

Positioning Indian Education on the Global Map: An Analysis of NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT:

This paper explores the potential of the National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 to elevate India as a global leader in education. It investigates the critical reforms introduced by NEP 2020, their convergence with global educational trends, and the strategic initiatives required to strengthen India's international educational stature. The study delves into how NEP 2020's implementation can foster innovation, inclusivity, and excellence within the Indian education system, enhancing its competitiveness and appeal on the global platform.

Keywords: *Indian Education, NEP 2020, inclusivity, global platform*

INTRODUCTION:

India has long been recognised for its rich and historic contributions to education, The Gurukul system, an integral part of ancient Indian education, remains well-known for its holistic approach. Over time, the Indian education system has undergone several transformations, particularly post-independence. The first National Education Policy (NEP) was introduced in 1968, followed by another in 1986, which was later amended in 1992. For over 34 years, the education framework introduced in 1986 has continued to guide the system.

However, a significant shift came in 2020 when the Indian government proposed a new National Education Policy (NEP 2020). This reform, approved by the cabinet, is set to bring about a radical transformation in the years to come. Starting from the ancient Gurukul system to the British-influenced model, the Indian education system has evolved through various stages of modification and implementation.

Many of us have experienced the existing 10+2 education structure, which is now being replaced by the innovative 5+3+3+4 model. Another noteworthy change under NEP 2020 is the removal of the rigid subject streams such as Arts, Science, and Commerce. Students will now have the freedom to choose combinations of subjects based on their interests and aspirations.

The goal of any education system is to prepare students to be future-ready and equipped with the necessary skills to achieve personal and societal success. NEP 2020 aims to empower

students to pursue their passions, excel in their chosen fields, and contribute to building a successful and developed nation. By removing the barriers of traditional subject streams and granting students the liberty to chart their own educational journey, the policy seeks to foster a more flexible and inclusive learning environment.

The Indian education ecosystem comprises various stakeholders, including government and private institutions, educators, students, and parents. Together, they play a vital role in shaping an education system that nurtures innovation, critical thinking, and a skilled workforce ready to face the challenges of the future.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To analyze the pivotal elements of NEP 2020 designed to internationalize Indian education.
2. To examine how NEP 2020 aligns with global educational benchmarks and exemplary practices.
3. To identify the challenges and opportunities in positioning Indian education globally through NEP 2020.
4. To offer strategic insights for boosting the global competitiveness of India's educational framework.

METHODOLOGY:

The methodology adopted a multifaceted approach to analysing the National Educational policy (NEP) 2020. It began with a detailed policy analysis, examining its provisions related to curriculum design, pedagogy, higher education, research, and internationalization. A comparative study was conducted, juxtaposing NEP 2020 with educational policies from globally leading nations. Additionally, case studies of Indian educational institutions that had successfully implemented NEP 2020 reforms were analysed to evaluate their impact on global rankings.

INDIAN EDUCATION POLICY

Since independence, India has introduced three significant education policies: the first in 1968, the second in 1986, and the most recent in 2020. These policies were designed to address the evolving educational needs of the nation. The overarching objective has been to enhance literacy, improve educational standards, and develop skills that meet global benchmarks.

National Education Policy 1968

The first National Policy on Education was introduced in 1968 under Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-1966). This policy emphasized a “radical restructuring” of the education system to ensure equal opportunities, promote national integration, and foster cultural and economic development.

Key features included:

- Compulsory education for all children up to age 14, as mandated by the Constitution of India.
- Specialized training and qualifications for teachers.
- The introduction of the “three-language formula” in secondary education, requiring the study of English, the state’s official language, and Hindi.
- Promotion of Hindi as a common language to unite the nation, despite its controversial status.
- Encouragement of Sanskrit education, recognizing its cultural significance.
- A recommendation to allocate 6% of the national income to education.

