

A Qualitative Analysis on the Significant Landmark in Indian Education: New Education Policy 2020

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Abstract: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to reform education by focusing on the learner. The NEP incorporates recommendations from the Education Commission (1964–66) and the Justice J. S. Verma Commission (2012), as well as previous versions of the policy – National Policy on Education 1986 (NPE 1986/92), Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, and Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016. The NEP 2020 is a big step forward since it emphasizes kids' entire development by assuring access, relevance, equity, quality, and solid foundational learning. Stakeholders in the education industry may learn a lot from the new policy. This research, written by KPMG in India, examines the impact of the NEP and identifies several opportunities that have arisen as a result of the new policy. Significantly, the policy emphasizes four critical reform areas: curricular adjustments to establish strong fundamental abilities, enhancing learning quality at all levels of education, shifting evaluation methods, and, ultimately, the need for systemic transformation. The year 2020 has been a landmark year for countries all across the world. Apart from COVID-19, the introduction of the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 was another significant move in India. Various committees have advocated increasing the budget allocation for education to 6% of GDP on a regular basis, which has piqued the interest of scholars. The goal of this article is to identify the NEP 2020 concerns and priorities.

Keywords: Free and compulsory education act, Education commission, National Education Policy (NEP), Systemic transformation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Countries plan to improve their educational systems (Rizvi and Lingard, 2009). The Government of India (GOI) has created the National Policy on Education to encourage education across all economic strata and to include common/ordinary people

in the mainstream (NPE). This strategy covers a wide range of topics, from elementary school education (literacy level) to institutions for higher education (specialization) - in both rural and urban contexts. The government of India proposed and disseminated the first NPE in 1968, the second policy in 1986, and the third major reformatory policy in 2020, all of which were presented and disseminated by the current Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi (Govt. of India, 2020). The National Education Policy 2020 is a new beginning for India's educational system. It is a large-scale project matched with the nation's current educational needs, with the goal of bringing significant educational reforms to the country. This program will undoubtedly be a watershed event in India's education system, as the country invests extensively and takes pleasure in its long and illustrious educational heritage. The policy is comprehensive, all-encompassing, and far-sighted, and it will undoubtedly play a major role in the country's future development. Its purpose is to make the educational framework broad, adaptive, multidisciplinary, and tailored to the needs of the twenty-first century as well as the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. The policy is driven by the nation's rich heritage, which includes old and timeless knowledge and thoughts. The policy aims to restore the grandeur of Nalanda, Takshashila, and Vallabhi by instilling in its students a critical understanding of India's rich culture, values, and traditions. The policy strives to not only bring out learners' hidden talents, but also to prepare human beings with good ethical principles, rational thought, and scientific temper, as well as a creative imagination. It aspires to produce citizens who will contribute to the creation of a society that is free of bias, inclusive, and plural, as our constitution envisions. Lord Macaulay eloquently illustrated that if we wish to dismantle the backbone of a country like India, we can simply do it by destroying its rich cultural history and educational system. They were the ones who made us Indians feel inferior to the system that was in place at the time and lowered its beautiful glory to insignificance. The strategy currently seeks to restore the previous splendor of our historical educational system by emphasizing our rich and diverse cultural

heritage while also aligning it with the new contemporary needs of a global society.

II. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF EDUCATION POLICIES OF INDIA

Following independence in 1947, the Government of India faced numerous obstacles, including illiteracy. The Government of India established and financed a variety of programs, laws, and regulations to combat illiteracy. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India's first Education Minister, envisioned a unified education system based on strong central government control of the education system and policies. The University Education Commission (1948–1949), the Secondary Education Commission (1952–1953), the Kothari Commission (1964–1966), and the University Grants Commission (November 1956) were established by the Union Government to propose ideas to improve India's educational systems. The Science Policy Resolution was accepted by Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, in order to boost science education. The Nehru government has supported outstanding education institutes (such as the Indian Institute of Technology) in order to promote engineering and science (IITs). The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was established as an autonomous agency by the Union Government in 1961. The goal of this mechanism is to provide advice to governments on the formation and implementation of educational programs.

