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Critical Comparison of India's new Education Policy with Global Education Policies

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ABSTRACT

Education is the very driving force of morals and principles in the students and a robust education system is an essential key in development of a nation. The Indian education system has come a long way from the Vedic period to the modern education system. There was a time when students had to leave their homes and live with their Guru's (teachers) for about fourteen years to receive education; today we have everything remotely accessible, just a click away, even when we are hit by a pandemic. This shift came through after the establishment of British rule in India.

The most appreciated feature of any system is its dynamic nature. Pertaining to this view, the New Education Policy, 2020 was introduced in India. The paper will focus on critically analyzing the New Education Policy, 2020 and the major lacunas that the policy possesses on the basis of the formulation and practical applicability. The paper will also throw light on the loophole's that are probable in the applicability of the policy as the real success of any policy lies in its effective applicability.

The paper also comprises of a distinct comparative study between the education systems of countries like Finland, USA and India. The comparison is based on how the new education policy, 2020 differs from the education systems of other nations and the scope of improvement by critically analyzing the key features of different education systems.

Towards the end, the paper will deliver a concluding analysis based on the research conducted on the New Education Policy, 2020 and the present education system of the progressive nations like Finland and USA. The paper will also sum up all the key features of the New Education Policy, 2020 and it will also highlight all its prospective attributes.

Keywords: *New Education Policy 2020, Finland, USA, applicability NEP 2020, critical analysis.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the real basis of foundation of any society and efficient education has always been an area of esteem for Indians. The initial education begins at home and Indians have always been vigilant and thoughtful about the intellectual development of their children. Initially, the formal education system of India was the gurukul system, where the students received education from their guru's in ashrams collectively.

Today the education system of India has also modernized; while competing with the west culture. A new education policy has been introduced in India which was approved by the cabinet on 29th July, 2020. The new policy focuses on the overall development of students by establishing a close relationship between practical activities and academics. The policy highlights the importance of practical field knowledge and application of the lessons learned so far. The policy also promotes imparting education in regional languages and promotes a more liberal sphere of holistic development.

The biggest challenge that the Indian government will face is in the applicability of the policy as the policy institutes an upside down change in the pervasive teaching and learning procedures. It will be quite interesting to note that how the government implements the new policy, since it will be a first major change in teaching methodologies after the introduction of education policy in 1986.

The education system of Finland and their policies pertaining to education, are considered the best and one of the most ideal systems of education in the world. Their system focuses more on intellectual and holistic development of students and least burden is put over their shoulders. The Finnish believe that a kid must have the opportunity to live the best time of their life that is childhood to full extent so that later on, they don't regret being confined in cages of compulsory education, hence, they begin their education at seven years of age; whereas in India the students begin their pre-school education at the tender age of three to four years. There are many other fantastic features of the education system of Finland that helps their students to develop eternally and live their life with happiness. We will be discussing the other key features of the Finnish education system in detail and how the National Education Policy, 2020 differs from their education system.

The education system of USA is also considered as one of the best systems in the world as their system is very well organized and versatile as well as flexible in nature. They follow the K-12 system of education and they spend the most amount of income per student in comparison to

other nations whereas, as of now India spends 3% of its GDP³ on the education and students. The educational system of USA has been divided into various divisions or phases making it flexible and easier for the students to understand the concept of education system. We will be establishing a critical comparative analysis between the education system of USA and the NEP, 2020 and how they differ from each other.

Every nation possesses their own customs and beliefs, when it comes to education and their students. India also has its own methods of teaching and imparting education. The introduction of NEP, 2020 is a big step in the field of education and this policy might bring out the best changes in the traditional education system of India and prove worthwhile to the students and teachers collectively.

II. HISTORY OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN INDIA

The role of quality education in the life of an individual can never be evaluated as our life begins with learning and continues as we keep learning. The importance of education has always been well understood and appreciated by the citizens of India. The first ever education policy was introduced by the government of India in 1968, under the reign of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The education policy of 1968 focused on imparting and creating equal educational opportunities. This provision was promulgated after taking in consideration the Constitution that provides, compulsory education must be imparted to children up to 14 years of age. The policy also promoted the implementation of “three language formula”, where the students would be taught in English, Hindi and their respective regional languages.

