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Policy Reforms in School Education and the NEP 2020

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Abstract-- Education plays a very important role in the holistic development of individual. It also plays as indicators of national Development of the country. It is the improvement factors of all those capacities in the individual which will enable one to control the environment and fulfil one's possibilities. A well-furnished and futuristic education policy is an indispensable movement for development of the country's economic and social progress, incorporated with cultural diversity, local and the global needs. In the present study researcher has adopted descriptive research and analysed the National Education Policy 2020 based on the available data such as research papers, journals, websites and mainly NEP 2020 through analytical method and conceptual discussion. This paper has discussed the fundamental principles of the NEP 2020 and mainly focused on school education system. In the perspective of school education-new academic structure, major innovations, evaluation systems, curriculum and pedagogy also highlighted in this paper. The National Education Policy 2020 is based on the pillars of access, quality, equity, affordability, accountability and it will transfigure our country into a "Global knowledge super power"

Keywords-- Holistic Education, Global Knowledge, School Education, Technology Integration, National Education Policy 2020.

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) was introduced to reform the Indian education system by promoting equitable access, inclusiveness, and the development of skills and creativity among learners. In the context of school education, the policy proposes several important reforms that aim to transform the structure, curriculum, and teaching-learning processes in schools. One of the major reforms introduced in NEP 2020 is the restructuring of the school education system into a 5+3+3+4 structure, consisting of five years of foundational stage, three years of preparatory stage, three years of middle stage, and four years of secondary stage. This structure aligns education with the developmental stages of children and aims to create a more flexible and learner-centred education system. The policy also emphasises multilingualism, encouraging students to learn in their mother tongue or regional language during the early years of schooling. In addition, NEP 2020 highlights the integration of technology in education to improve access to quality learning resources and enhance the teaching-learning process. The policy further focuses on vocational education, holistic development, and reforms in evaluation systems to ensure meaningful learning outcomes.

Overall, NEP 2020 aims to create an inclusive, flexible, and quality-orientated school education system that supports the holistic development of learners and prepares them for the challenges of the 21st century.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE STUDY:

Mohamed (2025) conducted a study titled "*Role of Education Policy in Creating a Knowledge Society: A Critical Analysis of India's National Education Policy 2020.*" The paper mainly focused on the stages, features, and principles of the education policy, along with its suggestions, implications, and challenges. The study highlights that although the policy promotes the use of technology in education, the digital divide in the country may limit its effectiveness. Overall, NEP 2020 is considered a step in the right direction for the Indian education system. However, its successful implementation requires addressing constraints such as funding, infrastructure, and the digital divide. This study attempts to explore how education policy nurtures knowledge in society in the light of the new education policy of India.

Rumi and Mete (2024) conducted a study titled "*Educational Reforms in India: The Opportunities and Challenges of Implementing NEP 2020.*" This paper explores the paradigm shift introduced by NEP 2020, focusing on both opportunities and challenges. Using a qualitative research methodology, the study examines the perspectives of various stakeholders, including educators, students, and policymakers, to understand the impact of the policy. The findings highlight increased accessibility, improved quality of education, and enhanced skill development, while also identifying challenges such as implementation barriers, resource constraints, and the need for systemic changes. The study provides recommendations to overcome these challenges and to ensure a more inclusive and progressive education system.

Nagpal (2023), in his research paper titled "*Implementing the National Education Policy 2020: Challenges and Solutions in School Education in India,*" aimed to analyse the challenges and possible solutions in implementing NEP 2020 in school education. Through a literature review, the paper highlights the importance of effective stakeholder engagement, adequate funding, and teacher capacity building. The study concludes that the successful implementation of NEP 2020 requires sustained efforts and collaboration among all stakeholders, including government bodies, educators, and the community.



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Mondal et al. (2023) conducted a study titled “*National Education Policy 2020: Initiatives for Reforming Curriculum and Pedagogy in Online and Digital Education.*” The study discusses various curricular and pedagogical innovations introduced under NEP 2020. It emphasizes the importance of digital and online education, especially in situations where traditional face-to-face education is not feasible, such as during pandemics. The policy encourages the development of online learning platforms and digital resources to support effective teaching–learning processes.

Bele (2023) conducted a research study titled “*National Education Policy 2020: Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education in India.*” The purpose of the study was to examine the potential and challenges posed by NEP 2020 in higher education. The analysis is useful for researchers, academicians, and policymakers in understanding the broader implications of the policy.

Barman (2023) conducted a study titled “*Transformation of School Education in the Light of NEP 2020.*” The main objective of the study was to analyse school education under NEP 2020 in comparison with previous educational policies and commissions, such as the Secondary Education Commission (1952), the Education Commission (1964–66), and the National Policy on Education (1968 and 1986). The findings indicate that NEP 2020 represents a modern education system with a strong emphasis on technology, vocational education, and multidisciplinary learning. It also highlights the importance of the mother tongue in education. The study concludes that all educational policies have consistently emphasized quality improvement in school education.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant as it examines the reforms introduced in school education under the National Education Policy 2020. The study highlights the potential of the policy to improve the quality, accessibility, and inclusiveness of school education in India. It also provides insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of these reforms. The findings of the study may be useful for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders in understanding the implications of NEP 2020 and in strengthening its effective implementation in the school education system.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are:

- ✓ To study the fundamental principles of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

- ✓ To Analysis the major reforms introduced in the school education system under NEP 2020.
- ✓ To identify the challenges and prospects in the implementation of NEP 2020 in school education.

V. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on descriptive research methodology. The researcher collected secondary data from various sources such as: Government policy documents, Research journals, Books, Official websites, NEP 2020 document. The collected information was analysed through analytical and conceptual methods to understand the major reforms in school education introduced by the policy.

VI. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF NEP 2020:

The National Education Policy 2020 is based on several guiding principles aimed at transforming the education system in India. The major principles are as follows:

- Holistic development of learners, focusing on both academic and non-academic aspects of education.
- Recognition of individual differences, ensuring that each learner’s unique abilities and potential are nurtured.
- Achievement of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) for all children by Grade 3.
- Flexibility in curriculum and subject choices, allowing students to follow their interests and talents.
- Multidisciplinary and integrated learning, removing rigid divisions between arts, sciences, and vocational education.
- Promotion of multilingualism and language diversity to enhance cognitive development and cultural understanding.
- Emphasis on conceptual understanding, creativity, critical thinking, and life skills rather than rote memorization.
- Continuous and formative assessment to support meaningful learning outcomes.
- Equity and inclusion to ensure equal access to quality education for all learners.
- Encouragement of innovation, autonomy, and transparent governance in the education system.

VII. MAJOR REFORMS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION UNDER NEP 2020

NEP 2020 introduced several significant reforms in school education –

❖ *New Academic Structure (5+3+3+4)*

Stage	Classes	Age	Focus
Foundational Stage	Pre-school + Class 1–2	3–8	Play-based learning
Preparatory Stage	Class 3–5	8–11	Activity-based learning
Middle Stage	Class 6–8	11–14	Experiential learning
Secondary Stage	Class 9–12	14–18	Multidisciplinary learning

- ❖ *Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN):* The policy gives high priority to achieving **foundational literacy and numeracy** for all students by **Grade 3**. This initiative ensures that children develop basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills at the early stages of schooling.
- ❖ *Curriculum and Pedagogy Reform:* NEP 2020 emphasizes a flexible and multidisciplinary curriculum that promotes critical thinking, creativity, and experiential learning. The policy encourages activity-based and learner-centred teaching methods to move beyond rote memorization and enhance students' conceptual understanding.
- ❖ *Language Policy:* NEP 2020 advocates for a three-language formula, where students can choose to learn regional languages, classical languages, or foreign languages in addition to English and Hindi.
- ❖ *Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education:* NEP 2020 promotes holistic and multidisciplinary education by encouraging students to explore multiple subjects and develop diverse skills. This approach supports the overall development of learners and enhances their critical thinking and creativity.
- ❖ *Integration of Technology:* NEP 2020 emphasizes the use of technology to improve the quality and accessibility of school education. The policy promotes digital learning platforms such as **DIKSHA** and **e-Pathshala**, which provide digital textbooks, interactive learning materials, and teaching resources for school students and teachers. These platforms support effective teaching–learning processes and help students enhance their knowledge and learning experiences through digital educational resources.

- ❖ *Vocational Education:* The National Education Policy 2020 introduces vocational education from Class VI onwards at the middle stage of school education. The objective is to provide students with practical skills and exposure to different professions through internships and skill-based learning. This initiative aims to promote skill development, employability, and dignity of labour among students.6. Evaluation and Assessment Reforms.
- ❖ *Evaluation and Assessment Reforms:* The National Education Policy 2020 introduces significant reforms in the evaluation system of school education. The traditional examination system is replaced by **competency-based assessment**, which focuses on students' conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and application of knowledge rather than rote memorization. The policy also emphasizes **continuous and formative assessment** to monitor students' learning progress regularly. An important feature of NEP 2020 is the **Holistic Progress Card**, which provides a comprehensive report of students' skills, competencies, and overall development.
- ❖ *Teacher Empowerment and Professional Development:* The National Education Policy 2020 places strong emphasis on strengthening the professional capacity of teachers to improve the quality of school education. The policy promotes continuous professional development through programmes such as NISHTHA, structured induction programmes for newly recruited teachers, and the development of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST). It also encourages the use of digital platforms like DIKSHA to provide teacher training and access to digital teaching–learning resources. These initiatives aim to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills, professional competence, and effectiveness in the teaching–learning process.

VIII. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION:

Despite its progressive vision, the implementation of NEP 2020 faces several challenges in the school education sector. Many schools, particularly in rural and remote areas, lack adequate infrastructure and access to digital resources, creating a digital divide that hinders the adoption of technology-enabled learning. Insufficient teacher training and limited capacity-building initiatives constrain effective delivery of the new curriculum and pedagogical reforms. Financial constraints and inadequate funding further limit the availability of learning materials, laboratories, and vocational facilities. Additionally, administrative challenges, lack of proper monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms pose obstacles to ensuring accountability and uniform implementation of policy reforms.



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Addressing these challenges is essential to fully realize the potential of NEP 2020 in enhancing the quality, inclusiveness, and effectiveness of school education in India

IX. CONCLUSION

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) provides a comprehensive framework to transform school education in India. By introducing reforms such as the 5+3+3+4 academic structure, competency-based assessments, integration of vocational education, multilingual learning, and effective use of technology, the policy seeks to enhance the quality, equity, and inclusiveness of education. In addition, initiatives like NISHTHA and the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) aim to strengthen teacher competence and professional development. The successful implementation of these reforms depends on coordinated efforts among the government, schools, teachers, students, and communities, alongside sufficient infrastructure, training, and resources. When effectively executed, NEP 2020 has the potential to improve learning outcomes, foster holistic development, and prepare students to be responsible, skilled, and globally competent citizens. Thus, the policy represents a significant step toward creating an inclusive, knowledge-driven, and forward-looking education system in India.

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