

NEW EDUCATION POLICY: IMPORTANCE IN THE CURRENT SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

Indian education has changed drastically since the government introduced the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The National Education Policy (NEP) emphasizes holistic development, critical thinking, and experiential learning from preschool to higher education to restructure the education system. The approach aims to eliminate equity and inclusion gaps by providing high-quality education to everyone, with a focus on neglected regions. Since economies worldwide are transitioning toward knowledge-based economies, the NEP's multidisciplinary approach helps students build global survival skills. The strategy emphasizes integrating technology into education to promote digital literacy and flexibility among educators and students. The NEP also promotes teacher training and capacity building to help them manage dynamic learning environments. In keeping with worldwide education and employment standards, the policy emphasizes lifelong vocational education and learning. The National School Program (NSP) promotes multilingualism and cultural identity via mother-tongue-based instruction in early school. Overall, the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is crucial to shaping India's educational framework, addressing current issues, and creating a resilient, flexible, and inclusive learning environment.

Keywords: *New Education Policy 2020, Holistic Education, Multidisciplinary Learning, Digital Literacy, Vocational Education, Teacher Training, Inclusion in Education.*

Introduction

By commissioning and implementing the New Education Policy (NEP), a group of international educational experts set out to ensure that all students in India, from kindergarten through university, would have access to a first-rate education. All educational levels, from kindergarten through college, will be subject to the New Education Policy. Since the country gained its independence in 1968, the education strategy has been revised three times: in 1986, in 2020, and in 1968. Its two predecessors have been rendered obsolete by the New Educational Policy, which has taken their place. Existing Individualized Education Program (IEP) characteristics have been included into the New Educational Policy 2020. Currently, there are a lot of issues with the educational technique that is being used; it does not cater to the requirements of people or society presently. Rather than teaching pupils to deal with the complicated issues they will face in the real world as they grow up, the current educational system places more of an emphasis on providing students with the ability to improve their memory. With a few notable exceptions, the vast majority of professional institutions do not provide students with sufficient opportunities to gain practical experience. There are still a lot of low-quality schools in the system, but since the country's independence, nothing has changed in terms of higher education. Because of this, universities in India are not considered to be among the very best in the world.

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Students in India face high rates of unemployment and underemployment since their education primarily focuses on classroom instruction rather than helping them improve their critical thinking, analytical, and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, Indian institutions produce a large number of graduates, the great majority of whom have not yet found jobs that make use of their degrees. This is a trend that is expected to continue. As a consequence of this, students who come from middle-class and wealthy families are choosing to seek higher education in developed nations. The process of obtaining high-level positions at multinational corporations (MNCs) is very straightforward for students who have graduated from universities located in other countries. Both the gross enrollment ratio and the number of schools reliant on private funding have been on the rise in India's higher education system. Educational establishments that were once managed with the intention of serving the general public have evolved into behemoths that are exclusively focused on making a profit. These individuals just do not have the financial means to send their children to school because they are unable to afford it. The majority of schools that could afford to operate on their own were located in remote or semi-rural locations; as a result of cutting costs, these schools were unable to offer their children an adequate education. Due to the fact that students are flocking to metropolitan institutions for higher education despite the low quality of the programs offered by these institutions, many universities have either closed their doors or been repurposed.

Historical Background of the Indian Education System

One way to look about the educational system in India is as having three distinct components. The educational systems that existed in India before its independence and are still in use now are listed below. There were four different religions that were taught in the old Indian religious school system: Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. A "Guru" was a teacher, and a "Shisya" was a student who was assigned to them. Over the course of this time period, the Guru shared his expertise in a wide range of fields, including yoga, spirituality, medicine, combat, and many more. The school, which was known as Ashram, was located in close proximity to the highland forests.

According to human expectations, desires, lust for power, and greed for money, the educational system went through a shift from a spiritual stage to a power-lust stage because of these factors. People in a global community have been separated from one another owing to a variety of circumstances, including language, race, religion, and others. Consequently, the majority of the members of a community have a tendency to seek out territory and assert their domination over the minority members of the community. As a result, the educational system places a primary emphasis on the study of weapons, military conflict, and the celebration of victories. The students were required to follow a curriculum that was centered on the development of their skills.

During the 1834–1835 period of British colonial administration, Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay restructured the educational system. Students at the secondary and higher levels of school build their education on the English language. It was at the university level that English became the de jure language of instruction. During that time period, these constructions were commissioned by educational institutions (both urban and rural) as well as universities. The fundamental objective of the educational system is to prepare individuals for employment in fields like as agriculture, transportation, medicine, and other related fields.

