

THE LONG-TERM IMPACT OF NEP 2020 ON THE INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Ms. R. Srivaishna

M. Sc. Computer Science (II – year)

Nallamuthu Gounder Mahalingam College, Pollachi

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a paradigm shift in India's educational landscape, aiming for holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary learning aligned with 21st-century needs. This document provides an in-depth analysis of the anticipated long-term impacts of NEP 2020 across school and higher education, focusing on its transformative potential in curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, teacher development, skill enhancement, and accessibility. While the policy presents a visionary roadmap, its successful implementation hinges on addressing significant challenges, including infrastructure development, teacher capacity building, digital equity, and sustained financial commitment.

Keywords: *NEP 2020, Indian Education System, Long-Term Impact, School Education, Higher Education, Skill Development, Teacher Education, Holistic Learning, Multidisciplinary, Digital Education.*

Introduction: A Transformative Vision for Indian Education

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which was passed by the Union Cabinet, July 29, 2020, is an overarching framework that aims to transform the education system in India, starting at the early childhood level, through to the higher education stage. NEP 2020, which replaces the National Policy on Education of 1986, aims to break the cycle of rote learning, fragmentation of higher education, employability minus skills and inequity in access. The major philosophy behind it is to develop a learning-based, not a content-based system, based on critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and holistic development. The success of this ambitious move in the long term will reshape the human capital of India and its international position as a knowledge economy.

Long-Term Impact on School Education(K-12)

NEP2020 proposes radical changes to the school education system, which stops being based on strict discipline and structure and becomes more flexible, holistic, and child-centered.

Structural and Curricular Reforms

The New Education Policy (NEP) restructures the Indian 10 + 2 system into a 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 model of education, to match the level of cognitive development to educational stages. This starts with a Foundational Stage (ages 3-8, Anganwadi/Preschool to Grades 1-2) that focuses on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and on the basic access to literacy and numeracy, to be achieved by 2030, based on play-based learning. A 3-year Preparatory Stage (ages 8-11, Grades 3-5) emphasizing experimental learning is followed by a 3-year Middle Stage (ages 11-14, Grades 6-8) during which subject teachers present more abstract concepts in several disciplines, and which combines vocational training and experience learning. Lastly there is a 4-year Secondary Stage (ages 14-18, Grades 9-12) that encourages multidisciplinary study where

subject choices are flexible, replacing strict streams and prioritizing critical thinking, problem-solving and deep learning.

In addition to the structural reorganization, the NEP suggests a less content-laden curriculum in which the learning process emphasizes experience and critical thinking more than rote memorization. It also highly promotes multilingualism and instruction in the native language up to at least Grade 5, and hopefully beyond, in order to enhance understanding and enhance language diversity. Another important point is that vocational education is integrated since Grade 6 with internships and the goal is that by 2025 50% of the learners will be exposed to vocational skills as a way of closing skill gaps and improving their employability. In general, the policy prioritises holistic development and 21st-century skills, which include higher-order cognitive skills, critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and digital literacy, as well as the combination of arts, sports and value-based education.

Assessment Reforms

The New Education Policy (NEP) brings profound changes in the area of assessment as rote learning is replaced by competency-based assessment. Board tests will be reformed to be more lenient and concentrate on the core abilities of the candidate, not memorization of facts, and the student will be allowed to take these tests once or twice a year.

One of the innovations is the Holistic Progress Card (360-degree assessment), that will assess the progress of students in all three aspects: cognitive, affective, psychomotor, with a combination of self-assessment, peer-assessment, and teacher-assessment to have a clear idea about the development of students and to avoid the anxiety during the exams. In order to standardize the assessment norms in the country, the policy requires the creation of a new national assessment center named PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge to Holistic Development).

Teacher Education and Professional Development

According to the New Education Policy (NEP), the Four-Year Integrated B.Ed. Degree is the minimum qualification of the teachers by 2030, and it is hoped that by then the teaching cadres will be professionalized by comprehensive training in pedagogical skills and specialization in a subject, thus producing better teachers. Moreover, the policy dictates that teachers must receive at least 50 hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) annually, which prompts people to learn throughout their lives, besides keeping them informed about new pedagogies, assessment strategies and changes in technology. NEP also focuses on establishing National Professional Standards of Teachers (NPST) to make the teaching profession more credible and respected and allow teachers to advance their careers.

Long-Term Impact on Higher Education

NEP2020 envisions a total transformation of the higher education landscape, in favor of a less fragmented, more multidisciplinary, and research-oriented ecosystem.

Structural and Curricular Reforms

The New Education Policy (NEP) is a set of radical reforms in higher education, which mainly promotes Multidisciplinary Education and Flexibility through breaking the disciplinary silos of higher education sector enabling students to take up subjects across the Arts, Science

and Commerce spectrum of education, thus contributing to holistic education and equipping the graduates in the fields of interdisciplinary challenges. Another notable aspect is Multiple Entry and Exit Options, which allow students to get into and out of programs at different levels with the right certifications (e.g., Certificate after 1 year, Diploma after 2 years, Bachelor's degree after 3 or 4 years), which is flexible, helps to reduce the dropout rate, and facilitates divergent educational courses. To enable such flexibility, the policy introduces an Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), which is a digital store of academic credits acquired at different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that allows a free transfer of credits and the movement of credits across institutions.