The National Education Plan (NEP) aims to create curriculum synergies from Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to school and higher education. The NEP emphasizes the importance of developing a national curricular and pedagogical framework that is competency-based, inclusive, innovative, and focuses on children's overall development. The human value system is intended to be imbued in school curriculum, which will allow greater flexibility and expose pupils to future abilities in computation, coding, design thinking, digital literacy, ethical and moral reasoning, and so on. The NEP encourages the development of strong basic skills beginning in early life. In addition, the strategy envisions a new way of thinking about vocational education by integrating it throughout secondary and higher education and building a credit framework to allow for vertical and horizontal mobility between the two. Quality enhancement in learning outcomes is one of the more prominent themes throughout the policy paper. The NEP highlights a number of activities, including excellent learning settings, the use of ICT resources for training, experiential learning, and boosting faculty quality, among others. Moving ECCE and school pedagogy to the 5+3+3+4 framework, as well as a three-tiered institutional design in higher education (research focus, teaching focus, and autonomous degree-granting colleges with strong employability focus) are positive developments for the sector. Educational institutions must make plans to take advantage of the policy's recommendations. It has accurately translated the demands of learners by allowing them greater choice in selecting subjects that are aligned with their goals.

Multiple entry and exit points, as well as the concept of an academic credit bank, will ensure that they continue to learn.

The policy's transformational characteristics are highly supported by the structural changes that are taking place in the ECCE, school, and higher education segments, as well as crucial digital elements. The NEP has undoubtedly generated a need for long-term planning at both the federal and state levels in order to fulfill policy objectives. Themes like scalability, autonomy, and accreditation emphasize the importance of making optimal use of both academic and non-academic resources, such as faculty, infrastructural capacity (such as a school complex), digital mode of delivery, and more money. The goal is to establish national-level certification and standard-setting organizations that will drive quality and focus on improving learning outcomes at their heart while also providing the most freedom and autonomy in the broader administrative structure. By delivering accessible and equitable quality education and fostering lifelong learning opportunities for all in the next decade, the NEP 2020 is intended to put India on pace to achieve objective four of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The transformational changes outlined for the ECCE, higher, and vocational education segments are highlighted in the following sections, followed by stakeholder-specific action takeaways.

III. THE FIRST NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION, 1968

The first NEP was announced in 1968 by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's government, based on the study and recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964–1966). The program was viewed as requiring "radical transformation" and promoting equitable educational opportunities (for both rural and urban areas) in order to achieve national integration and better cultural and economic growth. However, the choice to make Hindi the national language sparked debate. To establish a single language throughout India, the policy called for the use and acquisition of Hindi. The ancient Sanskrit language, which was considered a vital element of India's culture and legacy, was also encouraged to be taught under this strategy. This policy was also aligned to encourage physical education and the culture of sports and games. The NPE of 1968 proposed for education spending to increase to 6% of national revenue (Govt. of India, 1968).

IV. SECOND NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION, 1986

Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi introduced a new National Policy in 1986 to promote education at all levels of society. "Special Emphasis on the Elimination of Inequalities and to Sequentialise the Educational Opportunity," according to the accepted policy, regardless of caste (scheduled caste, scheduled tribes), gender (predominantly for females), or economic background. Scholarships, subsidies, allowances, adult education, and a variety of other techniques to encourage social integration were all part of the policy. This NPE is notable for its "child-centered approach," particularly in primary education, and for launching "Operation Blackboard,"

a popular educational reform. The goal was to improve primary schools all around the country. With the establishment of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in 1985, the policy expanded the open and distance university system (IGNOU, 1985). This policy is based on Mahatma Gandhi's ideology of promoting development (both economic and social) at the grassroots level in rural India (Govt. of India, 1986).

V. REVISIONS IN SECOND NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION IN 1992 AND 2005

Former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao amended the NEP in 1992. The Common Entrance Examination was adopted as part of this education agenda (CEE). Manmohan Singh, India's previous Prime Minister announced a new "Common Minimum Program" program. Under the NEP, 1986, the Program of Action (PoA) 1992 proposed a unified entrance exam for all India-based vocational and technical training admissions.

VI. THIRD NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION, 2020

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) presented a draft of the National Education Policy (NEP) in 2019, which was followed by many proposals and consultations from stakeholders and the general public. Reduced curriculum content is discussed in the Draft NEP in order to improve vital learning and critical thinking. The goal is to foster a holistic approach to learning that includes hands-on experiences, group discussions, and analysis. For the first time, it also mentions a curriculum change. The most notable change is the shift from a 10 + 2 + 3 to a 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 pedagogical structure. There is an attempt to maximize learning depending on children's cognitive development. The cabinet (senate) passed a NEP on July 29, 2020, with the goal of introducing various changes to India's current education system. The NEP 2020 scripts a substantial advancement in our educational system by being both appropriate and liberal. The National Education Policy has proclaimed a new vision for school education, presenting the system with a much-needed revision and reform agenda. It has outlined a vision for a fundamental shift in the way education is delivered, presenting new opportunities for education sector stakeholders while ensuring that every school-aged kid in India has equitable access to and receives a high-quality education.