Objectives of the Study

- One goal is to research the problems and difficulties facing today's universities.
- The second objective is to research how the 2020 New Education Policy would affect universities.

Techniques

For this descriptive study that was based on qualitative research, the data that was used came from secondary sources. Due to the fact that the study could only make use of theoretical knowledge, a content analysis of the materials that were available was carried out. Journals, books, reports, magazines, newspapers, and websites are just some of the print and online media that the researchers have combed through in order to collect the information that supports their findings.

Discussion and Analysis

Changes to the Structure of Higher Education Organizations There will be structural changes to the university system as a whole as a consequence of the full implementation of the National Education Policy 2020. Here are a few of the most noteworthy changes that have happened in this area:

Undergraduate Program Lasting Four Years

The curriculum for the undergraduate program must now be completed over the course of three years. In spite of this, the New Education Policy of 2020 will make available a bachelor's degree program that will continue for a total of four years.

- The first-year Certificate Program.
- Second year of the Advanced Diploma Programme
- In the third year of the bachelor's program.
- A four-year bachelor's degree that includes research.

Several Ways to Enter and Exit

In addition to being a four-year curriculum, the Bachelor of Science degree program provides students with a wide range of opportunities to specialize in their studies and enter the sector. Rather than having to begin the program from the very beginning, for instance, a student who has completed only one year of their undergraduate degree might enroll in the program during the second year of their degree.

Credit Bank for Academics

A key part of the Credit-Based system outlined in the National Education Policy 2020 is the Academic Bank of Credit. In the same way that a person's bank account is a representation of their debits and credits, a student's grades or credits will be logged against their name when they enroll in a program and are evaluated. In this way, individuals are able to access their credit records whenever they choose.

Program Termination for M.Phil.

After a master's degree, the most prestigious credential in the realm of higher education today is the Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.). After the New Education Policy was put into place, things changed. Degrees at the Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral levels can only be earned from accredited institutions. This is due to the fact that the new system does not provide the Master of Philosophy degree.

One Year of Master Degree Programme

Students have the opportunity to acquire both their bachelor's and master's degrees in a single academic year if they follow a four-year undergraduate plan that includes a research year. Applicants to the master's degree program, on the other hand, do not need to have finished their last year of research if they have completed their undergraduate degree within three years. They, on the other hand, are able to complete their master's degree in a mere two years.

The Cap for Private Institution Fees

A select fraction of India's educational institutions demand high tuition costs for their degree programs. Because of this, a significant number of students are unable to continue their education because they lack the financial means to do so. Accordingly, in an effort to reach the target of 50% enrollment by 2035, the government has chosen to impose a restriction on tuition for private schools, colleges, and universities. For that reason, the transaction will not incur any fees more than the CAP. Imagine this: a university or college can charge all students the same amount, regardless of their major, if the CAP is 50,000 rupees. This has been done with the intention of providing a more affordable education.

Utilizing Ramie and sisal fibers, the mechanical and thermal properties of hybrid composites were investigated.

Awareness and Understanding of NEP 2020

	Response Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. How familiar are you with NEP 2020?			
• Very familiar	20	26.0%	
• Somewhat familiar	40	51.9%	
• Not familiar at all	17	22.1%	
2. Which key features of NEP 2020 do you know about? (Select all that apply)			
• Multidisciplinary Education	60	77.9%	
• Vocational Training Integration	50	64.9%	
• National Educational Technology Forum	45	58.4%	

(NETF)			
• Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)	55	71.4%	
• Other	10	13.0%	
3. In your opinion, how important is NEP 2020 for improving the Indian education system?			
• Very important	35	45.5%	
• Important	30	39.0%	
• Neutral	7	9.1%	
• Less important	4	5.2%	
• Not important at all	1	1.3%	

Statistics reveal that respondents know a lot about the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020. 51.9 percent are acquainted with the policy, and 26.0 percent are extremely knowledgeable. The general awareness level is modest, with 22.1% of persons unfamiliar. Respondents are aware of the following National Education Policy 2020 highlights: Multidisciplinary Education (77.9%), ECCE (71.4%), and Vocational Training Integration (64.9%). Comments concerning the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), which was titled twice, overlap, suggesting that its qualities should be better communicated. Even if these traits are well-known. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is important for India's education system, according to 45.5% of respondents and 39.0% of others. This shows strong support for the policy's relevance.

