

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020: DURING & POST COVID-19 SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

At the time of submission of the Draft of National Education Policy in the year 2019, no one could have predicted the current disastrous state of the educational system in India created by the Covid-19 pandemic. The four stages of continual countrywide lockdown led to closure of all the schools, colleges, tutorials and other education institutions with immediate effect. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected severely to the traditional education system and it has been very alarming. As both students and educators may not be ready for this single accessible option, countries all over the world have no choice but to turn to go online. Online classrooms have replaced the traditional teaching methods within a very short span of time. The pandemic has left society with little time to design a systematic strategy for meeting education demands. During this period, outbreaks appear to be exacerbated and the developing country like India has miraculously responded by adopting an update to its education policy. The vision of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is to restructure and transmute the Indian education system. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has already included provisions for the use of digital pedagogy, which has become a necessity in a very short period of time. This Policy suggests the major efforts in light of the rise of digital technologies and the growing relevance of utilizing technology for teaching and learning at all levels, from school to higher education. The revival of the education system on the basis of new education policy would seek prudent deliberation by taking into consideration the present hurdles being faced during COVID era. The main aim of this paper is to assess the worth of the New Education Policy in during and Post Covid-19 scenario in India. The entire research study and findings are based on the objectives.

Keywords: NEP, Covid-19, Digital Platform, e-Learning, Pedagogy.

Introduction

In 2015, a committee led by Cabinet Secretary T. S. R. Subramanian was created to frame the new National Education Policy. And the committee presented the report to the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD), which was made available to the public as a draft in 2019. At the time of submission of the Draft of New Education Policy (NEP) in the year 2019, no one could have predicted the current disastrous state of the educational system in India created by the Covid-19 pandemic. The four stages of continual countrywide lockdown led to closure of all the schools, colleges, tutorials and other education institutions with immediate effect. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected severely to the traditional education system and it has been very alarming. As both students and educators may not be ready for this single accessible option, countries all over the world have no choice but to turn to go online. Online classrooms have replaced the traditional teaching methods within a very short span of time. The pandemic has left society with little time to design a systematic strategy for meeting education demands.

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There is no doubt that the education system has steadily grown in schools and colleges in the seven decades after independence, with much of the credit due to government policies and the constructive participation of the MHRD. After independence, the Indian government advanced educational reforms by forming education commissions, which worked tirelessly for two decades to bring the first NEP in 1968. This NPE, which lasted for the following 18 years, specified three linguistic formulas while also promoting Indian heritage by fostering Sanskrit. It's possible that the desire to eliminate inequalities and equalize educational prospects triggered the up-dating of NPE, 1968 to NPE, 1986. It has also implemented 'operation blackboard' to make the educational system run more smoothly. The policy was revised again after six years to include a Common Minimum Programme. The Right to Education Act, which stipulates that 1/4th of total seats be reserved for socially disadvantaged groups, went into effect on 1st April, 2010, and is one of the most significant changes.

During this period, outbreaks appear to be exacerbated and the developing country like India has miraculously responded by adopting an update to its education policy. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a wind of transformation in the Indian Education System in every respect, among the numerous changes that the country is facing at present. The vision of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is to restructure and transmute the Indian education system. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has already included provisions for the use of digital pedagogy, which has become a necessity in a very short period of time. This Policy suggests the major efforts in light of the rise of digital technologies and the growing relevance of utilizing technology for teaching and learning at all levels, from school to higher education.

Research Methodology

Objectives of the Study

- To overview the COVID-19 impacts on the Indian Education System.
- To assess the imminent role of the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 during and Post Covid-19 scenario in India.

Collection of Data

The secondary data is the base of this present study and it has been collected from various articles published in magazines, reports, books, daily newspapers, magazines, websites, internet, published journals, etc. The present study is qualitative in nature.

