap.
- Inclusion of the ‘Classical Language’ as an option will strengthen language proficiency. Moreover, teaching in the mother tongue in the early years promotes easier learning, better understanding, and improved learning skills.

Weaknesses

- Extending compulsory education both to preschool and secondary education will require a large sum of investment; however, there are no specific provisions mentioned in the policy regarding the methods of mobilizing funds for the same. In the previous year, the country spends less than 3% of its total GDP on education and ranked 62nd in total public expenditures on education. So, the question arises how it will reach 6% from less than 3%. Most of the previous government has set the goal of 6% of GDP to be spent but failed to do so.
- The report fails to address and incorporate ideas based on contemporary global thinking like the emphasis on creativity and critical thinking and the need for learning in a non-competitive and non-hierarchical ecosystem and discovering one’s true passion without any sense of fear.

- The creation of a National Testing Agency (NTA) has generated scepticism. The NTA, though envisaged to serve as a premier, expert, autonomous testing organisation to conduct entrance examinations for admissions and fellowships in higher educational institutions may, in reality, lead to loss of autonomy among the universities and departments over admissions.
- In promoting the study of regional languages, the importance of English is neglected. Those that are fluent in English language have households with three times higher income than those without any knowledge of English. By ignoring this, this policy has laid out a "language trap", which can create social inequality and impede economic growth due to loss of the demographic dividend.
- The current global pandemic has shown huge challenges for the education system in various ways. However, the NEP does not talk about it or rather shows concern in terms of upcoming pandemic related challenges.
- The cost of training the in-service teachers will also require time, energy, and resources for which the government has to allocate proper resources and infrastructure.

Opportunities

- A holistic report card is what the NEP 2020 is envisaging, where the performance of a student will be measured, keeping in mind all the three domains of learning: cognitive, psychomotor, and affective, which will help them in understanding the world from all the aspects of life. With the changes in the pedagogy and curriculum of education, the 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 system is expected to bring a new wave of intellectuals in the next 10 years. And this group of youth is said to be the most important resource in India.
- It indeed is a welcoming step for the students as well as authorities to pave the way for foreign universities to set up campuses in the country, which will not only provide more research-based options for students, increase competency but can also stop brain drain in the longer run.
- The reforms to the adult education system attract adults to join and begin or complete their incomplete education. The multidisciplinary approach to syllabi ensures the students excel in the subjects they have chosen.
- Inclusion of research study into the curriculum promotes the students to explore the depth of their chosen subjects.

- The academic credit stored in a digital locker will be like a bank credit through which a student will be able to resume education after a break, as specified by the higher education commission later.
- An autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration, both for school and higher education.
- Keeping in interest, versatility, and uniqueness of an educator is one such move that has brought hope for educators by giving them more autonomy in choosing aspects of pedagogy in classroom teaching, in lieu of chalk & talk, lecture, or audio-visual aids. Teachers should be encouraged to research their own practices for reflection, review, and self-assessment.

Threats

- The three-language formula is not appreciated by many states like West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu, as making Hindi as a compulsory language will look like an imposition on the people south of Vindhya.
- The NEP 2020 itself is an exercise of imposing uniformity and standardization along a single axis of control and power, which is paradoxical given India’s size, population, diversity, and constitutional federalism. It might be resisted by many States as education is in the concurrent list.
- The free breakfast scheme proposed, though, a great initiative, will increase the fiscal burden and add on to an already mid-day meal scheme that has seen irregularities and corruption over the years.
- There is a mismatch in the skill imparted in educational institutions and jobs available.
- The majority of experts feel that though policy speaks of encouraging reason and critical thinking, campus activities, the real actions on the ground differ, as can be seen from attacks on the campus and critical thinkers in the last few years.

TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGES AS LAID OUT FOR THE ECCE, HIGHER AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NEP 2020

1. Early Childhood Care and Education and School Education

NEP has signaled a new vision for school education, providing a much - needed

revision and reform agenda to the system. It has set the vision for a fundamental change in how education is delivered, opening up new opportunities for education sector stakeholders while ensuring that every school-aged child in India has access to and is provided with an equitable and high-quality education.

Unlike previous policy with the 10+2 system, NEP 2020 has changed the curriculum and has introduced the 5+3+3+4 system. Preschool to grade 2 being the foundational stage, grade 3 to grade 5 being preparatory stage, grade 6 to grade 8 being the middle stage and secondary stage grade 9 to 12.

Key impact areas

1.1 Ensure that every child has access to the formal schooling system

The NEP will make sure that every child from age 3 to 18 will have access to education, through either public or private schooling options. Over 3.22 crore out of school children will be brought into the formal education system by providing options for entry and exit into the schooling system.

