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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF NEP 2020 AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

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Abstract:

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is a landmark document that aims to transform the Indian education system at all levels. It intends to meet the nations many expanding growth imperatives. NEP 2020 include the focus on early childhood education, the integration of vocational education with mainstream education, the promotion of multilingualism, the use of technology for learning, and the creation of a National Research Foundation to fund and promote research. Restructuring and Breaking barriers Under NEP 2020 provide universal access to quality education at all levels, from preschool to higher education, and emphasizes the importance of holistic development, flexibility, innovation, and relevance in education.TheNational Education Policy 2020aims to transform education and placing the learner at the center. NEP 2020 offers many opportunities for schools and is a significant step toward propelling India's education system in the right direction. NEP 2020 opportunities for schools provide holistic student development by ensuring access, relevance, quality, equity and strong foundational learning. The new policy has various takeaways for Indian schools. The NEP

2020 presents an ambitious and comprehensive roadmap for the development of education in India, but its successful implementation will require a sustained and concerted effort by all stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, students and parents. The following paper is a small attempt to analyze what National Education Policy 2020 is, from point of view of opportunities and challenges the authorities might face in its implementation. Keywords: NEP2020, vocational education, holistic development, multilingualism

Introduction:

The new education policy proposed by the government of India has its vision on the educated encouraging and enlightening our students who are the designers of the future of our country. The policy has been drafted and crafted with the vision, that it will touch the life of every child of the country with aspiration goals of 21st century and without losing the beauty of the tradition and the values system of India. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a comprehensive framework that aims to transform the education system in India. It covers various aspects of education, including early childhood care and education (ECCE) and elementary education which include-

Educreator Research Journal

Original Research Article

a. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE): NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of a strong foundation in early childhood and suggests integrating ECCE into the formal education system, promoting play-based learning, and ensuring access to quality pre-primary education for children between the ages of 3 to 6.

b. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: NEP 2020 focuses on ensuring foundational literacy and numeracy for all students by the end of the foundational stage (Class 3). It suggests implementing early language and math instruction strategies to achieve this goal. The policy recognizes that there is a significant gap between the quality of education provided in urban and rural areas and aims to bridge this gap by promoting a more equitable and inclusive education system.

The NEP recommended that early childhood care & education be developed in a two-part curriculum consisting of:

1. Guidelines for Parents & Teachers of students up to 3 years of age
2. An educational framework for students between the ages of 3-8 years

The NEP talks about the implementation of these recommendations by expanding and improving the quality of the Anganwadi system and co-locating them with primary schools. Reforms in the framework of the current curriculum of school education are based on the development needs of the students. The NEP recommends the 5-3-3-4 pattern :5 years of Foundation ie. 3 years of preprimary followed by std 1 and 2, 3 years preparatory from std 3 to 5, 3 years middle from std 6 to 8, 4 years Secondary from std 9 to 12

Objectives:

1)To study the opportunities of NEP 2020 at the Elementary level

2) To study the challenges in implementing NEP 2020 at the Elementary level

Opportunities In Implementing NEP 2020 At The Elementary Level:

1. **Ensure that every child has access to the formal schooling system:** The NEP aims to provide every child from ages 3 to 18 access to education through either public or private schooling options. Consequently, NEP 2020 provides an opportunity for schools to reduce the number of students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups to drop out. The policy states to set up Special Education Zones, increased access to Open and Distance Learning (ODL), Gender Inclusion Fund to ensure a reduction in dropouts and an increased number of options for students from Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs).

2. **More holistic, competency-driven learning:** The policy focuses on ensuring students „learn to learn" and advocates an activity based, experiential learning methodology, with a strong emphasis on choice for students in the schools. NEP has introduced a change in curriculum and pedagogy to ensure students develop outstanding cognitive skills, mathematical and computational thinking,21st-century skills, and critical thinking skills, among others. These skills will result in a future-ready workforce with the proficiency to meet the changing needs required for future jobs.