Impact on Education Quality

4. Do you believe NEP 2020 will enhance the quality of education in India?	Response Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
• Strongly agree	25	32.5%	
• Agree	40	51.9%	
• Neutral	10	13.0%	
• Disagree	2	2.6%	
• Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	
5. Which area of education do you think will benefit the most from NEP 2020?			
• Curriculum Design	20	26.0%	
• Teacher Training	25	32.5%	
• Digital Infrastructure	15	19.5%	
• Vocational Education	10	13.0%	
• Student Assessment	7	9.1%	
• Other	0	0.0%	
6. What are the expected challenges in implementing NEP 2020 in your region?			
• Lack of Infrastructure	45	58.4%	
• Resistance from Educators	25	32.5%	
• Limited Awareness Among Stakeholders	35	45.5%	
• Inadequate Training for Teachers	20	26.0%	
• Financial Constraints	22	28.6%	
• Other	5	6.5%	

On the basis of the probable influence that NEP 2020 might have on the quality of education, a sizeable 51.9% of respondents are in agreement that it will improve educational standards, with 32.5% of them strongly agreeing with this statement. Based on this optimistic view, it seems that there is a high conviction in the success of the strategy in enhancing education. A emphasis on basic components of education improvement is shown in the areas that have been recognized as most likely to benefit from the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). These areas include Teacher Training (32.5%) and Curriculum Design (26.0%). Lack of infrastructure (58.4%) and limited awareness among stakeholders (45.5%) are the two areas that have been highlighted as the most significant challenges in the process of implementing NEP 2020. Because of these issues, the essential areas that need to be addressed in order to guarantee successful policy implementation have been brought to light.

Implementation and Adaptation

7. How effective do you think the current strategies for implementing NEP 2020 are?	Response Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
• Very effective	20	26.0%	
• Effective	35	45.5%	
• Neutral	15	19.5%	
• Ineffective	5	6.5%	
• Very ineffective	2	2.6%	
8. What additional measures do you believe are necessary for successful implementation of NEP 2020?			
• Increased Funding	50	64.9%	
• Enhanced Teacher Training Programs	35	45.5%	
• Better Infrastructure Development	40	51.9%	
• Public Awareness Campaigns	30	39.0%	
• Policy Reforms	20	26.0%	
• Other	5	6.5%	
9. How do you rate the involvement of local communities and stakeholders in the implementation of NEP 2020?			
• Very high	10	13.0%	
• High	20	26.0%	
• Moderate	35	45.5%	
• Low	10	13.0%	
• Very low	2	2.6%	

The success of the tactics that are currently being used to implement NEP 2020 is seen as being mostly favorable. Forty-five percent of respondents rated the strategies as effective, and twenty-six percent rated them as extremely effective. However, 19.5% of respondents consider these techniques to be neutral, indicating that there is opportunity for improvement. Increasing funding (64.9% of the total) and improving infrastructure development (51.9% of the total) are two of the key extra initiatives that have been identified for effective execution. Considering that the participation of local communities and stakeholders is assessed to be moderate (45.5%), it is clear that there is a need for more engagement in order to successfully support implementation efforts.

Current Problems and Obstacles in India's Current Higher Education System

It is imperative that we should not ignore the vital part that higher education plays by any means. As a consequence of this development, the higher education system in India handles a wide variety of issues. One or more of these concerns will be discussed in the following sections.

- **Enrollment:** In comparison to both developed and developing nations, India's Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education is low at 25.2%, according to Kakodkar (2022).
- **Quality:** Instead of focusing on developing students' critical thinking, employability, and skill sets, India's higher education system emphasizes rote memorization. Reason being, higher education is a response to the shortcomings of India's primary and secondary school systems.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** A lack of appropriate facilities is another obstacle that the Indian higher education system must overcome. Some of India's colleges and universities still don't have the bare minimum in infrastructure, even though the country's higher education system has come a long way (Menon, 2020).
- **Insufficient Equity and Access:** The disparity in access to higher education is one of India's most critical issues.
- **Need for more faculty:** Another factor that contributes to the overall quality of a university's education is the faculty-to-student ratio.
- **Financing of Higher Education:** Colleges and other educational institutions need more funding. When resources are limited, quality takes a hit.