1.2 More holistic, competency driven learning

NEP’s big impact will be on how students learn and develop their skills. Earlier it was more of memorizing instead of learning. The more focus would be on how to increase practical bases thinking and could be applied in real life and not just in books and papers. NEP has also changed curriculum in such a way that students can develop higher order cognitive skills, mathematical and computational thinking. Such of development of skills amongst students will lead to future ready workforce.

1.3 Professionally qualified and skilled teaching force

One of the key impact areas of the NEP is that all teachers will be professionally trained or certified by 2030. If implemented all teachers from Angad wadi levels up to secondary school will have the necessary professional qualifications and will meet a common set of professional standards which is a significant change from the current system.

2. Higher education

The NEP 2020 has outlined an ambitious task of nearly doubling the gap in higher education from 26.3 percent (2018) to 50 per cent by 2035 while improving quality of higher education institutions and positioning India as a global education hub. The main emphasis would be on

to providing a flexible curriculum through an interdisciplinary approach, creating multiple exit points in what would be a four-year undergraduate course. The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be handling the entire education segment. It will act as a single regulator and several functions including accreditation, funding and academic standard setting.

Key impact areas:**2.1 Enhanced equity and inclusion**

SEDGs have poor GER (SCs 22 per cent, STs: 15.9 per cent) and all enrolled students, less than 10 per cent have access to financial support. The establishment of special education zones in areas of high SEDG population and a greater role of private HEIs in ensuring equity through scholarships and remedial intervention is likely to enhance GER and graduation outcomes among the segments. Around 40 per cent students of the total higher education enrolment in India are through ODL. This is likely to see a significant increase in the coming few years to help double India’s GER.

2.2 Quality and well – incentivized faculty at the core of higher education transformation

The current faculty student ratio is 1:29 and 1:20 is the ratio that we are considering to be a healthy ratio. Minimum of five lakh faculty member would need to be hired into the system even at current GER levels. The quality of the faculty also needs to be addressed. The quality related improvements suggested to the talent management system are also likely to impact faculty motivation levels and in turn graduation outcomes of students.

2.3 Promoting excellence through internationalization:

It is crucial for any knowledge economy internationalization reforms proposed by the NEP would lead to a greater attraction of international academia to participate in the Indian education system. This will India highlight their presence globally. HEIs to expand their footprint abroad as well as reputed institutes to set up institutions in India. Collaborating with foreign universities will give global skills as well as international exposure to students. The framing of a new liberal legislative framework will form the basis of twinning/ articulation agreements between foreign and Indian universities and will be crucial to attract foreign investments in Indian education.

3. Vocationalization in Schools and development of Higher Education Pathways

NEP 2020 has emphasized its attention towards holistic education across schools and higher education institutions and acknowledges the need for vocational training for students. The policy reiterates India’s very low formally skilled workforce as compared to other developed economies. The policy has discovered some of the underlying reasons for low vocational education numbers, including lack of focus on dropout candidates.

Key impact areas:

3.1 Improved integration of vocational education:

NEP states that every child will learn at least one vocational skill in middle and secondary school. The aim will be to expose 50 per cent of the learners in school and higher education to vocational skills by 2025.

3.2 Integration of vocational education with higher education

HEIs can develop and conduct their own vocational courses in partnership with industry and NGOs. HEIs would also be allowed to offer short term vocational skill certificate courses. With improved linkages between formal education and vocational education.

3.3 Creation of Hybrid Vocational Ecosystem

A credit-based framework in sync with the national skills qualification’s framework is envisaged to allow easy mobility between vocational and higher education and create vertical and horizontal mobility for students undergoing mobility for students undergoing vocational training.

Thus, The National Education Policy 2020 is a progressive policy and aims to address many growing developmental imperatives of our country. It is imperative to prioritize the initiatives and implement the NEP in a gradual manner. The policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of education structures, including regulation and governance. It is only possible when the efforts are collaborative in nature, both at the Central and the State level, with significant involvement of private sector stakeholders in close consultation with educational institutes, trainers, technology partners and industry.

CONCLUSION

The policy introduces a whole gamut of changes and reads largely as a very progressive document, with a firm grasp on the current socio-economic landscape and the prospect of future uncertainty and the NEP 2020 paves the way ahead for many young aspiring students to be equipped with the right skillset.

The New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), has a lot of pluses but still needs to be improved. Considering the lack of infrastructure and current facilities in the Government run educational institutions, the claims made by the policy seem to be in question. The concept of multilingualism poses a lot of questions as it will require the government to invest heavily in the resources. Translating the textbooks and recruitment of well-qualified teachers will form the very base of this policy. With updates in its policies, NEP 2020 may turn out to be the best policy in the field of education and human resource. It will bring a sea change in the entire education system of the country, including its regulation and governance. The educational policy of 2020 has much scope for the multidisciplinary approach with digital learning, autonomy to courses and curriculum and the advancement of technology, business and education globally, is paving way for holistic development of the student. The execution and implementation will play the pivotal role in making the policy a success.

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