

## NEP 2020: A Progressive Document for Quality Education in India

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### Abstract

This paper aims to provide an analysis of the National Education Policy 2020 as a progressive document for quality education in India, using exploratory data derived from secondary sources. NEP 2020, approved by the cabinet of India on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020, has a vision for a comprehensive transformation of the education system of India. One of the primary objectives of this policy is to provide quality education in the institutions of India, including school, college and university, by 2030. The document is largely progressive in nature with a clear understanding of the prevailing social, cultural, ethical, political and economic conditions and the potential of quality education to address future challenges of Indian life. Therefore, the paper explores the canvas of the document for progressive reforms in the current education and governance systems and can also serve as a foundation for future research to assess the impact of the policy after its execution. Since NEP 2020 is anticipated to provide significant reforms in the higher education sector in India, it is expected to play a leading role in bringing fruitful changes in Indian society and economy. If properly implemented, NEP 2020 also has the potential to make India a role model in education to other developing countries of the world by 2030.

**Key Words:** National Education Policy, Progressive Document, Regulatory Structure, Quality Education, Reforms

### 1. Introduction

The progressive document of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which is presented by the Government of India, is a welcome step and a constructive plan for the improvement of the existing educational system. The first NEP was adopted in India in 1968, followed by a second NEP in 1986, and the most recent one in 2020. The National Education Policy 2020 was

launched on July 29, 2020 with a vision to modernize India's education system— adapting it to the demands of the learners and educators while preserving its roots in Indian culture. The purpose of the NEP 2020 is to reform the educational system and provide a progressive blueprint for quality education in India.

## 2. Context of NEP 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is the successor to the National Education Policy of 1986. In order to gather feedback on the NEP 2020, T. S. R. Subramanian, the former Cabinet Secretary, established a committee in January 2015. The report of the committee was made public in June 2017. The draft of NEP 2019 was then presented in 2019 by a board headed by Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, the Ex-Chief of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). A number of public discussions followed during the process and subsequently the draft of NEP 2020 was made public on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020 by the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD).

India's education system, particularly senior secondary and higher education, is already being affected by international trends and situations. Over the past few years, India has been making collaborations with international brands working in the education sector. These collaborations provide Indian and international educational institutions with the opportunity to increase their brand recognition and visibility on the international educational landscape. It is also attracting a large number of foreign students, including non-resident Indians, who are participating in a variety of skill-based and tutorial-oriented academic programs. Additionally, there are a number of international schools and universities that allow students to pursue their degrees without having to leave India. There are also developments in liberalizing education system which have enabled to reduce the gap for private schools and universities. With the increased need for mastery-level skills and capabilities and employment, the nature of courses, particularly offered by higher education institutions in India, has undergone a considerable alteration. In this context, the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is being implemented to give a boost to the education system of India and help it reach its full potential.

## 3. Objective of the Study

This paper seeks to analyze the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), recently declared by the Government of India (GoI). The objective of this paper is to review the policy as a progressive document for quality education in India, and provide an overview of its guiding principles and proposed measures, preparing the ground for a paradigm shift in school and higher education systems of India.

## 4. Methodology and Limitations

This paper offers a distinct study of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and is subject to some limitations as a result of the use of secondary data. A literature review will also highlight the findings of the study, which are supported by a few suggestions. The findings of this study may be used to guide future experiential research, and the consequences of the NEP 2020 after implementation can be recognized with some precincts. Nonetheless, the findings of this work might serve as a springboard for further research on numerous elements of NEP 2020, helping

students qualitatively grow in all aspects of their lives, from their mental and physical health to their social and emotional well-being.

## **5. Review of Literature**

Education, which is a strong tool for fostering ambition and self-assurance of the learners, can give them the ability to develop their personalities, make them learn their rights and let them speak out against the odds of the society. When the learners are properly educated and given authority in academic learning, they help in achieving the goals of fundamental and sustainable growth of a country. Therefore, each and every one of the society must get access to equal opportunities in order to advance and accomplish the goals of the country.

In 1986, the National Policy on Education (NPE) recognized education as the primary instrument that could lead the nation out of its economic and social backwardness and towards a more developed future. Education was to be used as a means of making a fundamental shift in the position of the learners. The NPE was called for a particular focus on promoting education of women, people from minorities and socially unrepresented groups, such as the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and the backward classes, eliminating inequalities and providing “equal education opportunities and education to all sections of the society” (K. Meenakshi Sundaram 128). It also focused on subsidized and compulsory education for all; however, the implementation of this policy could not bring the desired results in real terms.

