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POSTGRADUATE STUDENT'S PERCEPTION AND AWARENESS ON NEW EDUCATION POLICY-2020: A CASE STUDY OF BANGALORE

Daibiduti Chakraborty[1], Dr. Stanzin Nouskit[2]
[1]*Student, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Bangalore*
[2]*Assistant Professor, CHRD, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore*

ABSTRACT

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 brings transformative changes to India's higher education system, emphasizing flexibility, inclusivity, and multidisciplinary learning. Key reforms include a four-year undergraduate degree structure with multiple exit options, promoting a well-rounded, skills-oriented education. National Education Policy 2020 advocates for institutional autonomy and the establishment of multidisciplinary universities, aiming to shift away from the rigid affiliation-based college model. Additionally, the policy supports internationalization by encouraging collaborations with National Education Policy 2020 envisions a higher education landscape that prepares students for global challenges and aligns with the needs of a rapidly evolving workforce. The aim of this study is to assess the level of awareness and to understand the perspectives of post graduate students in Bangalore regarding the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Post-graduate students are key stakeholders directly impacted by the National Education Policy 2020 implementation. Their perspectives provide crucial insights into the policy's effectiveness in addressing their needs and concerns. Understanding student perceptions can help identify areas where the National Education Policy 2020 might require adjustments. The study adopts a qualitative approach, using a self-structured questionnaire to gather data. Sample was selected through simple random sampling technique. Data were collected from various universities in Bangalore. The study's findings shows that majority of the post graduate students were aware of the National Education Policy 2020 and the changes it brought in the education system especially higher education.

KEYWORDS: *National Education Policy 2020, Awareness, Post graduate students, Bangalore*

INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century, designed to address the evolving developmental needs of India. This policy seeks to overhaul and reform various facets of the education system, including its regulation and governance, to establish a new framework aligned with 21st-century educational aspirations, such as Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), while also drawing from India's cultural values and traditions. A key focus of the NEP is fostering the creative potential in every individual. It emphasizes that education should nurture both cognitive capacities—such as foundational literacy and numeracy, as well as higher-order thinking skills like critical thinking and problem-solving—and social, ethical, and emotional development (MHRD, 2020).

The NEP introduces significant and transformative changes to the current educational framework, pedagogy, and its interdisciplinary approach. Its student-centred design aims to deliver substantial benefits, focusing on achieving specific learning outcomes such as creativity, critical thinking, and practical skills rather than rote memorization. The policy also provides students with greater flexibility in choosing courses based on their interests and aptitudes, as well as in pacing their course completion (The WEEK, 2024). The NEP 2020 envisions a comprehensive transformation and revitalization of the higher education system to address current challenges and provide high-quality education with a focus on equity and inclusion. The policy outlines a vision of establishing large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, ensuring at least one in or near every district, and promoting more Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across India that offer instruction or programs in local/Indian languages. It advocates for more multidisciplinary undergraduate education, increased faculty and institutional autonomy, and the revamping of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support to enhance the overall student experience.

Key aspects of this vision include upholding the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership through merit-based appointments and career progression based on teaching, research, and service. The policy also proposes the creation of a National Research Foundation to fund outstanding peer-reviewed research and foster research within universities and colleges. Governance of HEIs would be overseen by highly qualified independent boards with academic and administrative autonomy, while regulation would be "light but tight" under a single regulator for higher education. The NEP 2020 seeks to increase access, equity, and inclusion through several measures, such as expanding opportunities for public education, offering scholarships from private and philanthropic universities for disadvantaged and underprivileged students, and promoting online education and Open Distance Learning (ODL). It also

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emphasizes the need for all infrastructure and learning materials to be accessible to learners with disabilities (NEP 2020).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of awareness about National Education Policy 2020 among Postgraduate students
2. To understand the perspective of students on National Education Policy 2020 among Postgraduate students
3. To provide recommendations and suggestions for enhancing National Education Policy 2020 awareness among Post graduate students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. To what extent are postgraduate students being aware of the key features and potential impacts of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020?
2. How do postgraduate students perceive the potential benefits and challenges associated with the implementation of National Education Policy 2020 in their academic experience?
3. Considering the current level of awareness among postgraduate students, what recommendations can be made for universities and institutions to improve communication and understanding of National Education Policy 2020?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Aithal (2020) highlights the challenges of implementing NEP 2020 in higher education institutions, stressing the need for well-defined strategies to address issues such as faculty development, infrastructure improvements, and maintaining quality in a flexible learning environment.

