

Subject Variety and NEP: Changing Routes of the Indian Education System

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Abstract: *The wide range of subjects and disciplines offered by the Indian education system has long been acknowledged as a reflection of the nation's rich cultural legacy and varied socioeconomic environment. An important turning point in India's educational history was the National Education Policy (NEP)'s adoption in 2020, which sought to update the curriculum and modify it to meet the changing demands of the twenty-first century. This study examines the relationship between topic diversity and the NEP, looking at how the program aims to improve students' access to a wide range of high-quality learning opportunities nationwide. This study offers an analysis of policy frameworks, historical views, and contemporary trends to shed light on how the Indian education system is evolving.*

Keywords: Education, NEP, Indian Education System, Pedagogy, Reform.

I. INTRODUCTION

In order to accommodate the vast range of interests and goals of students, the Indian educational system has historically offered a wide range of subjects and disciplines. However, in order to guarantee the curriculum's applicability and efficacy in the contemporary world, a reassessment is needed due to the swift speed of technological innovation and globalization. In response to this requirement, the NEP 2020 is born, with the goal of encouraging interdisciplinary learning and a diversity of subjects to support students' holistic growth and critical thinking abilities.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is a key document that will influence India's future. A slew of beneficial adjustments have been brought about by the most recent revision of NEP 2020, most notably the enhanced flexibility in course options that empowers students. This change reflects a break from the conventional, inflexible educational framework and attempts to meet the varied skills, passions, and professional goals of the students. The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes the need for a varied skill set that transcends the traditional limits of the arts, commerce, and sciences in recognition of the evolving dynamics of the global workforce.

The traditional division between the arts, humanities, sciences, and vocational education is called into question by the NEP 2020. The strategy creates a multitude of opportunities by eliminating the inflexible differences that frequently force students into predetermined professional trajectories. Today's students are urged to investigate a variety of topics that suit their interests, enabling a more comprehensive and customized educational path.

NEP 2020 places a lot of significance on holistic and multidisciplinary education. The document says, "Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable." (3) Research has been done to show how NEP 2020 has come out to be successful in changing the ways of Indian education system by this holistic approach of including more subjects and vocational skills. "Holistic and Multidisciplinary education is a disruptive ideology that gives more autonomy to the students. The role of teachers in the design and execution of curriculum is of the highest importance and the efficacy of any educational reform vests largely with the teachers. Adoption of diverse streams to fulfill the interest of the students providing them opportunities to choose from a variety of courses suiting their interest puts in place the major recommendation of NEP2020, i.e., Multidisciplinary education" (Shukla et al, 607).

II. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

A thorough examination of the topics' historical development within the Indian educational system yields important insights into the forces that have shaped the curriculum over time. The curriculum has changed over time in response to

shifting societal demands and educational ideologies, starting with the founding of modern colleges during the colonial era and continuing with the development of ancient learning centers like Takshashila and Nalanda. An increasing number of disciplines are given in schools and universities now because of the post-independence era's attempts to preserve indigenous knowledge systems and advance scientific and technical education.

Before the implementation of NEP 2020, the options available to the students were very limited. The subjects offered were majorly related to theoretical studies, with little to no vocational knowledge and real-life implementation. The school education in India was limited to a learn and vomit system wherein students were only tested on their memory. It was imperative that some kind of change was implemented so that students could learn vocational skills and be tested on them. Considering that the job market in contemporary times hires on skills and not on degrees or marks, it is much more significant for the system to change and inculcate more than just redundant theories in academics.

III. POLICY FRAMEWORKS

A thorough framework for educational reform, the NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on the value of a flexible and diverse curriculum. Important features include the incorporation of career education, the encouragement of interdisciplinary learning, and the application of cutting-edge teaching techniques to improve learning outcomes and student engagement. The policy aims to develop well-rounded individuals who can tackle difficult challenges in the globalized world by expanding the range of disciplines offered to students and promoting cross-disciplinary inquiry.

The NEP compliance places significant emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach to learning. In the past, there was little room for crossover across the science, commerce, and arts courses into which students may choose. The new policy, which lets students select from multiple streams of study, promotes a comprehensive approach. This helps them develop a more comprehensive understanding of other fields in addition to expanding their body of knowledge. A student who is enthusiastic about both economics and physics, for example, can now study both topics with ease, opening the door to a more flexible skill set. "In order to nurture holistic and well-rounded growth, it encourages students to choose a broad range of subjects, including courses in the arts, the sciences, and vocational fields of study" (Ram 12).

The National Education Policy (NEP) intends to transform the current inflexible "educational" matrix to incorporate multidisciplinary learning and academic freedom, as well as much-needed systemic transformation in the education ecosystem. The NEP adds courses like physical education, arts and crafts, and practical skills to the school curriculum and lets students choose a wide range of subjects to graduate with, without limiting them to certain streams like science, humanities, or commerce. But unless there is a matching shift in the way university courses are designed, this change's goal will not be accomplished.

The NEP's ability to give students a broad range of course options without confining them to particular "streams" has the effect of bringing about much-needed systematic change that has the potential to produce a number of noteworthy benefits, including the promotion of a multidisciplinary perspective in education from the perspectives of students and educational institutions. The NEP acknowledges that, at the school level, graduating from a single oriented "stream" may not be sufficient in the future to give the early support needed for tomorrow's entrepreneurs. The detrimental effects of hierarchies connected to "stream" psychology are also acknowledged by the NEP. Put differently, it captures the potential for promoting a shift in perceptions and meanings related to students choosing particular courses. Additionally, it promotes respect for "training in skills" as opposed to merely "studying of subjects." But in order to bring about a systemic shift in perception and bring about the realization of the NEP's vision, universities and other higher education establishments must gradually synchronize their admission standards and programs with the NEP's goals.

"The New Education Policy is a positive development. The policy is the outcome of practical experiences, factual research, input from stakeholders, and best practise lessons. It is a great effort that deals with several issues that have plagued the educational field for years. The moment has arrived for Indian teachers to embrace this chance and take control of their own fate" (Fatima et al 552-553).

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a wide range of subjects allows students to study a variety of subjects and gain a thorough grasp of the world around them, which is vital in determining the direction of the Indian educational system. In order to rethink the curriculum and encourage integrative learning experiences that equip students for the opportunities and challenges of the twenty-first century, the NEP 2020 offers a revolutionary chance. To ensure fair access to a varied variety of subjects for all learners, however, and to overcome implementation challenges, legislators, educators, and other stakeholders must work together to realize this objective.

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