



International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies (IJHSSS)

A Peer-Reviewed Bi-monthly Bi-lingual Research Journal

ISSN: 2349-6959 (Online), ISSN: 2349-6711 (Print)

ISJN: A4372-3142 (Online) ISJN: A4372-3143 (Print)

Volume-IX, Issue-II, March 2023, Page No.59-66

Published by Scholar Publications, Karimganj, Assam, India, 788711

Website: <http://www.ijhsss.com>

DOI: 10.29032/ijhsss.v9.i2.2023.59-66

National Education Policy (NEP 2020): An Analytical Study in School and Higher Education in India

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Abstract:

The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge landscape. With various dramatic scientific and technological advances, such as the rise of big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, many unskilled jobs worldwide may be taken over by machines, while the need for a skilled workforce, particularly involving mathematics, computer science, and data science, in conjunction with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, will be increasingly in greater demand.. As they say, change in the law of nature but this change was overdue for more than 35 years .The last time we saw a similar change in the field of education was back in the year 1986. For anything to survive in this dynamic world it is important to adapt to the changing scenario. Same goes for education, with changing information and communication technology (ICT), industrial requirement, there is need for change in the way we learn .And as the global scenario in education has been changing rapidly witnessing a paradigm shift in the overall system .It was important for India also to catch up with that change, an effort in this direction has been made through NEP 2020 to reform the education system in India. The study is purely qualitative in nature as it relies solely on secondary data sources. An effort is made to study the provisions of the policy and how these will contribute towards improving the education at school level and in the higher education. The study will also look into the challenges in implementing those provisions in place of the existing system of education in India.

Keywords: NEP 2020, School Education, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Higher Education, Reforms.

Introduction: India being one of the largest countries in the World when it comes to population. Keeping in view this fact it becomes really important that the focus should be on better education and skill development which has to do with the human resource development. Education is a basic necessity which sets the base for so many things .It is a prerequisite for developing human potential, creating equality in society and promoting National Development. Many efforts were made in this direction from time to time with constitution of various committees and commission and incorporation their

recommendations into the education system. After independence, India has come up with three policies at the National level. The first was national education policy in India in the year 1968 and the second in 1986 which was revised in the year 1992. The third being the recent one which came in the year 2020. With such a large population it is a challenge for India to ensure education for all and make sure that dropout rate is at the lowest as it is not only about bringing a child to the school, retaining that child is also a bigger task. According to 4th goal of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, by 2030? There is a belief that through this new national education policy 2020, India can achieve the goals established under the policy at least by 2040. The policy goals stress upon the fact that there should be equitable access to high-quality education to everyone individual irrespective of their social, economic background. Thus, a lot is expected out of NEP 2020 as it focuses more on skill, innovation, problem solving. NEP has diminished the walls of separation between the disciplines and advocated the importance of inter-disciplinarily and creativity. The policy expects a new set of regulations to make the education pedagogy more experimental, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented learner centered, analysis-based, flexible, enjoyable, and futuristic so that the educated output can support countries economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, cultural preservation, and national integration (G.). The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986.

The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education, higher education as well as vocational studies in India. The policy aims at changing the education scenario in India. The idea behind introduction of such policy is bridging the gap in the existing system of education and learning in India. And this gap can be bridged only if new reforms are incorporated into the system of education in India. This has been done through NEP 2020 where focus areas are innovation, skill, equity, quality in learning. India as a country is hoping that it will have a leading education system by the year 2040. Globalization and the market trends has already given a sense of adaptive changes which are required. Now it is not only about knowledge and education, the focus on skill, innovation, market demand is equally important when it comes to shaping up students for future roles. Therefore, there is a need to move towards the concept of less content, and more learning. The students should be taught to be active learners and their critical thinking ability should be developed. Education must build character, enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring, while at the same time prepare them for gainful, fulfilling employment.

Objectives of the Study:

- a) To analyze the provisions of the policy for school and Higher education in India in terms of their contribution to the existing system of education.
- b) To study the about the challenges which will be there in the implementation of this policy.

- c) To provide suggestions that can contribute towards the better implementation of NEP 2020.

