National Education Policy-2020: Students Speak Out – An Insights and Analysis

Dr. Satinder K Juneja [1], Dr. Aran Kumar [2], Dr. Ashaq Hussain[3], Dr. Pankaj Bandhoria[4]

1. *Associate Professor, Department of chemistry, Govt. MAM, College, University Road, Jammu (J&K).*

2. *Associate Professor, Department of chemistry, PSPS, Govt. College for Women, Gandhi Nagar Jammu (J&K)*

3. *Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, Govt. Gandhi Memorial Science College, Jammu (J&K).*

4. *Associate Professor, Department of physics, Govt. Degree College, Samba (J&K).*

Abstract

The survey of one thousand and thirty-five (1035) students from higher education institutions of UT of Jammu and Kashmir was conducted to get feedback from students regarding performance of National educational Policy-2020 of India. The survey provides valuable insights into the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, revealing a complex landscape of student preferences and concerns. A majority of 75.4% students are satisfied with subject combinations, indicating support for multidisciplinary flexibility, while 65.4% believe subjects will enhance employability, aligning with NEP's skill focus. However, a majority (84%) support replacing value-added courses with competitive exam prep, underscoring the emphasis on job readiness. The survey also reveals a strong preference for tech-centric skills, with 60.4% opting for AI and data analysis, whereas 30.4% prefer creative fields like fashion and design. Furthermore, 62.3% find value-added courses beneficial, but 37.5% disagree, suggesting a mismatch between curriculum design and student needs. A significant minority of 24.6% express dissatisfaction with subject combinations, highlighting the need for greater customization. Notably, 87.3% prioritize degrees for job prospects, highlighting employability concerns. To succeed, NEP-2020 must balance competing demands, address implementation challenges, and prioritize student-centricity, ensuring hassle free subject change, subject swapping, inter university migration, maintenance of academic bank of credits, transfer of credits, in India's education system becomes more relevant, inclusive, and effective in preparing students for the future.

INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a landmark initiative by the Government of India aimed at transforming the country's education system to meet the demands of the 21st century [1]. The policy seeks to address the existing gaps and challenges in the education system, making it more inclusive, equitable, and relevant to the needs of the nation [2]. One of the key features of NEP 2020 is the emphasis on multidisciplinary education, allowing students to pursue multiple disciplines and develop a range of skills [3]. This approach is expected to foster creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities among students, making them more employable and adaptable in the rapidly changing job market [4]. NEP 2020 also focuses on promoting online education and leveraging digital resources to enhance the learning experience [5]. The policy recognizes the potential of technology in expanding access to education, improving quality, and reducing disparities [6]. The National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) is proposed to be established to facilitate the exchange of ideas and expertise in the field of educational technology [7]. The policy places a strong emphasis on research and innovation, with the establishment of the National Research Foundation (NRF) to promote research in various fields [8]. The NRF is expected to provide funding and support to researchers, institutions, and industries to undertake innovative projects and initiatives [9]. NEP 2020 also aims to improve the quality of education by strengthening teacher training and development programs [10]. The policy recognizes the critical role of teachers in shaping the minds of future generations and proposes measures to enhance their skills and capacities [11]. The National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) is expected to be developed to ensure that teachers meet the required standards and competencies [12]. The policy also focuses on promoting inclusion and equity in education, with a special emphasis on marginalized and disadvantaged groups [13]. NEP 2020 proposes measures to increase access to education for girls, students with disabilities, and other

disadvantaged groups [14]. The policy also aims to promote vocational education and training to equip students with employable skills [15]. The implementation of NEP 2020 is expected to face several challenges, including infrastructure gaps, faculty shortages, and funding constraints [16]. However, the policy provides a roadmap for addressing these challenges and transforming the education system [17]. The government has initiated several measures to implement the policy, including the establishment of the National Education Commission and the National Curriculum Framework [18].NEP 2020 is expected to have a significant impact on the Indian education system, making it more relevant, inclusive, and equitable [19]. The policy's focus on multidisciplinary education, online learning, and research and innovation is expected to enhance the quality of education and make Indian graduates more employable [20]. However, the implementation of NEP 2020 also poses several challenges, including the need for significant investments in infrastructure, faculty development, and technology [21]. The policy's success will depend on the effective implementation of its various components and the collaboration of stakeholders, including governments, institutions, and industries [22]. In the present research work we have reached out to the students of various colleges of Jammu and Kashmir and tried to have the views of the students regarding the potentials, Pitfalls and challenges of National Education Policy (NEP)-2020.

