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National Education Policy, 2020 with Respect to Opportunities and Challenges: A critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

National Education Policy of India (NEP), 2020 has set the goal, direction and foundation of the future of education in India. It has been long awaited to catch up and meet the rapid technological, cultural, and societal changes across the globe. The various revolutionary landmark changes in this policy have been adopted on the basis of best practices in the various countries and commissioned report and recommendations. As per the researcher's opinion, this is a holistic approach towards education, starting from a foundation level up to Ph.D. It will ensure that quality education is indeed 'for all' equally and create not only job-seekers but also job creators at the same time. This skillful education will put India at par with the developed countries in the near future. However, it is only a policy document and not a law yet. As education is a part of the concurrent list, both the centre as well as the state can make the law. Therefore, now it is the responsibility of the various governments in our country to give this law a shape and implement it in a true sense. There is no doubt that, through this Education Policy, Higher Education in India will be globalised and internationalized, but at the same time, it will pose many challenges too. The basic objectives of this paper is to critically analyse the core opportunities and challenges under this new Education Policy, 2020 and examine how can it be implemented. Analytical Research methods will be adopted for writing this research and research resources will be collected from parliamentary debate, news paper articles, Education Policy, 2020, the education policies of other countries and the reports of the various committees and law commissions. Research will be limited to a few landmark opportunities and challenges only, that is related to students and not the teachers.

Keywords: Goal, foundation, policy document, globalized, skilled, responsibility, job-creators, NEP.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the backbone of the progressive society. Its prosperity, happiness and development are internally connected with education. Thus, it is education that leads a country into the path of socio-economic development, brings unity, solidarity, security and complete peace. As per the views of Mahatma Gandhi Ji, “philosophical concept of education is entirely based on the development of human personality”². The aims and purposes of education must be towards the holistic development of personality and a strong economic development of the country at the same time. Due to the rapid globalization, liberalization and technological changes, there is a huge transformation in the society. To catch up with the changes in the society, it was an absolute necessity and demand to update and change the current education system in our country.

The National Education Policy, 2020 is a long awaited landmark movement in the field of education in India. The demands for academic flexibility and skilled education have been made since long. NEP, 2020 is a combination of the recommendations of various committees’ and best educational practices in the world. The researcher is sure about the outcome of this policy which would be matching with the belief of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar “education enables a man to overcome all obstacles in life, be they social, cultural or economic in nature”³. The researcher feels that there would be a lot of opportunities to transform India into an economic super power and to create India as a hub of knowledge under NEP.

However, there are a lot of challenges and issues in implementing this policy such as - Gross domestic product (GDP), Gross Enrolment Ratio, Infrastructural facilities, language, Gender-Inclusion Fund’ and overall 360 degree reforms etc.

II. PARADIGM SHIFT UNDER NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

Early Childhood Care and Education: The Foundation of Learning

The Various International Declarations and Conventions which India is a party of, have recognized the right to education as a basic human right such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948⁴ and International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,

² Mkgandhi.org. 2022. *Gandhi's concept of education and its ethical perspectives for the development of Peace / Education / Articles on and by Mahatma Gandhi*. [online] <https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/g_edu.htm> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

³ Deccan Chronicle. 2022. *Ambedkar's way: It was education that helped him make a difference*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/opinion/columnists/130421/ambedkars-way-it-was-education-that-helped-him-make-a-difference.html>> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

⁴ Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, Art. 26.

1966⁵. The role of the courts regarding free and compulsory education in India has been instrumental⁶. Article 21 -A of the Indian Constitution and Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, covers free and compulsory education from the age of 6 to 14 years.

As it is estimated, “Over 85% of a child’s cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in the early years in order to ensure healthy brain development and growth⁷”. Looking into all the aspects as a part of the holistic development of a child under the new education policy from the age of 3 to 18, has been considered for free and compulsory education and therefore the Act and the Constitution of India have to be amended accordingly.

Quality Education for All: Quality of education is also declared as one of the goals to achieve sustainable development by the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development goal to achieve decent lives for all⁸. To ensure quality of education NEP has changed the structure of the education in India which will cover children from the age of 3 years to 18 years. Provision for establishment of Special Economic Zones is really remarkable which will focus, solve the problems and bring the disadvantaged children into the main stream of education. To provide equal education opportunities to all and ensure equal justice, Gender Inclusion Fund has been suggested for Female and Transgenders. We can see the reflection of the Constitution on the policy which secures equal opportunity, prohibition of discrimination, equal access, preservation of cultural values and performance of fundamental duties.

