

National Education Policy 2020 : Implementation and challenges for Indian Universities and Colleges

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Abstract:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant shift in India's education system, aiming to make it more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, aligned with the needs of the 21st century, and rooted in Indian ethos. The policy introduces several transformative changes, including a new curricular structure, the promotion of multilingualism, and the integration of vocational education. This abstract outlines the implementation strategies and the challenges faced by Indian universities and colleges in adopting the NEP 2020.

Introduction: National Education Policy 2020: Implementation and Challenges for Indian Universities and Colleges

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, approved by the Union Cabinet of India, represents a monumental shift in the country's educational landscape, poised to overhaul the system to meet the evolving demands of the 21st century. This policy is the first major revamp since the introduction of the NEP 1986, coming after a long gap of 34 years, reflecting a response to the dynamic and rapidly changing global educational trends and national developmental needs. Rooted in the philosophy of providing equitable and inclusive quality education, the NEP 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that directly contributes to transforming India into a global knowledge superpower.

The policy outlines a comprehensive framework for elementary to higher education, as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The overarching goal is to make education more holistic, enjoyable, integrated, and student-centered, moving away from rote learning towards experiential and discovery-based learning. The NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, multidisciplinary and multilingual education, and the ethical and emotional development of students. This policy aspires to cultivate well-rounded individuals equipped with the key 21st-century skills required for innovation and nation-building.

Key Features and Objectives:

1. **Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education:** NEP 2020 advocates for a broad-based, multidisciplinary, and holistic undergraduate education with flexible curricula, creative combinations of subjects, integration of vocational education, and multiple entry and exit points.

2. **Institutional Restructuring:** The policy proposes a restructuring of higher education institutions into three categories: research-intensive universities, teaching-intensive universities, and autonomous degree-granting colleges. This aims to build strong foundations for research, teaching, and community engagement.
3. **Equity and Inclusion:** With a focus on bringing marginalized and disadvantaged groups into the mainstream, the NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities for all, ensuring no child is left behind. This includes targeted scholarships, open learning, and adult education programs.
4. **Teacher Education and Training:** Recognizing the pivotal role of teachers, the NEP 2020 lays out a comprehensive plan for the professional development of teachers. It mandates the introduction of new and rigorous teacher education programs that emphasize pedagogy, subject matter expertise, and ethics.
5. **Use of Technology:** In a bid to harness the benefits of technology, the policy encourages the integration of technology in education for improving teaching, learning, and administration. This includes the development of digital infrastructure, content, and capacity building.

Implementation Strategies: The successful implementation of NEP 2020 hinges on the coordinated efforts of various stakeholders, including the central and state governments, educational institutions, teachers, and the community at large. Some of the critical strategies for implementation include:

1. **Curriculum and Pedagogy Reforms:** Educational institutions need to redesign curricula to make them more flexible and interdisciplinary, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills among students.
2. **Academic Flexibility:** The introduction of a multiple entry and exit system within degree programs allows students to tailor their educational trajectories according to their interests and career aspirations.
3. **Technology Integration:** Embracing digital tools and platforms for both instructional and administrative purposes is essential. This includes online and blended learning solutions to ensure continuity and inclusiveness in education.
4. **Research and Innovation:** The policy encourages the establishment of a research culture within institutions, promoting collaboration between academia, industry, and international bodies to foster innovation.
5. **Quality Assurance and Accreditation:** Strengthening quality assurance mechanisms through the establishment of the National Accreditation Council (NAC) and enhancing the role of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is crucial for maintaining educational standards.

Challenges: Despite its visionary framework, the implementation of NEP 2020 presents several significant challenges:

1. **Resource Constraints:** Implementing the broad spectrum of changes envisioned by the NEP requires substantial investment in infrastructure, technology, and human resources, which can be a hurdle for many institutions, especially in rural areas.
2. **Faculty Training and Development:** Transitioning to the new educational paradigms necessitates continuous professional development programs to equip faculty with the latest teaching methodologies, interdisciplinary knowledge, and research capabilities.
3. **Regulatory and Bureaucratic Hurdles:** Navigating the existing regulatory landscape and bureaucratic processes may slow down the adoption of NEP initiatives, requiring streamlined and supportive governance frameworks.
4. **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensuring that the policy's benefits are accessible to all sections of society, particularly marginalized and underrepresented groups, remains a formidable challenge. Addressing socio-economic disparities and regional imbalances is crucial for the policy's success.
5. **Resistance to Change:** Institutional inertia and resistance to change from various stakeholders, including educators and administrators, can impede the adoption of new practices and reforms. Effective change management and stakeholder engagement are necessary to overcome this resistance. The NEP 2020 is a landmark policy aimed at transforming the Indian education system to make it more adaptive, inclusive, and capable of producing global citizens. While the policy lays down a visionary roadmap, its success lies in the meticulous and collaborative efforts of all stakeholders to overcome the implementation challenges. If executed effectively, the NEP 2020 has the potential to significantly enhance the quality and relevance of education in India, positioning the country as a global leader in education and innovation.

Aims: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to fundamentally transform the Indian educational landscape to produce high-quality, equitable, and inclusive education for all. It seeks to create a system that aligns with the aspirational goals of 21st-century education while remaining rooted in India's values and traditions. The primary aims include:

- To provide universal access to quality education at all levels.
- To cultivate critical thinking, creativity, and innovation among students.
- To integrate vocational education with general education.
- To foster research and innovation in higher education institutions.
- To promote multilingualism and the Indian languages.

Objectives: The specific objectives of NEP 2020 include:

1. **Curricular and Pedagogical Reforms:** Develop curricula that promote holistic, inquiry-based, and learner-centric education.
2. **Access and Equity:** Ensure all children, regardless of background, have access to education from early childhood through higher education.

3. **Quality of Education:** Enhance the quality of education through effective teacher training, curriculum design, and assessment reforms.
4. **Multidisciplinary and Flexible Learning:** Encourage multidisciplinary approaches and flexible learning paths in higher education.
5. **Use of Technology:** Integrate technology in education for teaching, learning, and administration to make education more effective and accessible.
6. **Research and Innovation:** Promote a strong research culture and innovation ecosystem within higher education institutions.

Need: The NEP 2020 is necessitated by several factors:

- **Global Competitiveness:** To ensure that India's education system is competitive globally and meets international standards.
- **Demographic Dividend:** To capitalize on India's young population and transform them into a productive and skilled workforce.
- **Economic Development:** To contribute to the country's economic growth by providing a well-educated and skilled labor force.
- **Social Equity:** To bridge the educational divide and ensure inclusivity for all sections of society.
- **Technological Advancements:** To incorporate the benefits of technology in education, ensuring students are equipped with modern skills.

Scope: The scope of NEP 2020 encompasses:

- **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):** Emphasizes the importance of early childhood education as the foundation of learning.
- **School Education:** Focuses on holistic development, critical thinking, and creativity.
- **Higher Education:** Encourages multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary learning, research, and innovation.
- **Vocational Education:** Integrates vocational training at all levels of education to make students job-ready.
- **Teacher Education:** Introduces comprehensive teacher training programs to enhance the quality of teaching.
- **Adult Education:** Promotes lifelong learning and adult education programs to ensure continuous skill development.
- **Governance and Regulation:** Proposes reforms in the governance and regulatory framework of educational institutions to ensure autonomy, accountability, and transparency.

Hypothesis: The underlying hypothesis of NEP 2020 is that a reformed education system, which is flexible, inclusive, and multidisciplinary, will produce well-rounded individuals equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the demands of the modern world. This transformation is expected to result in:

1. **Improved Learning Outcomes:** Students will achieve better academic and personal growth outcomes due to a more engaging and relevant curriculum.
2. **Increased Access and Equity:** Educational opportunities will be more accessible and equitable, reducing disparities among different social and economic groups.
3. **Enhanced Quality of Education:** Through teacher training, curriculum reforms, and the use of technology, the overall quality of education will be significantly improved.
4. **Boosted Research and Innovation:** Higher education institutions will become hubs of research and innovation, contributing to national development and global knowledge.
5. **Economic Growth and Development:** An educated and skilled workforce will drive economic growth and development, making India a global leader in various sectors.

History: Evolution Leading to the National Education Policy 2020

The evolution of India's educational policies reflects the country's socio-economic needs, cultural values, and aspirations for development. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is the latest milestone in this journey, marking a significant shift from earlier policies. Here's a detailed history of the key developments leading to NEP 2020:

Pre-Independence Era

Before independence, education in India was largely informal and community-based, with traditional systems like Gurukuls and Madrasas playing a significant role. The colonial period saw the introduction of Western-style education, with Lord Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education (1835) emphasizing English education and Western sciences.

