



Transforming the Educational Framework of India for SEDG's: The Implications of the National Education Policy of 2020

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of the Right to Education Act (RTE) in India, which began in 2009, marked a significant transformation in the educational framework by encouraging infrastructure development and resulting in a significant increase in student enrollments, particularly at the upper primary level, which increased by 19.4%. Despite these gains, the Indian educational system continues to face significant inequities, particularly in higher education. Recognising these imbalances, the 2020 National Education Policy (NEP) recognises and seeks to address challenges such as limited school infrastructure, gender gaps, and educational inequality prevalent in rural areas and for SEDGs. The NEP-2020 expresses a commitment to develop Special Educational Zones (SEZs) to improve educational standards in marginalised areas and groups. However, for effective implementation, the particular and differentiating qualities of these zones require clearer demarcation. The strategy offers innovative educational frameworks, most notably the 5+3+3+4 structure, with the goal of facilitating universal access to education, accommodating children who are now excluded from formal schooling, and initiating reforms in teacher education and evaluation practises. To improve representation and reduce high dropout rates, the NEP introduces the notion of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs). The NEP-2020 includes transformative initiatives aimed at reducing educational inequality. However, effectively bridging the gap between aspirational policy aims and practical implementation obstacles needs

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sophisticated strategies. To realise the visionary aims described in the policy, successful implementation necessitates a harmonious integration of idealistic aspirations and pragmatic measures.

Keywords: NEP-2020, Inclusion, SEDGs, Person with disabilities, Special Educational Zones

In recent years, India's educational system has seen significant gains, particularly in educational facilities and student enrollment. Notably, the enactment of the Right to Education Act in 2009 produced significant results, particularly in increasing student enrollments in upper primary levels. Between 2009 and 2016, there was a notable growth of 19.4 percent in student enrollments at the upper primary level across the country, helped by systematic efforts in mid- day meal, sanitisation and safety measures. The findings of the 2011 Census indicated gains in literacy rates, with women obtaining a literacy rate of 65.5% and a noteworthy jump in literacy rates within the Muslim community to 68.5%, with Schedule Caste populations achieving a literacy rate of around 66%.

Despite significant improvement in a number of crucial areas, the Indian education system continues to struggle with complicated disparities and exclusions. Achieving a high level of education remains unattainable for a large segment of the rural population and marginalised populations, particularly in higher education.

The 2020 National Education Policy (NEP) is a comprehensive plan aimed at addressing major inequities in the national educational system. Recognising higher rates of student attrition among various socioeconomic strata and marginalised minority populations is an important aspect of the NEP-2020. The method represents an appreciation of the hurdles that contribute to inefficient resource allocation, such as educational facility limits and reasons that prevent rural women from participating. Furthermore, the NEP includes provisions to address the educational needs of children in geographically disadvantaged areas that have hitherto gotten insufficient attention.

This analytical debate aims to provide a thorough review of the main ideas for inclusive education. It sheds light on the significant difficulties that the National Education Policy (NEP) must face head on. The report presents a roadmap towards a more equitable and inclusive educational landscape, with the goal of addressing the intricacies of inequality and unlocking the latent potential within all segments of the Indian population.

The highlights of the National Education Policy 2020

Within the scope of the New Policy, there is a large and unified process of reform in the sphere of educational growth. This policy is intended to intimately connect many aspects of education, creating a comprehensive and all-encompassing structure. Its principal goal by 2030 is to ensure universal access to education for children from pre-school to secondary

levels, hence ensuring learning opportunities for all. This policy is guided by the principle of inclusion at its core, with the goal of embracing and supporting the educational needs of all young people. The ultimate goal is to reach a Gross Enrollment Ratio of 100%, which would represent the enrollment of every eligible kid in school.

The seamless integration of individuals who were previously outside the regular educational system is central to this project. The New Policy adopts an open schooling strategy to address the educational needs of a considerable number of out-of-school children, with the goal of providing an opportunity for two crore children to resume their educational path. This strategy is designed to maximise their potential and assist the acquisition of information and skills.