Affordability of Foreign Education in India

In search of better job opportunities, skills and knowledge, our children go abroad for higher studies. As per the data available by the Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs on 22.07.2021, 11,33,749⁹ students are studying in different countries.

To make foreign education affordable in India, which will definitely stop out flow from India to foreign countries, landmark provisions have been made under the policy. Top foreign universities can open up their campuses in India as well as Indian Universities can also do the

⁵ International Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 1966, Art. 13 & 14.

⁶ Mohini Jain vs State of Karnataka And Ors 1992, SCC and Unni Krishnan, J.P. And Ors.V State Of Andhra Pradesh And Ors. 1993, AIR, SC

⁷ 2022. *National Education Policy 2020*. [ebook] Ministry of Human Resource Development. Available at: <https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf> [Accessed 2 Feb 2022].

⁸ 2022. *POPULATION AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS*. [online] Available at: <<https://populationmatters.org/sdgs>> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

⁹ 2022. *Annexure- I to Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 396*. [ebook] Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Available at: <https://mea.gov.in/Images/CPV/ru396_new1.pdf> [Accessed 2 Fe 2022].

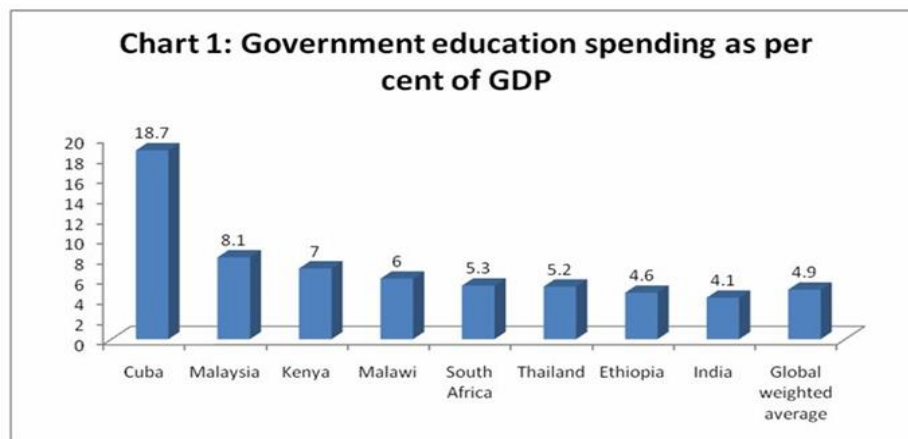
same in foreign countries. The students can get exposure of the highest ranking foreign universities while studying in India, where joint degree will be issued by the universities and maximum 30 % credits can be taken from the foreign universities. The collaboration and partnership will be encouraged between foreign and Indian Universities.

A Great Shift from Job seekers to Job Creators: No doubt education is a tool for empowerment, job satisfaction and creative minds for millions of children. NEP, 2020 focuses on a holistic development of a child, which includes physical and mental well-being of students. Now students will get rid off the memorising kind of an education system and critical and analytical approach will be developed and adopted by the students. The whole education system will be based on experimental, practical and skilled based learning. The natural likings and creativities shall be encouraged in this new education system. Coding will start from class 6. It is a great welcome move to focus on the mother tongue which will give the child an easy understanding and better grasping power for his/her entire life. Therefore, the whole purpose of education, is to prepare our student to face the 21st century challenges and to not only become job seekers but also job providers, at the same time.

Culture of Research: A very important outcome of the National Education Policy is to create a culture of research in India. Research is the backbone for academic excellence and we are absolutely not appropriate and upto the mark at the present time. Therefore, Indian Universities were unable to secure good rankings in the world universities list. The introduction of four years graduation course, where the last year would be for the encouragement of research component, which can be further nurtured in the post graduation and then Ph.D. For creating a strong notion of research in higher education, an apex body which is - the National Research Foundation would be created. Since, right now there is strict division among arts, science and commerce after 10th Standard, a culture of interdisciplinary approach of research will be developed in India. Students in rural areas will be encouraged to make extensive use of technology, to ensure equal opportunities for research.