NEP about School Education: The new NEP is based on four pillars which are Access, Equity, Quality, and Accountability. (Negi). NEP 2020 mainly talks about a journey from early childhood to higher education including vocational education. It has suggested for changes at all these levels of educations. The major reforms suggested in NEP about school education includes replacing of the existing 10+2 structure in school education with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18. NEP also talks about early childhood care and NEP about School Education: The new NEP is based on four pillars which are Access, Equity, Quality, and Accountability. (Negi). NEP 2020 mainly talks about a journey from early childhood to higher education including vocational education. It has suggested for changes at all these levels of educations. The major reforms suggested in NEP about school education includes replacing of the existing 10+2 structure in school education with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18. NEP also talks about early childhood care and education and how this foundational level of education can be strengthened. For ECCE, the NEP supports flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity-based, and inquiry based learning, comprising of alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colors, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles and logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting and other visual art, craft, drama and puppetry, music and movement. To boost this NCERT should develop Curriculum for children up to 8 years of age. MHRD also has an important role to play in ensuring the strong foundation for students at early stage of their lives. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy should be achieved by all the states and UTs by 2025. It should be the priority of MHRD to ensure that and a National Mission on this should be set up by MHRD. There is a mention about dropout rate as well. It is quite evident from the fact that GER (Gross Enrollment Ratio) from grades 6-8 is about 90.9% which comes down to 56.5 in 11th and 12th indicating a heavy drop out. In order to reduce this NEP Suggested that trained teacher and better infrastructure can help in keeping this to minimal. NEP advocates that there should be a reduction in the content of the syllabus at different level. And focus should be on discovery, discussions, critical and analytical thinking (National Education Policy 2020). These are the major provisions regarding the school education other include education in mother tongue, Experimental learning, flexibility in curriculum, Summative to formative style of assessment which promotes skill, competency, critical thinking and clarity

NEP about Higher Education: In India, higher education (HE) multiple regulators are going to be united in to Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as single regulator for HEIs. The certification bodies like (NAAC and NBA) are going to be replaced and a New National certification Council (NAC) will be constituted. The research and innovation funding in higher education would be supported by National Research Foundation. NEP has mandated for multidisciplinary education model for higher educational institutions. And these institutions should possess a campus with at least student strength of 3000. The

deadline provided to become multidisciplinary is 2030 and they are expected to have strength of 3000 students by 2040. Further, these Multidisciplinary Universities should either focus on research or teaching and can become specialized institution in one of them. The colleges have been given option to become autonomous and award their own degrees or they can also become a part of existing university. NEP also speaks about how to increase student's enrollment in all form of educational institutions. GER has been matter of concern in India so; present education policy has got special focus on it. NEP emphasizes on holistic and multidisciplinary education approach and research now is encouraged from UG level only. Present policy stress on over all development of a student with cross- disciplinary and outcome based education. There is a proposal of Academic Bank of Credit at National level to provide flexibility in acquiring degrees and multiple entry-exit option at all levels of education. Several digital platforms will be either started or existing one will be revamped to encourage online learning and digitalization of libraries .Student focused teaching & learning method will be the key in NEP 2020 in place of the current teacher focused teaching model. Evaluation model will be revamped from Choice based to Competency based. Evaluation and assessment model is also going to change from End semester examination system to continuous assessment system. All HEIs will have to focus on skill education. They also need to have provision for counseling centers with counselors to take care of mental well-being of students. Conventional education is going for massive transformation as it will be market driven hence forth. Indian government has aimed to establish world class educational institutions and attract lot of international students. Further, the courses completed in foreign universities by a student will be given weight age and considered equivalent in India. This will provide students flexibility to start a degree abroad and later on complete in India (National Education Policy 2020).

Some Targets in NEP:

1. All the provisions of the policy will be implemented by 2040.
2. 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio from Pre-School to Secondary level will be achieved by 2030.
3. Teachers to be prepared for assessment reforms by 2030.
4. There will be common standard for learning in private and government school.
5. Foundational numeracy and basic literacy to be achieved by Grade 3.
6. Universalizing early childhood care and education by 2030.
7. Vocational training for at least 50% learners by 2025.

Challenges in Implementation of NEP 2020: National Education Policy (2020) is reformatory step toward changing the education system of India for the better .A lot of effort has been put in framing the policy; it is the result of in-depth research, deliberations and discussion that we have arrived at something as comprehensive as NEP. But, there exist few changes in the successful implementation of these reforms which are as follow:-

1. There is a lack of infrastructure and funding to incorporate such massive changes into the system .The national education policy 2020 focuses on making India a global destination for education by stressing upon quality and dynamism. The policy

focuses on raising expenditure in the education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest. But figures gives a very contracting picture .It is not for the first time that there are talks about increasing the investment in education .The economic survey 2019-20 says India spends only 3.1 % of its GDP on education sector even after continuous talks on spending patterns .So the first thing is to priories education as a top priority and channelize the investment towards this goal.

