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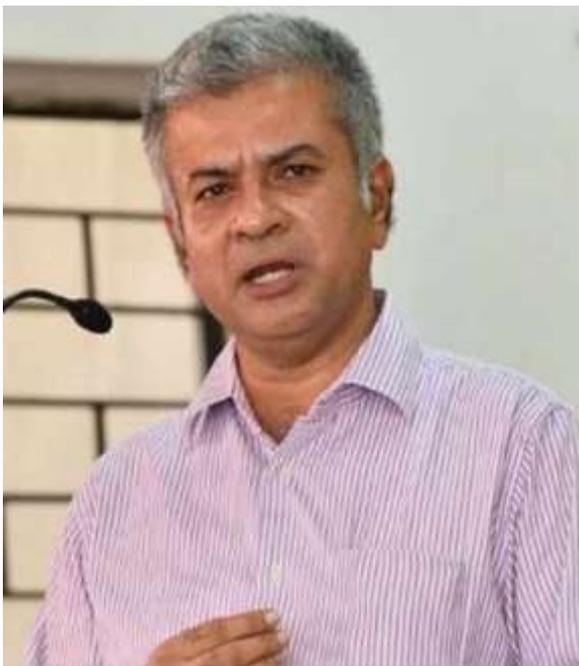
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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal providededicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

UNDERSTANDING NEP 2020 IN THE PATH OF HOLISTIC AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The future of the country depends on the quality of the education of the country. Thus, NEP, 2020 was introduced with the aim of advancement and development of the education system and holistic development of the student. The National Education Policy 2020 represents a significant milestone as the inaugural education policy of the 21st century, with a vision of ensuring universal access to high-quality education on a global scale. Its objective is to overhaul and amend various educational institutions' governance and regulatory frameworks. Consequently, the policy strives to transform India's educational landscape, shifting it from a local to a global leadership position, while ensuring equity, quality, incorporation, and accessibility. Several commendable steps taken up in NEP 2020 are incorporated in the article. The Sustainable development of the education system in the path of holistic development of the student is the focus of this policy.

However, the article critically evaluates some important aspects of the NEP 2020 in the path of Holistic development of students and sustainable development of education. While the opportunities presented by NEP-2020 are undeniable and it showcases a brighter future, there are significant challenges, that have been analyzed in the article. The government's greatest task is to transform the two-dimensional plans into a three-dimensional reality. Educational institutions and policymakers must reconsider the desired results and regularly re-examine the methods incorporated in the policy that may be advantageous to the students. The authors have tried to understand the NEP, 2020 in the path of development and particularly sustainable development. The authors have given viable suggestions for the policymakers and have studied the resources available in the public domain only.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Education, Critical Analysis, Holistic Development and Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Sustainable development has many dimensions, in all ways, the development of human beings through education is one of the important aspects. Education plays a fundamental role in the realization of one's complete human potential, the establishment of a fair and just society, and the advancement of national development¹. The provision of comprehensive and inclusive education is the crucial factor that will propel India's continuous rise and enable it to assume a position of global leadership in terms of economic progress, social equity, scientific innovation, national unity, and cultural preservation².

India is projected to possess the largest number of young individuals globally in the upcoming decade, and our aptitude to furnish top-notch services with excellent educational opportunities will decisively shape the future of our country. This increasing demand for a multidisciplinary skill set will be more pronounced in the future.

The central government's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 was given approval by the Union Cabinet of India on 29th July 2020 and it became effective in the academic year of 2023-2024. Dr Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan who is an Indian space scientist who led the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) from 1994 to 2003, gets the full credit of drafting the policy with his team (Kasturirangan Committee)³.

In the rapidly changing environment of work outlook and global ecosystem, it is increasingly important that children not only acquire knowledge but more importantly develop the skills to acquire knowledge. As a result, education must not only focus on curriculum-based learning but also develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in students. It should encourage creativity, multidisciplinary thinking, and the capacity to innovate, adapt, and gather new information in emerging fields. Pedagogy requires transformation to make education more experiential, interactive, comprehensive, inquiry-based, understandable, discussion-based, and

¹ National Education Policy 2020
<https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf> accessed 27 December 2024

See Also

Understanding education as a right <<https://www.right-to-education.org/page/understanding-education-right#:~:text=It%20is%20fundamental%20for%20human%2C%20social%2C%20and,and%20in%20promoting%20individual%20and%20collective%20wellbeing.>> accessed 27 December 2024

² Ibid

³ Draft National Education Policy 2019 <<https://prsindia.org/policy/report-summaries/draft-national-education-policy-2019>> accessed 27 December 2024

flexible. The course curriculum should not only include the core subjects of arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values, but also science and mathematics, to foster the development of all aspects and capacities of learners, thus enhancing the comprehensiveness, practicality, and fulfillment of education for the learner. Education must also lead to the development of character while also enabling them to acquire satisfying employment. This will help to achieve the holistic development of the student.