Kalyani (2020) analyses the policy's impact on stakeholders, emphasizing its potential to equip students with critical thinking and life skills.

Kurien et al. (2020) emphasize that the announcement of NEP 2020 was a welcome and unexpected development, providing fresh hope during the global challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ahmad et al. (2020) discusses the pivotal role of teachers in shaping the minds of the younger generation. Teachers must be passionate, motivated, and well-trained in content, pedagogy, and practice to fulfil their roles effectively. Beyond educating students, teachers play various roles in the classroom, from creating a positive learning environment to acting as monitors and facilitators.

Selvi (2021) explores the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 as a significant development in academic policymaking, with a particular focus on teachers and teacher education programs. The chapter examines the scope and potential of NEP 2020 in driving changes in the education system, especially in relation to teacher preparation.

Jha and Rajpal (2022) focus on the shift toward competency-based learning under NEP 2020, aligning with the policy's aim to move beyond rote memorization to assess real learning outcomes.

Roy and Swargiary (2022) observed that postgraduate students are more aware of research-related reforms, while PhD scholars possess a comprehensive understanding of NEP 2020's key aspects. The study highlights the need for tailored communication strategies to bridge knowledge gaps and enhance the effective implementation of NEP 2020, offering valuable insights for future educational reforms.

Arun et al. (2022) found that among 120 respondents, 45 (37.5%) agreed with the statement "Overburden of syllabus," while 64 (53.33%) supported "Universal access to education." However, 11 (9.16%) disagreed.

Swargiary (2023) revealed a disparity in awareness levels among student groups, with higher education students generally being more aware of NEP 2020 compared to K-12 students. This underscores the need for focused efforts to raise awareness among K-12 students. Additionally, the study found that online platforms and social media play a key role in disseminating information about NEP 2020, demonstrating the impact of digital media.

Ekka and Rao (2023) explore students' awareness of the New Education Policy, examining their familiarity with its core principles, goals, and strategies. The study also identifies factors influencing awareness, such as demographics, educational background, and access to information sources.

Ansari and Ali (2023) argue that NEP 2020 represents a significant educational reform, with various structural changes. To ensure its effectiveness, stakeholders need to collaborate at the grassroots level, and teachers should be trained in 21st-century knowledge and skills. The authors emphasize the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers.

Nair (2023) discusses the challenges in NEP 2020 such as infrastructure limitations, faculty training, and curriculum reform, while also pointing to opportunities for customized programs.

Praveen (2023) concludes that there is a correlation between age and the benefits students receive from NEP 2020. The study suggests that, despite initial challenges, significant success is expected in the future.

Bhattacharya and Mishra (2024) found a significant relationship between students' academic streams and their comfort level with the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in higher education.

RESEARCH GAPS

While several studies and reports have examined the overall impact and implementation of National Education Policy 2020,

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there is a noticeable lack of empirical research specifically measuring postgraduate students' awareness and understanding of the policy. This is particularly important since these students are expected to engage more deeply with the new educational framework. As an academic hub, Bangalore is home to a large and diverse population of postgraduate students, whose knowledge of the policy could significantly impact its success. Most existing studies focus on rural or non-metropolitan areas in India, where access to educational reforms tends to be slower. However, there is a research gap in understanding how students in educationally advanced metropolitan regions, such as Bangalore, perceive National Education Policy 2020. This is crucial as metropolitan areas are often early adopters of policy changes, and student perspectives in these regions could provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of implementation.

Previous studies on NEP 2020 primarily focus on the policy's content, potential challenges, and opportunities, but there is limited research linking student awareness with their perceptions of its effectiveness and how it is being implemented in their institutions. Understanding how well postgraduate students are informed about the policy and how they perceive it could help identify discrepancies between policy intentions and its actual execution on the ground.

There is a significant research gap in assessing the awareness, understanding, and perception of NEP 2020 among postgraduate students in metropolitan areas, especially in Bangalore. The present study will provide valuable insights about the perspectives and awareness of post graduate students on National Education Policy 2020 in Bangalore.

METHODOLOGY

This research aims to assess the awareness levels and perspectives of postgraduate students in Bangalore regarding the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. A sample of 120 postgraduate students was selected through simple random sampling technique. Data were collected from four universities of Bangalore using a self-structured questionnaire. The sample includes students from both public and private universities, with equal representation of 60 male and 60 female students. Four universities have been selected i.e. two public and two privates. After choosing the universities, four departments were selected through random sampling technique. An equal number of male and female participants were chosen, with 20 males and 20 females from each department at each university. 120 post graduate students.

