

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ARE EMBEDDED IN THE NEP 2020 AND UNDERPIN EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AND PROFESSIONALISM

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ABSTRACT

The New Education Policy 2020 has inevitably aimed to transform the educational landscape with technological advancements, universalization, reorganization of educational systems, and in furtherance, it substantially aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nation to meet global standards. Sustainable Development Goals encapsulated in the NEP 2020 serves a foundational step to enable an equitable platform with accessibility and inclusivity by value-based education, and contributes to eradicate inequalities by bridging gaps and adapting egalitarian perception. This paper examines and underlines the alliance and contributions of Sustainable Development Goals and NEP 2020 pertinent to global academic standards and enhanced professionalism. The paper aims to reflect the need of sensitive education and vocational training, to redefine the academic dynamics and meet the needs of the present generation and underscores potential challenges and hindrances in its implementation.

Keywords – Sustainable development goals, new education policy 2020, universalisation of education, NEP alliance with SDGs

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is indeed a stepping stone for self development & progress, and it paves way for both personal and professional growth. Right to Education is fundamentally enshrined in the Constitution of India under Article 21A, and it is undoubtedly conferred as an equitable and undivided right of every citizen, to ensure educational accessibility for various sections of society. As the educational landscape is rapidly transforming and advancing, it leaves behind concerning challenges which needs to be addressed, and it also generates various opportunities for future generations for their growth and development. This makes it crucial that, every human being regardless of one's background, seeks to achieve and utilize available resources, to embody knowledge through persistence and education. However, education unfortunately falls within the limits of privileged classes, and marginalized underprivileged sections remain outside the ambit of academic progress, due to the lack of inclusivity, awareness and resources, to overcome the hindrances and challenges of life, and become a part of the literate community. Secondly, the ratio of literates and illiterates also signifies a major lacuna in addressal of societal issues and differences, for instance, social inequalities and gender biases, which has also played a vital role in defining accessibility of education to some and exclusion of other for societal bias. Though, there is significant legislative framework available by the constitutional framers, to encourage and empower certain weaker section of society, still the execution is inadequately proportionate to successful implementation. the New Education Policy 2020 was brought to re-affirm and align Indian education system, with the goals established and accepted by the United Nation, to envision an inclusive, equitable, developed system, to provide quality education as per the global standards, and to foster a holistic multidisciplinary educational approach.

Under NEP 2020, Government of India has taken a crucial step of universalisation, to embark standardised education as per the global norms, and to enable future employment accessibility and diversity. This skill-centric approach is to address changing needs of the society, and embracing newly enabled opportunities after the revolution of technological advancements. The rapid growth of society has paved way for multitasking jobs, and has diversified employment opportunities by breaking traditional barriers and limits, such as, lingual differences, regional limits, etc. To efficaciously incorporate skill based curriculum and encourage skill development on grassroots level, it is quintessential to enhance teaching mechanisms and employ skilled professionals, who are well-versed with the evolving technical advancements, and opt for modern teaching mechanisms instead of lingering on traditional outdated teaching style. It is high time to organise requisite training programmes, and encourage and educate professionals, to adapt strategies centralizing vocational education and skill development. To achieve this target, our New Education Policy aims to eradicate probable hindrances, and enable a more holistic and practical approach marking a foundational change, and strengthening roots of society by reiterating inclusive and accessible education.

1. Egalitarian Perception and Inclusivity by eradicating discrimination

1.1. Chapter 6 and 14 of The New Education Policy 2020, highlights equitable and inclusive education, and has also embedded various sustainable development goals, for instance, quality education, gender equality, reduce

inequalities, decent work and economic growth, innovation, etc. These goals are significantly integrated in the NEP 2020, and contributes for the efficacious development of the education system. Upon keen observation, it is clearly visible that the goals tend to create, a more inclusive environment by eradicating social bias, gender bias, economic barriers and bridge gaps through educational means and empowerment of marginalized sections, to realise their fundamental rights pertinent to academic development. These goals seamlessly involve egalitarian approach by conferring privileges upon under-privileged people, and uniting fragmented sections of society, to furnish them with an equitable platform for their growth and empowerment. The new policy also adapts value-based educational mechanisms, to develop moral & ethical values and character traits, to transgress academics to embody principles for holistic and positive development. The encouragement for sensitive education is paramount, to eradicate lingering inequalities and empower weaker or under-privileged sections, to garner requisite knowledge for their livelihood and advancement. One of the main Goal enshrined in NEP 2020 - *“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”*, affirms equitable opportunity & accessibility.

