

Critical Study of the Provisions Given for the Education of Persons with Disabilities in the National Education Policy 2020

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Abstract: Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. The National Educational Policy: 2020 is the one of important policy which aims to bring transformation in education system. This Policy is the first education policy of the 21st century, and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of this country. This Policy also lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual, in all its richness and complexity India as developing country has witnessed two types of educational system for a decade. One is Education in Special schools for children with disabilities and other, education in regular schools for normal children. Several attempts have been made in the past to make education inclusive in the country but still it became changeling due to multiple reasons. The new National Education Policy: 2020 made an attempt to make education system more equitable and inclusive in nature. It has made some recommendations for education of persons with disabilities with emphasizing on inclusive education, technology and special education for some specific disabilities. Hence present study tries to highlights provision in new National Education Policy 2020 basis of the RPWD Act 2016 for education of persons with disabilities.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Provisions. Disability, Education

I. INTRODUCTION

A National Education Policy was created with a strong perspective to develop and modernize the Indian educational system after 34 years. The NEP 2020 initiative is a historic attempt to turn India into a knowledge giant and will enable the younger generation to succeed to new heights. Based on the recommendations of Kothari Commission, the first education policy was unveiled in 1968, and the second was unveiled in 1986. A revolutionary concept for educational reform is presented in the NEP 2020. It is a comprehensive policy that emphasizes universities' multidisciplinary and multimodal approaches, including education that is supported by technology. It calls for higher education spending, up from the NEP 1968's proposed 6% of GDP. Less than 3% of the Indian government's budget goes into education currently. Questions are raised over its application and distribution between the central and state governments.

Education is essential for the maintenance of democratic societies, and higher education has a crucial role in improving living standards and enhancing a society's economic prosperity (Amaral, 2022). Ensuring access and fairness in higher education is regarded as a fundamental and primary obligation of a government. One of the primary goals of a government is to provide a high-quality higher education system that is readily available to all segments of society. In today's society, both government educational policies and international organizations strive to provide equitable access, particularly in the higher education sector, by incentivizing students with various scholarships and awards. Creating inclusive learning settings is considered essential for promoting a sense of belonging among impaired students in higher education (Nieminen & Pesonen, 2022).

India, the largest democracy in the world, actively involves its citizens in the formulation of policy choices. Even though the twenty-first century is just starting out, there have been many difficulties throughout this time, including earthquakes, tsunamis, and especially the COVID-19 pandemic-induced hiatus. The implementation of the New

Education Policy (NEP, 2020) by the Government of India is a source of optimism amidst the difficulties presented by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. The initial NEP was introduced in 1968, succeeded by another in 1986, and the latest advancement took place under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020 (James et al., 2021). Following an extensive and careful consideration process spanning over six years, this policy has been formulated, representing a noteworthy advancement after a period of thirty-four years. The purpose is to develop an education system that is firmly based on Indian values, with the aim of transforming India, also known as Bharat, into a sustainable, equitable, and vibrant knowledge society. The policy seeks to achieve this by ensuring access to high-quality education for all individuals, thereby positioning India as a global knowledge superpower. One of its key pillars of this policy is the promotion of equity and inclusion in education and this is evident from the very first line of the policy document. The policy seeks to achieve universal access to high-quality education, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the United Nations Agenda 2030 (Sengupta, 2021). The adoption of the NEP 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic is anticipated to have substantial implications. The global pandemic has resulted in an unparalleled disparity between students and educational institutions, hence underscoring the imperative for inventive and all-encompassing methodologies in the realm of education. The scope of inclusion within educational institutions goes beyond the provision of support for students with disabilities and those from economically disadvantaged families. Additionally, it includes students who belong to socially marginalized communities and minority groups. The attainment of genuine equity and inclusion necessitates the recognition and meaningful engagement of historically marginalized and underrepresented groups, whereby their perspectives and needs are not only acknowledged but also included into policies and actions. Policies should transcend mere rhetoric and prioritize the design and implementation processes that effectively empower and improve marginalized communities.

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of present paper are to know the Disability Provisions in The National Education Policy 2020.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was based on documentary research method followed by qualitative analysis. The centre of the document was NEP 2020 published by Ministry of Education, Government of India. For analyzing this main concerned document the study also used different secondary sources of data as books, journal articles, official website, news reports, governmental reports, and international reports.

III. FINDING

- Skills on how to teach children with specific disabilities have been included in all teacher education programs.
- Neighborhood schools, special schools, and home-based education- as options for the education of children with disabilities, as a step towards resolving ambiguities towards school choices which arose during the Right to Education Act, 2009, 2012 amendment of the RTE Act and The RPwD Act, 2016.
- If a student opts for home-based education, the education provided would be audited on the basis of norms in the RPwD Act, 2016. This provision was introduced due to the concerns raised regarding the provision and quality of education provided to the students.
- To ensure the availability of adequate resources for students with disabilities including resource centers and educators, schools within a radius of 5-10 km will be consolidated within one school complex. This provision seeks to solve the aggravating problem of the shortage of special educators. (“Barrier-free access to education for all children with disabilities in NEP SJ E minister”)
- NEP, 2020 has introduced short-term specialization courses to teach children with disabilities with the existing framework. The teachers will be given the freedom to choose different tools for teaching as per the needs and requirements of the students.
- Setting up of a National Assessment Centre, PARAKH. PARAKH will ensure accessible assessment guidelines for children with learning disabilities (“NEP 2020: Making education more inclusive”).

- Broadly aligns with the objectives of the RPwD Act, 2016. It has referred to the RPwD Act, 2016 at multiple points and clears out a lot of ambiguities regarding the type of schools for children with special needs.
- Instructors will be prepared to perceive and recognize disabilities, especially explicit learning handicaps because, without such comprehensive training, there will be a staggering lack of skilled teachers. Hence, attention wouldn't be provided to children with disabilities and even if they are provided with the attention it would lead to wastage of time for other children in the class. ("Equitable and inclusive vision in the National Education Policy 2020: A Critique")
- Greater consonance between the NCTE and the RCI has been ensured so that special educators have both content and pedagogical knowledge, a gap that both teachers and special educators have identified.
- A flexible curriculum will be enacted according to NEP 2020. Curricular changes will be made in consultation with national institutes under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities ("Examining disability inclusion in India's new national education policy").
- NIOS will develop high-quality modules to teach Indian Sign Language and to teach other basic subjects using ISL.
- Resource centers in conjunction with special educators will support the rehabilitation and educational needs of learners with severe or multiple disabilities. ("NEP 2020")
- Other provisions like non-discrimination in schools, accessible infrastructure, reasonable accommodations, individualized supports, use of Braille and Indian Sign Language in teaching, and monitoring have been included in NEP 2020.
- Provisions for recruitment of special educators with cross-disability training which incorporates disability awareness within teacher education.
- NEP schools and school complexes will be equipped with resources for the integration of children with disabilities with mainstream students.

IV. CONCLUSION

NEP 2020 is a diverse policy which aims to inclusion of all sections of society ensures to address all issues of neglected dimensions in education for persons with disabilities. The emphasis on provision of a quality education system with particular focus on historically marginalized, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups is also noteworthy. It is particularly encouraging to note that the Policy acknowledges that a number of initiatives will be required, including innovative use of technology, to ensure that learning environments are supportive, engaging and enabling. Students with disabilities are a part of the 'Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups' (SEDG), a new term coined by the policy. The NEP focuses on technology based tools for students with disabilities. Assistive devices and appropriate technology-based tools, as well as adequate and language-appropriate teaching-learning materials will be made available to help children with disabilities integrate more easily into classrooms and engage with teachers and peers.

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