Data have been analysed on the grounds of:

1. Demographic composition of the student.
2. Awareness level of the student regarding National Education Policy 2020.
3. Perspective of Students regarding National Education Policy 2020.
4. Suggestions from students to increase awareness about National Education Policy 2020.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

1. Analysis Based on Demographic Profile

- A total of 120 responses were collected, evenly split between 60 female and 60 male postgraduate students.
- Out of 120, 42 percent of the respondents are from outside Karnataka, while 58 percent are Karnataka residents.
- Most respondents fall within the 22-23 age range, with 45 percent aged 22 and 55 percent aged 23.
- All respondents (100%) were unmarried during their postgraduate studies at the surveyed universities.
- The respondents are evenly distributed among four programs, with 25% from MA Political Science, 25% from MA English, 25% from MSc Chemistry, and 25% from MSc Physics.

2. Analysis Based on Awareness Level

The study revealed that 64 percent of participants were aware of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, while 36 percent had no knowledge of it. Among them, 50 percent —mostly female students—were familiar with NEP 2020 and its features, whereas the remaining 50 percent, primarily male students, lacked awareness of its aspects. Additionally, 75 percent of respondents were knowledgeable about the key features of NEP 2020, while 25 percent were unfamiliar with its higher education-related provisions and struggled to connect it with other education policies.

Among the 120 respondents, 82 percent had accurate information about the policy's key features, limitations, and objectives, while 18 percent held incorrect information. Only 2 percent knew that the MPhil program had been discontinued under NEP 2020, whereas 68 percent were aware of the introduction of a four-year undergraduate program, and 30 percent recognized the implementation of a multi-language approach in teaching. Furthermore, 38 percent could recall policies related to higher education, 42 percent had limited or incorrect information, and 20 percent demonstrated a thorough understanding of the policy's recent updates concerning higher education.

Additionally, 88 percent of participants were unaware that NEP 2020 has not been implemented in Karnataka, while 12 percent were aware of its implementation status. Furthermore, 67 percent did not know that the Karnataka government is introducing a State Education Policy, whereas 33 percent were aware that Karnataka has rejected NEP 2020 and plans to introduce a new State Education Policy. The study also found that 15 percent of respondents were unaware of the introduction of vocational courses under NEP 2020, 28 percent did not know about the promotion of internships or industry collaborations, and 47 percent were unfamiliar with the policy's emphasis on research and innovation. In contrast, 27 percent had accurate knowledge of NEP 2020's key aspects related to vocational courses and learning opportunities.

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3. Analysis Based on Perception of Students

The responses of individuals regarding various aspects of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in relation to traditional learning, its benefits, limitations, and its perceived impact on different levels of education. The results reveal several important trends and perceptions among the respondents.

i. Correlation between National Education Policy 2020 and Traditional Learning

The majority, 45 percent, did not see any connection between NEP 2020 and traditional learning, while only 8 percent perceived a correlation between the two. This indicates that many participants view NEP 2020 as separate from traditional learning methods. Among respondents from a humanities background, 50 percent recognized a link between NEP 2020 and traditional methods, whereas 50 percent of those from a science background did not identify a strong connection between NEP 2020 and traditional approaches.

ii. Benefits of National Education Policy 2020

Majority of the respondents i.e. 55 percent found NEP 2020 beneficial due to the flexibility it offers, making this the most appreciated aspect of the policy. Only 15 percent identified the examination pattern as beneficial. 30 percent could not identify any benefits, suggesting a substantial minority who are either dissatisfied with or unaware of the advantages of NEP 2020.

iii. Impact of NEP 2020 on Higher Education

Out of 120, 35 percent view NEP 2020 as beneficial for higher education., 47 percent have a neutral stance, neither favouring nor opposing the policy's effects and 18 percent feel it is non-beneficial, indicating that nearly one-fifth of participants view the policy negatively in the context of higher education.

iv. Limitations of NEP 2020

Among the 120 respondents, 20 percent consider the multiple exit points a limitation, while 32 percent see the lack of adequate training as a major drawback. However, the most significant concern is the introduction of multilingual systems, with 48 percent viewing it as problematic, likely due to challenges in implementation or concerns about its practicality.

v. Quality of Teaching

Majority i.e. 56 percent believe NEP 2020 supports acquiring proper teaching quality while 44 percent feel the opposite, suggesting a nearly even split in opinion on whether NEP 2020 is improving teaching quality.