Voice of the students and analysis

In the present survey conducted among one thousand and thirty-five (1035) students from various institutes of higher education in UT of Jammu and Kashmir, revealed insightful perspectives on the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The students, who participated enthusiastically, shared their views on the strengths, satisfactions, pitfalls, challenges, and needs related to NEP-2020. The survey aimed to gather feedback from students on the policy's impact, implementation, and areas of improvement.
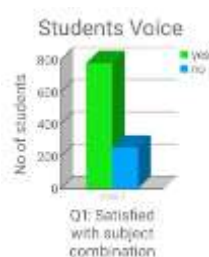
The students generally appreciated the policy's focus on multidisciplinary education, flexibility in course selection, and emphasis on multiple entry and exit system. Many students felt that NEP-2020 would enhance their employability and provide opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. However, some students expressed concerns about relevance of value added courses like, "under standing India, environmental educations, digital technologies, health and wellness etc., challenges such as interuniversity migration, transfers of credits, maintenance of academic bank of credits(ABC), lack of faculty training, and uncertainty about the change of subjects and swapping of subjects.

The students' feedback provides valuable insights for policymakers and educators to address the challenges and make NEP-2020 a success. By addressing the concerns and incorporating student feedback, NEP-2020 can become a game-changer for India's education system, making it more relevant, inclusive, and effective in preparing students for the future.

1. Satisfaction with subject combinations under NEP-2020: The data shows, that 75.4 % (780 respondents) said yes, they are satisfied with subject combination offered under NEP and 24.6 % (255 respondents) said no, they are not satisfied.

Argument in favour: The majority indicates that the subject combinations are generally well-received, suggesting the policy aligns with student preferences for flexible, multidisciplinary choices.
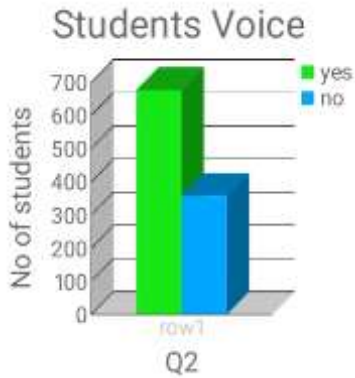
Argument against: The sizable minority (nearly a quarter) shows dissatisfaction, implying some students feel the combinations do not meet their academic or career needs.

2. Subjects helping to find a job: the data shows that, 65.4 % (677 respondents) believe the subjects will help them get a job., whereas 34.6 % (358 respondents) think the subjects won't help.

Argument in favour: A clear majority perceive the NEP-2020 curriculum as job-oriented, reflecting the policy's emphasis on skill development and employability.
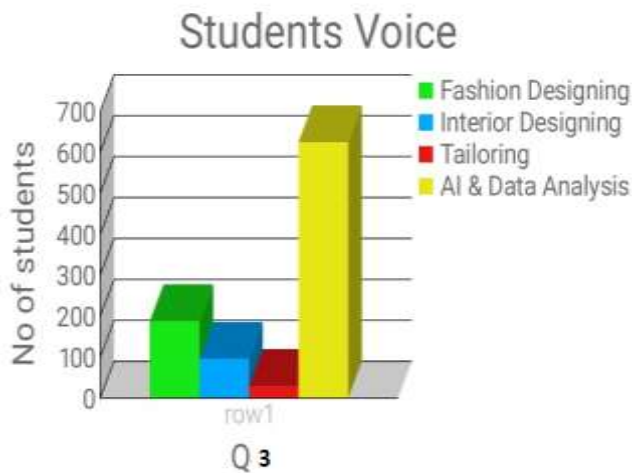
Argument against: Over one-third doubt its effectiveness, indicating concerns about skill mismatch or insufficient industry relevance in the offered subjects.

Q3:Subject/course preference: The data shows 60.4 % of respondents want AI and data analysis, while only 2.9 % pick tailoring.

Argument "for" tech focus: "The massive 60.4 % spike for AI & data analysis proves students are chasing future-proof skills that actually land jobs in the digital economy. If institutions ignore this, they'll be left with outdated curricula that nobody wants."

