Is the Implementation of Sustainable Development at the Heart of the National Education Policy 2020 Vision?

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Abstract

Young people are the future of society and agents of social change. Therefore, it is essential to give them an education that equips them with information and skills and alters their attitudes and behavior toward sustainable development. In the future years, the national education policy envisions an ideal societal transformation through sustainable living and development. This study aims to investigate answers to the question: Is the implementation of sustainable development at the heart of the National Education Policy 2020 vision? This research is a content analysis of the new national education policy for the year 2020. It focuses on sustainable development and its derivatives to promote a way of life that does not negatively impact the planet's environment, economy, or society. The content analysis discovered ten direct and indirect references to discuss the idea of sustainable development and its derivatives. In addition, the National Education Policy of 2020 includes precise indicators for its three pillars: environmental sustainability with seven references, economic development with 21 mentions, and social change with 15 citations. Based on this evidence data, the researcher concluded that the newly proposed education policy possesses an ideal vision of implementing sustainable development in education.

Keywords: Sustainable Development; Implementation; National Education Policy 2020; Environmental; Economic; Social.

1. Introduction

Education is paramount to a country's ecological, economic, and social development, so a clearly defined and forward-looking education strategy is crucial at both the primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels. From prehistoric periods to the present, Indian history reveals a wide range of social, economic, political, and other social changes. The human metamorphosis aims to usher in new ways of living and organizing society. Educators in various nations tailor their strategies to their students' unique needs across elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels by considering their history, customs, and cultural norms. To see a flourishing society, we must reform our educational policies (Kumar, Prakash, & Singh, 2020). The government's investment in its people's education indicates its priorities. It was expected that the government and the system would do something after India fell off the list of top institutions in recent years. After 34 years, India shifted its approach to education to better facilitate national development. This new Policy was developed by an expert group led by Dr. Kasturirangan, the former chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization. The Central Government of India officially

adopted the NEP 2020 in July 2020. In 1968, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's government released the first National Policy on Education, which advocated for a radical reorganization and equal educational opportunities to promote national cohesion and cultural and economic development. The second education policy was drafted by Rajiv Gandhi in 1986 and revised by Narasimha Rao in 1992. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is the third NEP to be implemented in India. This means that a policy for the past 34 years fails to adapt to the modern educational landscape. As a result, the Ministry of Human Resource Development developed a new NEP in 2020.

The 1986 NEP revolutionized education by utilizing information technology. Restructuring teacher education, early childhood care, women's empowerment, and adult literacy received more focus. It also suggested that university and college autonomy will improve education services. However, NEP 1986 failed to improve education by producing graduates with employable skills and research output through patents and academic papers. To compensate for previous NEPs' failures, NEP 2020 proposes a liberal education to foster multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary education and research at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels (K., 2021).

This NEP 2020 envisions an education system firmly rooted in Indian ethos and contributes directly to transforming India sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society (Government of India, 2020). This will be done by giving everyone a high-quality education, eventually making India a world knowledge superpower. The Policy says that our educational institutions should teach students to have a deep respect for the Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values, feel connected to their country, and be aware of their roles and responsibilities in a constantly changing world. This is what the Policy wants to accomplish. This Policy's overarching goal is to help students become responsible global citizens committed to issues like human rights, sustainable development (SD), and the betterment of the planet. It also aims to instill a robust national identity by teaching them about India and its rich culture and history. The researcher is delving into the topic, "Is the implementation of SD at the core of the NEP 2020 vision?" in light of the new NEP 2020.

2. Materials and Methods

The 2020 NEP's qualitative and quantitative content analysis addresses the research question, "Is the implementation of SD at the heart of the goal?" The researcher used several SD and pillar concepts to examine thoroughly. These phrases included "SD," "sustainable," "environmental," "economical," and "social." The NEP 2020 was used in the inquiry. To determine their meaning, these essential phrases' histories were examined. Six terms were found for sustainable development, 14 for sustainable, seven for environmental, 37 for economic, and 60 for social. I was checking the Policy's relevance. Seventeen of the words were redundant. Thus they were removed from the study. Based on the title and first three lines, 26 more sentences were removed from the study. The author read 81 whole sentences. After analyzing these lines, 28 were duplicates or did not match inclusion requirements. Therefore, only 53 of these sentences were analyzed.