In the academic world, a surge of innovation is transforming the educational landscape, shifting from the traditional 10+2 framework to a new 5+3+3+4 pattern. This updated style covers the formative years from 3 to 18, providing a new viewpoint on educational growth, notably recognising the key period between 3 and 6 as pivotal for cognitive development.

The confluence of many transformations corresponds to the 12-year educational progression, which is supplemented by three years of nurturing guidance from Anganwadi. This dynamic reveals itself in educational institutions through the harmonic combination of scholarly expertise, imaginative exploration, and professional mystery.

Language variety in education is analogous to a rich tapestry, fusing many languages to enhance knowledge transmission while also building connectivity and understanding among individuals. Assessment is a broad notion that aims to examine every aspect of a student's progress, approximating a 360-degree view that guides pupils towards desired learning objectives.

The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education is a significant transformative product that guides the development of pedagogical skills. The goal is to establish a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree programme by 2030, with the purpose of increasing access to higher education and accommodating 50% of aspiring individuals by 2035, which will necessitate the creation of an additional 3.5 crore seats.

A dynamic Undergraduate Programme emerges from the confluence of many academic fields, providing as a foundation for new curricula and practical education. Education becomes a mosaic of transferable credits, allowing for study along multiple paths.

Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities are icons of academic greatness, and the National Research Foundation serves as a catalyst for scholarly inquiry. The Higher Education Commission of India plays a critical role in regulating, standardising, funding, and accrediting public and private universities, progressively allowing individual colleges to grant academic degrees freely.

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The New Policy can be compared to a well-executed composition, merging goals and techniques to produce an effective work that taps into the intellectual capacity of all individuals.

NEP-2020 and Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)

The 2020 National Education Policy recognises specific demographic groups' underrepresentation under current educational systems. The policy adopts the concept of Socio- Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) to address the educational needs of marginalised people. Gender identities, socio-cultural affiliations, geographic backgrounds, disabilities, and socioeconomic situations are all considered in these SEDGs. This convergence is critical in establishing inclusion within these identified categories. The aforementioned categories seek to address the issue of high dropout rates caused by a variety of circumstances. These issues include geographical barriers that tribal communities encounter, as well as the historical exclusion of particular tribes from educational systems due to socio-cultural considerations.

The NEP-2020 presents a broad collection of measurements and initiatives to meet students' particular educational needs. These include targeted scholarships and conditional financial aid designed to increase parental involvement in school and encourage student enrollment.

Furthermore, the implementation of programmes like as supplying bicycles for transportation has proven helpful in increasing enrollment rates, hence improving educational representation.

However, this broad classification raises a number of issues. Notably, the policy's failure to recognise caste as a historical obstacle raises serious problems. Furthermore, the lack of explicit support for reservations is striking. The NEP ignores the complicated systemic impediments that impede marginalised communities' academic achievement, which originate from entrenched prejudices from multiple sources. The strategy fails to recognise the importance of affirmative action, a critical instrument for redressing historical disparities and fostering equitable representation. Furthermore, in the area of teacher vacancies, the policy does not contain caste inclusion and affirmative action.

The complex interaction between policy development and the socio-cultural landscape highlights the need for a more nuanced and comprehensive strategy to addressing historical disparities and cultivating an inclusive educational environment.

The recognition and authentication of gender-specific identities

Individuals from disadvantaged groups, particularly females and transgender people from various socioeconomic origins, face significant educational hurdles, according to the 2020 National Education Policy (NEP). To address these inequities, the NEP suggests novel solutions such as distributing bicycles to build cycling communities and organising walking groups to improve school attendance. These projects seek to increase community involvement and to create support structures for disadvantaged pupils. To address the educational requirements of females and transgender people, the policy proposes a 'Gender-Inclusion Fund' to improve educational opportunities.