Covid-19 Impacts on the Indian Education System

The Covid-19 is the foremost human disaster in the year 2020. The WHO has declared Coronavirus a pandemic, as more than 200 countries and territories have confirmed medical cases of coronavirus. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has created tremendous shock to the economies globally. The countrywide lockdown and its rules and norms compel for maintaining physical distance which in turn pushes the whole society to use a virtual platform for the majority of interactions, whether personal, official, or commercial. As a result, all schools, colleges, tutorials, and other educational institutions have been closed indefinitely. Traditional teaching techniques have been substituted by online classrooms in a relatively short period of time, leaving students and teachers with less time. Despite the obstacles experienced by students, professors, and parents, classes and assessments are switched to a virtual platform and are still being followed. It has harmed the overall quality of education because both sides (teachers and students) are unfamiliar with the new technology. Traditional classroom teaching requires students' groups to obtain education under one roof, which has a significant impact on the education industry.

Because of budgetary restrictions, technical illiteracy, and other key issues, schools and colleges have maintained a hassle-free objective-based evaluation system, with board exams were based on prior performance and periodic online internal examinations. As a result, numerous educational institutions are taking corrective measures in the hope that the current crisis would only be transitory. It also gives a push to enhance schools and HEIs in such perilous conditions. Despite the fact that the current scenario foreshadows the future learning process, which necessitates the integration of traditional classroom instruction with the use of digital tools. Efforts to combat COVID began long before the COVID period, maybe with the inclusion of computer laboratories and the use of smart boards in classroom instruction, but the epidemic age has prompted many to consider how they would respond to such adversity.

Imminent Role of NEP 2020 during and Post Covid-19 Scenario in India

New Circumstances need new initiatives. In the recent crisis of Covid-19 pandemic Online teaching has played a very positive role. Covid-19 has necessitated that the education system should be equipped with alternate methods of quality education, when and where traditional methods of education are not possible. NEP 2020 recognises the significance of leveraging the Technology advantages while also recognizing its probable risk and threats. It stresses for well-designed and properly sized pilot projects to figure out how the benefits of online and digital education can be gained through addressing or reducing the drawbacks. Meanwhile, existing digital platforms and continuing ICT-based educational efforts must be improved and expanded to address present and future difficulties in providing high-quality education to all learners. It is critical in the context of education that every student, in both urban and rural regions, has access to digital devices and hardware. The availability of affordable computing devices is also an essential parameter for ensuring digital education. The advantages of online education, on the other hand, cannot be realised unless the digital gap is bridged via coordinated initiatives like the Digital India campaign.

NEP 2020 suggests use of Technology in educational planning, teaching-learning process, training & professional development, holistic assessment of students, administration & management, regulation for transparency and accountability. The usage of technology for online and digital education satisfactorily is the very vital matter of equity concern. Policy also gives emphasis on ensuring equitable use of technology. Which means each and every learner / student must have access to learning material even outside the classroom. Hence, to acquire this equity several vital suggestions made by NEP are: to increasing access for disadvantaged groups, to develop DIVYANG friendly education software, to prepare e-content in regional languages, to set up virtual labs for hands-on learning, to upgrade DIKSHA and SWAYAM portal, to digitally equipping schools, teachers & students, to using student data to create a holistic picture of students to improve learning.

This Policy suggests the following major efforts in light of the rise of digital technologies and the growing relevance of utilising technology for teaching and learning at all levels, from school to higher education: a) "Pilot studies for online education (Optimise and expand existing digital platforms and ICT based initiatives)", b) "Digital infrastructure (Invest on creation of open, interruptible, evolvable, public digital infrastructure)", c) "Online teaching platform and tools (Provide assistive tools for monitoring progress of diverse group of learners)", d) "Content creation, digital repository, and dissemination (Change in pedagogy for online & digital education)", e) "Addressing the digital divide (Availability of affordable computing devices to eliminate digital divide)", f) "Virtual Labs (Leverage existing platforms for creating virtual labs)", g) "Training and incentives for teachers (Suitable teachers training to prepare teachers as effective online educators)", h) "Online assessment and examinations (Online assessment in different approach)", i) "Blended models of learning (Blended approach with online and experiential learning)" and j) "Laying down standards".

