NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a significant reform in India's education system, introduced after a gap of more than 35 years. It marks a shift towards modernizing education to meet the needs of a dynamic and evolving global scenario. Announced during the COVID-19 pandemic, it reflects an effort to align India's education framework with global standards, focusing on adaptability to advancements in technology and changing industrial requirements.

The policy aims to transform the approach to teaching and learning, emphasizing holistic development, flexibility, and inclusivity. It highlights the need for foundational learning at the school level while ensuring a robust higher education system. Drawing on secondary data from books, journals, government publications, and other sources, the policy outlines provisions to enhance the quality of education.

However, its implementation poses challenges due to the existing system's infrastructure and resistance to change. The goal of NEP 2020 is to develop an education system that is inclusive, future-proof, and globally competitive.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Higher Education, Skilled Employable Workforce, Roadmap, Reform

INTRODUCTION

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, A Vision for India's Education System. India, as one of the world's most populated countries, faces the challenge of providing quality education and developing skills for its large population. Education is essential for personal growth, social equality, and national progress.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, approved on July 29, 2020, aims to reform India's education system. It focuses on ensuring quality education for everyone, regardless of their social or economic status, in line with the United Nations' goal of inclusive and equitable education by 2030. However, given India's size and diversity, challenges like high dropout rates, limited access,and retaining students in schools remain significant.

NEP 2020 aims to break down rigid boundaries between disciplines, promoting a flexible and creative approach to learning. It emphasizes hands-on, inquiry-based teaching to make education more engaging and learner-focused. The policy's ambitious goals include lifelong learning opportunities and aligning education with India's goals for economic growth, social justice, scientific progress, and cultural preservation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.   Abhishek Sarta (March 2022) in the research paper "National Education Policy (NEP 2020): An analytical insight into the reforms it will bring in school and higher education in India", stated that NEP 2020 is the hope for change in Indian education system. A major shift from traditional to modern education more student centric and focused on skilled based rather than mere providing them theoretical knowledge. He also stressed that it should be properly implemented considering all the stakeholders.

2.   Prof.(Dr.) Abhay Kumar (2022) in the research paper "Importance of National Education Policy-2020 in Imparting Education", stated that India is implementing the NEP 2020 to reform education, aiming to create a new education system that empowers youth and boosts their confidence to create new knowledge, skills, and human values. The policy focuses on providing value-based, knowledge-based, and skill-based higher education, fostering interest in

their chosen areas, and encouraging innovation in technology. The research-focused policy aims to accelerate the attainment of these objectives and make all stakeholders innovators, contributing to the betterment of society and fostering respect for each other.

3. Alok Kumar (2021) in the research paper titled "National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: A Roadmap of India 2.0", finds that NEP 2020 aims to revamp higher education in India by integrating ICT and collaborating with international communities. The policy aims to adapt to the post-COVID era and provide a more innovative curriculum. It will require changes to higher education institutions, allowing foreign universities to establish campuses in India without bottlenecks. NEP 2020 also emphasizes skilling in India, offering multiple entry and exit options for students. If implemented properly, it could make India a global hub in education by 2030, highlighting the importance of professional education in higher education.

4. Dr. Rupesh G. Sawant and Dr. Umesh B. Sankpa (Jan 2021), "NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 AND HIGHER EDUCATION: A BRIEF REVIEW", concluded that The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) is a noble policy with ambitious goals. However, its success depends on the government, universities, and schools overcoming practical challenges. Indians must conquer substantial execution challenges for years and decades in order to achieve their dreams. Good implementation and execution are key.

5. Prof. Smt. Teena P. Darbar (May 2021), in her study "Impact of National Education Policy 2020 on Higher Education", finds that The National Education Policy 2020 aims to create a holistic, flexible, multi-disciplinary education system that aligns with the needs of the 21st century and 2030 sustainable development goals. The policy aims to achieve a 100% gross enrollment ratio by 2030, focusing on developing 21st-century skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and digital literacy. Implementation is crucial for success.

6. Rajib Santra and Suman Basu (2023) in the study titled "National Education Policy 2020: Opportunities and Challenges for India's Higher Education" stated that the NEP, 2020 addresses India's educational gap by ensuring equal access to high-quality education for all by 2030. Cooperation between the center and the states is crucial for success. Enhancing funds is needed to reorganize the educational system and meet international standards, despite challenges.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on descriptive research. All the data is collected from secondary sources like various websites, research papers and publications. The NEP 2020 is implemented successfully in various colleges and universities at the same time many colleges and universities are struggling in implementing the NEP 2020 because of proper guidelines, infrastructure, lack of training, orientation, introduction of new courses and designing the syllabus.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- To understand the NEP 2020 as new reform in education.
- To study the issues and challenges in implementation of NEP 2020.
- To study the readiness of colleges and universities in implementation of NEP 2020.

PROBLEMS OF STUDY

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced transformative reforms in India's education system. However, like any major policy, it has challenges that can be viewed as problems for the study. Some of these issues includes such as infrastructures facility, study material, training for the teachers, new introduced courses, competency of teachers as they are not industry expert.

In many colleges vocational skill courses are taught the teachers in classroom without any practical session. It is also observed that many colleges are not is position to implement the NEP 2020 but pressure from the university forces them to implement without having the required infrastructure and faculty members.