VII. APPROACH TO TEACHER EDUCATION

Recognizing that teachers will need to be trained in both subject and pedagogy, teacher education will be gradually relocated to interdisciplinary colleges and universities by 2030. As schools and universities become more multidisciplinary, they will strive to have excellent education departments that provide B.Ed., M.Ed., and Ph.D. degrees in education. By 2030, a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree that teaches a variety of knowledge content and pedagogy and incorporates significant practical

experience in the form of student-teaching at local schools will be the minimum degree qualification for teaching. The 2-year B.Ed. programs will be offered by the same interdisciplinary schools that offer the 4-year integrated B.Ed., and will only be open to students who have already earned bachelor's degrees in other specialized fields. These B.Ed. programs may also be modified as 1-year B.Ed. programs and will be available only to those who have finished the equivalent of a 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's Degree or who have a Master's degree in a specialization and seek to teach in that area. Only recognized multidisciplinary higher education institutions offering 4-year integrated B.Ed. programs would be able to offer such B.Ed. degrees. Multidisciplinary higher education institutions that offer the 4-year in-class integrated B.Ed. program and are accredited for ODL may also offer high-quality B.Ed. programs in blended or ODL mode to students in remote or difficult-to-access locations, as well as in-service teachers seeking to improve their qualifications, with appropriate robust arrangements for mentoring and practice cum training and student-teaching components of the program.

VIII. EDUCATION POLICY IN INDEPENDENT INDIA

There were no important commissions or reports in the British period after the Sargent Commission. Even the report of the Sargent Commission was never published. Following the transfer of power, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) decided to establish two commissions, one for university education and the other for secondary education, realizing that the needs of independent India would differ. It became clear that India's education system would be overhauled. This decision was made at a time when the promises made to the people in the field of education during the independence war were about to be fulfilled. The provision of free and compulsory education until the age of 14 years was contested in the Constituent Assembly, and these arguments eventually found expression in the Constitution of India's Directive Principles of State Policy. The country's educational strategy had set a goal of developing a universal elementary education system by 1960. In order to meet the country's needs, necessary reforms were made to the secondary and higher education systems (Saikia, 1998). With India's independence, a new chapter in education policy began. The enormous diversity of Indian society has resulted in a slew of difficulties and challenges. The government established education commissions to address these issues and make recommendations for comprehensive policies to address educational issues and improve India's educational system.

In 1950, India approved the Constitution after gaining independence. Both the state and the federal governments were given responsibilities for education. The framers of the Constitution realized that a well-educated electorate is critical to the stability and progress of a democratically-governed society. The principle of 'equality of educational opportunity' was highlighted in the Constitution, as was the accomplishment of social justice through a policy of 'positive discrimination.'

pedagogies will transition toward competency-based learning and technique to overcome any barriers to achieving learning outcomes. Art interaction is one such cross-curricular academic practice that incorporates various parts of art and culture as the basis for learning ideas across topics. The use of a coordinated methodology will strengthen the connections between training and culture. Integrating sports and education under the banner of holistic development, which would improve physical and psychological well-being as well as cognitive capacities, is urgently needed. The National Education Policy 2020 serves as a benchmark for providing multidisciplinary and flexible higher education to students and future generations by incorporating multidisciplinary universities and colleges, multiple entry and exit points in a degree program, a national academic credit bank, autonomous institutions, a common entrance test, the establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), and professional standard-setting bodies into its system.

There would be no hard-core separation between what we today call 'vocational' or 'academic' streams, among 'arts,' 'humanities,' and 'sciences,' with the NEP 2020, as the holistic approach would offer a wide range of courses and subjects with no demarcation between what is 'curricular' or 'extracurricular,' as the holistic approach would offer a wide range of courses and subjects with no demarcation between what is 'curricular' or India's languages are among the world's richest, most scientific, and expressive, with a vast library of ancient and present literature. It is therefore critical for young citizens to be aware of their country's rich and various languages in order to appreciate the diverse cultures' perspectives and the treasure they possess in the form of values and traditions. The mother tongue should be employed as a medium of instruction since it will provide a solid basis for creative thinking. At the outset, every effort should be made to ensure that there is no gap between the learner's mother language and the medium of instruction. Local or native sign languages must also be taken into account. For pupils with hearing impairments, Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized across the country, and national and state curricular materials will be developed. Along with language proficiency, space must be made for the development of scientific temper, creativity, and innovation, physical education, logical reasoning, and occupational exposure. Ahimsa, satya, diversity, respect for all individuals and their innate skills regardless of their background, respect for the environment, and helpfulness are all qualities that should be valued and adequately cultivated in learners to help them become better persons for life.

X. EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: LEARNING FOR ALL

The most powerful tool for attaining social justice and equality is education. While inclusive and equitable education is an important aim in and of itself, it is also necessary for building an inclusive and equitable society in which all citizens have

the opportunity to dream, flourish, and contribute to the nation. The education system in India must be designed to benefit India's children, so that no child is denied the opportunity to learn and flourish as a result of their birth or upbringing. This Policy states that one of the key aims of all education sector development programs will continue to be closing the social category disparities in access, participation, and learning outcomes in school education. While the Indian education system and subsequent government policies have made steady progress in closing gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education, large disparities still exist, particularly at the secondary level, especially for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups who have historically been underrepresented in education. Gender identities (particularly female and transgender individuals), socio-cultural identities (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities), geographical identities (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts), disabilities (including learning disabilities), and socio-economic conditions can all be used to categorize Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) (such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor). While school enrollment drops continuously from Grade 1 to Grade 12, the decline is far more pronounced for each of these SEDGs, with even bigger declines for female students within each of these SEDGs, and typically steeper in higher education.

Only new initiatives will be able to meet new problems and conditions. The current surge in pandemics has brought to light the importance of being prepared with other strategies for coping with the crisis. In light of this, the National Education Policy 2020 acknowledges the value of technology while also addressing its possible risks and perils. It asks for well-designed research that shows how we may maximize the benefits of using technology as a vehicle for 21st-century education while avoiding the disadvantages. To meet the current and future challenges of providing quality education to all, existing digital platforms and ongoing ICT-based educational efforts must be enhanced. The policy includes ideas such as pilot studies for online education, digital infrastructure, online teaching platforms and tools, bridging the digital divide, virtual labs, teacher training and incentives, and blended learning models, all of which will contribute to India becoming a global superpower in the field of technology by addressing these needs and preparing its learners with the appropriate technological approach.

XI. CONCLUSION

The NEP 2020 provides an elaborative framework for a country's educational system to develop. In most cases, replacing a policy takes decades. The present policy is the third in the series, and it succeeds the NEP from 1986. The NEP 2020 lays forth a clear roadmap for the country's education. It is not, however, obligatory to follow. Top universities from around the

world would be eligible to establish campuses in the country under NEP 2020. The NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on reforming the curriculum. The board examinations will be overhauled, with a focus on encouraging students to develop critical thinking skills and providing them with hands-on learning opportunities. The most important thing is that students will be taught all of their subjects in their native language. The NEP 2020 aims to meet the demand for specialists in a variety of disciplines, from agriculture to artificial intelligence. India needs to be ready for what is to come. The goal of this policy is to humanize education by introducing multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and trans-disciplinary approaches with a focus on humanities-related disciplines. Even a student pursuing a professional degree can now study some humanities subjects, which was not possible under previous policies. Furthermore, this policy places a strong emphasis on vocational skills in order to fulfill the increased demand for workers, as well as a focus on employability through skilling. The current policy considers teacher education to be a critical component.

The Policy is devoted to increasing educational investment significantly, as investing in the education of young citizens can be the most fruitful kind of investment for the country's future. To raise public investment in education to 6% of GDP, the Centre and the States will have to work together as a team. This will be vitally important in attaining the policy's objectives. The NEP 2020 includes numerous provisions for realizing the goals of many aspirant Indians and restoring the dignity and prestige of the educational system. However, in the end, good implementation is critical to the success of any policy that is enacted. It is up to the federal and state governments to join hands and work together to ensure that it is implemented efficiently and effectively not only on paper but also in the classroom. Such an effective execution will necessitate a long-term vision, as well as many projects and actions that must be coordinated by multiple bodies at both the national and individual levels. The current approach in education allows for flexibility by utilizing transferable credit banks to address high dropout rates. At the primary level, putting more focus on the mother tongue/local language would undoubtedly reduce dropout rates and improve children's learning capacities. The focus on Indianization, which would result in the development of better people for the country, is the most significant aspect of this new program. Furthermore, the NEP 2020 lays the groundwork for some young, eager understudies to be equipped with the necessary skill set. Its proper implementation will be the key to its success. It will continue to grade V. NEP 2020 is predicted to change the educational landscape in the near future, bolstering India's claim to becoming a superpower.

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