3. Results and Discussions

SD is typically described as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Burton, 1987). This is a popular definition of the notion. These three essential pillars support the ideas of social inclusion, environmental preservation, and economic growth (Sachs, 2012). According to the findings of the researcher who conducted the

content analysis of SD and its pillars phrases, the concepts above appeared ten times directly and indirectly in the new NEP 2020. In addition, SD's ecological, economic, and social components are discussed 43 times in different contexts (Government of India, 2020). The following figure 1 provides a graphical representation of this information.

Figure 1: The Pillars of Sustainable Development
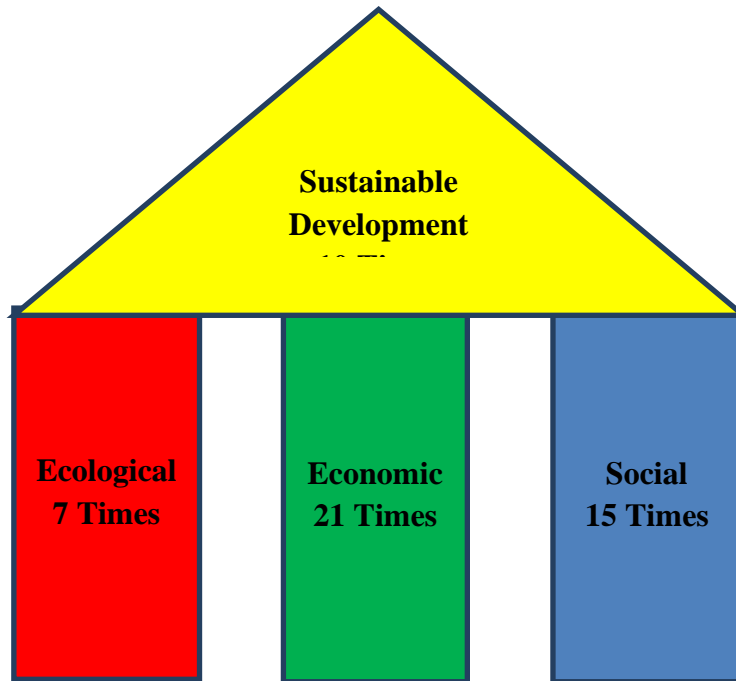
3.1 The Indicator of Sustainable Development

The concept of SD is mentioned directly and indirectly ten times in the NEP 2020, each time with a different context. India adopted SDG4 of the 2030 Agenda for SD in 2015 to provide inclusive and equitable quality education and encourage lifelong learning opportunities for everyone by 2030. To achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development SDGs, the education system must be restructured to promote learning. The goal of the Policy is to help students develop a strong identity as Indians in all aspects of their being and to provide them with the information, skills, attitudes, and tendencies necessary to be responsible advocates for human rights, sustainable development, and global well-being (Government of India, 2020).

The Indian Constitution's Fundamental Duties (Article 51A) and other Constitutional rules will be emphasized in teacher training programs. This means that teachers must follow these rules when teaching or doing any other activity. Environmental education in schools will integrate environmental knowledge with sensitivity to its protection and SD. Schools can make choices based on what is needed and possible in their area to keep things safe, secure, and an excellent learning place. School assessments highlight educational outcomes and financial, academic, and operational transparency. This would help India meet SDG4, which says that all children should be able to get a free, fair, and good primary and secondary education.

Higher education is essential for India to become what its Constitution says it should be: a democratic, fair, socially aware, cultured, and humane country that supports freedom, equality, brotherhood, and equity for everyone. Higher schooling is good for economic growth and stability. The impact of climate change, pollutants, managing waste, health and hygiene, biodiversity, forest and animal protection,

sustainable development, and living will all be covered in environmental education. Global Citizenship Education will help students understand global issues and advocate for peaceful, tolerant, and sustainable communities as the world becomes more interconnected. Thus, schools and institutions must uphold equity and inclusivity. The education policy must address justice and inclusion in higher education. This meets SDG 4.4 and maximizes India's demographic dividend. India must also be at the front of the pack when it comes to training workers in innovative fields like computational intelligence, genomics, biotechnology, nanotechnology, the environment, and living in a way that does not harm the planet. These fields will be taught to undergraduates to make them more employable. Clean energy, water saving, sustainable farming, protecting the environment, and other green technologies will also be emphasized in the classroom (Government of India, 2020).