vi. Vocational Education

Among 120, 33 percent hold a positive view of NEP 2020's impact on vocational education, while 27 percent are neutral, and 40 percent view it negatively, reflecting scepticism about its effectiveness in enhancing vocational education

vii. Government's Role in Implementing NEP 2020

Among 120 respondents, 10 percent view the government's role positively, 2 percent are neutral, and a striking 88 percent have a negative perception of the government's efforts in implementing NEP 2020, indicating widespread dissatisfaction with its execution.

viii. Impact of NEP 2020

Most of the respondents i.e. 67 percent believe that NEP 2020 has a positive impact while 33 percent think that the policy has had a negative impact, suggesting a significant division in how the policy's outcomes are perceived.

ix. Implementation of NEP 2020 in Karnataka

Majority of the respondents i.e. 67 percent think that NEP 2020 should be implemented in the Karnataka state because of the reasons that would positively impact course curriculum, infrastructure, training, and vocational courses, whereas 33 percent felt that the present system is better than the National Education Policy 2020.

4. Analysis based Suggestions from students to increase awareness about NEP 2020

The study put forth several recommendations to address the limitations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and enhance its implementation. Key suggestions from respondents include the following:

Many participants expressed concerns about the multilingual teaching model and proposed introducing a "flexible language model" to accommodate students unfamiliar with the specific languages being used. A significant number recommended reinstating the three-year degree program, arguing that the four-year integrated graduate course is too lengthy and time-consuming.

Additionally, most respondents were dissatisfied with the multiple exit points system in NEP 2020, suggesting a return to traditional teaching and learning methods, as they feared the current system might cause confusion and disrupt their academic progress. A commonly shared recommendation was the implementation of mandatory internships for postgraduate students, with respondents emphasizing that such internships would provide valuable industry exposure and better prepare them for future

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A significant number of students were aware of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, but many lacked accurate information about its details, highlighting a clear gap in knowledge and awareness. The study revealed that female respondents generally had more knowledge about NEP 2020 compared to their male counterparts, with a notable proportion of male respondents being either uninformed or unaware of the policy's features. Additionally, students from science backgrounds did not perceive a strong connection between NEP 2020 and traditional learning methods, while humanities students identified a clear link. More than half of the students viewed NEP 2020 positively, especially for its flexibility and the introduction of vocational subjects. Others appreciated the policy's new examination patterns and the opportunities it provided for internships and industrial collaborations. Respondents generally believed that NEP 2020 would positively impact course curricula, infrastructure, training, and vocational programs. The study also identified three major limitations: multiple exit points, lack of proper training, and the introduction of a multilingual system. Most students felt NEP 2020 primarily benefited undergraduate studies, with many unaware of its relevance to higher education. However, humanities students felt that NEP 2020 had improved their higher education experience by offering more flexibility, internships, and industrial partnerships.

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Since NEP 2020 has not yet been implemented in Karnataka, many respondents viewed its implementation as a challenging task. In terms of recommendations, respondents suggested addressing the multilingual teaching method by introducing a "flexible language model" for students unfamiliar with certain languages. They also recommended reinstating the three-year degree program, as they found the four-year integrated course too lengthy. There was considerable dissatisfaction with the multiple exit points system, with many advocating for a return to traditional teaching methods to avoid confusion in students' educational paths. Finally, there was strong support for making internships compulsory for post-graduate students to ensure they gain sufficient industrial exposure.

POSSIBLE SUGGESTIONS FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

The study came up with various suggestions for various stakeholders involved in the implementation and carrying forward of National Education Policy 2020:

Government

The study finds a lack of a comprehensive plan for phased implementation with clear timelines and resource allocation for teacher training, infrastructure development, and curriculum revision. Hence it would suggest designing flexible multidisciplinary programs with clear pathways for students to enter and exit the workforce. Collaborate with industries to create internship opportunities and offer skill-based courses aligned with market demands.

Teachers

Teachers should be encouraged to participate in training programs on the new pedagogy, assessment methods, and technological tools outlined in National Education Policy 2020. Teachers should participate in awareness programs about NEP 2020 to effectively educate students about the policy.

Students

The study is based on the respondent's feedback which shows students are very less aware of the National Education Policy 2020 and its features. Hence it can be suggested to organize seminars to educate them on National Education Policy 2020 goals and how they can support their children's holistic learning at home. It also encourages participation in school committees and provides feedback on the implementation process.

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