This fund is meant to assist states in developing frameworks for integrating these marginalised people through various initiatives such as sanitary supplies, cash transfers, and bicycle distribution programmes. Furthermore, the money will enable governments to sponsor community-based programmes that address specific barriers to female and transgender youth education. The development of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, which aim to improve boarding facilities, is part of this policy's effort to eliminate regional barriers to education.

Despite its progressive objectives, the NEP-2020 lacks proper diversity and ignores critical debates that are missing from present educational frameworks. There has historically been a conspicuous lack in educational curricula addressing sexual orientation and identity discrimination, as well as the special obstacles experienced by transgender people in professional settings. This lack of recognition results in a fundamental disdain for these people. Despite the removal of Article 377, identity debates remain contentious, creating a stigmatised social environment and contributing to historical discrimination against marginalised groups.

Quantitative data emphasises the disparity even further. According to recent Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) data, a disproportionately low number of transgender students took class 10 and 12 exams. This numerical disparity highlights the disproportionate barriers that transgender people confront. Unfortunately, the current policy lacks a comprehensive strategy to boost enrollment rates among this demographic, as well as particular ways to ameliorate the prevalent bias that leads to disproportionately high retention rates within this group. A more customised and comprehensive strategy is required to address these deeply embedded inequities.

Recognition of persons with disabilities (*Divyangjan*)

The proposed policy reflects a strong commitment to recognising and integrating children with special needs into mainstream educational institutions, which is consistent with the objectives outlined in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016. This bill pushes for a comprehensive framework that promotes inclusivity and assistance for people with disabilities. The use of specialised instructors across school complexes to establish an inclusive

atmosphere customised to the specific requirements of these children is a critical component of this programme. The provision allowing children with major disabilities to choose home schooling facilitated by trained educators specialising in home education is a key innovation in this context, ensuring access to quality educational possibilities.

In addition, the policy emphasises educators' quick diagnosis of learning impairments and the adoption of methods to assist both academic progress and the psychological well-being of children who face these issues. To that purpose, the construction of the National evaluation Centre, known as PARAKH, is aimed at carrying out fair evaluation procedures created exclusively for children with learning disabilities. The policy assesses alternative educational frameworks in order to strengthen these goals.

Despite these progressive underpinnings, it is vital to critically evaluate the policy's practicality within the existing educational context. The policy's aspirational character may obscure actual difficulties. It fails to address the majority of educators' lack of specialised training to adequately perform these obligations, as well as the acute personnel shortages in most Indian institutions. Furthermore, the policy lacks clarity on how to implement techniques to facilitate inclusive and accessible home schooling for affected children.

Empirical research reveals a wide disparity between policy goals and actual execution. According to a recent Delhi Child Rights Commission study, a substantial majority of educational institutions, specifically 60%, had no enrollment of children with disabilities. Furthermore, 28% of schools reported a representation of children with impairments of less than 1%. This difference highlights the possible socioeconomic disparities that people with disabilities suffer when compared to their non-disabled peers.

The policy's flaws are more visible in the contemporary setting. The declaration lacks clear initiatives to ensure educational access for this particular group. It also ignores specifics about curricular changes that could help students with learning disabilities feel less excluded in the highly competitive modern Indian educational system. This criticism emphasises the importance of a more in-depth discussion on translating policy aims into concrete actions, bridging the gap between idealistic concepts and realistic implementation.

Creation of Special Educational Zones

The policy under consideration exhibits a comprehension of the needs of children with special needs, prioritising their inclusion in mainstream educational institutions. The alignment with The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act of 2016 principles demonstrates a commitment to a comprehensive framework that advocates for inclusivity and assistance for people with disabilities.

A critical component of this programme is the recruitment of specialised instructors from various educational institutions to establish an inclusive atmosphere attentive to these students'

unique requirements. A noteworthy advancement is the provision for children with serious disabilities to choose home schooling, which is enabled by skilled educators who specialise in home education. This provision intends to guarantee that these kids have fair access to high-quality educational opportunities. Furthermore, the policy emphasises educators' timely diagnosis of learning impairments and the adoption of interventions to assist the academic performance and psychological well-being of children who face such obstacles. The establishment of PARAKH, the National Assessment Centre, intends to provide objective assessment methods suited for children with learning disabilities, thus achieving the policy's objectives.

