

National Education Policy 2020 and Sustainability: An Indian Perspective

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Abstract

As we know, education is an important factor to determine the future of a nation. During the twentieth century, education, skills, and the acquisition of knowledge have become crucial determinants of a person's and a nation's productivity. One can even call the twentieth century the "Age of Human Capital" in the sense that the primary determinant of a country's standard of living is how well it succeeds in developing and utilizing the skills and knowledge, and furthering the health and educating the majority of its population. Thus, making them change would be a difficult task. Globally there is a realization that education can only help to bridge the disparities to a certain extent. This has prompted the United Nations (UN) to come up with the list of sustainable development goals (SDG) for transformation of nations by the year 2030. One among the seventeen sustainable goals listed by the UN is the SDG4 that deals with education. The focus of SDG 4 is to ensure universal, equitable and all-inclusive education for all by the year 2030. As far as India is concerned, there is a serious take on the SDG4. A lot of efforts have been put from the Government side to achieve sustainability in education by 2030. A conscious effort to this was the drafting of the National Education Policy 2020. Through this article, an attempt is made to understand the various provisions under SDG4 and that of NEP 2020. It also tries to analyse and understand the various schemes and initiatives of the government that would enable it to achieve sustainability in education by 2030. The authors have used the published information for the preparation of this article. The analysis and discussions herein are strictly based on the opinions of authors and their long experience in the educational field.

Keywords – NEP 2020, SDG 4, sustainability, government schemes, youth skills, environment education etc.

Introduction

The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution. The main objective of introducing the education policy is to make India a knowledge superpower. So that there can be changes in the society. Through this scheme, high level quality education will be made available to the children. Apart from this, through this scheme, children will be emphasized on constitutional values, association with the country etc. In the new

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education policy, it has been said to keep the medium of instruction in the mother tongue, local or regional language till the fifth standard. It can be extended to class VIII or beyond. Foreign languages will be taught from secondary level. However, it has also been said in the new education policy that no language will be imposed.

Now, India has the world's largest youth population, and the success of the nation will depend on whether or not it is able to offer its young people with access to high-quality educational opportunities. The dissemination of information is evolving at a breakneck pace. Many unskilled jobs around the world may be taken over by machines as a result of various dramatic scientific and technological advances, such as the rise of big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, while the demand for a skilled workforce, especially involving mathematics, computer science, and data science, in addition to multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, will grow. There will be a significant shift in how we meet the world's energy, water, food, and sanitation needs as a result of climate change, increasing pollution, and depleting natural resources; this, in turn, will necessitate new skilled labor, particularly in biology, chemistry, physics, agriculture, climate science, and the social sciences. The increasing frequency and severity of epidemics and pandemics, together with the ensuing challenges in societal organization, highlight the need of interdisciplinary education and training.

In fact, it is becoming more crucial that youngsters not just study, but learn how to learn, due to the rapidly evolving work environment and global ecology. Therefore, the focus of education should shift toward developing higher-order skills such as analytical reasoning, problem-solving, creativity, interdisciplinary thinking, and the ability to quickly and effectively assimilate new information. Education must change in order to be more immersive, comprehensive, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, discussion-based, adaptable, and, of course, fun. To make education better-rounded, helpful, and rewarding for the student, the curriculum should incorporate fundamental arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values in addition to science and mathematics. In addition to preparing students for successful careers, education should help them develop morally, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Significant changes are needed across the board, from preschool to university, to close the achievement gap between what is now being offered and what is needed. By 2040, India's education system should be world-class, providing all students, regardless of their family's socioeconomic status, with access to a first-rate education. The primary goal of this, the first national education strategy of the 21st century, is to meet the many and pressing needs of our country's rapid expansion. To achieve the aspirational objectives of 21st century education, particularly SDG4, while building upon India's traditions and values, this Policy recommends a redesign and overhaul of the whole education framework, including its regulation and governance.