National Education Policy 1986

In 1986, under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, a new National Policy on Education was introduced with a focus on removing disparities and ensuring equal educational opportunities, particularly for women, Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Scheduled Castes (SC). The policy’s highlights included:

- Expansion of scholarships and adult education programs.
- Recruitment of more teachers from SC communities.
- Incentives for economically disadvantaged families to send their children to school.
- Development of new educational institutions and provision of housing and services.
- A “child-centred approach” in primary education, exemplified by the launch of “Operation Blackboard” to entrance primary schools nationwide.
- Expansion of the Open University stream, including the establishment of Indira Gandhi National Open University in 1985.
- Introduction of the “rural university” model inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy to foster grassroots r and social development.
- A target to allocate 6% of GDP to education.

Modifications in 1992 and 2005

The 1986 National Policy on Education was revised in 1992 by the P. V. Nagashima Rao government. Later, in 2005, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh introduced a new policy aligned with the “Common Minimum Programme” of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government.

The Programme of Action (PoA) 1992, under National Policy on Education 1986, proposed a common entrance examination for professional and technical programs across India. The Government of India’s resolution on 18 October 2002 established a Three-Exam Scheme:

- Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE) at the national level.
- State Level Engineering Entrance Examinations (SLEEE) for state institutions.
- Option for states to join AIEEE.

This system standardized admission processes, maintained professional standards, and reduced the physical, mental, and financial burdens on students and their families by minimizing the number of entrance exams.

National Education Policy 2020

On 29th July 2020, the cabinet approved the new National Education Policy, making a significant overhaul of the Indian education system. The policy, drafted in 2019 and refined through public consultations, introduced several transformation changes:

- Reduction of curriculum content to focus on essential learning, critical thinking, and holistic, experiential, discussion-based, and analytical learning.
- Transition from the traditional 10+2 system to a 5+3+3+4 structure to better align with children’s cognitive development.
- Emphasis on flexibility and multidisciplinary approaches in higher education.

Analysing the Pivotal Elements of NEP 2020 designed to internationalize Indian Education

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative shift in India’s educational landscape, aiming to integrate global best practices while preserving the country’s rich academic heritage. One of its key objectives is the internationalization of Indian education, making it competitive and aligned with global standards. This discussion highlights the key components of NEP 2020 that support the internationalization of Indian education.

1. *Facilitating Foreign University Collaborations:* NEP 2020 allows top-ranked foreign universities to establish campuses in India, thereby fostering an exchange of

knowledge, research, and faculty expertise. This move aims to provide students with international-quality education at a more affordable cost compared to studying abroad. Additionally, it encourages Indian institutions to forge partnerships with global universities for academic and research collaboration.

2. *Promoting Multidisciplinary and Holistic Education:* The policy encourages a flexible and multidisciplinary curriculum that aligns with international educational standards. The emphasis on liberal arts, skill development, and research-driven learning fosters a holistic academic environment, making Indian graduates more globally competent.
3. *Enhancing Research and Innovation:* To strengthen India's position in global research, NEP 2020 establishes the National Research Foundation (NRF), which aims to fund and promote high-quality research across disciplines. This initiative fosters global academic collaborations and elevates India's standing in international research rankings.
4. *Credit Transfer and Student Mobility:* NEP 2020 envisions a robust Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) system, enabling seamless credit transfers between institutions. This facilitates student mobility both within India and internationally, allowing learners to pursue education across global universities with ease.
5. *Encouraging International Student Enrolment:* The policy emphasizes making India a preferred destination for international students by simplifying admission procedures, improving infrastructure, and offering scholarships. The 'Study in India' initiative is expected to attract global talent, thereby fostering cross-cultural learning.
6. *Curriculum Globalization and Language Flexibility:* NEP 2020 promotes multilingualism while ensuring that Indian students have access to international languages and curricula. By integrating global best practices into Indian education, students become more adept at navigating the demands of a globalized workforce.
7. *Faculty Development and International Exchange Programs:* To enhance teaching quality, NEP 2020 encourages international exposure for faculty through programs, collaborative research, and global training opportunities. This ensures that educators stay updated with global pedagogical advancements.