The 'India Report on Digital Education 2020' was also prepared by the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD). This Report examines the pioneering approaches used by the MHRD, state and union territory education departments. The objective of the report is to ensure children have access to education at their home as well as to facilitate remote learning and education for all. And to ensure availability of education through the digital medium during the COVID-19 pandemic. MHRD has prepared programmes, portals and apps for digital education some of the important are as follows: PRAGYATA, Swayam Prabha TV Channels, DIKSHA portal and MANODARPAN. The report states that under various Missions for development of online and digital education in India, all the states and union territories have taken various initiatives and multi-modal approaches to make certain that learning of students and professional development of teachers endures by online & digital modes. The report also elaborates various of the key digital initiatives taken by the state governments.

In keeping with the spirit of "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat", the new policy aims to strengthen the ECCE persuasive pedestal by introducing a new pedagogy structure of 5+3+3+4 (for age groups of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years), based on the assumption that a child's brain nurtures over 85 percent before the age of six years. Following that, NCERT suggests the formation of NCPFECCE in order to achieve ideal results in the envisaged sectors. It also urges for CPD of educators. Constant feedback to the Government finally led to draft a new education policy, primarily to suggest better pedagogy structure as per the present needs. Committing to a 21st century edification system, the policy document proposes many amendments to transform reforms in school and higher education, predominantly to gratify the challenging expectations. It aimed for a 100% success rate of GER in Pre-school to Secondary Level by 2030.

The new Education Policy, which was approved in July 2020, aims to achieve excellent education by:

- Introducing a 5+3+3+4 pedagogical structure, as well as a frequent and formative evaluation system for schools,
- aiming for foundational literacy and numeracy by 2025 for strong development pedestal,
- enabling universal access to education through HECI having four verticals, namely, NHERC (for regulation), GEC (for standardization), HEGC (for funding) & NACC (for accreditation),
- constructing curriculum structure by establishing NCFSE,
- setting up of PARAKH as National Assessment Center,
- fostering regional languages & aiming for equitable and inclusive education by emphasizing SEDG group,
- maintaining transparency for recruiting teachers through Common NPST,
- ensuring achievement of standards by forming an Independent Public SSSA and enabling assessment through SQAAP.

A specialised department will be formed in the Ministry to cater the needs of e-education in schools and higher education. The main objective of this department is to compose the structure of digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building. As a result, specialists from the fields of administration, education, educational technology, digital pedagogy and assessment, e-governance, and other fields will be the composition of this centre. Apart from digitalization, NEP 2020 proposes a complete overhaul of the present system, which would need a concerted effort on the part of all educational institutions to implement changes.

Covid-19 pandemic is far from done; two waves have already had a devastating impact on people's quality of life and a third wave has started showing its disasters. The future is always uncertain, and the education policy has already developed provision for digital and online education as other critical areas of attention to address such bad scenarios. In the recent crisis of Covid-19 pandemic Online teaching has played a very positive role. Covid-19 has necessitated that the education system should be equipped with alternate methods of quality education, when and where traditional methods of education are not possible.

Conclusion

In the summary it can be concluded that the Education in India has a long history and has seen various changes. Digitization is unquestionably the requirement of the day, and the current pandemic has driven us all to agree. In the event that similar scenarios develop again in the future, using an e-platform would be more dependable. However, establishing such trust is a difficult endeavor, especially given the fact that any country's future workforce is predominantly built through its educational system. If the delivery method is not trustworthy and well tested, the child's total growth and development is risked. In this scenario, the digital platform will require more testing time, especially as NEP has identified important essential domains like physical and motor development, cognitive development, socio-emotional-ethical development, cultural/artistic development, and so on. The same suggests doing a parallel run, which is obviously impossible owing to time, money, effort, and other restrictions.

The 21st century intends to provide IT-based education in order to meet global expectations. Unquestionably, educational institutions must focus on continuously upgrading pedagogical curriculum on the one hand, and enhancing the delivery system through creative and pioneering technology on the other. Global connectivity permitted almost ubiquitous transmission of knowledge through different electronic devices, resulting in the acceptance of smart-boards, PCs, and laptops into the educational system. Building a mixed system that incorporates the best of both traditional and digital systems requires careful thinking. NEP 2020 has already suggested numerous changes to the current system, and the incorporation of digital engagement in such a system may be well received by teachers, students, and parents. The revival of the education system on the basis of new education policy would seek prudent deliberation by taking into consideration the present hurdles being faced during COVID era.

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