3.2 The Indicator of Environmental Pillar of Sustainable Development

The following paragraphs will highlight the significant aspects of the environmental pillar of SD that are included in the new NEP for the year 2020. Children must study specialized disciplines, abilities, and talents in today's fast-changing world. Scientific temperament and evidence-based thinking; originality and initiative; concern for the environment (including water and resource preservation, sanitation, and hygiene); knowledge of current events and the most pressing issues confronting local communities, state by state, the nation, and the world; fluency in at least one foreign language. Current topics like AI, education regarding the environment, education about global citizenship, etc., will be integrated into curricula and teaching methods at the correct times to help students of all ages learn the skills they need to succeed (Government of India, 2020). School curricula will effectively mix environmental knowledge and sensitivity to its protection and SD to include environmental education. For a holistic, multidisciplinary education, all HEIs must offer credit-based courses and projects in community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education.

Environmental education will cover climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, biodiversity conservation, wildlife conservation, and sustainable living. Water conservation, sustainable agriculture, environmental protection, and green technology will also be emphasized in the classroom. As climate change, machine learning, and artificial intelligence advance, a healthy research ecosystem is more important than ever. In order to reclaim its position as a leading knowledge economy in the years and decades ahead, India will need to boost its research capability and production across disciplines. Economic, sociological, environmental, and technological progress depends on research more than ever (Government of India, 2020). India's social problems, like making sure everyone has access to clean drinking water, educational opportunities, improved communication, healthy air, energy, and amenities, will need solutions that are based on outstanding science and technology and an in-depth knowledge of the social sciences, humanities, and the different cultural and social and environmental contexts.

3.3 The Indicator of Economic Pillar of Sustainable Development

In the newly proposed NEP 2020, the many aspects of the economic pillar of SD are outlined. Education promotes personal, social, and national progress. India's ascent and global leadership in economic growth, social fairness, and cultural preservation depend on quality education. India should have a top-notch education system for all children by 2040. Education fosters social and economic mobility. Crores of young children, especially those from poor households, lack quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). ECCE for all children is the goal. They prioritize low-income neighborhoods with

socioeconomically disadvantaged schools (Government of India, 2020). Quality will keep students, especially girls and low-income pupils. Formal and non-formal education will be offered in schools to help students. Students from all backgrounds, especially socio-economically disadvantaged groups, should have access to high-quality residential summer programs in various disciplines offered at the national level. However, there are still significant differences in high school, especially for groups that have been underrepresented in school because they are poor (Government of India, 2020).

Socioeconomically marginalized individuals can be grouped based on gender, culture, location, disability, and socioeconomic position. High-quality ECCE assists economically disadvantaged pupils the most. This Policy reduces gender and socioeconomic inequities in education, especially vocational education. Education promotes economic growth and sustainability (Government of India, 2020). Socially disadvantaged children need support to succeed in college. Research is vital to a nation's economic, intellectual, sociological, environmental, and technological development. Constitutional ideals should inform it of social, economic, and political fairness. The state and federal governments will ensure books aren't too expensive and available nationwide, especially for rural and economically disadvantaged people. The nation's economic, social, cultural, educational, and technical growth is significant for making a high-quality, equal public education system. Funding will be made available for universal access, learning resources, nutritional support, student safety and well-being, adequate teachers and staff, teacher development, and all significant initiatives toward equitable, high-quality education for disadvantaged and socioeconomically underprivileged groups (Government of India, 2020).

3.4 The Indicator of Social Pillar of Sustainable Development

The following provides an overview of the most critical parts of the social pillar of SD, which are included in the recently proposed NEP 2020. The Policy promotes innovation through socioeconomic issues. It says that education must build cognitive skills like reading, writing, and math, as well as "higher-order" skills like cognitive thinking and problem-solving, as well as social, ethical, and moral skills and attitudes (Government of India, 2020). As many established nations have proved, learning one's language, culture, and customs improve educational, social, and technical advancement. Poor schools, social norms, and language have hindered Scheduled Caste enrolment and retention. Scheduled Caste children's access, engagement, and learning shall be prioritized. Reduce socioeconomic category gaps in the school curriculum in the following sub-sections. School facilities could promote community social, intellectual, and voluntary activities and social cohesion during non-teaching hours (Government of India, 2020).