Regardless of these measures, a thorough review of the plan within the current educational landscape is required. The policy may disregard practical issues such as instructors' lack of specialised training to fulfil these obligations and the scarcity of personnel in many schools across India. Furthermore, the strategy lacks precision in implementing strategies for promoting inclusive and accessible alternative home schooling for people affected by these conditions.

Empirical research reveals a significant disparity between policy aims and actual outcomes. According to a recent Delhi Child Rights Commission study, almost 60% of schools had no enrollment of children with disabilities, while the remaining 28% had less than 1% representation. This difference indicates the possibility of unequal socioeconomic results for people with disabilities versus those without impairments.

In the contemporary setting, the policy displays gaps in its depth in terms of a comprehensive approach to secure educational access for the designated group. It also lacks particular curricular adaptations to address the marginalisation of students with learning difficulties in the competitive environment of Indian educational institutions. This criticism highlights the importance of a more extensive discussion on converting policy objectives into tangible initiatives, so strengthening the relationship between idealistic concepts and practical implementation.

Observations and Implications of the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020

The 2020 National Education Policy (NEP) provides a comprehensive collection of initiatives that have the potential to significantly transform India's educational system. The creation of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities, with the goal of achieving excellence comparable to prestigious institutions such as the IITs and IIMs, is a primary focus of this approach. This effort intends to promote interdisciplinary academic discourse, addressing the critical need for knowledge integration across multiple areas. Notably, the policy advocates for an equal and unbiased educational system by emphasising the consistent application of accreditation and regulatory standards across both public and private educational institutions.

The landscape of higher education is changing dramatically, with a shift away from college affiliations and towards a paradigm of gradual autonomy. This development represents a significant shift in the governance of higher education institutions. Furthermore, the strategy predicts a restructure of the teaching profession, requiring educators to acquire a four-year Bachelor of Education degree by 2030 in order to enter the teaching profession. This requirement aims to improve teachers' readiness in a changing educational setting.

The policy highlights the need of implementing online education methods that are geared to educate students with the essential abilities to properly manage future issues, such as pandemics, demonstrating a proactive attitude. This approval demonstrates the policy's ability to effectively meet the changing educational environment and highlights its commitment to accommodate different learning styles. In order to achieve the desired results, the policy envisions:

- ❖ The policy highlights the need of implementing online education methods that are geared to educate students with the essential abilities to properly manage future issues, such as pandemics, demonstrating a proactive attitude. This approval demonstrates the policy's ability to effectively meet the changing educational environment and highlights its commitment to accommodate different learning styles. In order to achieve the desired results, the policy envisions.
- ❖ This goal also involves obtaining a GER of 100% from Pre-School to Secondary Level by 2030, demonstrating an all-encompassing commitment to delivering wide educational options. It aims to facilitate the reintegration of a large number of out-of-school children, estimated at 2 crore, in order to promote educational inclusion.
- ❖ By 2023, the goal is to cultivate a teaching cohort with the necessary skills and knowledge to negotiate and adapt to evaluation reforms. Furthermore, the goal is to develop an inclusive and equitable education system by 2030, with a particular emphasis on correcting historical educational inequities.
- ❖ Part of this goal is to transform board examinations into tools for assessing fundamental principles and the practical application of knowledge. Furthermore, the goal is to ensure that every student develops at least one identified ability by the end of their education.
- ❖ The effort also includes promoting uniform educational standards throughout both public and private educational institutions, demonstrating a shared commitment to guaranteeing high-quality education across all sectors. The NEP-2020 is essentially a complete framework for educational reform in India, embracing different aspects such as governance, instructional approaches, inclusion, and skill development. The defined outcomes serve as tangible goals, emphasising the policy's commitment to holistic educational growth.

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