



The Changing Dynamics of Indian Education for Holistic and Multidisciplinary Development: A Literary Review of NEP 2020

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Abstract— This research paper examines the transformative impact of India's National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) on holistic and multidisciplinary education. Released in July 2020, NEP replaces the 1986 framework to address evolving educational requirements through comprehensive reforms from primary to higher education levels. The policy emphasizes technology integration, research promotion, and infrastructure enhancement while preserving indigenous knowledge systems. A key focus is modernizing libraries through digital resources, including e-books and e-journals, to facilitate research and improve accessibility. The policy recognizes libraries as crucial centers for learning and cultural preservation, particularly in promoting local and indigenous knowledge from the primary education level. By mandating infrastructure strengthening at both school and higher education levels, NEP 2020 ensures institutions receive adequate resources for implementation. The policy's vision extends beyond traditional academic frameworks to foster holistic student development through enhanced learning resources and community library engagement. This research analyzes how these multifaceted approaches contribute to creating a more flexible, effective, and culturally responsive education system in India. Thus, NEP 2020 envisions enhancing holistic and multidisciplinary development in students by boosting their learning and by inculcating their habits of reading through community libraries.

Keywords— National Educational Policy, Holistic, Indian languages, Multidisciplinary, Library, vernacular languages, technology.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim and objectives of this paper are to study the NEP 2020 its impact, prospect, consequences and challenges in the Indian education system.

INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a landmark transformation in India's educational landscape, marking the first comprehensive policy revision since 1986. Initiated under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020, the policy addresses critical gaps in the existing educational framework and aspires to align India's education system with 21st-century global challenges. Its main concern were previous policy was 34 years old so it aims to address systemic challenges in Indian education system, the Government of India (GOI) understood the need of an hour and drafted after extensive consultations with stakeholders they proposed finally in July 2020, NEP 2020

The Fundamental Objectives of this policy are:

1. Promote inclusive and equitable quality education

2. Develop holistic and multidisciplinary learning
3. Enhance critical thinking and research capabilities
4. Prepare students for emerging global workforce
5. Reduce educational disparities
6. Prioritize the vernacular languages

The NEP 2020 is not merely a policy document but a transformative roadmap designed to revolutionize India's educational ecosystem. It seeks to shift from a traditional, exam-centric approach to a more flexible, learner-centric model that emphasizes cognitive development, critical reasoning, and skill acquisition.

This policy aims to reform the educational system in India at all levels, from primary to higher education, and to make it more holistic, multidisciplinary, flexible and qualitative. (Kalyani, 2020). It also suggests increasing the state share on education from 3% to 6%. The key highlights of the NEP 2020 include: Replacing the existing 10+2 structure of school education with a new 5+3+3+4 structure, which includes three years of pre-primary education. Introducing a new curricular and pedagogical framework for school

education, which focus on the development of core capacities such as cognitive, social, emotional, and ethical by promoting multilingualism and the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction up-to at least 5th class. (Soni, web) Moreover, this policy helps the students to comprehend the quality of education by reducing the pressure of learning language. Most of the children were overloaded with mechanical writing work for the sake of preparation for grade first. According to research, 85% of children's brain develops by the age of 6 years. Therefore, it is important to give proper stimulation for the development of child's brain at early stages. In addition, the children who come from diverse background (based on caste and religion) are not getting quality education at early stages. Therefore, the policy talks about the universalization of education at every level per child for the sake of acquiring logical thinking, problem solving attitude, observational skills, fluency in communication and smart behavior etc. (Sharma, web)

The curricular and pedagogical structure of school education consist of Foundational Stage (Grades 1-2), preparatory stage (Grades 3-5), middle stage (Grades 6-8), secondary stage (Grades 9-12). The curricula will aim for holistic development of learners by equipping them with the key 21st century skills, reduction in curricular content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking and greater focus on experiential learning. Students will have to increase flexibility and choice of subjects so that they choose their own paths according to their talents and interests. In other words, this taboo of our society will be replaced by this policy because parents will not be able to force their students to opt any particular field. This societal pressure will be minimized and hopefully these academics suicidal attempt will be vanished from our society. This policy also gives emphasis on the summative to formative assessments which focus on the competency basis evaluations. The goal of this is to reduce the rote learning and hard evaluation of examinations in order to encourage continuous and progressive learning process.

Languages

In contemporary time, communication plays a significant role in one's daily life. Meanwhile, current education policies which are responsible to rote learning, students find it difficult to acquire and understand some other language proficiently. Communication is the best medium to showcase ones inner potential and talent. Therefore, the National Education Policy 2020 aims to keeps the mother tongue as the medium of instruction till Grade 5 while suggesting its continuance till Grade 8 and beyond. This policy also focuses that students will have to learn minimum 3 languages at their school years under the 'formula' of which at least two should be native language of India. It also suggested that no language will be imposed on the students because children understand more if the concept is comprehended in their language as they can relate to the word quickly. (NEP, Web) Thus, NEP encourages the use of bilingual teaching learning approaches, especially for those students whose home language is different from the medium of instruction.