Post-Independence Developments

University Education Commission (1948-49)

- **Chaired by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan**, this commission emphasized higher education reforms and the establishment of universities to foster scientific and technical education.

Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)

- **Headed by Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar**, this commission recommended the diversification of the curriculum and the introduction of vocational education to cater to different talents and societal needs.

Indian Education Commission (1964-66)

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- Also known as the **Kothari Commission**, chaired by Dr. D.S. Kothari, it proposed a comprehensive framework for India's educational development. Its recommendations led to the formulation of the first National Policy on Education in 1968.

National Policy on Education 1968

- **Objectives:** To promote national progress, a sense of common citizenship, and culture.
- **Key Features:** Emphasis on the three-language formula, equalizing educational opportunities, and prioritizing science and technology.

National Policy on Education 1986

- **Context:** Formulated under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, this policy responded to the changing socio-economic landscape.
- **Key Features:** Focused on "Education for All," promoting women's education, and strengthening research. It also aimed at the modernization of education and addressing the disparities in access to education.

Programme of Action 1992

- **Background:** The policy was revised under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to address implementation gaps and introduce new strategies.
- **Key Initiatives:** Strengthened the focus on elementary education, adult education, and the inclusion of marginalized groups.

Developments in the 21st Century

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001)

- **Objective:** To achieve universalization of elementary education.
- **Impact:** Significant improvements in enrollment rates and infrastructure at the primary level.

Right to Education Act (2009)

- **Mandate:** Made elementary education a fundamental right for children aged 6-14 years.
- **Provisions:** Emphasized free and compulsory education, improved teacher-student ratios, and infrastructural standards.

Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (2009)

- **Objective:** To enhance access to secondary education and improve its quality.
- **Impact:** Focused on reducing dropout rates and improving the quality of secondary education.

Towards NEP 2020

T.S.R. Subramanian Committee (2016)

- **Mandate:** To draft a new education policy reflecting contemporary challenges.
- **Recommendations:** Emphasized pre-primary education, restructuring of the school curriculum, and focus on foundational learning.

Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee (2017-2019)

- **Mandate:** Further refining the education policy draft.
- **Key Proposals:** Suggested the introduction of a new curricular structure (5+3+3+4), emphasis on early childhood education, and the integration of vocational education with the mainstream curriculum.

National Education Policy 2020

- **Approval:** The NEP 2020 was approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020.
- **Vision:** To transform India's education system by 2040, aiming to make it more inclusive, flexible, and aligned with the needs of the 21st century.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Curricular Reforms:** Shift from a rigid curricular structure to a more flexible and multidisciplinary approach.
 - **Technology Integration:** Leveraging technology in education to enhance teaching, learning, and administration.
 - **Research and Innovation:** Establishing a strong research culture in higher education institutions.
 - **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensuring educational opportunities for all, including marginalized and disadvantaged groups.
 - **Teacher Training:** Focus on continuous professional development of teachers.

The NEP 2020 represents a culmination of decades of educational reforms and initiatives, reflecting a comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities in India's educational landscape. It seeks to build on the successes of previous policies while introducing innovative strategies to meet the aspirations of a modern, globalized India.

Advantages and Disadvantages: National Education Policy 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) brings a comprehensive overhaul to India's education system, with the potential for significant benefits and some challenges. Below are the key advantages and disadvantages associated with its implementation:

Advantages:**1. Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education:**

- **Broad-Based Learning:** Emphasizes a well-rounded education, integrating arts, humanities, sciences, and vocational studies.
 - **Flexibility:** Students can choose and combine subjects across streams, fostering a more personalized and interest-driven learning experience.
2. **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):**
- **Foundation Building:** Focuses on the importance of early years, ensuring a strong foundation in literacy, numeracy, and cognitive development.
 - **Inclusivity:** Universal access to quality early childhood education ensures equitable learning opportunities from the start.
3. **Vocational Education:**
- **Skill Development:** Integrates vocational training with mainstream education from an early stage, making students job-ready and enhancing employability.
 - **Practical Learning:** Encourages practical, hands-on learning, aligning education with industry needs.
4. **Use of Technology:**
- **Enhanced Learning:** Promotes the use of digital tools and online resources to enhance the teaching and learning experience.
 - **Accessibility:** Technology can help bridge the educational divide, making quality education accessible to remote and underserved areas.
5. **Teacher Training and Development:**
- **Professional Growth:** Emphasizes continuous professional development and training for teachers, improving the quality of instruction.
 - **Innovative Pedagogy:** Encourages the adoption of innovative teaching methods and practices.
6. **Research and Innovation:**
- **Academic Excellence:** Promotes a strong research culture in higher education institutions, fostering innovation and critical thinking.
 - **Global Competitiveness:** Positions India as a global leader in research and innovation, contributing to the knowledge economy.
7. **Equity and Inclusion:**
- **Educational Access:** Ensures that all sections of society, including marginalized and disadvantaged groups, have access to quality education.
 - **Gender Parity:** Focuses on closing gender gaps in education and promoting women's education.

8. Regulatory Reforms:

- **Autonomy and Accountability:** Proposes a more autonomous and accountable governance structure for educational institutions.
- **Standardization:** Establishes clear standards and quality assurance mechanisms, enhancing the overall quality of education.

Disadvantages:

1. Resource Constraints:

- **Financial Burden:** Implementing the extensive changes proposed by NEP 2020 requires significant financial investment in infrastructure, technology, and training, which may be challenging for underfunded institutions.

2. Faculty Training and Resistance:

- **Skill Gaps:** Transitioning to new pedagogical methods and interdisciplinary approaches necessitates comprehensive faculty training, which may face resistance and require time.
- **Resistance to Change:** Institutional inertia and resistance from educators and administrators can impede the adoption of new practices.

3. Technological Divide:

- **Digital Gap:** Despite the emphasis on technology, the digital divide remains a significant challenge, with disparities in access to digital infrastructure and resources, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

4. Implementation Challenges:

- **Coordination and Execution:** The success of NEP 2020 depends on effective coordination among various stakeholders and seamless execution, which can be hindered by bureaucratic and administrative hurdles.
- **Scalability:** Scaling the proposed reforms across diverse educational institutions with varying capacities poses a significant challenge.

5. Equity Concerns:

- **Regional Imbalances:** Ensuring uniform implementation and addressing regional disparities in educational quality and access can be difficult.
- **Marginalized Groups:** Despite policy intentions, effectively reaching and benefiting marginalized and disadvantaged groups remains a complex task.

6. Overhaul of Examination and Assessment Systems:

- **Transition Period:** Shifting from traditional rote learning and examination systems to holistic and formative assessment methods requires time and adjustment for students, teachers, and institutions.

7. Vocational Education Stigma:

- **Perception Issues:** Vocational education in India often suffers from a stigma of being less prestigious compared to academic streams, which might affect student enrollment and acceptance.

8. Regulatory Overhaul:

- **Complexity:** Implementing regulatory changes and ensuring compliance across numerous institutions can be complex and time-consuming. The National Education Policy 2020 presents a forward-thinking and ambitious vision for transforming India's education system. While it offers numerous advantages such as holistic and multidisciplinary education, early childhood education, vocational training, and a strong focus on research and innovation, its implementation faces significant challenges. These include resource constraints, faculty training needs, technological divides, and ensuring equity and inclusivity. Addressing these challenges through collaborative efforts and strategic planning will be crucial for realizing the full potential of NEP 2020 and driving India towards a more equitable and robust educational future.

Research Methodology: Evaluating the Implementation and Challenges of NEP 2020 for Indian Universities and Colleges

1. Research Design

The research on the implementation and challenges of NEP 2020 in Indian universities and colleges will be conducted using a mixed-methods approach. This combines quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the policy's impact.

2. Objectives

- To evaluate the preparedness of Indian universities and colleges for implementing NEP 2020.
- To identify the challenges faced by these institutions in implementing the policy.
- To assess the perceived benefits and drawbacks of NEP 2020 from the perspectives of various stakeholders.

3. Research Questions

- What measures have universities and colleges taken to align with the NEP 2020 guidelines?
- What are the major challenges encountered during the implementation process?

- How do faculty, administrators, and students perceive the changes brought by NEP 2020?
- What strategies can be recommended to overcome the challenges identified?