- 1.2. Education is not limited to a particular class, and every human being deserves to get accessibility regardless of their background, societal or economic status. It is a foundational aspect of life to further build a successful career. This fundamental right to get educational accessibility is re-affirmed by Universal Declaration of Human Rights under Article 26. Similarly, UDHR has also, prohibited under Article 2 and 23 gender inequality and affirms equal rights. There are numerous international covenants, shedding light on gender equality and embracing inclusivity, including SDGs. In NEP 2020, the Government of India has also aligned its educational strategies, to create inclusive atmosphere free from various biases. Under chapter 6, gender disparities and disadvantaged groups are discussed, and it states that, even historically their representation remained inadequate. Currently, as per the data collected by Ministry of education (UDISE Report) 2023-24 survey, out of total student enrolment there is only 9.1% of ST and 16.8% of SC students for school education, and the ratio further depreciates for attaining higher education. These statistics are concerning figures for marginalised sections, who still face difficulties to even opt for elementary education.
- 1.3. Though, with progressive society the numbers pertinent to gender specific bias has slightly changed, but has not lowered to satisfactory limits, the other significant Goal- *“Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”* assures that, education is not furnished with lenses of gender discrimination and neither such discrimination, refrain deserving individuals to give up on employment opportunities as affirmed under SDGs- *“Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”*. The SDGs further states, *“Reduce inequality within and among countries,”* to ensure that, not only within the local limits of the Country, but also on a global scale discriminations are prohibited paving way for equal and fair opportunities.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper has incorporated secondary data garnered from Government and International authority's official websites, and perused official documents published by the Ministry for comprehensive understanding of NEP through the lense of Sustainable Development Goals.

3. VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND SKILLED PROFESSIONALS

- 3.1. Under chapter 5 of NEP 2020, professional standards for teachers are discussed in the light of NPST (National Professional Standards for Teachers), defining competency and quality standards for teachers, to ensure well-qualified and well-trained teachers are delegated with educational responsibilities. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is accountable to look after implementation of the NPST framework, which is responsible for evaluation of educators performance for their recruitment, to ensure equitable access to the quality education is delivered, to ensure only those professionals are recruited, who are well-equipped with pertinent skillset and qualification. The Chapter 15 of NEP further, set a benchmark for quality educators, and emphasize more on pre-requisites, to maintain ethical, professional, and global standards, while boarding professionals for the purpose of teaching, and to determine educators potential, capabilities, qualifications, to check their ability to work in challenging environment and deliver satisfactory outcomes efficaciously.
- 3.2. The New Education Policy, also revolves around another significant facet, to enhance quality education by (VET) vocational education and training. To excel career opportunities, embark professional growth and develop certain skills, to fulfil developing needs of the present generation is essential, to make individuals employment-ready and competent professionals, to seize employment. Skill development through VET increases career progression, networking opportunities, adaptability for dynamic roles, and contributes for the upliftment of the society. Skilled professionals can further encourage skilled individuals, to become self-reliant and aspire higher ambitions. These trainings are to foster specialized knowledge, transferable skills, practice-based learning, etc. vocational skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, leadership skills, communication and much more, emphasizes more on

industry-specific knowledge to be imbibed in the training programs. By encouraging students to move ahead with specialised courses and training, to excel in the industry, new education policy surpasses the mainstream educational practices that were prevalent from traditional perspective.

