

New Education Policy, 2020 and Legal Education in India

Dr. Mansi Sharma

Assistant Professor, SOL, IGNOU, New Delhi

Abstract:

The National Education Policy 2020 has made a significant change in the education system. This abstract delves into the implications of the transformations done in the education system through National Education Policy with special emphasis to Legal Education. It also highlights the key features, challenges and outcomes of the National Education Policy. It also revolutionizes the traditional pedagogical approaches prevalent in the legal education system and aims to nurture critical thinking, problem solving skills and ethical consciousness among law students. We know that by integrating vocational training and experiential learning opportunities within the legal curriculum, the National Education Policy poses to bring a balance between theoretical and practical application of law. It also provides a multi facet opportunity to law graduates in diversified fields and helps in enhancing the employability and professional competence of law graduates. This is the first time when National Education Policy focuses on general professional and technical education. It also talks about legal education within the context of higher education. All stand-alone universities and institutes like IITs and National Law Universities are mandated to become multidisciplinary universities under the National Education Policy, 2020. Moreover, by promoting diversity and inclusivity within the legal profession, the NEP aligns with the imperatives of social justice and democratization of legal institutions.

Keywords: New Education Policy, legal reforms, legal education, quality education, constitutional values ,justice, equity and education, multidisciplinary education, skill based education, Bar Council of India ,University Grants Commission. professional course.

Objectives:

1. To discuss the history of Educational Reforms in India
2. To explain the Objectives of the National Education Policy, 2020.
3. To discuss the salient features of the New Education Policy 2020. With special emphasis to legal education.

Introduction:

The Education Policy was framed in 1986 and revised in 1992 .After more than 3 decades the New Education Policy 2020 was announced on 29/07/2020 to meet the requirements of the 21st century and to address the significant changes in the education system and society at large. The New Education Policy 2020 aims at a massive transformation in Indian education through “an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all, thereby making India a global

knowledge superpower. NEP 2020 is founded on 5 guiding pillars of access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability.”¹ It aims to address the growing developmental imperatives of our country and empowers the youth to be prepared to meet diversified national and global challenges. We all know that quality education is important for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. It is believed that India will have the highest population of young people in the world over the next decade, and our ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them will determine the future of our country.

“The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved.”

Highlights of the New Education Policy:

- The New Education Policy ensures Universal access at all level of schooling from pre-primary school to grade 12.
- NEP 2020 emphasizes on early childhood care education with new curricular and pedagogical structure.
- NEP 2020 emphasizes on equitable and inclusive education to all.
- It focuses on recognizing, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of these students by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote students’ holistic development in both academic and non- academic spheres.
- The New Education Policy focuses on flexibility of learning so that learners learn at their pace and time.
- The New Education Policy emphasizes on conceptual understanding and critical thinking, which is very important in legal education.
- The New Education Policy promotes multilingualism and the power of language and teaching and learning. If we adopt this in legal education then we will be able to create legal awareness in the entire country.
- It focuses on extensive use of technology in teaching and learning.
- The New Education Policy respects diversity and respect for local content in all curriculum, pedagogy and policy.
- The New Education Policy talks about synergy and curriculum across all levels of education including legal education.
- The New Education Policy talks about continuous review of progress based on sustained research and regular assessment by education experts.
- The New Education Policy talks about education as a public service so quality education should be provided to all as per the Fundamental right under Article 21 A of the Constitution of India.
- It says that the quality education must aim to develop good, thoughtful ,all round and creative individuals which is very important in any legal education.
- It talks about providing meaningful and satisfying lives and work rules and enable economic independence to all.

