

Reimagining Teacher Education in India: Evaluating NEP 2020's Impact and Implementation Challenges

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Abstract

India's educational system has undergone a dramatic change with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which places a special focus on enhancing teacher preparation. The policy, which was endorsed by the Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020, was crafted by a commission led by former ISRO Chairman Dr. K. Kasturirangan, who defined the vision for the country's updated education system. The NEP addresses various challenges within the current education system, including quality, affordability, equity, access, and accountability. This paper examines the significance of teacher education as outlined in NEP 2020 and the challenges encountered during its implementation. By reviewing existing literature and policy documents, this research underscores the essential role of well-trained teachers in realizing educational reforms and identifies possible obstacles to effective teacher education. The paper also includes a number of progressive proposals on different aspects of higher education. These proposals include developing quality universities and colleges, institutional restructuring and consolidation, promoting more holistic and multidisciplinary education, creating optimal learning environments and student support systems, transforming the regulatory framework, increasing the use of advanced technology and its integration, and enhancing online and digital education. The draft of the policy is divided into four parts Part I: School Education, Part II: Higher Education, Part III: Other Key Areas of Focus, Part IV: Implementation. This paper specifically focuses on teacher education, which is covered in Part II of the Higher Education section.

Keywords: Education policy, NEP 2020, teacher education, opportunities & challenges, Indian higher education system, research and innovation focus

INTRODUCTION

The NEP 2020 seeks to revolutionize the Indian education system by focusing on comprehensive, student-centered, and adaptable learning. Historically, India has been a global hub for learners, offering diverse fields of study such as ancient sciences, arts, philosophy, and literature. This revised National Education Policy (NEP 2020) offers an all-encompassing overview and framework for India's education system, covering everything from pre-primary to higher education.

The Indian government has committed to implementing the recommendations of this policy by the year 2030. NEP 2020's main goal is to provide high-quality education for all students, raising the country's educational standards. Furthermore, the policy seeks to elevate India's education system to a global stage, demonstrating its dedication to excellence in education.

India is confident that the objectives set out in the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 can be met by 2040. The policy strives to ensure equal access to high-quality education for all individuals, irrespective of their social or economic status [1].

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The goal is to establish a system that provides outstanding primary and higher education to all citizens, infused with Indian values and cultural principles. This strategy aims to turn India into a fair and dynamic knowledge society and a leading global knowledge power.

To achieve this vision, NEP 2020 emphasizes enhancing educational quality at all levels by establishing a new, optimal system. This includes a comprehensive overhaul and redesign of the existing education framework, encompassing policies, regulations, and management systems. The new policy is designed to address various aspects of the education system, ensuring that it is capable of meeting the needs of a diverse and dynamic population. By doing so, India hopes to elevate its educational standards and establish itself as a leader in global education [2, 3]. The policy envisions a new framework of regulations designed to transform educational pedagogy [4]. It aims to make learning more experiential and inquiry-driven, encouraging discovery and analysis-based approaches. The emphasis is on developing a student-centered, adaptable, and engaging education system that equips learners for the future. The aim is to cultivate knowledgeable individuals who can contribute to the nation's economic development, social justice, and equality. Additionally, the policy seeks to promote scientific advancement, preserve cultural heritage, and foster national integration. By adopting these innovative educational methods, the policy aims to create a well-rounded and capable populace that can support and drive the nation's progress in various fields. NEP 2020 also recognizes the importance of lifelong learning and flexible educational pathways, which allow students to continue education in their preferred fields without being constrained by rigid frameworks. To promote holistic development, the strategy presents a multidisciplinary approach that promotes cooperation across several academic disciplines, including the humanities, sciences, and arts. It also emphasizes how technology may be incorporated into the classroom to establish a digital learning environment that enhances accessibility and diversity. By using digital means to close the gap between urban and rural education, the approach aims to guarantee equal opportunities for everyone. Therefore, the NEP 2020 is a ground-breaking initiative designed to change the Indian educational system.

The National Policy on Education was developed to enhance the quality of education in the country, aiming to provide educational opportunities to all citizens. The new education policy is designed to help recruit the best and brightest individuals to join the educational sector, ensuring that high standards of teaching and learning are maintained throughout the nation.

Educators at all stages are vital in influencing the future of upcoming generations. Teacher education plays a vital role in developing a cadre of school teachers who will have a lasting impact on students [5]. Training teachers is a complex task that requires a broad, multidisciplinary approach and in-depth knowledge. This comprehensive training guarantees that teachers are well-equipped to provide excellent instruction and support, fostering a vibrant learning environment for their students.

Education transforms individuals and has a profound impact on the entire nation. It transforms personal lives by expanding knowledge, skills, and perspectives while simultaneously contributing to national development and progress.

Teachers are indeed the cornerstone of our society, playing a crucial role not only within the school environment but also beyond it. They play a key role in driving societal change and enacting reforms. The success of education is greatly affected by the quality of teaching, which relies heavily on the teacher's education and training [6]. The skills and attributes of teachers can be innate or cultivated through comprehensive education and professional development, which enhance their knowledge, attitudes, ethics, and abilities.