Since the NPE required a significant transformation, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 was duly proposed by a committee led by Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan. The National Education Policy focuses on the holistic, flexible and multi-disciplinary development of the learners, with the profess aim “to sustain and take care of the existing vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all” (Deep Kumar 248). The goal of this new policy is to universalize education in India, making India a superpower in the field of knowledge and wisdom. The NEP 2020 prescribes an impartial approach to achieving quality in education, with the help of state and local community organizations, educators and the learners. It proposes various measures to facilitate access of the aspirants to schools, colleges and other institutions, such as— making provision for the quality education of international standard, the online leanings of the programmes, the uniformity in education system, the philanthropic contribution of private partners, the comprehensive development of teachers, the partnership programmes with the foreign organizations, etc.

The NEP 2020 is founded on the principles of access, equity, affordability, quality and accountability in line with the sustainable development goals of well-developed countries of the world. Though the NEP 2020 has some gaps in implementation, it has gained a comprehensive understanding of the global situation. Therefore, it is essential to implement the NEP 2020 with caution in order to resolve the problems and set an example for providing quality education to all and sundry.

## **6. Attributes of NEP 2020 for Quality Education**

The NEP 2020 has been implemented with the objective of reinforcing changes in the educational system from junior to senior levels. In order to keep up with the requirement of

quality education, the literature of this study will give emphasis on core concepts, thoughts, real-world situations and solutions through the NEP 2020. It is anticipated that The NEP 2020 will have a constructive and enduring effect on the school and higher education systems of India as it “envisions a shift towards a more inclusive and flexible education system that focuses on the overall development of students” (Khrish Swargiary & Kavita Roy 47). The government has taken a praiseworthy step by allowing foreign universities to establish campuses in India and Indian universities to establish campuses in other countries of the world, thus providing students with the opportunity to experience the world-class quality of education within their own country as well as overseas. Furthermore, the policy of introducing multidisciplinary approach in study will also result in a renewed emphasis on all fields of study, which will enable students to study and progress holistically.

It is observed that NEP 2020 has deep focus on school education and higher education as well as other areas of education as given below in a nutshell:

### **6.1.Focus on School Education**

1. NEP 2020 provides an overview of early childhood care and education, emphasizing the importance of the foundation of learning.
2. It emphasizes the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy as essential components of learning.
3. It has plan for reducing dropout rates and making sure everyone has the chance to go to school at all levels.
4. It highlights that school curricula and pedagogy should be designed to provide a holistic, integrated, enjoyable and engaging learning experience.
5. It is all about giving teachers the best training and helping them grow and develop.
6. It underlines the concept of equitable and inclusive education, emphasizing the importance of providing learning opportunities for all individuals.
7. It talks about how schools can use school complexes/clusters to improve their resources and governance.
8. It proposes to establish and accredit the quality of school education through standard-setting and accreditation.

### **6.2.Focus on Higher Education**

1. NEP 2020 presents an innovative and forward-thinking concept for the future of India’s higher education system, specifically the concept of quality universities and colleges.
2. It concentrates on the process of institutional restructuring and consolidation.
3. It promotes a more holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to education.
4. It emphasizes the importance of creating optimal learning environments and providing students with the necessary support.
5. It emphasizes the importance of motivating, energizing and enabling faculty.
6. Its mission is to promote equity and inclusion in higher education.
7. It highlights the importance of teacher education in order to achieve academic excellence.

8. It intends to reinvigorate vocational education.
9. It intends to spark innovative research in academics across all disciplines through a New National Research Foundation.
10. It intends to make significant changes to the regulatory framework of higher education.
11. It outlines a roadmap for the development of effective governance and leadership for higher education institutions.

### **6.3.Focus on Other Areas of Education**

1. NEP 2020 promotes professional education.
2. It emphasizes on adult education and lifelong learning.
3. It puts a lot of emphasis on promoting Indian languages, arts, and culture.
4. It intends to utilize and integrate technology in education.
5. It underlines the importance of equitable use of technology in online and digital education.