New Education Policy 2020's effects on Higher Education

- **Changing the Higher Education Regulatory Framework**

A complete overhaul of the regulatory environment is necessary to resuscitate the higher education sector and enable it to succeed. The regulatory framework for higher education ensures that several bodies will independently and empoweredly regulate, accredit, fund, and define academic standards. All of the system's built-in checks and balances rely on this. In order to accomplish their common goals, the four institutional entities charged with carrying out these crucial functions must work autonomously. Assuming they were separate entities, these other groups would be required to submit their reports to the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). With the National Accreditation Council (NAC) as its second vertical, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will have a "meta-accrediting organization" (). In order to ensure that there are enough accredited institutions, the National Accreditation Council (NAC) can supply them. As the third arm of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) will keep an eye on how much money goes into universities and colleges in an accountable and transparent manner. New priority areas will be developed through the distribution of scholarships and grants by the Higher Education Grants Commission (HEGC).

- **Domestic Internationalization**

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is another initiative that will bring foreign universities and professors back to Asian nations, but it also challenges domestic institutions to raise the bar on education quality. Potentially opening the country up to the development of campuses by overseas universities has the Indian education sector flourishing all over the place. The Asian nation boasts one of the world's largest networks of higher education systems, with over 900 institutions and about 40,000 colleges. China (51%), Brazil (50%), and other BRICS countries have greater Gross Enrollment Ratios (GERs) in education than Asian countries, which only account for 26.3% of the total population. Plus, it's far lower than the GER in European and North American countries, where it may be over 80%. If Asian nations are serious about constructing a new economic mechanism based on information resources instead of natural resources, then global education must advance significantly. Presumably, by 2030, Asian nations will have to build an extra 1,500 colleges and universities to handle the massive influx of students expected at their educational institutions.

Therefore, in order to raise more funds to invest in the country's educational system, the Indian government must open the External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) channel and promote Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The ministry's goal is to make India an even more formidable educational force, especially since the country now has over seven lakh students enrolled in institutions abroad. The objective of this program is to significantly decrease the emigration of human capital seeking better job and educational possibilities elsewhere. To achieve this goal, we must ensure that foreign colleges may continue to offer top-notch education for a fraction of the cost while keeping their accreditation. Several studies have found that cross-border education helps students become more culturally sensitive, globally aware, and combative, and it also benefits the economy. When schools work together with other institutions all over the globe, they may better adapt their curricula to global pedagogy and provide students more chances to study a wide range of subjects.

Moving Towards a Multidisciplinary and More Holistic Education

A comprehensive and interdisciplinary education would prioritize the growth of each student's emotional, social, intellectual, physical, and moral capacities. Even technological universities like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) would adopt a more holistic, interdisciplinary, and arts and humanities focused curriculum. Students majoring in the arts and humanities would benefit from a more scientific education and a curriculum that emphasizes practical and soft skills if they are to realize their aspirations. To accomplish this comprehensive and interdisciplinary goal, all HEIS programs should include credit-bearing courses and projects in environmental education, value-based education, and community involvement and service. During the three or four years needed to get an undergraduate degree, there would be plenty of chances to acquire the necessary certifications.

Conversely, you should give some thought to the four-year Bachelor's degree program that encompasses a variety of disciplines. Also, to help with the digital preservation of academic outcomes, the Indian government will build an academic bank of credit. Schools will have an easier time granting the student degree credit as a result of this. A recommendation has been made to create an Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) so that students can save the credits they have earned from different accredited universities (Nithish, 2023). A student has the option to transfer their credits should they desire to change universities.

Energetic, Motivated, and Skilled Faculty

For higher education institutions, the calibre of their faculty has a major bearing on their overall performance. It is important that teachers have access to opportunities for professional development and furthering their careers. In the event that faculty members consistently fail to uphold fundamental principles, they will be subject to repercussions. There would be clear and transparent procedures for employing academics at HEIS, and these procedures would be determined upon independently.

Optimal Learning Environments and Support for Students

When it comes to education, the most important components are the curriculum, the pedagogy, the ongoing evaluation, and the support for the students. Educators that are passionate about their work will collaborate with educational institutions to develop courses and instructional strategies that will captivate and engage all students. The progression of any program will be determined by the utilization of ongoing formative evaluation. The burden of determining the evaluation methods leading up to accreditation is with the higher education institution. With an eye on encouraging innovation and adaptability, the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) is undergoing revisions.

Every single school will have its own detailed Institutional Development Plan (IDP). This plan will outline all of the school's academic objectives, including the enhancement of the curriculum and the enhancement of the effectiveness of interactions between students and teachers. It would be possible for educators to work with students in a variety of positions, including those of guide, advisor, and instructor, because they would have the necessary prior experience and training. On the other hand, university students who come from families with poor incomes require support and encouragement in order to successfully make the move to higher education. Afterwards, universities and colleges would be required to set up first-rate support centers and given the funding and supplies they needed to become successful.