3. **Assessments as a means, not the end: One** of the most critical NEP 2020 opportunities for schools is to switch from annual examinations to a system of formative assessments to brace the teaching-learning process. The policy suggests moving away from rote learning and high-stakes exams. It encourages a competency-

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Original Research Article

based assessment approach that assesses students; overall development, including cognitive, social, emotional, and vocational skills. Students demonstrate expertise in multiple ways: a low-stakes board exam in 10th grade and multiple assessments throughout the year focusing on demonstrating learning to reduce the fear of examinations and allow students to demonstrate what they have acquired to the best of their abilities

4. **Resource efficient, open and accountable education system:** Another significant NEP 2020 opportunity for schools is to rationalise schools into clusters or complexes to increase the overall utilisation of school infrastructure, improve collaboration between schools and devolve autonomy for schools. NEP 2020 has also introduced multiple ways to introduce uniformity across schools.

5. **Curriculum and Pedagogy**: The policy recommends a flexible and multidisciplinary curriculum for elementary education. It promotes an activity-based and experiential learning approach to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students.

6. **Teacher Training and Professional Development:** NEP 2020 emphasizes the continuous professional development of teachers and encourages the development of teacher training programs that focus on updated pedagogical techniques and content knowledge.

7. **School Infrastructure**: NEP 2020 emphasizes the need for adequate infrastructure in schools to create an enabling learning environment. This includes provisions for classrooms, libraries, science and computer labs, and other facilities.

8. **Equity and Inclusion:** The policy aims to bridge the gap between different socio-economic groups and regions and therefore, it promotes measures to ensure that children from marginalized and disadvantaged backgrounds have equal access to quality education.

9. **School Governance and Management:** NEP 2020 suggests reforms in school governance and management to empower schools and teachers. It encourages the involvement of local communities and parents in school-related decision-making processes.

10. **Technology Integration:** The policy acknowledges the role of technology in enhancing the quality of education. It recommends the integration of technology into teaching and learning processes while ensuring that it is used in a responsible and ethical manner. The NEP suggested setting up an autonomous body that would facilitate decision making on the deployment, induction and use of technology. NEP said that this would be achieved by implementing the following measures: a. Establishment of National Education Technology Forum. b.The recommended autonomous body would be administered under this mission. c.It will also include virtual laboratories in various disciplines providing remote access.

11. **Vocational Education:** NEP 2020 proposes the introduction of vocational education at the upper primary level (Classes 6 to 8) to equip students with practical skills and enhance their employability.

Challenges Ofelementary Education Under NEP-2020 At The Elementary Level:

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) is a comprehensive policy that aims to transform the education system in India. While the policy has several positive aspects, there are also several challenges that need to be addressed. Some of the challenges of NEP-2020 are:

1. **Implementation**: One of the biggest challenges of NEP-2020 is the implementation of the policy. The policy covers a wide range of areas and requires significant investment and infrastructure to implement. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India brings about significant changes and ambitious goals for elementary education. While it aims to transform the education system for the better, it also faces several challenges in its implementation which include. a. Infrastructure and Resources: Implementing the NEP"s vision requires substantial investments in terms of infrastructure, facilities, and resources. Many schools, especially in rural and disadvantaged areas, lack basic amenities such as classrooms, libraries, and technology infrastructure. The successful implementation of the policy requires cooperation from all stakeholders, including the central and state governments, educational institutions, and the private sector.

2. **Funding**:Doubling the public investment for education was one of the important recommendations of the NEP 2020.NEP 2020 insisted on the expenditure of 6% of the GDP on education. Doubling the current 10% of total public expenditure to 20% in the next decade was recommended. The implementation of NEP-2020 requires significant funding, and the policydocument does not provide clear guidelines on how the funding will be raised. The policy mentions the establishment of the National Research Foundation, but the details on how it will be funded are not clear

3. **Language policy**: NEP-2020 has proposed a three-language formula, which has sparked controversy in some states. The Policy recommended that the three-language formula be continued and flexibility in the implementation of the formula should be provided. The three language formula states that state governments should adopt and implement the study of a modern Indian language, preferably one of the southern languages, apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi-speaking states, and of Hindi along with the regional language and English in the non-Hindi speaking states. There is a concern that the policy may lead to the imposition of a particular language and undermine the linguistic diversity of the country. NEP 2020 promotes a multilingual approach to education, which can be challenging to implement in regions with multiple languages. Ensuring proficiency in multiple languages and maintaining linguistic diversity while delivering quality education can be a logistical and pedagogical challenge.

