



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### CRITIQUING NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY- 2020 WITH REFERENCE TO SCHOOL EDUCATION: PROMISES, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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#### ABSTRACT

The year 2020 has been unique for nations all over the world. A significant change that occurred in India, aside from Covid19, was the creation of the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Researchers have become interested as a result of the several committees' recommendations to raise the budgetary allocation for education to 6% of the GDP over time. This research seeks to describe the issues and priorities of NEP 2020. Data has been collected from the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) website, the information (policy documents) was being used to analyse the data. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is formulated to revamp education system and lay down road map for new India. It was approved by Indian cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020. This paper is a maiden attempt to highlight NEP 2020 and study India 2.0 vision towards overall transformation education system to meet the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This study is based on secondary data and exploratory in nature. Findings are based on a systematic review of existing literature. It was found that one of the main objectives of NEP 2020 is to increase student's enrollment in all educational institutions such as elementary school, professional and higher education by 2030. To achieve that it has suggested progressive reform in the existing education and governance systems. 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. If implemented properly; then it has got everything to make India global hub in education by 2030.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Government of India (GOI) has developed the National Policy on Education to advance education across all socioeconomic classes and to include commoners/ordinary people in society (NPE). This strategy covers a wider range of educational settings, including both rural and urban settings, from elementary school education (literacy level) to colleges for higher education (focused specialisation). The GOI proposed and released the first NPE in 1968. The second policy was released in 1986. The current Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, released the third major reforming policy in 2020 and to realise one's full potential, create a fair and just society, and advance national development, one must have access to high-quality education. And the secret to India's continuous rise and leadership on the international stage in terms of economic growth, social fairness and equality, scientific and technical advancement, national integration, and culture preservation is universal high quality education. The world's knowledge and job landscapes are currently undergoing fast transformations. It should be highlighted that changes to the educational system can close the gap between the current state of learning outcomes and what is needed. Quality, equity, and integrity are

essential outcomes of the reforms, from Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to Higher Education (HE). India needed a system of education that provided equal access to a high-quality education for all students, regardless of their social or economic status. India has accepted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD), which aims to guarantee inclusive and equitable quality education and to create opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone. And in order to reach this lofty aim, which is part of the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4.4), the entire educational system will need to be redesigned to support and encourage the educational process. The Government of India resolved to modify the current educational system in order to bring about reformation by creating a comprehensive National Education Policy 2020. The new strategy envisions an education system focused on India that, by offering top-notch instruction to everyone, directly supports to our country's sustainable transformation into a just and thriving knowledge society. It is the country's first education policy of the twenty-first century and it strives to address various expanding developmental imperatives. In order to develop a new system that is in line with the aspirational goals of 21st-century education and builds upon India's traditions and value systems, this Policy

suggests rewriting and overhauling every area of the educational system, including its regulation and governance. The development of each person's creative potential, as well as higher order cognitive skills like critical thinking and problem solving, as well as social, ethical, and emotional aptitudes and dispositions, is a priority for NEP 2020. Most importantly, this Policy was created with guidance from the rich tradition of ancient and timeless Indian wisdom and thoughts.

The committee that prepared policy document of the NEP 2020; was headed by former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan. This Education Policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities - both the 'foundational capacities' of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Education plays a strong role in building nation; education decides the future of the nation, the destiny of its people. The impact is going to be a durable one in terms of growth and development of the state and subject. The role of education and its importance can't be ignored in today's scenario. The expansion and development is seen if we compare the pre independence and post-independence era. After 34 years Indian Govt. is going to change the way India will study, this is the third amendment in the education policy.

There are several changes planned in new National Education Policy 2020 that may actually affect all the stakeholders (Kalyani Pawan, 2020). The objective of the policy is to prepare country to face challenges of next decades of 21<sup>st</sup> century and make India a global hub in education with multidisciplinary and liberal education, Aithal, P. S. et al in their paper highlighted important aspects of new education policy and compared them with the existing conventional education system. NEP 2020 emphasized to promote innovations and expected to have varied implications on the Indian teaching system. It has also laid down framework for its effective implementation. Jha, P. et al (2020) has discussed drawbacks of the New Education Policy, 2020. The present NEP is third in its series which India is going to implement.