2. From the policy documents is seems quite obvious that there will be more stress on privatization of education .In a country like India where affordability of education is still the biggest issue ,privatization seems like a major hurdle in implementation of the policy. Although NEP does mention about the need of transparency in fee structure but there is no mention about how they will curtain the growing fees of private institutions and make them function in a manner where utilitarianism will be the focus not profit maximization.
3. There is no mention is the NEP 2020 about how it will be ensured that the benefits of education reaches the marginalized section of society. The explicitness about the inclusion of every section of the society is missing in the policy document .The roadmap for any such action is missing.
4. Ensuring the accountability of each stakeholder is a huge task .The comprehensiveness of the policy require many stakeholders working together in a close knitted and well-coordinated relationship .The kind of changes the implementation of this policy will bring to the system is massive in terms of impact and outreach .Thereby expecting cooperation and acceptability of each stakeholder is a tedious task in such a large setup.
5. The policy document talks about top foreign colleges setting up their institutions in India .However to what extent it will solve the problem for India is debatable as setting up institutions in India will Cost them hefty amount of money which they will be recovering from the fees and related charges which will ultimately increase the burden on the student making it difficult to enroll themselves in such institutions.
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7. NEP advocated that mother tongue will also be a medium of instruction till class 5 ,preferably till class 8 and beyond it wherever possible .But is has a negative side attached to it also as it will further intensify the gaps between students who knows English or Hindi and who doesn't know these .Secondly, it will be difficult to standardize the reading material in absence of any script making it a tedious task .It will require large investments and positives coming out of this investment seems less likely and there are chances that it might create a bigger gulf in the education system

8. NEP 2020 talks about experimentation in the pedagogy since the foundational years of study has brought about a Paradigm shift in the way of learning which a welcome change is. But this will require well trained teachers to ensure that this experimentation, flexibly goes well with the students, only then the strategically advancements in the curriculum can be achieved for the betterment of students. So, the tarring of teachers to adapt to such flexible ways is a must which is lacking at the moment.
9. Inter-disciplinarily in higher education demands a paradigm Shift ,many have appreciated the step towards portioning inter-disciplinary learning .As it will create amongst learner a wide range of experience and perspectives about all the different things those exist around .But to bring such thing into action is a task which requires drastic changes .Indian system of education has been compartmentalized for decades now and to adapt to this idea of multi-disciplinarily there will be need to cultural and behavioral shift .The professors and the learners both should develop respect and curiosity to learn new things from multiple disciplines not keeping themselves in an air bubble .This will require 20-30 good years to create a positive atmosphere for such change.

Findings: Looking at the prospects and the challenges related to Education in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 one can make out that it appears as if it will changes the overall gamut of education within the country .But some of the recommendation made in the NEP seems less practical and more ambitious . Taking nothing away from the Policy Makers one can say that it is distinct dream that can change the system of learning in India and make India an educational hub. But, we need to realize that we need to fix some of the basic things fist then only we can move to the higher goals .For say more focus should be given to teacher training, penetration of technology in education, training students to be learner, increasing our investment in education, ensuring that our dropout rates are within safe limits. Once all these things are taken care of then we can aim for higher goals. However, it is also a truth that if we as a country will not manifest for these changes and will keep our focus limited to basic issues .We will be left behind many of the counties which are already working on new advancements in the field of education and continuously striving to achieve greater heights in the educational field. Some of the Suggestion that can add to the effective implementation of NEP is:

1. Adequate awareness should be created amongst all the stakeholders involved in the successful implantation of the Policy.
2. The coordination between the Centre government, States and the Local bodies should ne worked upon in order to make this policy a success.
3. Timely feedback from parents, Students, industry will also help in successful implementation of the policy.
4. More focus should be given on training of teachers and inculcate the required skill in them .Same goes for the students.

5. More investment should be directed towards education in order to make this policy a clear winner for improving the overall educational scenario in India.

Conclusion: NEP 2020 is a document that has been perceived with a lot of hope and optimism in bringing about a paradigm changes in the overall education system of the country. Change is the law of nature and it is important to adapt with the changing environment .The old education system and practices are no longer holding any relevance in the modern times .For example we have seen during the COVID- 19 that how important it is to make ICT an active part of teaching learning process, And how we as a country need to train our students and teachers to learn this skill to make the overall process of learning more enriching and satisfying. It has become meaningless to continue with outdated education system. On the part of the Indian government a lot of changes would be required to be brought to the curriculum of higher education absorbing the global demand for receiving skilled manpower. Thus, implementation NEP 2020 would be a great challenge. Overall, NEP 2020 is largely a very progressive document, with a firm grasp on the current socio-economic landscape and the prospect to meet future challenges. Well, no policy bears any fruit if that is not implemented in an appropriate way. The policy seems like a well thought and genuine attempt to reshape Indian Educational System. This policy highlights the integration of professional education in HEI for skilling and employment generation. It won't be wrong to conclude that NEP 2020 has laid a concrete roadmap for India 2.0 and if implemented properly then it has got everything to make India global hub in education by 2030. (Kumar).The future of the nation depends heavily on the kind of education imparted within that state .NEP 2020 is a ray of hope in that direction .But India as a country need to ensure that the promise made under this should not remain on papers and become a reality and that will only be possible with effective implementation of its provision with proper coordination from all the stakeholders.

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