4. Data Collection Methods

A. Quantitative Methods

1. Surveys:

- **Target Groups:** Faculty, administrators, and students.
- **Sampling:** Stratified random sampling to ensure representation from diverse institutions (public and private universities, urban and rural colleges).
- **Instrument:** Structured questionnaires with Likert-scale items to measure perceptions, readiness, and challenges.

2. Secondary Data Analysis:

- **Sources:** Government reports, institutional records, and statistical data from educational bodies.
- **Purpose:** To analyze trends in enrollment, infrastructure development, technology adoption, and funding before and after NEP 2020 implementation.

B. Qualitative Methods

1. Interviews:

- **Target Groups:** Educational policymakers, university administrators, and senior faculty members.
- **Instrument:** Semi-structured interview guides to explore in-depth perspectives on the policy's implementation and challenges.

2. Focus Groups:

- **Participants:** Groups of students and faculty from different disciplines.
- **Purpose:** To discuss and gather diverse views on specific aspects of NEP 2020, such as curriculum changes, vocational education integration, and the use of technology.

3. Case Studies:

- **Selection:** A few representative institutions that have taken significant steps towards implementing NEP 2020.
- **Purpose:** To provide detailed insights into successful practices and encountered challenges.

5. Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis:

- **Statistical Techniques:** Descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and inferential statistics (e.g., t-tests, ANOVA) to compare perceptions and readiness across different types of institutions.
- **Software:** Statistical software like SPSS or R.

Qualitative Data Analysis:

- **Thematic Analysis:** Coding and categorizing qualitative data to identify common themes and patterns.
- **Software:** Qualitative data analysis software like NVivo.

6. Validity and Reliability

- **Pilot Testing:** Conduct pilot tests of the survey and interview instruments to refine questions and ensure clarity.
- **Triangulation:** Use multiple data sources and methods to cross-verify findings and enhance the credibility of the results.
- **Member Checking:** Share preliminary findings with participants to validate the interpretations and conclusions drawn.

7. Ethical Considerations

- **Informed Consent:** Obtain informed consent from all participants, ensuring they are aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time.
- **Confidentiality:** Maintain the confidentiality of participants' identities and responses.
- **Approval:** Seek approval from relevant institutional review boards or ethics committees.

8. Limitations

- **Scope:** The study is limited to a sample of universities and colleges, which may not fully represent the diversity of all Indian higher education institutions.
- **Response Bias:** There may be biases in self-reported data, especially regarding perceptions and attitudes.

9. Expected Outcomes

- **Comprehensive Assessment:** A detailed understanding of the current state of NEP 2020 implementation across Indian higher education institutions.
- **Identification of Challenges:** Clear identification of the key challenges and barriers faced during implementation.

- **Policy Recommendations:** Practical recommendations for policymakers, institutions, and stakeholders to facilitate smoother implementation and overcome challenges.

By employing a robust and multifaceted research methodology, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the implementation and challenges of NEP 2020, contributing to the ongoing efforts to reform and enhance the Indian education system.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020 represents a bold and ambitious vision for the future of education in India. It aims to create an education system that is flexible, inclusive, and multidisciplinary, fostering the holistic development of individuals. While the policy offers numerous advantages, its successful implementation requires addressing significant challenges related to resource constraints, technological divide, faculty training, equity, and regulatory hurdles. By adopting strategic recommendations and fostering collaboration among all stakeholders, India can overcome these challenges and achieve the transformative goals set by NEP 2020. This policy has the potential to significantly enhance the quality and relevance of education in India, positioning the country as a global leader in education and innovation. If executed effectively, NEP 2020 will not only transform the educational landscape but also contribute to the broader socio-economic development of the nation, empowering future generations to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a transformative framework poised to revolutionize the educational landscape of India. This comprehensive policy, the first significant overhaul in 34 years, is designed to meet the evolving demands of the 21st century, positioning India as a global knowledge superpower. It addresses the multifaceted needs of the education sector, spanning early childhood care to higher education, and emphasizes holistic development, critical thinking, and inclusivity. NEP 2020 envisions an education system that breaks away from the rigidity of traditional learning models. By promoting multidisciplinary and flexible learning paths, it aims to cultivate well-rounded individuals equipped with critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The policy's focus on integrating vocational education, early childhood education, and the use of technology underscores its commitment to producing future-ready learners.

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