To felicitate this, these bilingual textbooks will be made available to express the concept in their language. They emphasize that up to grade 2, the student will learn reading and writing in their own mother tongue. Further our classical languages like Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Odia, Pali etc. will also be made available in schools as options for students in grades 6-12 and simultaneously foreign languages like English, Korean, Thai, French, Japanese and German will also be offered at the secondary level. Indian sign language will be standardized or given importance. (Sharma, Web) NEP 2020 The policy lays emphasis on promoting multilingualism so that children can know and learn about the rich and vast array of languages of their country. So, every student in the country will be able to participate in a fun project/activity on 'The Languages of India', sometime in Grades 6-8, such as under the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' initiative. (NEP Web) This proficiency in language will enable the students to represent their country at global level. There will be no inferiority in the eyes of an Indian which has inserted by the colonizer in our psyche. The NEP 2020 also gives special attention to the teacher recruitment process and their career path. Teacher will be recruited through robust and transparent method. Promotion will be merit based and there will be a lot of skilled and competent training programme which enhance the effective learning teaching outcome. This will enhance the quality of teaching and education in the long run.

Higher Education

NEP 2020 proposes a 4-year multi-disciplinary bachelor's degree in an undergraduate program with multiple exit options, ranging from a certificate after completing a year in a discipline or field, to a Bachelor's degree 'with research' if the student completes a four-year degree program which includes a 'rigorous' research project in a chosen major area of study. Likewise, the master's program is intended to be flexible in its duration, depending on the prior experience of the student. A Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) has a minimum requirement of a Master's degree or a 4-year Bachelor's degree with Research experience. (NEP, 2020) As Sharma, further stated that there will be no rigid distinction between the different streams like Arts, science, music, craft, yoga etc. students can opt any subject combination as they like. The subject which is considered as extra-curricular activities earlier will be taught as curricular subjects. So that learners can choose their subjects according to their talent and interest and can prepare themselves to vocational as well as academic subjects without any peer and parental pressure.

To increase (Gross Enrolment Ratio) GER in higher education to reach at least up to 50% by 2035. The aim will not only be to increase the GER in higher education rather including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. A holistic and multidisciplinary education will help to develop well-rounded individuals who possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication,

discussion and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. (NEP, Web)

Holistic Multidisciplinary Education

In present world, technologies and advancement is inseparable part of our society simultaneously, our education is confronted with different challenges. We need students, who are quick learner, critical thinker and effective communicator to analyze any kind of situation. But, our present classroom teaching encourage to rote learning. To remedies this, the policy envisages a broad-based multi-disciplinary holistic education at the undergraduate level for integrated, exposure to science, arts, humanities, mathematics and imaginative and creative combination of study along with multiple entry/exit points. (Sharma, Web)

Earlier, only literature was seen as a medium to enhance the student's analytical and critical thinking. High Order Thinking skills questions were designed to enhance the student's critical, analytical and descriptive skills. But, now NEP 2020 took a revolutionary step towards individual's all round development in this direction. It will promote the integration of libraries into curriculum that means libraries should be considered as the integral components of teaching learning process rather just a place to enhance their skills. Thus, Libraries are seen as critical tools in achieving this goal, as they provide a central location for students to access and use these resources. It will enhance student's wide range of learning. NEP 2020 has understood the importance of reading and critical thinking so they want to promote this reading culture among the students through libraries (Soni, Web). Therefore, NEP will strengthen the public libraries and provide accessibility to those who cannot grasp such opportunity and it ensures equal access to quality education for all the students. NEP 2020 aims to integrate vocational education into the mainstream education since at school level from Grade 6 onwards in order to achieve skilled workforce. As per Kaushik (2014), in modern India there are 90% of jobs opportunities are skill based; entailing the requirement of vocational training on the contrary only 5% of the youth in India are vocationally trained. Though, there is a huge disparity in demand and supply. NEP 2020 aimed to give exposure to vocational education at least to 50% of learner by 2025. (Nandini, Web) Therefore, students will learn practical knowledge about their surroundings during this period.

Challenges

The National Education Policy 2020 emerges as a bold reimagining of India's educational framework, challenging traditional approaches and signaling a radical shift in how learning is conceptualized and delivered. This isn't merely a policy update—it's a strategic intervention designed to bridge the gaps between education, innovation, and real-world needs. While the policy appears picture-perfect on paper, its true test lies in navigating the complex terrain of practical execution over the next two decades.