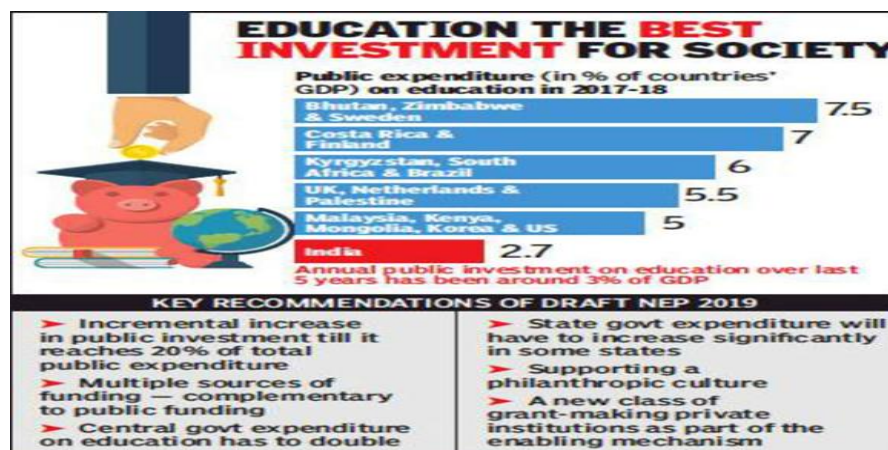
NEP, 2020 announced 6% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Education: This is not the first time, but since 1968, the National Education Policy has been recommending that India should spend 6 % of the total GDP on education every year. But the reality, as can be seen from the below charts, what India is spending on education, is even less than in developing countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, Thailand and much below in global weighted average. The pandemic has badly impacted our economy. As per the researcher's views, the private sector must come ahead in helping to make education globalised and internationalised while also ensuring high quality. They should keep on contributing in double, till the GDP reaches at least 20 % of the total

DGP.



Source: UNDP

Source¹⁰:



Source¹¹:

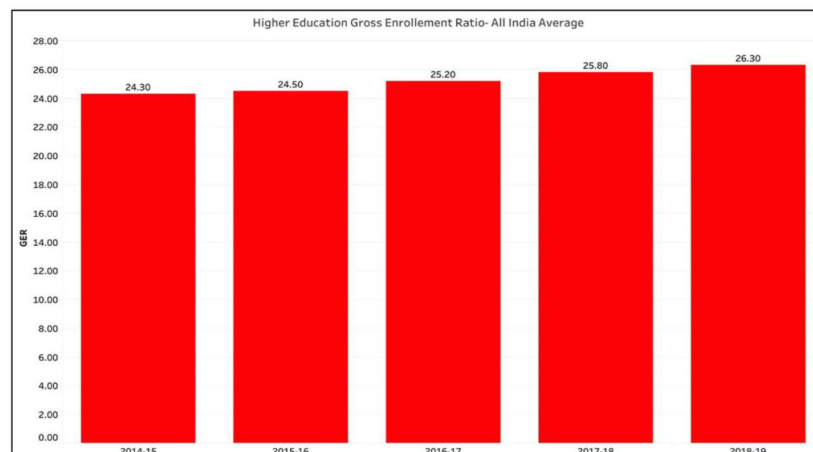
6% GDP on education has never been implemented or rather no efforts have been taken to implement the same, despite of the recommendations by both, the earlier national education policy in 1968 or 1986. Therefore, the Government must take a sincere effort to make a law for the same. As per the researcher's entire implementation of the policy, fundamentally based on the budget, which is the first ladder in the successful implementation of the policy. 6% should be the minimum allocation of the entire budget and apart from it, contributions of the private sector should be added into that. Its high time when the companies must pay at least 5% of their benefits towards educational funds.

¹⁰ MR Online. 2022. *Public Spending on Education in India* | MR Online. [online] Available at: <<https://mronline.org/2011/06/29/public-spending-on-education-in-india/>> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

¹¹ News, I., 2022. *Panel: Hike education spend to 20% of public expenditure in 10 years* | India News - Times of India. [online] The Times of India. Available at: <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/panel-hike-edu-spend-to-20-of-public-expenditure-in-10-years/articleshow/69950757.cms>> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

Higher Education Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) to raise 50% by 2030:

It is also one of the remarkable goals set by the National Education Policy to be achieved by the year 2030. As per the present trends of enrolment in higher education, it seems to be a great challenge to achieve this target. The actual figures of the enrolment can be analysed by the following chart-



Source:¹²

India's GER is very less as compared to China (51), South Korea (94), Malaysia (45), Indonesia (36), Iran (70) etc. Globally, USA's higher education GER is 88, UK's is 60, Germany is at 70 and Canada's is 69 etc.¹³ By achieving this decided percentage of enrolment ratio, a lot of job opportunities will be created in India.

III. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

It is clear from the above discussion that this education policy is a holistic approach towards overall development of students. It recognizes natural likings of the children then nurtures and develops them. Our traditional moral values, ethics, fundamental duties, etc. are incorporated and given equal importance. As per the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi ji, "we cannot be separated education from ethics, morality and spiritualism"¹⁴. Overall, this policy focuses on making our students global citizens, through skilled education. They will be prepared to get employment as well as become job creators. They will be equipped with critical thinking, which will make them innovative and research oriented.

¹² M, P. and Kancharla, B., 2022. *Higher Education GER improves, but challenges remain*. [online] FACTLY. Available at: <<https://factly.in/gross-enrolment-ratio-ger-of-higher-education-improves-but-challenges-remain%E2%82%AC%80%BF/>> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ Mkgandhi.org. 2022. *Gandhi's concept of education and its ethical perspectives for the development of Peace / Education / Articles on and by Mahatma Gandhi*. [online] <https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/g_edu.htm> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

Flexibility and multidisciplinary approach will give students a broad understanding about the subject and prepare them to face the 21st century challenges. The students will understand the importance of team work and collaborative learning. To continue their interest in learning, as in case of, due to certain reasons, they take multiple drops; multiple entries and exits are allowed in degree courses; and students will be awarded with certificates for the completion of one year and diploma after completion of second year and third year and final degree after completion of the four year. Encouragement and facilitating online learning will definitely take education to the un-reached population residing in the out skirts of the country. As per the researcher's opinion, 360 degree reforms in our education system, will bring sustainability in education and curb commercialization of education in India. As per the researcher's opinion, the category of Socio- Economically Disadvantaged group will benefit as lacs of our children in that category will be educated.

The National Education Policy is a visionary document. It has set the goal of the 21st century education and provided a Standard which has to achieved. There is no doubt that, when implemented properly, it will bring an overall positive change in Indian education. However it is not a law, yet. Some challenges as per the researcher's opinion and suggestions to overcome them are as follows below:

1. A lot of awareness is required to avail these benefits by students under this policy. In a welcome move under the UGC (Establishment and Operation of Academic Bank of Credits in Higher Education) (First Amendment) Regulations, 2021, now any university or college, irrespective of it's ranking, can participate and register to come under the ABC framework, I asked at least 50 students about ABC, non- of them know about it. A committee should be setup only to spread awareness, at least for 2 years. The Media, academicians and a group of students from all the institutions can use social media for spreading awareness.
2. The policy is only a comprehensive frame work for the 21st century education. Education, being a part of the concurrent list, the Central as well as State Governments should take maximum efforts to implement it.
3. The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 should be amended to include children between the age of 3 to 18 years in the ambit of free and compulsory education to match with NEP, 2020.

4. Article 21A¹⁵, Article 45¹⁶ and Article 51 A (k)¹⁷ of the Indian Constitution should be amended in the line of NEP.
5. Digitalization of education requires urgent attention regarding infrastructure. How far India will invest in education in the pandemic times, is a big question Infront of our government as a challenge.
6. There should be clear provisions about legal consequences in case of dropouts due to child marriages, child labour, child begging.

Despite of the various challenges, the researcher firmly believes that this New Education Policy will bring a complete transformation in the society and India will be ready to face all the challenges be it economic, social or cultural. It will fulfil what Dr Abdul Kalam believed, in making education reachable, flexible, and feasible for all.¹⁸

¹⁵ INDIA CONSTI. Article 21A

¹⁶ INDIA CONSTI. Article 45.

¹⁷ INDIA CONSTI. Article 51 A (k).

¹⁸ News, O., 2022. *APJ Abdul Kalam cared for children's education across the world - Times of India*. [online] The Times of India. Available at: <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/nri/other-news/apj-abdul-kalam-cared-for-childrens-education-across-the-world/articleshow/48304560.cms>> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

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