The second national education policy was promulgated by the Indian government in 1986⁴, under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi. This new policy focused on creating more educational opportunities for women, scheduled castes and tribes and other marginalized sections of society. The policy also majorly focused on the promotion of digital teaching methods by introducing the “Operation Blackboard” that aimed at establishing digital blackboards in every classroom. The policy was followed by launch of various other important schemes such as the Mid-day meals and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

The third and latest education policy in India was approved by the Cabinet in July, 2020. This

³ Prachi Gupta, How much India spends on education: Hint, it's less than rich countries' average, FINANCIAL EXPRESS (Nov. 22, 2019, 3:15 PM), <https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/how-much-india-spends-on-education-hint-its-less-than-rich-countries-average/1772269/lite/>.

⁴ National Education Policies 1968 and 1986, GK TODAY (Oct. 1, 2016), <https://www.gktoday.in/gk/national-education-policies-1968-and-1986/>.

policy mainly focuses on the holistic development and promotes practical application of academic knowledge and aims at establishing a discussion and analysis based learning process. This policy aims at revising the traditional 10+2 system to 5+3+3+4 system and attempts to make learning process interesting rather than a burden.

It is pretty evident that the Government of India understands the need to regularly amend the educational policies to fulfill the demands and needs of the citizens collectively. The introduction of the New Education Policy, 2020 substantiates this fact.

III. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY, 2020

It is a known fact that Change is the law of nature and we need to change with time if we wish to survive. Similarly every system, policies and laws need time to time amendments to efficiently cater the needs and aspirations of the citizens. The cabinet approved the new education policy⁵ with the vision to provide better and improved education facilities to the citizens. The new policy mainly focuses on holistic development and promotes practical knowledge over academic knowledge. The key features⁶ of the new education policy are as follows:

1. The school premises will be utilized beyond the official working hours of the school's for other educational purposes for adults.
2. The new policy focuses more on the vocational studies and promotes sampling of vocational courses like metal work, carpentry etc. and internship opportunities for students to encourage holistic development.
3. The policy also recognizes the importance of digital advancement; hence, it states that a separate unit will be established in the MHRD to look after the requisites of E-education for high schools and higher education both.
4. The NEP, 2020 lays down a strict provision regarding the educational qualification of teachers. They aim at establishing an integrated 4 year B.Ed. degree course and this degree will be the minimum qualification for any citizen to qualify as a teacher.
5. A single body will be established to regulate the higher education in the whole country including the legal and medical education.
6. The GDP expenditure on the Education sector will be increased to 6%.

⁵ New Education Policy, 2020, MHRD, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiK3LLwva_sAhU_4zgGHXYNBOkQFjABegQIBRAB&usg=AOvVaw3q_UrJ_dSXCMDGIMzetExR.

⁶ Usha, New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020): Highlights and PDF Downloads, NOTICE BARD (July. 31, 2020), <https://www.noticebard.com/new-educational-policy-2020/>.

7. The policy also promotes the bag less day's initiative in schools and also promotes the "three language formula" teaching in all the states.
8. The policy also undermines the stream separation policy and promotes a more liberal sphere of choice of subjects for students and aims at diminishing the line of separation between the vocational studies and academics.
9. The policy aims at providing multiple exit options to the students who wish to opt out of the course in between. The certificates, diploma and degrees will be issued on the basis of time period.
10. The new policy also focuses on establishing multi-disciplinary institutions in the nation, opening doors for several new opportunities for the students.

The new policy not only promotes holistic development but the policy has been designed with utter care to actually put vision to work. There is a popular saying, "Action speaks louder than words." Hence, the new policy not only promises a better future with commendable vision but it has several provisions that will put the vision to play and help us in building India a 'knowledge hub' in the near future.