NEP 2020- Everything that Teachers Should Know In a nutshell, teachers are the lifeblood of the educational system. Without them, the equation would be flawed. NEP 2020 believes that the quality of teacher education, recruiting, deployment, service conditions, and teacher empowerment is not where it should be. The highest caliber of people need to be inspired to become educators by

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restoring the profession's former esteem and prestige.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 proposes a variety of measures to guarantee that educators get high-quality training and that their workplaces meet minimum standards. Take a peek at what NEP 2020 implies for educators: In order to attract the smartest and brightest students, especially those living in underserved rural regions, the government should provide a large number of merit-based scholarships for top-tier, four-year, integrated Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programs throughout the country. Educators will be financially compensated for accepting positions in underserved communities. Reduced teacher turnover will provide stability in both role models and classroom settings for pupils. Only in exceptional cases that have been carefully and systematically described by State/UT administrations will transfers occur. In addition, transactions will be handled via a transparent online automated system. The Teacher Eligibility Tests (TETs) will be improved by include more relevant and up-to-date questions. More educators, from elementary school instructors on up, will be included in the TETs as well (Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary). When choosing instructors for certain subjects, we will additionally assess how candidates fared on the relevant sections of the TET or NTA. In addition, more and more classroom observations and interviews are being included into the teacher recruiting process at schools and universities. This will assist make sure the applicant knows more than what they'd learn in a book, and instead has some experience with classroom management and methods. These interviews would also be used to determine how confident and skilled candidates are in teaching in the local language, a crucial factor in ensuring that every school or educational complex has at least some instructors who can communicate with students in the local language and other commonly used regional languages.

NEP 2020: Expediency of skills for youth in India

Government of India launched Skill India on the occasion of first World Youth Skills Day in 2015 with four landmark schemes, National Skill Development Mission, National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) Scheme and Skill Loan Scheme. Till now its three phases have been completed. In the general budget of the financial year 2023-24, it has been announced to start its fourth phase. Under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0, the work of skilling and providing skills to lakhs of youth of the country will be done. Along with this, emphasis will also be given on industry partnership, on-the-job training and courses aligned with industry needs. For this, 30 skill centres' will also be opened across the country where they will be trained in a better way. The budget for education has been increased by about 8%. Rs 1.12 lakh crore has been received for education. Whereas in 2022 this figure was 1.04 lakh crore. 44,094 crore has been received for higher education and 68,804 crore for school education. But the share of education budget in GDP is stagnant at 2.9 per cent. Modern courses like Coding, AI, Robotics, Mechatronics, IOT, 3-D have also been included for PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0, along with this they are to be trained on printing soft skills and drones. Special care has been taken to empower the youth and help them realize the dream of the 'Amrit Generation'. Emphasis has been laid on preparing youth power according to the needs of various industries. For this, under the ambitious National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme, 47 lakh youth

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will be made skilled by providing financial help. Equal importance has been given to education and skills in the New Education Policy-2020. It has paved the way for integration of schooling and skilling, horizontal and vertical mobility through the National Credit Framework and has redefined India's skilling ecosystem. Training for traditional jobs, industry partnerships and courses tailored to industry needs are also included. While investment in human capital is critical to realizing sustained economic growth, high technical and vocational skills can improve the competitiveness of economies. In sync with the Sustainable Development Goals, the National Youth Policy-2021 envisages a 10-year vision for youth development in India to unleash the potential of youth in driving economic growth. Since we are moving forward with the dream of becoming a developed nation by the year 2047.

According to the recent report published by the United Nations, we have left behind China in terms of population. There is a large segment of youth power in India, about 32%, which needs to be skilled. In the coming times, 25% of the global working population will come from India. In such a situation, unless we skill, re-skill and up-skill our young demographics and prepare them for future work, we will not be able to discharge our global responsibilities. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has entered into a Government-to-Government Agreement with a total of 11 countries including Australia, Belarus, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Qatar, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom in the field of skill development and vocational education training. Government MoUs have been signed. Apart from this, several MoUs have been signed with Germany, Japan, Singapore, UAE, Gulf Cooperation Council countries to provide skills to the youth of India. Singapore's High Commissioner to India Simon Wong said that we have close ties with India and Singapore is the first country to integrate UPI through its fast payment system Pay Now. Also, a few days ago the Indian rocket PSLV put two satellites of Singapore into orbit. Thus, there is a huge opportunity to expand this cooperation in the field of skilling. Despite these programs and plans, data from the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy showed that in October 2022, India's unemployment rate rose to 7.8 percent from 6.4 percent in September. In 2019-20, out of 54.2 crore people, only 7.3 crore or about 13 per cent received any kind of vocational training and only 3 per cent were formally skilled. Digital skills are needed by 2.7 crore people representing 7 percent of the workforce in India. By comparison, 24 percent of workers in China, 52 percent in the United States, 68 percent in Britain, and 80 percent in Japan are skilled.