Higher education must empower society to address its problems. A multidisciplinary education develops all human capacities, including intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral. Each school must help different students academically and socially. This strategy requires all schools to phase in vocational education programs to address the social status hierarchy of vocational education. HEI leaders will be socially committed, confident in teamwork, pluralistic, able to work with varied people, and cheerful. Literacy programs help adults learn to read and write, making the community want all children to go to school and community involvement in positive social change. The 1988 National Literacy Mission, primarily based on voluntary participation and assistance, increased national literacy from 1991–2011, especially among women, and launched conversations on significant societal issues (Government of India, 2020).

4. Discussions

The researcher has discovered that the new NEP contains an interplay between the idea of SD and the pillars that support it throughout its entirety. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the United Nations established in 2015 are the primary focus of this document. The NEP indicates SDG 4 quality education in SDGs, highlighting that India embraced Goal Four of the 2030 Agenda for SD. SDG four aims to provide inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone by 2030 (Government of India, 2020).

The Policy urges the many educational stakeholders to have SD and living by being true to the Indian way of thinking and being. To put into practice the idea of SD within the education sector, the Policy seeks to incorporate it through teacher training and higher education (Government of India, 2020). By focusing on SD, the researcher evaluates that the NEP foresees the dissemination, education, and implementation of SD by 2030.

One of the objectives of the NEP is to educate people about SD, not only in an overtly didactic way but by pointing out the three pillars, i.e., the environmental, economic, and social components. As a result of the ecological imbalance in the world, one of the NEP's primary goals, which will be in place by the year 2030, is to promote environmental sustainability. The researcher identified and measured approximately seven indicators of the significance of environmental consciousness in teaching, school, and higher education. This encompasses a scientific mindset and the ability to think in a way supported by evidence, as well as creativity and invention, environmental consciousness, including the conservation of water and other resources, as well as sanitation and hygiene (Government of India, 2020). It will suitably combine environmental knowledge and sensitivity to its protection and SD to make education about the environment a component of school curricula. Education will also focus on sustainable energy sources, water saving, farming that does not waste water, protecting the ecosystem, and other green technologies.

The researcher also produced a quantitative and qualitative analysis of approximately 21 economic sustainability indicators in the NEP for 2020. India aims to advance to developed nationhood, although it is now classified as a developing nation. Once the nation's economy can become stable and only grow higher, the nation will have achieved a peaceful and sustainable living situation on this planet. Education of a high standard for all citizens is essential to India's continued rise to the forefront of global leadership in areas like economic expansion, social justice, and the preservation of cultural traditions (Government of India, 2020). In addition, the strategy seeks to improve the status of disadvantaged members of society, particularly children, members of scheduled castes and tribes, those who are physically or mentally challenged, and those who come from economically disadvantaged sections. As a result, the strategy introduces an early childhood care and education program integrated into the conventional education system. The Policy's objective is to eventually make ECCE of a high level available to all children in the nation (Government of India, 2020). Neighborhoods that are struggling socioeconomically will be given priority. This Policy strives to decrease gender and socioeconomic inequities in education. Purchasing books at an affordable price is essential for people living in remote or rural areas and those with lower incomes.

The researcher quantified 15 times the component of the social dimension in the new NEP for the year 2020. The most crucial aspect of SD is the social change that may be brought about through disseminating information on SD. It is imperative to practice SD to solve social problems such as injustice, disparity, and inequality based on gender, economics, religion, and education. In and outside the classroom, each school must assist various student cohorts in academics and social development

(Government of India, 2020). Being well-versed in one's native tongue, cultural practices, and ceremonial traditions benefits intellectual, societal, and professional development. Relatively undeveloped in society and education, Other Backward Classes also require special care for their unique circumstances (Government of India, 2020). Based on the above evidence of direct and indirect indicators of SD and its pillars, the researcher has concluded that implementing SD in the future should be at the heart of the New Education Policy 2020.

5. Conclusion

The NEP 2020 prepares Indians for the future. For universal investment, the current Policy demanded a shift from development-based education to sustainable development. The policy revisions aim to align the system with SD, but the issues are how to mold pupils in a competitive economy. In contrast to the Government of India mega projects like Make in India, Start-up India, Skill India, and Self-Reliant India, it addresses India's need for sustainable solutions. This strategy considers aspects of national relevance that affect society and culture, such as regional adaptation and higher education for half the population. However, they must be carefully built to create global competitors. This NEP 2020 achieves Indian education reforms. It also makes necessary structural, institutional reforms that align with government nation-building major initiatives and SDGs. However, how union and state governments handle significant implementation issues will determine the holistic education of future stakeholders.

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