

Transforming India's Education System: An Analysis of the National Education Policy 2020

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) is a comprehensive framework for reforming the education system in India, released in 2020. The policy aims to address the existing gaps and challenges in the education system, while also providing a vision for the future of education in the country. The NEP envisions a holistic, learner-centered, and flexible approach to education, with a focus on promoting critical thinking, creativity, and innovation. It proposes several transformative changes, including the establishment of a national mission on foundational literacy and numeracy, the integration of vocational education into mainstream education, and the use of technology to enhance learning outcomes. This article provides an overview of the key features of the NEP and analyses its potential impact on the education landscape in India.

Keywords: national education policy, learner-centered education, foundational literacy, technology in education, holistic approach, impact analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a ground-breaking reform in the Indian education system. It has been a long time coming, with the last education policy introduced in 1986. The NEP aims to address the challenges and drawbacks of the current education system and bring it in line with global best practices. The policy proposes an ambitious and comprehensive plan to transform the education system to make it more relevant, flexible, and inclusive, to meet the diverse needs of students. The NEP seeks to increase access and equity in education, recognizing that many students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, face barriers in accessing quality education. To address this, the policy proposes measures such as the establishment of more schools, increasing enrolment rates, and providing financial assistance to students in need. The policy also aims to promote equity by eliminating gender, social, and regional disparities in education.

Moreover, the NEP strives to improve the quality of education in India by restructuring the school curriculum. The current education system is not adequately preparing students for the challenges of the modern world, and the NEP proposes a more interdisciplinary and skill-based approach. The policy encourages the use of technology in education and advocates for regular training and professional development of teachers.

The NEP also recognizes the importance of multilingualism and proposes a three-language formula in schools to promote it. This will enable students to learn three languages, including their mother tongue, regional language, and a widely spoken language such as English. Additionally, the NEP recognizes the value of vocational education and proposes to introduce it from an early age to equip students with the skills they need to enter the workforce.

One of the most significant objectives of the policy is to promote lifelong learning and multidisciplinary education. To achieve this objective, the NEP has introduced a novel 5+3+3+4 model of education. Under this model, the first five years of schooling will focus on foundational learning, followed by three years of preparatory education, three years of middle education, and finally, four years of secondary education. This model aims to establish a more flexible and diverse education system that can cater to the distinct needs and interests of students.

The foundational stage of education is intended to provide a strong base for the child's overall development and covers the age group of three to eight years. The curriculum of this stage will be based on play-based and activity-based learning, which will focus on cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development.

The preparatory stage of education is intended to build upon the foundational stage and cover the age group of eight to eleven years. The curriculum of this stage will focus on introducing students to a wide range of subjects and topics to help them develop an interest in learning and explore their passions.

The middle stage of education is intended to provide students with a more comprehensive education and cover the age group of eleven to fourteen years. The curriculum of this stage will focus on multidisciplinary learning, providing students with a holistic understanding of various subjects and their interconnectivity.

The secondary stage of education is intended to prepare students for higher education and the workforce and cover the age group of fourteen to eighteen years. The curriculum of this stage will focus on specialization and provide students with the option to choose a stream that aligns with their interests and career aspirations.

The NEP's 5+3+3+4 model of education aims to establish a more flexible and diverse education system that can cater to the diverse needs and interests of students. The policy recognizes the importance of providing a holistic and comprehensive education to enable students to develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the 21st century. The NEP 2020 is expected to bring about a significant transformation in the Indian education system and make it more relevant, inclusive, and globally competitive.

The NEP 2020 has set out to promote universal access to education as a key objective of the policy. This goal aims to ensure that all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have access to quality education. The policy has recognized the need to increase enrolment rates and reduce drop-out rates, especially among disadvantaged and marginalized groups. To achieve this goal, the policy has proposed several measures, such as the establishment of special education zones in areas with a high concentration of disadvantaged and marginalized students. These zones will provide additional resources and support to students who need it the most. The policy also plans to use technology to provide remote and online education to students in remote areas where access to schools is limited.

The policy has also recognized the importance of providing education in regional languages to promote inclusivity and diversity. To this end, the policy has proposed the introduction of a multilingual approach to education. The policy aims to introduce at least two Indian languages in addition to English as mediums of instruction in schools.

Additionally, the NEP 2020 has emphasized the importance of vocational education to equip students with the skills they need to enter the workforce. The policy has proposed the introduction of vocational education in schools from the sixth grade onwards. The aim of this initiative is to provide students with practical skills and knowledge that will enable them to pursue a variety of career paths.