Considering the above mentioned points, the question arises— what should be done so that the progressive document of the NEP 2020 could lead to the steps and initiatives that need to be taken in both school education and higher education? The answer is manifold. Therefore, there is the need of— pledging universal access to all levels of education from preschool to grade twelve; providing quality care and education to all children; introducing a new curricular and pedagogical structure; eliminating rigid distinctions between various subjects and activities, vocational and academic streams; starting a nationwide effort to teach basic literacy and numeracy skills; encouraging the use of multiple languages and Indian languages; implementing assessment reforms, establishing a National Assessment Centre (PARAKH) for evaluating, reviewing, and analyzing knowledge for the purpose of overall development; establishing a Gender Inclusion Fund, with a focus on those people who are less fortunate financially and socially; making strong and open procedures for teacher recruitment and merit-based evaluation; giving access to all resources through schools centers and groups; establishing State School Standards Authority (SSSA); promoting vocational education in schools and higher education systems; raising GER rate to 50% in the higher education organizations; endorsing all-inclusive and multi-disciplinary education with numerous pathways for admission/exit; setting National Testing Agency (NTA) to provide common entrance examination for entry to higher education institutions; forming academic bank of credit; establishing Multidisciplinary Educational and Research Universities (MERUs) and National Research Foundation (NRF); providing a unified framework for the advancement of education at the university level, including school education; expanding open and distance learning options to boost Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER); enhancing globalization of education; enabling higher education system to incorporate professional education as a fundamental component; creating a body for mentoring; making of a self-governing educational entity: the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF); achieving a 100% literacy rate for both young people and adults; building multiple systems to prevent the commodification of higher education; making educational institutions subject to the same audit and reporting requirements as a non-profit body; prompting all the entities to work together to boost public funding for education to 6% of GDP as soon as possible; and reinforcing the Central

Advisory Board for Education (CABE) to ensure coordination in order to bring the overall emphasis on quality education.

## **7. Strategy for Making it Possible**

### **7.1. Making the Central Advisory Board of Education Stronger**

In order to ensure the successful implementation of the policy, it is essential to have a long-term perspective, to have access to expertise on a regular basis, and to have strenuous action from all stakeholders, including institutions and individuals of the country. To this end, the Policy proposes to strengthen and empower the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) for broad discussion and scrutiny of educational and ethnic growth, but will also be responsible for the expansion, articulation, evaluation, and revision of the idea for education in India, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Human Resources and Education (MHRD) and the relevant top bodies of the education sector, as well as the establishment and continual review of the institutional frameworks that will facilitate the attainment of this policy.

### **7.2. Making Education Affordable and High-Quality for Everyone**

This policy is committed to significantly increasing educational investment, as it is the best investment for the future of society when it comes to providing high-quality education to young people. However, India's public spending on education is significantly lower than the recommended 6% of GDP, as the target was set in the 1968 policy, which was repeated in the 1986 policy and reaffirmed in the 1992 policy review. This figure is significantly lower than that of most other developed countries of the world.

So as to attain the objective of educational excellence and the numerous advantages it brings to the nation and the economy, this policy strongly supports and envisages a significant increase in public expenditure in the education sector by all the stakeholders. All the stakeholders will collaborate to raise the public investment in the education sector to 6% of GDP as early as possible. This is considered to be of paramount importance for the attainment of a high-quality and equal public education system, which is essential for the growth of Indian life and society.

The policy also encourages the renewal, promotion, and encouragement of private altruistic activities in the educational sector. Specifically, any public institution may take steps to raise private charitable funds in order to improve learning outcomes.

### **7.3. Making Implementation**

The success of any policy is contingent upon its implementation. Therefore, the NEP 2020 is required to be implemented in a phased manner and on a priority basis by a variety of entities, including the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD), the Central Bureau of Education (CABE), Union and State Governments, schools, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and other public and private bodies working in the field of education. There is also necessary to ensure that the policy is implemented in accordance with the need of the present time, conducting an all-inclusive review for underlining the status of quality education in India. Hence, "it is yet a proposal, in coming few months it will take its final shape and ready for implementation" (Pawan Kalyani 17).

## 8. Conclusion

The NEP 2020 is a bold and big initiative. It facilitates the educators, learners, and administrators to learn the policy and get inspiration to make a positive contribution to the world of quality education in India. The NEP 2020 is generally considered to be a progressive document made for introducing substantial number of modifications in the education system of India. It also seems that it is carefully designed after making a comprehensive review of the prevailing conditions of political, economic, social, cultural and ethical spheres. Hence, it reflects a unique blend of tradition and modernity in its structure and an integrative perspective for the future of quality education in India.

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