It took thirty four years to formulate it since the last one in 1986. The policy has number of relevant considerations regarding how to provide quality education of global standard, bring equality in education and increase participation of private players. Suryavanshi, S. (2020) has stressed upon development of teacher in Indian universities on Chinese university model. As per Kumar, K., et al (2020) National Education Policy 2020 will prove to be a milestone for Indian Education. NEP-2020 provides a comprehensive framework for primary education to include teaching business & technical education. It also got provision for internet-based e-learning which is paradigm shift from conventional system. The essence of NEP is access, equity; affordability, responsibility, and quality in accordance with United Nations sustainable goals. NEP is not free from loopholes but it has taken deep insight into global scenario. It should be implemented with great caution to address challenges that are required for fostering

quality education for all. Deb, P. (2020) discussed the Indian ethos and cultural values in teaching that got its place in National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

**Background of NEP 2020:** This policy envisages that the extant 10+2 structure in school education will be modified with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18 years. Currently, children in the age group of 3-6 years are not covered in the 10+2 structure as Class 1 begins at age 6. In the new 5+3+3+4 structure, a strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from age 3 is also included, which is aimed at promoting better overall learning, development, and well-being.

**Objective of the research:** This study's main goal is to examine how New Education Policy 2020 will affect school education system in India. The paper also identifies the key characteristics of NEP and examines how they influence the current educational system.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive in nature. The required secondary data was gathered from a number of websites, including those run by the Indian government, magazines, journals, and other publications. To draw the inferences and draw the findings, the data was then examined and processed.

**International Scenario:** Taina Saarinen (2008) has addressed the text and discourse analysis in education policy from theoretical and methodological points of view. Policies are discursive processes and it disputes instruction policies. Policy documents can be used as information and it is seen usually in the case in instruction policy analysis. But text analytical tools are required to be applied consistently. Most specialists agree that instruction should be intelligent of expectations so as to adopt the proactive role. It should meet the expectations of recruiters and prepare students for future job tasks, upcoming changes in employment patterns. Education should contribute towards innovation in society (U Teichler, 1999). Trevor Gale & Deborah Tranter (2011) has highlighted traditions, concepts and practices of social justice in Australian education policy. It portrays the changes in policy, importance of market analysis as per proposals of the Bradley Review. The importance of empowering students with social justice, equity and social inclusion in school education is analyzed in the study. Tornike Khoshtaria et al (2020) examined the brand name and its impact in Georgian Universities. Fierce competition forced the Georgian universities to utilize various promotional strategies to get students/customers. However, their attempt failed as university did not forecast the market demand correctly. This study provided insight on customer or market demand based education system. It also concluded whether or not whole equity dimensions have a control on university brand name with competition in market. It will promote universities to partner, or co-create, treat students as important stakeholder. A conceptual model based on co-creation across inputs, processes, and outcomes can be devised. Dollinger & Jason Lodge (2019) projected a model that highlights and distinguishes the dual- value of co-creation, co-production, and operation. The proposed education model may facilitate guide, directors, and researchers to ensure quality education. Recent discourse regarding the fourth age has solved many problems. The requirement for basic changes within the industrial

structure and better education systems may prepare for technological revolution. There are multiple challenges in terms of its overall industrial structure, labour market and better education. There is a need to upgrade the roles of its government, trade and universities in information creation and talent formation (Jisun Carl Gustav Jung, 2019). The school education practice in Asia has gone for massive reform and internationalization. This has created opportunities for developing cosmopolitan learning in Singapore's school education. Cosmopolitan learning is associated with Internationalization of education and plays a crucial role in shaping the international students' identities, aspirations and worldviews.

### **SALIENT FEATURES OF NEP RELATED TO SCHOOL EDUCATION**

The development of India into the democratic, just, socially conscious, cultured, and compassionate country preserving liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice for all that is envisioned in its Constitution depends greatly on school education.. Given the demands of the 21st century, effective school education must work to create morally upright, considerate, all-around, and creative people. The education must be fostering character development, ethical and constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, a scientific temperament, creativity, a spirit of service, and 21st century skills in a variety of academic fields.

#### **Early Childhood Care and Education: The Foundation of Learning**

Over 85% of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in the early years in order to ensure healthy brain development and growth. Presently, quality ECCE is not available to crores of young children, particularly children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Strong investment in ECCE has the potential to give all young children such access, enabling them to participate and flourish in the educational system throughout their lives. Universal provisioning of quality early childhood development, care, and education must thus be achieved as soon as possible, and no later than 2030, to ensure that all students entering Grade 1 are school ready.

A National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) for children up to the age of 8 will be developed by NCERT in two parts, namely, a sub-framework for 0-3 year-olds, and a sub-framework for 3-8 year-olds, aligned with the above guidelines, the latest research on ECCE, and national and international best practices. In particular, the numerous rich local traditions of India developed over millennia in ECCE involving art, stories, poetry, games, songs, and more, will also be suitably incorporated. The framework will serve as a guide both for parents and for early childhood care and education institutions.