The NEP 2020 also emphasizes the importance of teacher training and professional development. The policy proposes several measures to improve the quality of teaching, such as the establishment of a National Mission on Mentoring, the promotion of continuous professional development, and the introduction of a four-year integrated teacher education program. These measures aim to improve the quality of teaching and promote a more student-centered approach to education. In addition to these objectives, the NEP 2020 also proposes several changes to the higher education system in India. The policy aims to promote multidisciplinary education and reduce the emphasis on rote learning and standardized testing. The policy proposes several measures to achieve this goal, such as the establishment of a National Research Foundation, the introduction of a credit-based system, and the integration of vocational education.

II. NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

NEP aims to make education more fair, inclusive, and effective for all students. However, making this policy work in real life can be challenging. It's important to measure how well it's working and how it's affecting different groups of people, like students, teachers, parents, and communities. Research should explore factors that enable or impede policy implementation and its impact on learning outcomes, student engagement, teacher morale, and other relevant outcomes. This will help identify potential challenges and inform policymakers about necessary adjustments that can be made to improve the effectiveness and impact of NEP 2020.

NEP 2020 also aims to address equity and inclusion in education by ensuring that all students have access to quality education, regardless of their social or economic background. However, effectively targeting marginalized groups and improving their access to quality education may be challenging. Further research can help identify the barriers that prevent marginalized groups from accessing quality education and inform policymakers about the necessary steps that can be taken to address them. This will help ensure that the policy's goal of achieving equity and inclusion in education is met. NEP 2020 also wants to change the way we assess students. Instead of just memorizing facts and passing tests, we want to focus on real-life skills and abilities that will help students succeed in the future. But coming up with a fair and accurate way to measure these skills can be tricky.

NEP 2020 wants to bring in more digital technology in education to make learning more fun and interesting for students. This can also help us to reach more students who may not have had the opportunity to learn before. However, not all students have equal access to technology, and we need to make sure that everyone can benefit from this new approach to education. We need to understand how digital education is working for different students so that we can make changes and ensure that everyone is getting the most out of the new policy.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

"A Critical Analysis of India's National Education Policy 2020: Opportunities and Challenges for Vocational Education and Training" by Tushar Agarwal and Manish Sabharwal (2021). Agarwal and Sabharwal (2021) provide an analysis of India's National Education Policy 2020 with a specific focus on vocational education and training (VET). The authors examine the opportunities and challenges that this policy presents for VET, and they propose ways to address the

challenges and make the most of VET's potential. They argue that VET can play a significant role in supporting the country's economic growth and development by providing relevant skills training to young people. However, they also note that there are several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure that VET can fulfill this potential. For example, there is a need to improve the quality of VET programs and to make them more responsive to the needs of the labor market. Agarwal and Sabharwal suggest several measures to address these challenges, including strengthening the linkages between VET and the labor market, promoting public-private partnerships in VET provision, and enhancing the quality of VET trainers and assessors.

"*New Education Policy 2020: A Paradigm Shift in Education*" by Deepa Kumari, published in the International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR) in June 2022. Kumari's (2022) article in the International Journal of Scientific Research provides an overview of India's National Education Policy 2020. The author outlines the main features of the policy and discusses the potential benefits and challenges that it presents. She emphasizes the importance of effective implementation strategies to realize the policy's goals. Kumari notes that the policy has the potential to transform the education system in India by promoting greater access, equity, and quality. However, she also identifies several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure that the policy can achieve its objectives. These challenges include addressing the digital divide, ensuring teacher training and development, and improving the quality of assessments. Kumari suggests that effective implementation strategies will be critical in addressing these challenges and realizing the potential benefits of the policy.

"*The National Education Policy 2020: Opportunities and Challenges for Higher Education in India*" by Shilpi Bansal and Alok Kumar Singh (2021). Bansal and Singh (2021) offer a critical analysis of India's National Education Policy 2020 with a focus on its impact on higher education in the country. The authors examine the key features of the policy, including its emphasis on multidisciplinary education, the use of technology, and a focus on research. They also explore the opportunities and challenges that the policy presents for the higher education sector. Bansal and Singh argue that the policy has the potential to promote innovation and excellence in higher education by encouraging a more flexible and diverse approach to teaching and learning. However, they also note that there are several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure that the policy can achieve its objectives. These challenges include the need to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, to address issues of access and equity, and to promote greater collaboration between academia and industry. The authors suggest several measures to address these challenges, including promoting the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning, providing support for innovative research, and fostering greater collaboration between academia and industry.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To explore the impact of the NEP on the employability of graduates.
2. To examine the impact of the NEP on the gender gap in education
3. To investigate the challenges faced by educational institutions in implementing the NEP.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data collected for this study contains secondary data. It was collected from different articles, journals and online resources.