The successful implementation of NEP 2020 faces five critical obstacles:

1. **Teacher Training Complexity:** Establishing high-quality foundational education requires more than volunteer efforts. It demands a systematic, professional approach to teacher training, necessitating substantial time and resources to develop skilled educators capable of delivering comprehensive early childhood education.
2. **Multilingual Content Development Challenge:** India's linguistic diversity presents a significant barrier to creating standardized, mother-tongue-based educational content. The country's vast array of languages makes it extremely difficult to develop comprehensive, inclusive educational materials that can effectively address linguistic variations.
3. **Infrastructure Limitations:** Many educational institutions lack the necessary infrastructure to support innovative learning spaces. Schools and colleges frequently struggle with inadequate library facilities, insufficient storage spaces, and technological deficiencies, which impede the policy's vision of creating vibrant, interactive learning environments.
4. **Funding Uncertainty:** The NEP 2020 lacks clear mechanisms for generating the substantial financial resources required for its comprehensive implementation. Without a well-defined funding strategy, the policy's ambitious goals may remain theoretical rather than practical.

These challenges collectively underscore the complex landscape of educational reform in India, highlighting the need for a strategic, well-resourced approach to policy implementation.

5. **Library up gradation:** Libraries are envisioned as dynamic, interactive hubs that spark creativity and innovation. However, in many Indian educational institutions, this potential remains unrealized due to significant infrastructural challenges, including limited physical spaces, inadequate storage facilities, and technological deficiencies. These constraints prevent libraries from becoming the transformative learning environments they are meant to be, hindering students' access to knowledge and collaborative opportunities.

The gap between the ideal library as a vibrant intellectual center and the current reality in numerous schools and colleges underscores the urgent need for comprehensive infrastructure development and technological up gradation in India's educational ecosystem. (Soni, Web) The policy's potential is immense, but so are the challenges. Its true measure will not be in its eloquent design, but in how effectively it can be translated into meaningful educational experiences that empower India's youth to become innovative, adaptable, and globally competitive professionals.

Similarly, there is not proper guideline regarding what kind of job opportunity students will get who will have learned multidisciplinary subjects. It would not be easy to create

such jobs opportunities which have such subject combination future availability, for example, a student with physics and music as a subject combination will have what kind of job opportunity because Indian market has narrow scopes for it. Ultimately, the students will definitely be getting confused while selecting such subject combinations. (Sharma, Web) However, before implementing this policy these few question should be answered by the GOI and some ground work as a preparation should be done for the same. So, such kind of confusion should have no place before implementation.

CONCLUSION

NEP 2020 marks a strategic departure from traditional rote learning, prioritizing children's holistic development. The policy represents a transformative government outlook that emphasizes: Learner-Centric Approach, shifting from memorization to comprehension, encouraging critical thinking, promoting individualized learning. This is one of the boldest step has been taken by the GOI, where world is setting a new goal at global platform in such scenario to promote one's own classical language and willing to set new goal is appreciating. The National Education Policy 2020 represents a groundbreaking initiative by the Indian government, positioning itself as a transformative approach to education that addresses multiple dimensions of learning and development. By embracing a holistic and forward-thinking framework, the policy seeks to revolutionize India's educational landscape. At its core, the NEP 2020 is a comprehensive blueprint that goes beyond traditional educational paradigms. It champions a multidisciplinary approach that breaks down rigid academic boundaries, encouraging students to explore diverse fields of knowledge. The policy recognizes that modern education must be adaptive, integrating digital technologies, multilingual learning, and skill-based training to prepare students for a rapidly changing global environment. The National Education Policy 2020 stands at a critical crossroads of aspiration and implementation, presenting a visionary blueprint that simultaneously inspires and challenges the existing educational ecosystem. While the policy appears picture-perfect on paper, its true test lies in navigating the complex terrain of practical execution over the next two decades.

Positioned to be operationally active until 2030-40, the NEP 2020 represents more than a mere policy document—it's a strategic roadmap designed to reimaging India's educational landscape. Its ambition is profound: to transform a traditional, often rigid educational system into a dynamic, adaptive learning environment that can nurture future-ready talent. The policy's strength lies in its holistic vision, which goes beyond conventional academic frameworks. It doesn't just propose changes; it envisions a fundamental reconstruction of how learning is perceived, delivered, and experienced. By emphasizing multidisciplinary approaches, technological integration, and skill-based learning, the NEP 2020 acknowledges that education must evolve to meet the unpredictable demands of a rapidly changing global ecosystem. However, the journey from policy to practice is

rarely straightforward. The gaps between theoretical brilliance and ground-level implementation remain a critical consideration. Success will depend on multiple factors: institutional readiness, teacher training, infrastructure development, and a cultural shift in educational mindsets. The policy's potential is immense, but so are the challenges. Its true measure will not be in its eloquent design, but in how effectively it can be translated into meaningful educational experiences that empower India's youth to become innovative, adaptable, and globally competitive professionals.

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