4. DYNAMIC ADVANCEMENTS AND FOUNDATIONAL CHANGES

- 4.1. The Chapter 23 and 24 of NEP 2020, Recognises the significance of technical advancements in education, and aims to use technology to improve teaching experience and contribute efficaciously, for expedient assessments ensuring fairness. Technology has enlarged the scope of work and education to great extent, and has generated high-quality digital content accessible at fingertips in multiple languages, and, it contributes to bridge gaps and encourage educational development. It has emphasized importance of interactive learning and enabled digital platforms with robust infrastructure, to transform learning experience on global scale. Technical advancements are efficient in addressing quality concerns and effectiveness of education by targeting core issues.
- 4.2. The world is volatile and the demands are more dynamic and diversified. If we talk about India alone, it is a union of many cultures and customs, accompanied by lingual differences and diverse knowledge in numerous fields. The data known on record has not exhaustively covered information from across the world. As the advancements took place, many discoveries have unfolded existence of astonishing facts, and paved way for scientific research. Today, by transgressing information and connecting nationwide channels, we have generated numerous employment opportunities. Such jobs do require extraordinary skills over basics, to cater that, it is essential to promote multilingual education and create a diverse platform, that offers, Individuals to learn and excel skills requisite to handle global tasks, and secure employment, for instance, technical advancements have brought the world together, and has inevitably paved way for digital learning experience. The classrooms used for teaching today, are not typically consisting a black board anymore, and has switched to digital boards with intrinsic features, to suffice modern needs of teaching, through animations and accessible database, the landscape for teaching has completely transformed. These developments are vital to beat, the obstacles of 21st century, and ultimately curb socio-economic gap and secure global standards equitably.
- 4.3. The NEP 2020, set forth foundational changes to serve futuristic needs. By universalisation of education, NEP aims to cater global audience and bridge inter-connected nations, and generate numerous resources to tackle global issues and unite people all over the world. Standardised education enables student, to pursue quality courses without the fear or discomfort of national or lingual limits. Skill development diversely help individuals, to imbibe multiple qualities, and learn and excel them with practice-based approach. Foundational literacy is crucial to shape future generations and reform present outdated system. Today, we have incorporated artificial intelligence based educational platforms, to deliver adaptive learning methods which enhanced accessibility and focuses more on personalised learning. AI has transformed digital learning experience and brought information at fingertips, educators are using AI to track feedback and progress of individuals, and identify weaknesses that needs to be addressed. With the help of such advance facilities and connectivity, the opportunities for teaching and learning are empowered surpassing traditional challenges. By way of e-webinars, seminars, conferences, workshops, many vocational programs, and training events have reached to a wide community.

5. CURRENT DISPARITIES AND NEED FOR REFORM

- 5.1. As discussed above, the main challenge in implementing NEP 2020 to meet SDGs is the barriers of society, be it social inequalities, gender disparities, economic challenges, technical advancements, discrimination, or unaware public. To free education from these difficulties, and make it accessible to everyone is quite a task. The need of the hour is to reach a wider audience and promote educational awareness, and make people realize about their fundamental rights to get foundational and numeric literacy, to raise their voice and become self-reliant. Despite economic differences, to curb the ratio, it is essential to provide people with literacy and skills, crucial to advance their standard of living and seize employment. To distribute education equitably, the social stereotypes need to be broken and re-impose social balance, by promoting equal and fair opportunities. Backward classes and under-privileged sections of society needs to be adequately represented, to overcome social differences and inequalities.
- 5.2. Promotion of fair and equitable chance to one and all also implies that, gender-based discrimination is effectively addressed. To reform current educational system, it is vital to incorporate discrimination free practices and fair opportunity to be conferred on deserving candidates. Equal representation also implies, curbing women-centric differences and promoting gender neutral opportunities. Equitable participation is proportionate to equitable representation. Thus, transparency and fairness for availing opportunities needs to be maintained. Professionalism is not gender-centric and educational training is for everyone.

6. PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

6.1. The chapter 20 of the New Education Policy, aims to strengthen roots of the system by providing professional standards for education, and highlights the significance of holistic and multidisciplinary education, by breaking old norms and meeting needs of present generation, and it embodies crucial skills to foster critical thinking, innovation, and adaptability. It emphasises more on integration of professional education in higher education, and reiterate professionals should be well-equipped with requisite knowledge, to contribute to society and curb difficulties. NEP 2020 aims to revitalize professional fields, such as legal education, healthcare education, research, and innovation to make it globally competitive, and serve the changing needs of job market and society. This chapter envisions a transformation of professional education, and bend it towards holistic multidisciplinary approach, to align present generation needs and enhance industry scope.

7. CONCLUSION

The New Education Policy 2020, by adopting and encapsulating sustainable development goals transforms, the educational landscape and re-ensure educational standards on global basis. This strategy change was adapted with an aim to meet the present generation needs, and enhance education industry by overpowering challenges and enabling improved learning experience, and to incorporate professional standards to ensure high quality equitable education is delivered to every person, irrespective of inequalities, disparities, and differences to affirm inclusivity. This is foundational change to strengthen roots of society and empower development of mankind without biases, by advocating for fundamental rights. Consequently, by advancing technologies and enabling digital platforms, inter-connected education and employment is secured, to embark revolution by encouragement of individual growth. NEP 2020 ensures, a future-ready generation who is well-equipped with skills and experience to tackle challenges. Technical assessments by using digital platforms ensure fairness and track progress effectively. By promoting awareness and encouragement to boost literacy rates, a more professional and educated society can be secured, and with experienced & educated professionals quality education is assured for present as well as future generation.

8. REFERENCES

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