Thus, NEP 2020 lays a strong foundation for internationalizing Indian education by fostering global collaborations, improving research output, and making the curriculum more adaptable to international standards. By implementing these reforms effectively, India can emerge as a global educational hub, attracting students and scholars from across the world while equipping its own students with skills to excel in the global economy.

NEP 2020 and its Alignment with Global Educational Benchmarks and Exemplary Practices

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a significant overhaul of India's education system, with an emphasis on holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary learning. This research explores how NEP 2020 aligns with international educational benchmarks and exemplary practices followed in leading educational systems worldwide.

Alignment with Global Educational Benchmarks: -

1. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 – Quality Education):
 - NEP 2020 emphasizes equitable and inclusive education, ensuring access to quality education for all, aligning with SDG 4.
 - Focus on foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) matches global efforts to improve early childhood education.
2. OECD Learning Framework 2030:
 - NEP 2020 promotes competency-based education, critical thinking, and problem-solving, similar to OECD's emphasis to student agency and lifelong learning.
 - Encourages skill-based and vocational education from an early stage, reflecting OECD's recommendations for future-ready education.
3. PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) Benchmarks:
 - The policy's focus on conceptual understanding over rote memorization aligns with PISA's assessment standards.
 - Emphasis on numeracy, literacy, and scientific reasoning mirrors the framework used in high-performing PISA countries such as Finland and Singapore.
4. Global Best Practices in Higher Education:
 - Adoption of a multidisciplinary education model (similar to the Liberal Arts approach in the U.S. and Europe).
 - Establishment of a credit-based system with Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), aligning with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).
 - Flexibility in course selection and multiple exit options, resembling global university structures.

Exemplary Practices Reflected in NEP 2020: -

1. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):

- Inspired by Finland's education model, NEP 2020 strengthens pre-primary education with a play-based, activity-oriented curriculum.
 - Integrated approach to early childhood development, combining health, nutrition, and education.
2. Technology-Driven Learning:
- Promotion of digital and blended learning aligns with global trends post-COVID-19.
 - Establishment of National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) echoes initiatives like the European Digital Education Plan.
3. Teacher Training and Professional Development:
- Continuous professional development (CPD) framework for teachers aligns with models in Singapore and Finland.
 - Focus on teachers' autonomy and merit-based career progression follows international best practices.
4. Vocational Education and Skill Development:
- Emphasis on vocational training from Grade 6 onwards is similar to Germany's dual education model.
 - Promotion of apprenticeship programs and industry collaboration mirrors practices in developed economies.
5. Assessment Reforms:
- Shift from high-stakes examinations to holistic assessment is in line with formative assessment models in top-ranking education systems.
 - Introduction of adaptive testing and self-assessment tools echoes global trends in student-centric evaluation.

Thus, NEP 2020 integrates various international benchmarks and best practices, ensuring that Indian education remains competitive on a global scale. By emphasizing flexible learning, skill development, teacher empowerment, and technology integration, the policy aligns with the evolving demands of 21-century education. Effective implementation and continuous monitoring will be crucial in realizing these global aspirations while catering to India's unique educational landscape.

Challenges and Opportunities in Positioning Indian Education Globally through NEP 2020

In positioning Indian education on the global stage, several challenges and opportunities emerge:

Challenges:

1. *Implementation Gaps* – Effective execution of NEP 2020 across diverse educational institutions remains a challenge due to infrastructural and financial constraints.
2. *Quality and Standardization* – Ensuring uniform quality across schools and higher education institutions is difficult, given the diversity in curriculum and faculty expertise.
3. *Global Recognition of Indian Degrees* – Aligning Indian degrees with international standards to enhance acceptance in global academic and employment markets is essential.
4. *Skill Development and Industry Readiness* – Bridging the gap between theoretical learning and practical application to meet global employment requirements.
5. *Digital Divide* – Inequal access to digital resources affects the effectiveness of online learning and international collaborations.
6. *Regulatory and Policy Constraints* – Bureaucratic hurdles and evolving policies can slow international partnerships and student exchanges.