Counter-argument "against" niche skills: "But the 18.2 % for fashion designing and 9.3 % for interior design can't be brushed off. These creative fields still employ thousands and deserve equal footing, otherwise we're squeezing out talent for the sake of a tech hype."
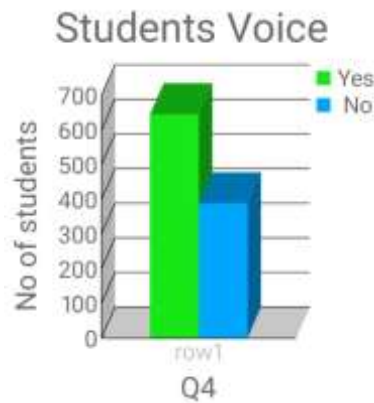

Q4: Relevance of existing "Value of added" courses: The split is 62.3 % "yes" (courses are beneficial) versus 37.5 % "no".

Argument "for" value-added courses: "With 62.3 % agreeing the courses are beneficial, it's clear NEP-2020's value-added model is hitting the mark – it's adding real skill-boosting content that students see as useful for employability."

Counter-argument "against" value-added courses: "The significant 37.5 % who say 'no' signals a major gap. If over a third of students feel the courses don't add value, the policy might be forcing irrelevant content, leading to wasted resources and dissatisfaction."
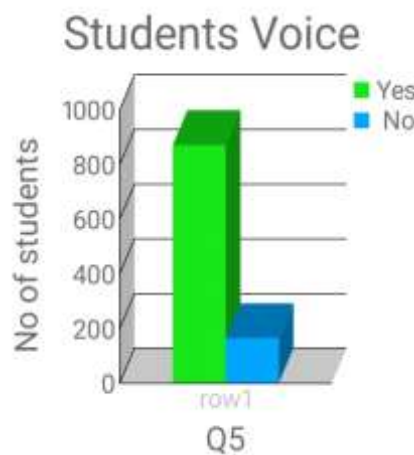
Combining both data points(Q3 &Q4), the debate boils down to balancing tech-centric preferences (60.4 % AI) with creative-skill demand (30.4 % fashion + design + tailoring combined) and ensuring the 62.3 % perceived benefit translates into actual job readiness for the 37.5 % skeptics.
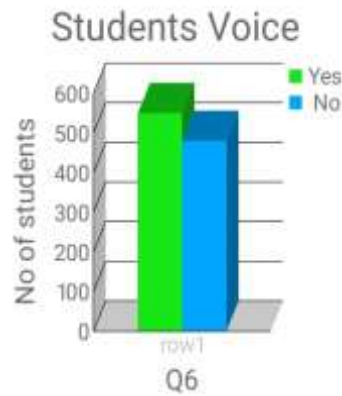

5. Value-added courses vs. competitive exam prep:"Should value-added courses be replaced by courses required for preparation of competitive exams like IAS, JKAS, SSB, etc."

The debate in a nutshell: Pro-replace side (84.0% yes) argues that exam-specific courses give students a direct edge in cracking high-stakes competitive exams, boosting career prospects in civil services. They say the market demands focused prep, and students' time is better spent on targeted syllabi.

Anti-replace side (15.8% no) claims value-added courses provide holistic skills (critical thinking, creativity, interdisciplinary knowledge) that the NEP-2020 promotes for overall development. They worry exam-centric teaching narrows learning and reduces flexibility.

6. Joining college for an education degree only: Pro argument: Over half the students(53.7%) chose an Education degree primarily for academic purposes, suggesting a genuine interest in teaching, pedagogy, or the subject matter itself. Supporters argue this reflects a passion for learning and a commitment to the field of education, aligning with NEP-2020's goal of improving teacher training and quality. These students likely prioritize intrinsic motivation and career fulfillment in education roles.

Con argument: (no): A sizable minority (46.3%) opted for other motivations beyond just an Education degree, implying they prioritize employability, interdisciplinary learning, or specialization in other fields. Critics argue this pragmatic approach shows students are hedging their bets—using Education as a supplementary or fallback option while keeping career doors open in tech, management, or other in-demand sectors. This group may see Education as less lucrative or prestigious compared to other degrees.

7. Joining a degree for securing a job:

Pro argument: The 87.3% majority underscores that employability is the primary driver for most students when picking a degree program. Proponents of this job-centric approach argue that aligning education with market needs boosts graduates' chances of securing employment, reduces unemployment, and fulfills the economic demand for skilled workers. They believe institutions should tailor curricula to industry requirements and competitive exams to maximize job readiness.