The structure Lengths of Degree Programmes

The National Education Policy 2020 subject states that the average time to get a bachelor's degree at any given educational institution is three or four years. After two years, any school will be happy to provide the code a certificate; after three years, they can give the code a degree and another certificate. They enroll in a year-long degree program provided by the UN agency and study whatever they like. To go a step further, the government of an Asian nation will help fund the creation of a credit union for schools so that students' academic achievements can be guaranteed by technical means. Companies may start factoring tip credit into their overall code level as a result of this. Potentially useful for students who find out they need to drop out of the class midway through the semester. It is possible for students to continue from where they left off in the prior course even if they are required to begin the course from the very first day. There is a possibility that there will be an issue with planning; nonetheless, according to NEP 2020, schools are free to create graduate degree programs. Students who are currently enrolled in college can earn a postgraduate degree in just one year. An undergraduate degree program at the United Nations has been completed, and the organization will begin giving graduate degrees in two years. has completed an undergraduate degree program at a United Nations entity that lasted for three years.

Financial Support for Students

There is a possibility that students may be able to achieve their objectives with the assistance of financial and economic aid. The following are some suggestions that were made by NEP 2020:

- It is the responsibility of higher education institutions (HEIs) to help defray the costs of higher education for those students who cannot otherwise afford it.
- The expansion of the "National Scholarship Portal" to include stipends, board, and lodging supplied by institutions that receive public support would help to better ensure that students receive financial assistance.
 - **Access Equality:** It is possible to open doors to new opportunities, some of which may assist communities and people in breaking the cycle of poverty, if one is successful in gaining admission to a prominent university. As a result, one of the primary objectives should be to make certain that all individuals have access to a platform that provides high-quality higher education. By the year 2020, every student, particularly those who come from families with low incomes, will have the same opportunity to pursue their education at a prestigious institution.

- **Evaluation System:** To make sure that every student has a good time and learns something new, schools and teachers can decide on lessons and ways of teaching. Any assessment procedures leading to final certification require the consent of the higher education institution. A more adaptable and welcoming framework for new ideas will emerge from the reform of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS). Instead of high-stakes exams, a continuous and comprehensive evaluation system would be put in place.
- **Vocational Education:** It is a common misconception that children who would never amount to anything in regular school could benefit from vocational training, and that the quality of vocational instruction is generally poorer. When it comes to formation of opinions, students are significantly influenced by this unfavorable perception. As a result of the fact that this is a significant issue, the appropriate solution is to reevaluate the future of vocational education and the manner in which it will be provided to students.
- **Research and Innovation in Higher Education:** NEP 2020 places a significant amount of focus on encouraging both the public and commercial sectors to invest money in research and development. As a consequence of this, creativity and originality will increase significantly. In order for industry to take the lead in skilling, upskilling, and reskilling, there must be a strong commitment from the industry as well as close interaction with academic institutions. It is essential to acquire the knowledge necessary to educate oneself on intellectual property rights (IPR), which are rights that protect ideas, concepts, and designs. To get the most out of these privileges, this is a must.
- **The National Education Technology Forum (NETF):** The establishment of the NETF, which is among the goals of NEP 2020, is a promising step. The ability of educational institutions to respond rapidly would be facilitated by the hosting of high-quality educational technology tools across all delivery dimensions for the purpose of instruction and learning. As a matter of "privacy and security," it is vital to host domestic EdTech solutions on "open-source development platforms" endowed with enhanced cyber resilience. Firewalls, Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS), and compliance with cyber security standards are also critical for protecting against outside threats and vulnerabilities. Every student's "personal privacy" will be safeguarded in this way (Kumar, 2020). The study's empirical findings provide credence to the idea that optimism is associated with better mental and physical health. Optimists have a tendency to have a lower level of general dissatisfaction with their lives, both psychologically and physically. Positive mothers are better equipped to deal with challenging circumstances, such as the illness of their child, since they have a more optimistic outlook.

Conclusion

The policy is typically seen as fairly progressive, and it implements a wide range of reforms. This is due to the fact that the strategy takes into account both the present socioeconomic climate and the possibility of future uncertainty. Educating the future generation to deal with the dematerializing and digitizing economy at its rapid pace will necessitate a completely new set of skills. Since the epidemic has accelerated the shift toward digitization and disruptive automation, this is now more important than ever. Ultimately, the goal of the National Employment Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is to meet a need in the job market by educating experts in sectors as diverse as AI and agriculture. India must get ready for what is to come. Many ambitious young people will be able to get the training they need thanks to the NEP 2020.

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