#### **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: An Urgent & Necessary Pre-requisite to Learning**

The ability to read and write, and perform basic operations with numbers, is a necessary foundation and an indispensable prerequisite for all future schooling and lifelong learning. However, various governmental, as well as non-governmental

surveys, indicate that we are currently in a learning crisis: a large proportion of students currently in elementary school - estimated to be over 5 crore in number – have not attained foundational literacy and numeracy, i.e., the ability to read and comprehend basic text and the ability to carry out basic addition and subtraction with Indian numerals. Attaining foundational literacy and numeracy for all children will thus become an urgent national mission, with immediate measures to be taken on many fronts and with clear goals that will be attained in the short term (including that every student will attain foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade

The highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025. The rest of this Policy will become relevant for our students only if this most basic learning requirement (i.e., reading, writing, and arithmetic at the foundational level) is first achieved. To this end, a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) on priority. Accordingly, all State/UT governments will immediately prepare an implementation plan for attaining universal foundational literacy and numeracy in all primary schools, identifying stage-wise targets and goals to be achieved by 2025, and closely tracking and monitoring progress of the same.

**Curtailling Dropout Rates and Ensuring Universal Access to Education at All Levels** One of the primary goals of the schooling system must be to ensure that children are enrolled in and are attending school. Through initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (now the Samagra Shiksha) and the Right to Education Act, India has made remarkable strides in recent years in attaining near-universal enrolment in elementary education. However, the data for later grades indicates some serious issues in retaining children in the schooling system. The GER for Grades 6-8 was 90.9%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12 it was only 79.3% and 56.5%, respectively - indicating that a significant proportion of enrolled students drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8.

As per the 75th round household survey by NSSO in 2017-18, the number of out of school children in the age group of 6 to 17 years is 3.22 crore. It will be a top priority to bring these children back into the educational fold as early as possible, and to prevent further students from dropping out, with a goal to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio in preschool to secondary level by 2030. A concerted national effort will be made to ensure universal access and afford opportunity to all children of the country to obtain quality holistic education—including vocational education - from pre-school to Grade 12.

#### **Criticism of NEP 2020**

Here is a list of complaints that have been made about or could be made about the NEP 2020.

As it glosses over important issues of access to education that have long existed, the policy is a vision statement that fails to include the lowest strata of society and offers little to no assistance to the poor, women, and caste and religious minorities

To carry out this enormous ambition, there is no thorough roadmap or logical execution strategy in place.

- The NEP avoided parliamentary review, debate, and oversight. This is a somewhat hurried approach, one that appears to be intended to score a political point, given that it has been brought at a time when parliament is not in session owing to COVID-19. Additionally, this is not the first time it has occurred. In the previous six years, members of parliament have frequently been excluded from essential talks, preventing them from critically analysing legislation, expressing their opinions, and making amendment suggestions.
- The execution of this plan will require a number of milestones and a financial commitment that are not entirely known. Consider the following sentence: "The Center and the States will cooperate to enhance public investment in the Education sector to achieve 6% of GDP at the earliest." There is no unambiguous promise that can make the government answerable.
- Three Formula for languages: Although this clause is not required by the policy, it is written in a way that gives students, teachers, and schools minimal latitude and flexibility. Additionally, it directly conflicts with a ruling from the Supreme Court. The organization of this is certain to bring to mind the anti-Hindi movement of 1965, which was in opposition to the plan of the federal government to make Hindi an official language. Political parties in the South interpret this as an attempt by the Modi administration to impose Hindi in states that do not speak it. This is true despite the fact that the Centre has stated clearly that it would not impose any language on any state and that the state itself will have the final say in the matter.
- The RTE Act is not addressed in the NEP 2020, and without legislative support, universal education cannot be implemented. There is no system in place to connect the RTE to elementary and secondary education. Legally, the state or the Centre is not bound by this. According to a statement from the RTE forum, "The final policy talks about the universalization of school education from 3 to 18 years, without making it a legal right. Therefore, there is no compelled method for the federal and state governments to implement it. It will be very challenging to achieve universalization without the RTE Act.

## CONCLUSION

School education plays a significant role in determining a nation's economy, social standing, level of technological adoption, and healthy human behaviour. The country's education department is in charge of enhancing GER so that all citizens have access to school education opportunities. The National Education Policy of India 2020 is working toward achieving this goal by implementing creative policies to raise the standard, make it more appealing, make it more affordable, and increase the supply. NEP-2020 is anticipated to achieve its goals by 2030 by promoting merit-based admissions with free-ships and scholarships, merit & research-based continuous performers as faculty members, merit-based proven leaders in regulating bodies, and strict quality monitoring through biennial accreditation based on self-declaration of progress through technology-based monitoring.

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