VI. FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

A recent survey conducted by the National Employability Report 2020 showed that less than half of engineering graduates, only 45.9%, were found to be employable. The survey also revealed that employability varied greatly based on specific skills, such as coding, data analysis, and communication. This suggests that graduates may not possess the necessary skills required by employers, leading to a significant gap between the skills possessed by graduates and the skills demanded by the job market.

Another report by the World Economic Forum (WEF) indicates that job market requirements are changing rapidly, and graduates need to possess critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills that are not typically taught in traditional education systems. India's NEP 2020 aims to address this gap by emphasizing the development of such skills through various measures such as experiential learning, vocational education, and multidisciplinary education.

Therefore, there is need for a more relevant and practical education system that aligns with the changing needs of the job market. The NEP 2020 recognizes this need by prioritizing the development of skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, which are essential for success in today's rapidly evolving job market.

Furthermore, the NEP's emphasis on experiential learning, vocational education, and multidisciplinary education could help bridge the gap between traditional education and job market requirements. By providing students with hands-on experience and exposure to various fields, the NEP could equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in a dynamic and competitive job market.

According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2019, girls in India, especially in rural areas, face significant challenges in accessing education. Girls are less likely to be enrolled in school, more likely to drop out, and less likely to achieve basic levels of literacy and numeracy than boys. This suggests that there is a need for targeted efforts to promote girls' education and reduce the gender gap in education.

The NSSO 2014 survey revealed that although there have been improvements in girls' enrolment rates in primary and upper primary education, they still lag behind boys' enrolment rates. Boys' NER in primary education was 84.2% compared to girls' NER of 78.4%. The survey also showed that more girls dropped out of school than boys due to factors such as poverty, child marriage, and social norms. Thus, the survey suggests the need for further efforts to address the gender gap in education and reduce dropout rates among girls.

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics reports that the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for primary education in India is close to 1, indicating near parity between boys and girls. However, the GPI for secondary and tertiary education is lower, indicating a significant gender gap. This gap is attributed to factors such as poverty, cultural norms, and lack of access to safe and quality education for girls.

To address the gender gap in education in India, targeted efforts are needed to promote girls' education, especially in rural areas where the gap is wider. Factors such as poverty, child marriage, and cultural norms contribute to this gap, and efforts should be made to address them. Safe and quality education should be made more accessible to girls, and policies should be implemented to encourage and support girls to stay in school, such as providing financial incentives and addressing cultural norms that discourage girls' education. Investing in education, particularly in rural areas, can help improve access to education for all children, regardless of gender.

Indian educational institutions struggle to implement the NEP due to inadequate infrastructure, funding, and trained faculty, according to Indian Express. The scarcity of resources has made it difficult to achieve NEP objectives, while the shortage of trained STEM faculty has compounded the problem. The pandemic has worsened the situation, revealing the inadequate infrastructure of many institutions. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the successful implementation of the NEP in India.

The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) has identified several challenges in India's education system, including a lack of resources and inadequate teacher training. Reforms and improvements such as increased funding, better teacher training programs, and efforts to promote equal access to education are necessary to address these challenges.

Hence, to help Indian educational institutions implement the NEP, there is a need to address the shortage of resources, trained faculty, and infrastructure. This includes increasing funding for education, providing better teacher training programs, and promoting equal access to education. The pandemic has further highlighted the need for better infrastructure in educational institutions. By addressing these challenges, India can successfully implement the NEP and improve its education system.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Increase budget allocation:** The government needs to allocate a higher percentage of the national budget to education. This means that more money needs to be put into building schools, training teachers, and providing resources for students. The private sector should also be encouraged to invest in education by offering incentives for investment. Additionally, the government should explore alternative sources of funding for education, such as public-private partnerships or international aid.
2. **Focus on implementation strategies:** The NEP should prioritize the development of clear and feasible implementation strategies. The government needs to ensure that all stakeholders, including teachers, students, and parents, are involved in the implementation process. This means that the government should work closely with schools, universities, and other educational institutions to create a plan that works for everyone.
3. **Monitor progress:** The government should establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track progress in implementing the NEP. This means that the government needs to regularly check on the progress made in implementing the NEP and use this information to make necessary adjustments. It's important to make sure that the NEP is having a positive impact on education in India.
4. **Emphasize regional and linguistic diversity:** India is a very diverse country and the NEP should recognize and celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of India. Education policies and programs should be developed to meet the needs of diverse communities and regions. This means that the government needs to take into account the different languages spoken in India and ensure that all students have access to education in their own language.
5. **Promote vocational education:** The NEP should prioritize the development of vocational education programs that prepare students for the workforce. This means that the government needs to work with industry and employers to

identify the skills and knowledge needed for the job market. Vocational education should be integrated into the mainstream education system and given equal importance to academic education. This will help students develop skills that will help them find jobs after graduation.

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