NEP also includes the Restructuring of HEIs into research intensive universities, teaching intensive universities and autonomous degree granting colleges, to establish large and dynamic multidisciplinary institutions, and to eliminate the system of affiliations within 15 years. Last but not least is a high Focus on Research and Innovation by setting up a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund, mentor and develop research capacity in all fields with a vision of fostering and developing a strong research culture and making India a global research Centre.

Governance and Regulatory Reforms

New Education Policy (NEP) involves major reforms in governance of higher education and creation of a single overarching regulator, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). The HECI will have four independent verticals that provide regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standards to simplify governance, reduce regulatory load, and foster academic freedom as well as accountability.

In line with this, the policy focuses on giving these Institutions more Autonomy and gradually rolling out to Higher Education Institutions that are performing well to promote innovation and excellence, but with a strong regulatory control. In addition, NEP highly promotes the idea of Internationalization of Education which makes the best global universities open campuses in India and Indian Universities Internationalize curriculum and research which makes them global and makes Indian students accessible to world-class education locally.

Skill Development and Employability

New Education Policy (NEP) emphasizes extensively on increasing the employability of graduates as well as entrepreneurial spirit. Vocational and Professional Skills will be incorporated in higher education programs, the direct effect of which will be reduced unemployment amongst graduates as they will be more industry-oriented and their higher education will be more relevant. The policy also encourages a major Focus on Entrepreneurship and Innovation, wherein curriculum design and institutional ecosystems are specifically designed to inculcate an entrepreneurial mindset among students and motivate them to become job creators, as opposed to just job seekers.

Cross-Cutting Long-Term Impacts

In addition to certain school and higher education reforms, NEP 2020 is likely to have a range of long-term effects on the Indian education system as a whole.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has a vision of various revolutionary changes to the Indian education system. The ultimate transition to Holistic Development and Critical Thinking is to eliminate rote learning to create a workforce that is better prepared to face challenging

issues in the global context by addressing concepts and finding solutions. The goal of the policy is to achieve a high Increased Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) with a target of 100 percent in the school education system and 50 percent in the higher education system by 2030 and 2035 respectively, and to achieve increased access and equity. This, in conjunction with a high value attached to skill building, vocational and interdisciplinary education is likely to result in Enhanced Employability of Indian graduates.

Another initiative is the Digital Transformation of Education championed by the NEP which encourages the widespread adoption of technology in all learning processes, such as the creation of digital content, online/blended education, and equitable access to digital infrastructure. Moreover, it aims to advance Indian Languages, Arts and Culture by incorporating the Indian bodies of knowledge into the curriculum system in order to build national pride and respect to its heritage. The policy believes in Equitable and Inclusive Education and to narrow the gap, it has special considerations of socio-economically disadvantaged groups, such as a Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones. It is also concerned with Teacher Empowerment and Professionalism by providing intense training, continuous professional growth and better working conditions in order to attract the best talent. Finally, through rebalancing the Indian education system to the global standards and by promoting a research-intensive culture, the NEP will increase the Global Competitiveness of India.

Challenges to Long-Term Implementation and Success

Although the NEP 2020 is a visionary roadmap of the education system in India, its long-term effects depend on successful and sustained implementation of the vision, which is associated with numerous challenges. First and most important is to ensure a large and sustained Financial Investment, in which the policy targets 6 percent of GDP, which will be necessary to build and upgrade infrastructure, adopt new teaching methods and technology, and handle resistance to change.

Intimately connected is Infrastructure Development that requires colossal investment and time in constructing state-of-the-art classrooms, laboratories, digital infrastructure and vocational training facilities, and a fair distribution of the same, especially in the rural regions. Incorporating the ubiquitous Digital Divide in access and literacy, and most importantly in rural areas, is important to take advantage of the learning that is driven by technology. Since education is a co-curricular topic, State-Level Implementation will prove to be a difficult task, since ensuring the uniformity and effectiveness of its implementation in a multitude of diverse states with varying priorities, resources, and language backgrounds will have to be coordinated. It will require a great deal of awareness and perseverance to overcome Resistance to Change by various stakeholders, such as students, parents, faculty, and administrators already used to the traditional system.

There should be a fine line between Quality vs. Quantity because the policy is to boost the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) but at the same time ensure the quality of education is maintained and enhanced as the expansion rate is high. Good Accreditation and Regulatory Systems are essential so that the new framework and specifically the HECI can enhance autonomy and maintain quality and accountability. The process of continually designing relevant Curriculum that responds to industry needs and societal demands will continue. Lastly, the Introduction of

Language Policy should be a fine balance between encouraging the local language and the identified necessity of learning English in university and communicating in English worldwide.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is the most bold and wide-ranging education reform law in decades in India. Its long-term effect is a fundamental change to a more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, and skill-oriented education system which is compatible with the needs of the 21st century. When well implemented, the NEP could unlock the demographic dividend of India, delivering the vast young population with relevant skills and critical thinking, creating a knowledge-based economy through a strong research landscape and innovation-intensive higher education, promoting equity and inclusion by putting quality education into the reach of every Indian, and re-establishing India as an education hub by improving the quality and international attractiveness of its institutions. Yet, such a shift will not be fast and simple. Sustained political goodwill, large amounts of financial resources, strong central-state government cooperation, good teacher training initiatives, eliminating infrastructural bottlenecks, and ensuring good stakeholder acceptance are critical factors that will lead to the success of the long-term vision of NEP 2020. The next decade will be key to the realization of how these radical policies will be made practical in terms of concrete improvements in the learning outcomes, employability and general human development in the wide and varied educational environment in India.

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