- It talks about faculty and institutional autonomy.
- It focuses on revamping curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and student support.
- It talks about reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership position and lays emphasis on establishment of National Research Foundation.
- It talks about “light by tight” regulation by a single regulator for higher education.
- It says that by 2040 all education institutions shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions, each of which will aim to have 3000 or more students.
- It also talks about one large multidisciplinary higher education institution in every district by 2030.
- It focuses on improving the gross enrollment ratio in higher education, including vocational education, from 26.3%. To 50% by 2035.
- It says that university will mean a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate programs with high quality teaching, research and community engagements.
- It also focuses on Research Intensive Universities which will focus on the research in all the areas including legal research.
- New Education Policy also says that Higher education institutions will support other higher education institutions in their development, community management and service, contribution to various fields of practice, faculty development for a higher education system and support for school education.
- It further says that the present complex nomenclature of higher education institutions in the country such as “deemed to be university”, “affiliating university,” “affiliated Technical University,” “unitary university” shall be replaced simply by university on fulfilling the criteria as per norms.
- It says a holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human being, intellectual, aesthetics, social, physical, emotional and moral in an integrated manner.
- Imaginative and flexible curriculum structure will enable creative combinations of disciplines for study and would offer multiple entry and exit options in the education system.
- Curricula of all higher education institutions shall include credit-based courses and projects in the area of community engagement and service environment education and value-based education as per the New Education Policy.
- An Academic Bank of Credit shall be established which will digitally store the academic credits earned from various recognized Higher education institutions so that degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into credit earned.
- HEI will focus on research and innovation by setting up startup incubation centers, technology development center centers, and frontier area of research greater industry- Academic linkages and interdisciplinary research, including humanities and social sciences research as per the New Education Policy.
- NEP, says that HEI should also move away from high stakes examinations towards more continuous and comprehensive evaluation.
- It focuses on providing. High quality support centers and professional academic and career counseling Centers for all students.
- It reaffirms that all programs, courses, curricula and pedagogy across subjects, including those in classrooms, online and in ODL modes, as well as student support, will aim to achieve global standards of quality education.

- Efforts will be made to incentivize the merits of students belonging to SC, ST, OBC and other SEDG's.
- It mandates to increase hostel facility for students and medical facilities to all students in their institutions.
- It focuses on encouraging large number of free ships and scholarship to all students.
- It focuses on the importance of training of faculty members and providing research grants to faculty members.
- It talks about transparent. Process and criteria for faculty recruitment.
- It talks about. Enhancing Gender balance in admission in higher education institutions.
- It talks about inclusive education admission system.
- It talks about providing socio -emotional and academic support and mentoring of the learners at all levels.
- 8 emphasizes on providing vocational education to all.
- It talks about establishing incubation centers in higher education institutions with partnership with industries.
- It talks about aligning Indian standards of education with international standards as maintained by International Labor Organization.
- The credit-based framework will also facilitate mobility across general and vocational education at all levels.
- It talks about stand-alone agriculture university, legal university, Health Science university, Technical University and standalone institutions in other fields which aim to become multidisciplinary institutions offering holistic and multidisciplinary education to all.
- It also talks about establishing E Vishwavidyalaya Digital University.
- It emphasizes on. Ensuring collaboration of policymaker, industrialist, educationist and corporate leaders for successful implementation of NEP 2020.
- Focuses on continuous check on progressive implementation of NAP objectives and timely feedback.
- It talks about renewing and reviewing the Composition, powers and functions of Bar Council of India and University Grant Commission.
- It lays focus on. Education which promotes ethics, human and constitutional values.
- It also focuses on Giving importance to Life skills.
- It talks about holistic development of the education system.
- It talks about establishment of performance assessment, review and analysis of knowledge for holistic development as a National assessment centre signifying and focusing significant step towards competency based and holistic assessment in education.
- It also focuses on Gender Inclusion Fund, emphasizing the importance of gender equality in education and supporting initiative to empower disadvantaged groups.
- It also focuses on special education zones to address the specific needs of disadvantaged regions and groups, furthering the policies commitment to equitable access to quality education for all.

Conclusion and Suggestions:

1. The NEP aligns with the imperatives of social justice and democratization of legal institutions. While its successful implementation hinges upon overcoming numerous challenges, the policy holds the

promise of revitalizing legal pedagogy and redefining the role of law schools in shaping the future of the legal profession.

2. The NEP emphasizes a holistic approach to education, aiming to cultivate critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills among students. In the realm of legal education, this translates into a departure from rote memorization towards experiential learning and interdisciplinary studies. Law schools are encouraged to integrate practical training, moot courts, and internships into their curricula, ensuring that graduates are not only well-versed in legal theory but also equipped with the skills necessary to navigate the complexities of real-world legal practice.
3. Furthermore, the NEP underscores the importance of inclusivity and diversity in education. In the context of legal education, this entails efforts to broaden access to legal studies for underrepresented communities and marginalized groups.
4. Scholarships, mentorship programs, and outreach initiatives are vital components of this endeavour, ensuring that the legal profession reflects the rich tapestry of society it serves.
5. Moreover, the NEP recognizes the evolving nature of the legal landscape in the digital age with advancements in technology and reshaping the practice of law.
6. Integration of courses on emerging fields such as cyber law, intellectual property rights, AI and technology in legal practice becomes imperative, equipping students with the expertise needed to address contemporary legal challenges.
7. By embracing the principles of the NEP, legal institutions can foster a new generation of lawyers who are not only knowledgeable in the law but also agile in their thinking, compassionate in their approach, and equipped to navigate the complexities of an ever-changing world.

References:

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