The global agenda for educational development, as exemplified in Goal 4 (SDG4)⁴ of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by India in 2015, aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and encourage the provision of lifelong learning opportunities for all individuals by 2030. However, achieving this challenge requires a complete transformation of the education system which is a magnifying task with a population like ours⁵.

Policy Focus on Holistic Development and Sustainability

The policy aims to enhance knowledge among the students in a way that understands human rights, gives importance to sustainable development, and has compassion for the well-being of the entire world.⁶ In doing so, it seeks to shape truly global citizens who reflect a genuine understanding of the world. A key aspiration of this policy is to achieve Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG4)⁷, which has the aim of inclusion of all and equal quality education, thereby providing a lifelong learning experience for all students across India. The novel policy aspires to facilitate the progression of transformative modifications in the

⁴ Definition of SDG4: SDG4 is a commitment to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." This goal is a pivotal driver for positive change, emphasizing the transformative power of education in fostering a sustainable and equitable world. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), <https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/en/sdg4#:~:text=SDG4%20is%20a%20commitment%20to,as%20well%20as%20other%20partners.> accessed 28 December 2024

⁵ Ibid

⁶ National Education Policy 2020 https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf accessed 27 December 2024

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⁷ Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), <https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/en/sdg4#:~:text=SDG4%20is%20a%20commitment%20to,as%20well%20as%20other%20partners.> accessed 28 December 2024

educational systems of both schools and higher education institutions within the nation. This measure stands as a significant stride taken towards bridging the gap and implementing much-needed improvements in the educational structure of the country.

Critical Analysis of this Policy

In the path of sustainable development and holistic development, only some key issues of the policy were discussed. This policy has many dimensions, but the authors have limited this article to focus on the key factors affecting sustainable development and holistic development. Some of them are-

1- INCOMPLETE SCHOOL READINESS

The National Education Policy 2020 articulates the notion of "School readiness," an exceptionally commendable concept. The policy aims to accord primacy to establishing a solid educational foundation for each new learner to be included in the educational framework. However, it is essential to understand whether the Anganwadi centers or primary schools are ready to explore novel pedagogical approaches. This brings to light the concern of how school preparedness can be attained through a comprehensive infrastructural transformation. Accomplishing this objective is bound to be exceptionally challenging without requisite procedural modifications and resource allocation.⁸

2- CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VOCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL

Vocational education was also embraced by Mahatma Gandhi, who advocated for education that promotes both personal growth and practical life skills. This type of education is focused on equipping individuals with the knowledge and skill-based training necessary for earning a living. Additionally, it places a strong emphasis on integrating technology into the educational process to facilitate changes in planning, teaching, and assessment methods⁹. However, it is important to acknowledge the fact that with a lack of basic infrastructure facilities, especially in government schools, inadequate resources, and skilled teaching staff in schools. 60 % of the student population did not have access to the Internet, which means that these students do not

⁸ Kamaldeep Kaur Sarna, Sanya Puri & Kabir Singh Kochar, 'National Education Policy-2020: A Critical Review' (2021) <[https://hansshodhsudha.com/third-issues/\(Jan-March%202021\)-8-14.pdf](https://hansshodhsudha.com/third-issues/(Jan-March%202021)-8-14.pdf)> accessed 30 December 2024

⁹ How To Use Technology in the Classroom: Benefits & Effects, <<https://drexel.edu/soe/resources/student-teaching/advice/how-to-use-technology-in-the-classroom/>> accessed 29 December 2024

have the opportunity to benefit from new technologies and gadgets. Therefore, it is crucial to consider how we can address the needs of those students who are excluded from these advantages¹⁰.

3- THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The advantages of online/digital education laid down in NEP 2020, and the vision of inclusion of all cannot be fruitful unless the digital disparity between urban and rural education systems is eradicated. Where only 60 % of the student population does not have access to the internet, it means that these students do not have the opportunity to benefit from new technologies and gadgets. The accessibility of reasonably priced computing devices is also rare in primary schools as well as higher education¹¹.

Online classes conducted by educational institutions have been rendered ineffective due to the lack of essential technological devices and proper internet connectivity. Furthermore, the allocated budgetary support is not adequate for the development of an electronic infrastructure in rural areas.¹²

4- THE THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA UNCERTAINTIES

The NEP 2020 incorporates the provision of the using the mother tongue as the mode of communication with the students till class five. This particular provision presents a challenge as each state is now tasked with determining its indigenous language. The second issue with the Three Language Formula revolves around the goal of making Hindi and Sanskrit the two languages mainstreamed in all states. However, this approach has faced significant criticism, particularly from the South, as it is seen as an attempt to impose Hindi on non-Hindi-speaking states. Lastly, there is no clear vision regarding education including the mother tongue for students whose parents have transferable jobs. Given the considerable inter-state movement in our country, such as for members of the armed forces and government jobs, it would be exceedingly difficult for these children to excel in an education system where each state has its state language, considering the diverse nature of India.