In a globalized world, where competition between firms and industries has intensified, workers are required to possess a high level of skills that enables them to engage in innovation, improve the quality of products/services and significantly increase their efficiency in production processes. Enable to increase the extent. For this, first of all, we have to increase the investment in the field of public health and education. If we look at the World Human Development Index, our rank is 132 in the list of 191 countries. In this, it is mainly seen that what is the progress of any country in the field of human development. Healthy life and education, living standard etc. are seen in this. As far as the increasing population is concerned, half of the population is of women. To achieve the goal of a developed India, the participation of women has to be increased which has come down from 25 per cent to 19 per cent in the last few years. Apart from this, it is also very important to re-skill and up-

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skill after giving a skill, because the technical competition is increasing in the country and the world and this should be a lifelong process.

New Education Policy 2020: Opportunities and Challenges

A path for reclaiming, re-articulating, and reconstructing the Bhartiya self is provided by NEP-2020 so that we may become a world leader (Vishwaguru) where equity, equality, and brotherhood would be honoured. The current environmental education system is not improved by it. With the way environmental education is now set up, it is happy. It does give the proper weight to sustainable development goals, which are also concerned with environmental benefits, The strategy also places a strong emphasis on the dissemination of indigenous knowledge, which is excellent for addressing environmental issues. However, the failure of the Indian educational system to realise the need for greater environmental education is quite regrettable. Environmental concerns are not a priority for the school system in India. Due to this mentality, India is falling behind in environmental research. Therefore, it was essential that we discuss the environmental education curriculum and pedagogy reforms that are much required. We shall encounter the beginning stages of a trend that gravely risks damaging the very fabric of our existence within our generation if the current rate of environmental devastation is allowed to continue. The current degree of environmental damage is unprecedented in the history of humanity. The environmental issue is mostly caused by overconsumption, which is why environmental education must emphasise consumption restraint. In the end, modifying our consumption habits will help protect biodiversity and our own environmental welfare. These challenges to environmental education force us to reconsider how we do research, educate and train environmental specialists and educators, formulate legislation, and disseminate environmental knowledge to the public. From now on, Environment Education (EE) will be included as a subject in the form of only a few chapters of the textbook. It limits the scope of discussion of Environmental Issues because it is integrated into Core Issues. Centralized textbooks do not address specific regional contextual issues. The limited availability of EE in teacher training may be the reason for the limited nature and motivation of teachers for teaching methods. It is difficult for instructors to include EE into their lessons due to a lack of reference resources on the environmental issues and difficulties unique to each state and poor school/colleges infrastructure. Here are some suggestions for overcoming the problems mentioned: The libraries might receive genuine reference resources from different governmental and non-profit organisations. This would help the instructor contextualise the state's environmental issues. Giving access to information and communications technology (ICT) would provide them quick access to digital materials and contribute to raising awareness of environmental concerns in the nation and throughout the world. It is important to urge teachers of core disciplines to pay attention to EE themes that are interwoven with the material of other subjects. To assist the instructor in the classroom, it would be necessary to organise modules, seminars, and frequent discussion forums. There should be regular textbook revisions to allow for the integration of modern environmental issues. In the context of instruction, case studies, field trips, and Nature hikes and project work should be promoted to foster an inquiry- and exploration-based mentality. It is possible to build appropriate practises that are child-directed and inquiry-based, based on

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research, theory, and real-world experiences. By encouraging critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making in realistic situations, compelling stories and case study evidence would help the comprehension of EE techniques. The development of environmental awareness, skills for understanding the environment, curiosity, and inquiry, as well as a personal feeling of duty and care, might all be included in the curricular framework for environmental learning.

Conclusion

The NEP 2020 is also in the line of Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030), which clearly believes equal access to education is the base of sustainable development. By alienating SDG targets into NEP, the government has ensured the success of self-reliance campaign of the nation through providing equal education to all. NEP 2020 will strengthen all the citizens of the country by enhancing their skills and knowledge.

Furthermore, it clearly talks about the complete overhauling of Indian educational system from pre-primary to higher education along with curricular reform to institutional reform in a phased manner, which will help India to achieve SDG objectives.

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