IV. PLAUSIBLE LOOPHOLES IN THE APPLICATION OF NEP, 2020

It is true that the policy has been designed with utter care and due attention has been given to every requisite of the students as well as teachers but there are still some loopholes in the policy that the government will realize after they start implementing the policy. Some of the plausible loopholes in the application of NEP, 2020 are as follows:

1. The policy lays down a provision that states that preferably the means of communication for teaching the students till grade 8 will be regional languages. It is true that this step will make it easier for the students to learn in their mother tongue but there are transfer students and migrated students too in every state. It will become very hard for such students to cope up and catch up with their fellow classmates if there is no standard language of teaching in the nation.
2. The new policy promotes site learning that is the students will visit various workplaces and Indian parents being possessive doesn't contrast with this particular vision. This is a whole new concept for Indians to accept as the students of grade 6-12 are supposed to intern for various vocational programs. This will be the biggest challenge that the government will face while implementing the NEP, 2020.
3. The education system is about to be overturned after 30 years of implementation, hence, the application of the new policy and acceptance of the same by the citizens will be a

tough nut to crack. It is human tendency to develop affinity for the ongoing system and the last policy had been applicable in India for more than 30 years, making the implementation of the new policy much more difficult.

4. According to various reports, India is still in its developing stage and poverty⁷ being one of the most prevalent issues; the digital learning will undermine the learning aspiration of the poor sections of the society as owning a laptop and other electronic devices is still equivalent to luxury in India for the marginalized sections of the society. The new policy promotes digital learning to great extents and this will affect the learning capabilities of the poor sections of the society.

It is evident to note that the policy clearly promotes many new agendas that were not put into consideration in the last policy, but no policy can be hundred percent perfect, similarly this policy also possesses plausible loopholes that will gain attention during the application procedure of the policy.

V. EDUCATION SYSTEM OF FINLAND AND NEP, 2020

It is always been quite interesting to compare our policies with global nations and it is a trend among the citizens to compare their native policies with the policies of other nations. Time and time again, the education system of Finland has been regarded as the best education system in the world. Following are the key features of the education system of Finland⁸ and their comparison to the NEP, 2020 are as follows:

1. The children in Finland don't begin schooling till 7 years of age whereas the NEP, 2020 has educational provisions for children of 3 years of age. The citizens of Finland believe that the children should be allowed to live their childhood peacefully without any burden of studies and competition, while on the other side the Indian children are instigated with the feeling of competition at the tender age of 3 years.
2. There are no standardized tests in Finland because they believe in comprehensive learning rather than students just cramming things to pass a particular rather than gaining real knowledge, whereas the NEP, 2020 nowhere mentions that there will be no standardized testing of students.

⁷ The Good, Not-So-Good and Bad of NEP 2020, TIMES OF INDIA (Aug. 17, 2020, 12:35 PM), <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/the-good-not-so-good-and-bad-of-nep-2020/articleshow/77518391.cms?from=mdr>.

⁸ Mike Colagrossi, 10 reasons why Finland's education system is the best, BIG THINK (Sept. 9, 2018), <https://bigthink.com/mike-colagrossi/no-standardized-tests-no-private-schools-no-stress-10-reasons-why-finlands-education-system-in-the-best-in-the-world>.

3. Finland has a definite procedure and well defined level of qualification for teachers to make sure that the teachers possess the real potential to educate students. NEP, 2020 also aims at establishing an integrated compulsory degree course for teachers, hence, ensuring that the students receive quality education.
4. The students in Finland don't receive much burden from school in form of homework as they are expected to relax at home and study during school hours. They don't have to rush early to schools as they begin their schools past 9:30 am and their school hours are also shorter in comparison to India. A new provision could have been added to NEP, 2020 that states that, it is prohibited to give huge piles of homework to the students.
5. The educational atmosphere of Finland is very relaxing and students don't have to run a constant race to excel. The evaluation is conducted individually for every student. They believe in cooperation over competition. NEP, 2020 appreciates the holistic development but it is on the policy enforcers to establish a new atmosphere corresponding to the new policy as that of Finland. It is the natural nature of Indians to compete for anything and everything which makes the whole learning process nothing more than a burden.
6. The education system of Finland has no dead ends. The NEP, 2020 also aims at adopting the same policy as it will provide credibility to every student and a path to succeed in life.

The above mentioned are the key features of the Finnish education system that are unique and helps them stand out of the crowd. NEP, 2020 has also tried to incorporate some of these features to improve the prevalent education system of India.