Con argument: The 12.5% minority who did not prioritize jobs indicate a subset of learners who value degrees for personal enrichment, research interests, or non-vocational goals like intellectual growth or social contribution. Opponents of an overly job-focused system warn that excessive emphasis on employment can squeeze out holistic learning, creativity, and critical thinking—elements that the National Education Policy-2020 also champions for well-rounded development.

Conclusion

The students' feedback highlights both positive and negative aspects of the policy. On the positive side, a majority of students (75.4%) are satisfied with the subject combinations offered under NEP-2020, indicating that the policy's focus on multidisciplinary education and flexibility is well-received. Additionally, 65.4% of students believe that the subjects will help them get a job, reflecting the policy's emphasis on skill development and employability.

However, some students expressed concerns about the relevance of value-added courses, challenges in implementation, and uncertainty about subject changes. The survey also reveals that students prioritize employability, with 87.3% joining a degree to secure a job. The majority (84%) support replacing value-added courses with competitive exam preparation courses, indicating a strong demand for focused preparation.

The debate around subject preferences highlights the need for balance between tech-centric skills (AI and data analysis) and creative skills (fashion designing, interior design). While 60.4% of students want AI and data analysis, 30.4% prefer creative fields, emphasizing the importance of diverse skill sets.

The students' feedback provides actionable insights for policymakers and educators to address challenges and make NEP-2020 a success. To succeed, NEP-2020 must balance competing demands, address implementation challenges, and prioritize student-centricity, ensuring hassle free subject change, subject swapping, inter university migration, maintenance of academic bank of credits, transfer of credits, in India's education system becomes more relevant, inclusive, and effective in preparing students for the future.

References:

[1] Ministry of Education (2020). National Education Policy 2020.

[2] Agarwal, P. (2021). The transformative potential of the NEP 2020: Challenges and opportunities for higher education.

[3] Joshi, S., & Mishra, D. (2022). Implementing NEP 2020: Analyzing its impact on higher educational institutions.

[4] Saxena, R. (2022). Policy changes in higher education and their socio-economic impact: A study on NEP 2020.

[5] Tiwari, R., & Rao, S. (2020). The roadmap to academic excellence: NEP 2020 and its strategic framework.

[6] Deep, A., & Singh, R. (2022). Critical analysis of NEP 2020 implementation challenges.

[7] Mehta, A. C. (2022). Decoding UDISE+ 2021-22 enrolment ratios under Samagra Shiksha.

[8] Kumar, K., & Sarangapani, P. M. (2021). NEP 2020 and its implications for higher education in India.

[9] Bhattacharya, L., & Menon, V. (2022). Assessing faculty adaptation to NEP 2020 mandates in higher education.

[10] Patel, H., & Mehta, A. (2021). Governance and leadership challenges in the implementation of NEP 2020.

[11] Chatterjee, P. (2020). The paradigm shift in pedagogical approaches with NEP 2020.

[12] Das, M. (2021). NEP 2020's approach to higher education and internationalization.

[13] William, P., Shrivastava, A., Chauhan, P.S., Raja, M. (2021). The implementation of NEP 2020 in higher education systems.

[14] Desai, K., & Verma, N. (2022). NEP 2020: Challenges in higher education faculty training and curriculum development.

[15] Roy, B. (2021). Integrating technology in higher education: Opportunities post-NEP 2020.

[16] Sharma, R., & Gupta, M. (2020). Higher education reforms: Evaluating the changes under NEP 2020.

[17] Singh, A. (2021). NEP 2020 and the future of higher education in India: A critical analysis.

[18] Kalyani, P. (2020). An empirical study on NEP 2020 with special reference to the future of Indian education system.

[19] Landage, V. A. (2023). National Education Policy 2020: Extensive opportunities for innovation in the education system.

[20] Manjulika Srivastava*, B. M. (2021). National Education Policy – 2020: Proposed implementation strategy for accreditation of HEIs.

[21] Panditrao MM, P. M. (2020). National Education Policy 2020: What is in it for a student, a parent, a teacher, or us, as a Higher Education Institution/University?

[22] Patil, V. K. (2023). Traditional Indian education values and new National Education Policy.

[23] Aithal, P. S. (2020). Implementation strategies of higher education part of National Education Policy 2020 of India towards achieving its objectives.