Xavier Institute of
Social Service

EDITORIAL

NEP 2020: Revisiting Education System in India

Before commenting upon the New Education Policy 2020, a proper appraisal of the state of education in India after seven decades of independence has become urgent. Conceptually, education is concerned with human affairs, and it relates to the larger questions of education policy and the roles of educational institutions in societies. In this regard, two sociologists, viz., Pierre Bourdieu (1967) and Max Weber (1974), who extensively studied education and social exclusion, examined how educational systems sustained privileged positions while marginalizing certain groups. They suggested targeted interventions in order to create an integrative education system by overcoming the hurdles. Historically, during the 1800-1900 period, one radical change in education was carried out, viz., the replacement of the traditional system of Indian education by the western system. From the 20th century onwards, we decided to bring about another radical change in education, viz., efforts to replace the colonial education system with the Indian national. After independence, the expectation generated in the masses towards education was formulated by the Indian Education Commission (1964-66) in the following terms: "The masses suppressed for centuries have now awakened to a sense of their styles and a demanding education, equality, higher standards of living, and better civic conditions (Report of the Education Commission" (1964-66, p. 3). After 20 years of its formulation, the Government of India issued four major documents dealing with the National Policy of Education (NPE) in 1986. The challenge of education from the perspectives of policy and programme of action was the gist of the documents. Again in 1990, a committee was set up to review NPE 1986 and to make recommendations for its modifications. Consequently, while broadly endorsing the NPE, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) had recommended a few changes in the policy in 1992. Thus, a review of the policies, programmes, and outcomes of the above two previous National Education Policies formulated in 1968 and 1986, modified in 1992, and now the third, NEP 2020, has come after a long gap of 34 years, replacing the NPE 1986, indicating that a number of issues

have persisted over the last seven-decades of development planning in India. However, these policy documents deserve careful scrutiny for a number of reasons, more particularly to assess how they affect the right to education for the underprivileged.

The National Education Policy 2020 is different from ideas and methods hitherto being used in all the previous educational policies of India. Not only the ideas and methods, but also the focus is different. There is also a difference in emphasis. The shift is from fact-providing to critical thinking. Broadly speaking, the NEP 2020 focuses on the psychological growth and mental health of students, which covers the ability to think, perceive, have multi-valued judgment, have greater self-awareness, inner discipline, self-reliance, social concern, worldly practicableness, greater wisdom, and the spirit of dedication. However, the NEP 2020 has several contradictions and limitations, which need to be rectified. We are still trying to reach the goal of a national system of education, and it could be an achievement even if we do so by the end of the 21ˢᵗ century.

Contributors' Responses

The paper titled "National Education Policy 2020: Prospects and Challenges in the Context of Ho Language in Jharkhand" by Jaykishan Godsora and Dr. Manish Tiwari explores the promotion of the Ho language in Jharkhand within the framework of NEP 2020. The paper focuses on government efforts, implementation challenges, and potential recommendations.

The paper titled "National Education Policy 2020 and Social Exclusion: Examining from the Perspectives of Max Weber and Pierre Bourdieu" by Dr. Pramil K. Panda tries to examine how educational systems sustain privileged positions while marginalizing excluded groups. The author argues that by taking into account Weber's social stratification theory and Bourdieu's habitus and cultural capital theory simultaneously.

Prof. Lalit Kumar, in his paper titled "Social Dimension of Education in NEP (2020): Some Observations," talks about the need for adult education and Life-long learning for social development and suggests the government invest more money in public education for social development and managing social gaps.

The paper by Dr. K. Kiran Kumar and Dr. R. Krishna Vardhan Reddy draws attention to Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory and

Intersectionality to analyze the multifaceted nature of educational exclusion. The authors argue that while NEP 2020 provides a framework for addressing these challenges, its success depends on targeted interventions, increased financial investment, and continuous stakeholder engagement.

The paper titled "Unveiling Exclusion in the National Education Policy 2020: Impacts and Implications for Indian Education" by Vikas Kumar critically examines NEP 2020 compared with the National Policy on Education 1986 to assess its potential in addressing disparities related to gender, caste, socioeconomic status, and regional inequalities.

The paper, by Dr. Sudipta Adhikary, critically examines the role of NEP 2020 as a potential driver for inclusivity and as a framework that could inadvertently perpetuate existing inequalities. The study highlights the digital divide as a major concern, particularly in rural areas, where inadequate infrastructure and financial limitations prevent equitable access to technology-driven learning through case study methodology.

The paper "Futuristic Media Information Literacy to Counter AI Generative Deepfake Media Content and its Implication" by Kawaljit Singh and Prof. Harish Kumar explores the connection between media literacy and disinformation and finally proposes strategies for integrating media literacy into educational frameworks like NEP 2020.

Questions have been raised by Dr. Nazmul Hussain Laskar in his paper titled "NEP 2020 and Exclusion of M. Phil.: A Critical Review". The author criticises India's social sciences curriculum, which has inherited western research techniques and methods in the structure, neglecting important issues like nationalism and peasant movements. The author suggests strong standards for an analytical entrance exam, as multiple-choice questions in admission are insufficient to evaluate a qualified scholar who may become faculty in the future.

The book titled "Ethics and People's Issues, 2024," authored by Rev. Dr. M. Stephen, published by Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, is reviewed by Dr. Uma Chatterjee Saha. It covers a wide range of pressing contemporary ethical issues, such as development, war, human sexuality, democracy, and secularism, providing a well-rounded perspective on the challenges faced by marginalized communities. In her concluding remarks, she opines that the book is a thought-provoking and timely exploration of the ethical challenges facing the marginalized communities. However, the reviewer points

out that while the author offers insightful critiques, some readers may perceive the discussions on the topic of Hindutva and secularism as politically charged or biased. This may alienate those with differing viewpoints, limiting the book's appeal to a broader audience.

To conclude, out of the three major goals of education – developing humaneness, citizenship, and productive employment – much more is desirable. The marketization of education, especially higher and technical education, is resulting in commodification, dehumanization, and a lack of sense of citizenship. Moreover, the crisis of quality education is not merely due to the decline in the standard of teaching or shortage of teachers or deterioration of basic infrastructure. It is as much due to academic stagnation. This is, surely, a very sorry state of affairs and requires our urgent and serious attention. The Government of India, through its NEP 2020, has recognized the challenges facing India's higher education system and proposed several initiatives to resolve them as such through increased funding for disadvantaged groups, development of cutting-edge technologies, faculty development programmes, improved governance structures, and the provision of incentives for interdisciplinary research and learning. However, the key concern for India today still needs to be adequately addressed, i.e., how to deal with the issues of quality and cultural development for safeguarding our humanity. On one hand, there is a need to create an employable workforce to harness the demographic dividend to the maximum extent, and on the other, to inculcate value-based quality education guided by morals, ethics, and character building, so as to solve the growing human problems.

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