It is also found that many students are not interested in learning the course IKS (Indian Knowledge System) as they feel that the syllabus is based on Hindu mythology, this leads to diversion of interest of students. In such case elective option should be provided to the learners.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a landmark reform in India's education system, introduced to revamp and modernize learning practices at all levels. The policy's primary focus is to create a student-centric and skill-based framework that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and innovation. The shift from the traditional 10+2 structure to a 5+3+3+4 model emphasizes foundational learning in the early years, enabling a strong base for future academic and personal growth. It promotes multidisciplinary education, with flexibility in subject choices and multiple entry and exit options, empowering students to pursue diverse career paths.

The NEP's success is reliant on its effective implementation, even though it has a promising vision. Concerns such as infrastructure gaps, teacher shortages, and disparities in access to quality education must be addressed to achieve its ambitious goals. Nevertheless, the NEP sets a forward-thinking roadmap to transform India's education system, fostering a generation of lifelong learners ready for global challenges.

The policy aims to make Indian education globally competitive by focusing on innovation and research. This also includes strengthening India's cultural heritage while aligning with global education standards. The policy seeks to enhance vocational education, ensuring students gain practical skills for the job market. This will help bridge the gap between education and employment opportunities. In the long run, NEP will help create a more skilled and employable workforce, boosting the economy. It will also raise India's global academic reputation and preserve its cultural values. It will be challenging to ensure that all regions and institutions follow the policy effectively. The shift to continuous assessment will require extensive training and changes in existing systems.

The challenges and issues in implementing NEP 2020

- **Diverse Educational Landscape**: India's socio-cultural and linguistic diversity makes uniform implementation challenging.

- **Infrastructure Deficiencies**: Many schools lack basic facilities like classrooms, laboratories, and libraries, hindering experiential and holistic learning.

- **Insufficient Funding**: The recommended 6% GDP allocation for education has not been achieved, limiting resources for new initiatives.

- **Teacher Training Costs**: The upskilling of a large workforce of teachers requires significant financial investment, which is currently inadequate.

- **Access to Technology**: Many rural and economically disadvantaged students lack access to digital devices and reliable internet connectivity.

- **Digital Literacy**: Both teachers and students require training in digital tools, which is not universally available.

- **Institutional Autonomy**: Increased Autonomy for higher education institutions raises concerns about quality control and accountability.

- **Multidisciplinary Integration**: Transitioning to a multidisciplinary model demands a complete overhaul of curricula, which is resource-intensive and time-consuming.

Readiness of colleges and universities in implementation of NEP 2020

Several institutions have already taken proactive steps to align themselves with the NEP 2020. Many colleges and universities have started revising their curricula to incorporate multidisciplinary learning, flexible credit systems, and choice-based credit systems (CBCS). These reforms aim to provide students with more autonomy in choosing courses and specializations. Institutions are emphasizing research and innovation by establishing centers of excellence, promoting interdisciplinary research, and encouraging faculty and students to engage in cutting-edge research projects.

Recognizing the importance of technology-enabled learning, many institutions have invested in online learning platforms, digital resources, and blended learning models. Colleges and universities are focusing on skill development and entrepreneurship by offering courses in various skills, such as coding, data science, artificial intelligence, and digital marketing. They are also encouraging students to start their own ventures through incubation centers and mentorship programs. Some institutions are actively seeking international collaborations, student exchange programs, and faculty

partnerships to enhance global exposure and cultural exchange.

Despite these positive developments, several challenges hinder the full implementation of NEP 2020, Many institutions, especially those in rural and semi-urban areas, lack adequate infrastructure, such as well-equipped laboratories, libraries, and digital classrooms. Additionally, financial constraints limit their ability to invest in new technologies and faculty development programs. The NEP 2020 requires a paradigm shift in teaching methodologies and assessment practices. Faculty members need to be trained to adopt innovative teaching techniques, such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, and experiential learning. However, many institutions lack the resources and expertise to provide adequate faculty development programs.

The implementation of NEP 2020 requires significant changes in regulations and policies at the central and state levels. The bureaucracy involved in these processes can delay the implementation of reforms. Students may need additional support to adapt to the new learning environment, especially in terms of critical thinking, problem-solving, and independent learning skills. Traditional mindsets and societal expectations may hinder the adoption of innovative practices, such as flexible credit systems and multidisciplinary learning.

HIGHLIGHT

Skill development is a key highlight, with vocational training such as coding and crafts introduced from Class 6 onwards. Board exams are restructured to focus on understanding and critical thinking rather than rote learning, reducing stress. Colleges now offer multiple entry and exit options, allowing students to pause and resume studies as needed.

The NEP also leverages technology to make education more accessible, especially for students in remote areas. Teachers' training programs will be strengthened to ensure better teaching quality. Additionally, the policy aims to bridge inequalities by ensuring equal access to education for girls, disadvantaged groups, and rural communities. Overall, NEP 2020 lays a strong foundation for a modern, inclusive, and globally competitive education system.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

While the NEP 2020 offers a promising vision for Indian education, its successful implementation will depend on the collective efforts of various stakeholders, including the government, institutions, faculty, students, and parents. Overcoming the challenges and building on the positive indicators will be crucial for realizing the full potential of this transformative policy.

The government should more focus on training of teachers, giving sufficient time for implementation, providing more flexibility in syllabus design and funds for the infrastructure development. The courses offered to students should be relevant to the present scenario. Institutions should provide placement and internship to the students by collaborating with the corporate houses.

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