The National Education Policy 2020 provides a structure for central and state governments to work together in enhancing the quality of teacher education [7]. By working together, these entities can advance teacher training programs and ensure a brighter future for the teaching profession. This

collaborative effort is essential for fostering high standards in education and achieving long-term improvements in teaching and learning outcomes.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. *Quality and Consistency*: Guaranteeing uniform quality in teacher education programs across various institutions, as outlined in NEP 2020.
2. *Curriculum reforms*: Aligning teacher education curricula with the transformative vision set forth by NEP 2020.
3. To explore the role of teachers as defined by NEP 2020 and examine the policy's recommendations for teacher education.
4. *Faculty Development*: Offering continuous training and support for teacher educators, as outlined in NEP 2020.
5. *Assessment and Evaluation*: Developing robust assessment and evaluation mechanisms for Teacher Education programs NEP 2020.
6. *Promoting diversity and Inclusion*: Guaranteeing that teacher education programs support diversity, equity, and inclusion is a key aspect of NEP 2020.

RESEARCH QUESTION OF THE STUDY NEP 2020

1. What are the implications of NEP 2020 on teacher education programs in India?
2. What does the National Education Policy 2020 outline regarding the teacher's role?
3. What challenges and opportunities are associated with the implementation of technology-enhanced teacher education as described in NEP 2020?
4. What suggestions are provided for the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020?
5. How can teacher education programs address the varied needs of students, including those with disabilities, as emphasized in NEP 2020?

ABOUT NEP 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 aims to develop an education system that embodies India's traditions, culture, values, and ethos, with the goal of turning the nation into a fair, sustainable, and dynamic knowledge society [8]. Crafted with a deep respect for the country's rich historical legacy and the contributions of scholars in various fields, NEP 2020 aims to offer high-quality, multidisciplinary liberal education. It seeks to boost the gross enrollment ratio (GER) in school education from 28.05% to 50% and proposes reforms in current education policies and governance systems, stressing accountability among all involved parties [9].

TEACHERS EDUCATION

The highlights of NEP 2020 for teacher's education part of higher education section (1)(2)(3) are listed below:

1. By 2030, all standalone teacher education institutions should transform into multidisciplinary higher education centers, offering only a four-year integrated B.Ed. program.
2. All schools at the foundation, preparatory, middle, and secondary levels should hire teachers who hold a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree with dual major specializations in Education and a subject area.
3. By 2030, individuals with a three-year undergraduate degree will be able to enroll in a two-year B.Ed. program, whereas those with a four-year undergraduate degree or a master's degree in other fields will have access to a one-year B.Ed. program.

HIGHER EDUCATION

A conference on how the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is transforming higher education was held today in New Delhi. Hosted by the Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, the event included various sessions such as an inaugural address, discussions with governors and lieutenant governors, meetings with state and union territory education ministers, a special session focused on NEP 2020, along with technical sessions and discussions.

This policy marks the first update in over thirty years, following the previous one established in 1986 and revised in 1992. The New Education Policy 2020 is expected to be a significant milestone in India's educational history, distinguished by its thorough, inclusive, and forward-thinking approach. It is expected to significantly influence the nation's future development [10].

It is a point of pride for India and represents the integration of top global ideas and practices in education. A Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be established to oversee higher education, with the primary objective of boosting the gross enrollment ratio. The HECI will be structured into four primary divisions [11].

The National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) will oversee higher education, including fields such as teaching, medical, and legal education. By focusing on ethics and human and constitutional values, the council aims to promote informed citizenship, which is essential for reinforcing our democratic principles.

The governor highlighted that the policy expands the scope of foundational education by extending the required school years from the current 6 to 14 years to a new range of 3 to 18 years. Significantly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a speech at the opening session, with President Ram Nath Kovind also in attendance. Additionally, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank,' the Minister of Education for the Government of India, was present at the event.

CONCLUSION

India is preparing to implement the National Education Policy 2020 across the country, with the goal of enacting substantial reforms and transformative changes in both school and higher education. The aim is to establish a new education system that empowers youth, enhances their confidence, promotes the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, and imbues human values. This strategy seeks to tackle both present and future challenges of a modern society through greater innovation and technological advancement. Education is seen as a key factor in transforming individuals and the nation, underscoring the critical role of teachers as nation-builders. As a result, there is a strong focus on enhancing teacher education programs in India to achieve these transformative objectives. Despite the advancements proposed in NEP 2020, the current education system still faces several challenges. This is a pivotal opportunity for Indian teachers to influence their own futures. They must envision their goals and diligently work towards achieving them. The National Education Policy is poised to elevate the education system to new heights and is crucial for ensuring high educational standards. It has the potential to present India's education system in a distinguished manner. However, it is essential to focus on how quickly the new policy can be implemented and to address the various challenges and shortcomings of the existing system before fully adopting the new reforms.

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