¹⁰ 60% of students do not have internet access in India: Report, A study by the Azim Premji Foundation showed that almost 60 percent of school children in India cannot access online learning opportunities. (15 November 2021) <<https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/news/story/60-students-do-not-have-internet-access-1876720-2021-11-14>> accessed 30 December 2024

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Pinki Malik, 'NEP 2020: Analysis of Technological Education and a Way Forward, Educational Quest- An International Journal of Education and Applied Social Sciences (2023). <<https://doi.org/10.30954/2230-7311.1.2023.4>> accessed 30 December 2024

5- MARGINALIZING ENGLISH EDUCATION IN SCHOOL

In continuation with the three language formula uncertainties, another aspect of NEP 2020 to marginalize English education by making it an optional subject till grade eight is highly criticized. English is associated with employability and social status in India¹³. If government schools teach students only in their native languages and deny them the chance to learn the English language, they would feel secluded from society. Various research studies demonstrate how a significant number of economically disadvantaged students drop out of school due to their incapability to efficiently speak in English. Therefore, it is essential to not forget the role of English in the Indian education system as well as in India's growth story. The right to English medium education must be equivalent to a right to education in our country¹⁴.

6- INAPPROPRIATE EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

The government pledged in the NEP 2020, that a portion equivalent to 6% of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will be allocated towards the field of education. However, the current allocation towards education for the year 2022-23 is 2.9% of the country's GDP. Thus, the policy has failed so far to ensure in fulfillment of the funding promise.¹⁵

7- DEEP ROOTED CORRUPTION

Corruption has deeply rooted itself in the education system of India since the time of independence. Admissions in schools and colleges through improper ways of bribe and power, charging of desired fees by the private institutions, and rejection of admission to underprivileged students in private schools despite having the regulation of a specific number of seats allocated for them, are some of the most common aspects of corruption prevalent in our education ecosystem¹⁶. Teacher recruitment on a part-time or contract basis is also seen as a common practice in many reputed government institutions like Kendriya Vidyalaya. NEP 2020 does not present any clear picture for improving the standards of the teachers who are the foundation of education. No clear roadmap has

¹³ N. Shalini Jayanthi & R. Vijay Kumar, 'English And Employability In India In The Globalization' Journal Of English Language And Literature (JOELL) (2016) <<https://joell.in/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ENGLISH-AND-EMPLOYABILITY-IN-INDIA.pdf>> accessed 30 December 2024

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Suresh Yenugu, 'The new National Education Policy (NEP) of India: will it be a paradigm shift in Indian higher education?' Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education, 4, 121–129 (2022). <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2022.2078901>> accessed 30 December 2024

¹⁶ Lauren Frayer & Sushmita Pathak, 'When Students In India Can't Earn College Admission On Merit, They Buy Their Way In' (4 August 2019) <<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/04/745182272/when-students-in-india-cant-earn-college-admission-on-merit-they-buy-their-way-i>> accessed 30 December 2024

been presented in NEP 2020 to overcome such malpractices and free Indian education from the hands of corruption.

These are important points to consider in the path of holistic development of the student and sustainable development of the education policy.

Conclusion

The NEP 2020 still has a long way to go. Considering its magnitude and the complexity associated with its implementation, particularly in securing coordination and cooperation among various stakeholders at different levels such as the state, district, and private sector, it is an arduous task. Additionally, issues such as minimal state efforts, limited financial resources, and the education atmosphere that does not favor the execution of innovative ideas and creations shall also create obstacles in the path of NEP 2020. The most critical challenge shall be to build consensus and encourage states to take ownership of the policy. Hence it can be concluded that the success and achievements of NEP 2020 are mostly dependent on cooperation between the centre and states and the readiness of states to embrace the reforms. Thus, the above points need to be considered in the path of holistic development of the student and sustainable development of the education policy.

Suggestions

- 1- Bridging the gap of the internet divide between rural and urban education systems by incorporating regulations on corporate giants to facilitate the rural beds with internet connectivity.
- 2- Connecting well-qualified and trained individuals from civil society institutions or departments of social justice and empowerment or the government bodies to work on a non-profit basis with primary schools as well as higher education institutes.
- 3- Establishment of innovative education centres with the help of various voluntary organizations to reduce the number of children of the daily wage workers, labourers, and other economically and socially backward sections of society, who drop out of schools due to unavoidable situations.
- 4- Establishing a Special department to update the education system with the dynamic changes in the field of education and technology.

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