4. **Teacher training**: The policy emphasizes the need for teacher training and development, but there are several challenges in implementing this. The existing teacher education system needs to be revamped to meet the changing needs of the education system. Ensuring that teachers are equipped with the skills and knowledge to deliver quality education as per the new pedagogical approaches and curricular changes is a significant challenge. Comprehensive and effective teacher training programs are essential but may face logistical and resource constraints

5. **Equity and Inclusion:** While NEP 2020 aims for equitable access to education, ensuring that marginalized and economically disadvantaged students have equal opportunities remains a challenge. Addressing socio-economic disparities, gender-based discrimination, and access to quality education in remote areas is a complex task.

6. **Assessment system:** The policy proposes a new assessment system that focuses on the holistic development

of the students. However, there is a concern that the implementation of the new assessment system may be challenging, especially at the elementary level in the rural areas where resources are limited. Shifting from a rote-learning and examination-focused approach to a competency-based assessment system requires careful planning and capacity-building among teachers and educational institutions. Developing reliable and valid assessment tools that measure holistic development can be challenging.

6. **Inclusivity**: The policy aims to make education inclusive and accessible to all, but there are several challenges in achieving this goal. The existing education system suffers from various forms of inequality, including gender, socio-economic, and regional disparities.

7. **Technology Integration**

   While technology can enhance learning experiences, its integration into the Elementary level classrooms may be hindered by issues such as inadequate access to devices, reliable internet connectivity, and digital literacy among teachers and students

8. **Early Childhood Education:** Integrating early childhood care and education into the formal education system requires collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and parents. Coordinating efforts and ensuring quality at this stage can be demanding

9. **Political and Bureaucratic Challenges:** Implementing comprehensive reforms in the education system often involves navigating through bureaucratic procedures, policy changes, and political considerations, which can impact the pace and effectiveness of implementation.

Some of the concerns expressed about the NEP 2020 are as follow:

- The report fails to address and incorporate ideas based on contemporary global thinking like the emphasis on creativity and critical thinking and the need for learning in a noncompetitive and non-hierarchical ecosystem and discovering one's true passion without any sense of fear.

- Delivering the changes proposed related to Anganwadis may be difficult despite the focus given to early childhood care and schooling.

- The propositions of volunteer teachers, peer tutoring, rationalization of the system of schools and sharing of resources do not seem like long-term solutions.

- Lack of clarity in government strategies regarding the Public Sector like municipal schools, state-run institutions, Kendra Vidyalaya, etc.

- The creation of a National Testing Agency (NTA) has generated skepticism. The NTA, though envisaged to serve as a premier, expert, autonomous testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for admissions and fellowships in higher educational institutions may, in reality, lead to loss of autonomy among the universities and departments over admissions.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the NEP 2020 presents significant opportunities for transforming theEducation system in India, but its successful implementation will require overcoming various challenges. The NEP 2020 has identified

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several challenges in the IndianEducation system and implementing these strategies can help to address these challenges and provide a more inclusive and holistic approach to learning. Overall, NEP 2020 is largely a very progressive document, with a firm grasp on the current socio-economic landscape and the prospect to meet future challenges seeks to address the entire gamut of education from preschool to doctoral studies, and from professional degrees to vocational training. In adopting a 5+3+3+4 model for school education starting at age 3, the New education Policy recognizes the primacy of the formative years from ages 3 to 8 in shaping the child's future. NEP 2020 makes a bold prescription to free our schools, colleges and universities from periodic "inspections" and place them on the path of self-assessment and voluntary declaration. The policy, inter alia, aims to eliminate problems of pedagogy, structural inequities, access asymmetries and rampant commercialization. The Policy proposes the creation of „inclusion funds" to help socially and educationally disadvantaged children pursue education. The NEP, which is designed to ease the burden of classroom teaching and examination on students, will play an important role in creating the future of the country. It's success, however, lies in uniform and transparent implementation at all levels, with an equitable distribution of resourcesAddressing these challenges will be crucial to the successful implementation of NEP-2020 and to achieving the goals of transforming the education at the Elementary Level.

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