Opportunities:

1. *International Collaboration* – NEP 2020 encourages foreign universities to set up campuses in India, fostering global academic partnerships.
2. *Multidisciplinary and Research-Oriented Learning* – Emphasis on holistic education and research excellence will help India gain a strong academic reputation worldwide.
3. *Technology-Driven Education* – Leveraging digital education, AI-driven learning, and online courses can enhance India's global educational outreach.
4. *Recognition of Indian Education Standards* – Aligning with global accreditation systems will improve the global perception of Indian degrees.
5. *Export of Human Capital* – With a focus on skill-based learning, India can position itself as leading provider on a well-trained workforce for the global market.
6. *Promotion of Indian Knowledge Systems* – NEP 2020 encourages integrating India's rich heritage in education (such as yoga, Ayurveda, and Sanskrit studies), attracting international students.

By strategically addressing these challenges and leveraging opportunities, India can establish itself as a global educational hub, making NEP 2020 a transformative policy for international positioning.

Enhancing India's Global Competitiveness in Education: Strategic Insights from NEP 2020

The National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform India's education system into a globally competitive framework that aligns with international standards while preserving its unique cultural heritage. By focusing on innovation, inclusivity, and quality, NEP 2020 provides a strategic roadmap to elevate India's position in the global education landscape. Some of the key Strategic Insights for Global Competitiveness can be:

1. *Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education* – NEP 2020 emphasizes a shift from rote learning to a multidisciplinary approach, integrating arts, sciences, and vocational skills. This prepares students for a dynamic global job market, fostering creativity, adaptability, and problem-solving skills essential for international success.
2. *Flexibility and Credit-Based Learning* – The introduction of the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) and the Multiple Entry-Exit Systems (MEES) allows students to tailor their education pathways. This aligns with global best practices, making Indian degrees more comparable and recognized worldwide.
3. *Integration of Technology* – Digital learning, AI-based education models, and online resources have been integrated to bridge the accessibility gap. By leveraging technology, India can position itself as a leader in EdTech and digital learning solutions, attracting international students and collaborations.
4. *Internationalization of Education* – NEP 2020 encourages partnerships with foreign universities, student exchange programs, and the establishment of global campuses in India. These initiatives enhance cross-border knowledge exchange and elevate the global perception of Indian education institutions.
5. *Research and Innovation* – The policy promotes research-driven education through the establishment of the National Research Foundation (NRF). This will strengthen India's global research output, attracting international scholars and fostering groundbreaking discoveries.
6. *Skill-Based and Vocational Training* – Aligning education with industry requirements ensures employability on a global scale. By incorporating vocational training from an early stage, Indian students will be equipped with practical skills, making them valuable assets in the international workforce.
7. *Equity and Inclusion* – By ensuring education access for all, including underprivileged and marginalized communities, India can create a diverse and skilled talent pool. This

inclusivity strengthens the country's workforce and fosters a globally competitive economy.

8. *Strengthening Regulatory Framework* – The establishment of a single higher education regulatory body, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), ensures streamlined governance and quality assurance, boosting global confidence in India's education system.

CONCLUSIONS

The National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative shift in India's education system, strategically positioning it for global integration. By emphasizing multidisciplinary education, skill development, and flexibility in learning pathways, NEP 2020 fosters an ecosystem that aligns with international standards.

The policy's alignment with global benchmarks, such as outcome-based education, digital learning initiatives, and research-driven pedagogy, underscores its commitment to excellence. It resonates with best practices observed in leading educational systems worldwide, ensuring that Indian institutions remain competitive on the global stage.

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However, the journey toward internationalization is accompanied by challenges, including infrastructural constraints, regulatory complexities, and the need for faculty upskilling. At the same time, NEP 2020 presents opportunities to enhance cross-border collaborations, attract international students, and establish India as a knowledge hub.

To maximize India's global educational standing, strategic interventions such as policy consistency, increased investment in research and innovation, and strengthened industry-academia linkages are essential. By effectively addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities, India can create a dynamic and globally competitive education framework that meets 21st-century demands.

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