VI. EDUCATION SYSTEM OF USA AND NEP, 2020

USA has always been the first preference for the international students to pursue higher education due to the fact that USA⁹ is highly developed and possesses all the latest technologies and teaching methods. The key features of the education system of USA and their comparison to NEP, 2020 is as follows:

1. The education system of USA is very organized as they follow the K-12 system of education and have divided their system into various categories depending upon the level of education. The NEP, 2020 aims at discontinuing the pedagogical 10+2 system and recommends to follow the 5+3+3+4 system of education.

⁹ The Experience of Studying in the USA, EDUCATION USA, <https://educationusa.state.gov/experience-studying-usa/us-educational-system>.

2. USA spends the highest amount of GDP on the education sector to provide education to all the students. In 2014, they spent 6.2% of their GDP on education to achieve their existing policies¹⁰. NEP, 2020 also promises to spend 6% of GDP on education sector from now on.
3. USA offers free quality education to all the students for about 13 years irrespective of their caste, religion as well as nationality. India also tries to offer free and compulsory education to all the students up to 14 years of age but the area where we lack is the quality. One of the reasons for this lacuna is the economy of our nation as well as corruption and high population rates. NEP, 2020 promises to focus on providing necessary education to poor sections of society too, as envisaged in the Article 21A of the Constitution of India.
4. USA offers a wide range of options for the students to choose from when it comes to deciding their major subjects as there is no discrete line of separation between various streams. NEP, 2020 also has a certain provision that evidently mentions that there will be no more forced lines of separation between various streams.
5. The education in high schools of USA is more focused on vocational education and holistic development of students. The students are constantly assigned projects that require them to interact with people engaged in professional practice such as stakeholders, lawyers, doctors etc. The NEP, 2020 also focuses on the vocational studies and also has provisions that mention that the students from standard 6-12 have to pursue professional internships and field visits to receive proper vocational education.

Studying in USA is a dream of most of the international students and they are highly fascinated by even thoughts of studying there. Hence, above mentioned were the major key features of the education system of USA that attracts the students to study there.

VII. CONCLUSION

The shift from the ancient and traditional Gurukul system was initiated by Britishers' as they wanted to incorporate commercialization in the education sector. After independence, we followed the same education system and an education policy was first introduced in 1968 by the Indira Gandhi government. This policy mainly focused on establishing equal educational opportunities for everyone. Similarly, a new education policy was introduced in 1986 by the

¹⁰ Justin Baeder, Why U.S. Schools are Simply the Best, EDUCATION WEEK (Oct. 22, 2012), https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/on_performance/2012/10/why_us_schools_are_simply_the_best.html.

Indian government under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi. This policy for the first time recognized the importance of the Information Technology in the education sector. This particular policy promoted many new subsequent programs.

After 30+ years, a new education policy has been introduced in India which was approved by the Cabinet on 29th July, 2020. This new policy mainly focuses on the holistic development of the students and its main aim is to make learning a fun process rather than a burden on the learners. Many new reforms have been introduced by the Government of India under this particular policy with an aim to make India a knowledge hub in upcoming years. After critically analyzing the provisions of the NEP, 2020 we can say that this is a bold step taken by the Indian government in the education sector with a well-defined vision and action plan that is our NEP, 2020.

The education system of Finland is regarded as the best education system in the world due to its highly flexible nature. After critically analyzing and comparing the education policies of Finland and NEP, 2020, it is quite interesting to note that our policy has some similarities with the world's best education system. India is trying its best, at a rapid speed to develop more and more and establish a path of glory for its citizens. It is also quite ironic to note that NEP, 2020 has many similarities with the education system of USA which is also regarded as one of the best education systems in the world. This evidently highlights the fact that, India is on the right course of development and we are competing well on the global level. This comparison also highlights that NEP, 2020 in itself is a big step towards success for our education sector and for the students and all the citizens collectively.

It is true that every policy certainly has some flaws; NEP, 2020 also has some plausible loopholes that will be noticed whilst the application of the policy. There is another popular saying that goes as, "where there is a will, there is a way." Hence, if the government willfully implements the new education policy with complete enthusiasm, there is no obstacle or difficulty that cannot be tackled. To sum up, it is in the hands of the government and the executive authorities that how they implement the policy and bring about the best results while taking necessary measures to overcome all the difficulties that come in the way of success.
