

Equitable and Inclusive Education of NEP 2020: It's Importance for Learning Perspective.

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Abstract:

India has a rich tradition in the field of multidisciplinary education approach since the period of Nalanda and Takshashila. The different learning institutions or centers (Ashram) in the ancient times initiated to teach various branches of knowledge such as singing, painting, mathematics, sports, science, vocational and professional subjects. India is a country with all most 138 crores population, where 8.6 percent tribal population (2011 Census) and rural population is 450 million. Equitable and Inclusive education is important for social justice and removing imbalance among the various cast, creeds and communities. This paper tries to focus on the perspective of the NEP, 2020 in bridging the gap of rich and poor, urban and rural, male and female, general categories, tribal categories and the minorities in case of education. In India it is observed that the successive government policies on education have made steady progress in bridging the gap of gender and social categories in all levels of school education, particularly in the secondary level, especially for Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDG). The SEDG can be broadly categorized based on gender- female and transgender, based on socio-culture as Schedule Tribe, Schedule Castes, OBC, and Minorities, on the basis of geographical location such as students from villages, small towns, and inspirational district etc. and on the basis of socio-economic conditions such as migrant communities, low income households, victim of child trafficking, orphans including child beggars and the urban poor. It is seen that the NEP 2020 is a must needed policy to reduce the gap of social categories in school, College and University education.

Keywords: Equitable, Inclusive, Education, Socio-Economic.

Introduction

Education is the identity of a nation or a community, which reflects the strength and weakness of the citizens of the country. Education helps in bringing the social justice and equality among the various caste and communities of a country. India has a rich tradition in the field of multidisciplinary education approach since the period of Nalanda and Takshashila. The different learning institutions or centers (Ashram) in the ancient time initiated to teach various branches of knowledge such as singing, painting, mathematics, science, vocational and professional subjects.

Equitable and Inclusive education is important for social justice and removing imbalance among the various cast, creeds and communities. The topic Equitable and Inclusive Education has been taken from the NEP-2020 published by the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India in Stanza No. 6. The equitable and inclusive stanza of the policy has been mentioned elaborately from 6.1 to 6.20. The term 'Inclusive' has been defined by the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016, as "a system of education wherein students with and without disabilities learn together and the

system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities”. This paper tries to focus on the perspective of the NEP, 2020 in bridging the gap of rich and poor, urban and rural, male and female, general categories, tribal categories and the minorities in case of education.

It is accepted that only the education can bring the social justice and equality in the society. Being a socialist and democratic country not a single Indian child should losses the opportunity to learn and excel their capabilities because of his or her caste, community, location or economic background. The government of India is taking various education policies in different times and achieving steady progress in reducing gender and social categories gaps in all levels of school education. But still large disparities among the different categories of children have been noticed, especially at the secondary and higher education system, particularly, among the Socio-Economically Disadvantage Groups (SEDG). The SEDG can be broadly categorized based on gender- female and transgender, based on socio-culture as Schedule Tribe, Schedule Castes, OBC, M.O.B.C, and Minorities, on the basis of geographical location such as students from villages, small towns, and inspirational district etc. and on the basis of socio-economic conditions such as migrant communities, low income households, victim of child trafficking, orphans including child beggars and the urban poor. The NEP 2020 of BJP led government has direct relationship in connection with the equitable and inclusive education with the New Education Policy of 1986. In 1986, the then Congress government led by Rajiv Gandhi introduced a new national education policy. This policy emphasized on the removal or reducing of disparities and to equalize educational opportunities for all, especially for Indian women, Schedule Tribes (ST) and Schedule Caste (SC) communities. The basic aim of that policy was to improve and equalize educational opportunities to all the citizens of the country. (Source, NEP-2020, p-24).

Review of Literature

Dr. Joseph K Thomas, (2022) *India's New National Educational Policy*, In the book the writer has try to simplify and decode the National Policy 2020 proposals on curriculum, courses and medium of instruction etc. The writer has mentioned in the book that the NEP 2020 has given more important on the Indian-centric education system which contributes directly to transforming our nation iin to an equitable, inclusive and vibrant knowledge society by offering high quality education to all.

Dr. Kashab Chandra Mandal, (2022) *National Educational Policy 2020. The Key to Development in India*. In the book the writer deals primarily with the National Education Policy 2020 of India. The author has made an attempt to highlight the provisions of the latest National Education Policy in comparison with some best education systems in the world such as the USA, the UK, and Finland. The comparative analysis with these countries has made this book unique and interesting to read. The examination of elementary as well as secondary education of Japan, and the best practices of Finnish schools and government have opened up a new door of knowledge to the readers. This book has been written mainly for students, teachers, guardians, and other stakeholders, who are actually going to benefit from the National Education Policy 2020. The author mentioned that India's future growth and genuine sustainable development can only be achieved through the proper implementation of the NEP-2020.

Prof. Raj Shree Dhar, (2021) , *NEP 2020 Conception of a Modern Knowledge Society*. The author has mentioned in this book that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is aimed at transforming India's education system into a modern, progressive and equitable one. The new policy focuses on improving

poor literacy and numeracy outcomes associated with primary schools, reducing dropout levels in middle and secondary schools and introducing the multi-disciplinary approach in the higher education system. Besides, the policy also lays emphasis on early childhood education, restructuring curriculum and pedagogy, reforming the examination process and investing in teacher training. Although the NEP 2020 aims to bring a holistic change in the education system of India, there are substantial challenges, both quantitative and qualitative, in implementing the reforms. This book intends to show a Concepts, Approaches and Challenges of NEP 2020.

Objectives of the Study

The basic objective of this paper is to find out the role of NEP 2020 in the Indian academic system. The NEP 2020 is aimed to make India as the knowledge guru of the Glob. India has a very good long history in the field of education since the ancient time. Keeping in view the importance of the NEP 2020 following are the objectives of this study,

1. To study the importune of NEP 2020 for academic improvement of our country.
2. To find out the role of Equitable and Inclusive Education among the various tribes and community of Assam.

Methodology of the Study

The topic of the study “Equitable and Inclusive Education of NEP 2020: It’s Importance for Learning Perspective” is selected after going through several review of literature. The study is purely based on secondary sources of data. Mostly the published government policies on NEP 2020 are taken as the main source of information. In addition to that the NEP 2020 main copy, news paper, seminar publications are also taken as the important secondary sources.

Description of the Policy

India is a country with all most 138 cores population, where 8.6 percent tribal population (2011 Census) and rural population is 450 million. The people of India speak a numbers of languages to share their views or to communicate with others. According to the SIL Ethnologue (a U.S. Based, worldwide, Christian non-profit Organisation) there are almost 415 living languages in India. According to the 2011 Census, following are the native languages with more than one million speakers, Hindi- 26.6 percent, Bengali-7.94 percent, Marathi-6.84 percent, Telegu-6.68 percent, Tamil-5.69 percent, Gujarati-4.55 percent, Urdu-4.19 percent, Bhojpuri-4.18 percent, Kannada-3.59 percent, Malayalam-2.87 percent, Odia-2.81 percent, Punjabi-2.57 percent, Rajasthani-2.13 percent, Chhattisgarhi-1.34 percent, Assamese-1.22 percent, Maithali-1.10 percent, Santali-0.576 percent, Kashmiri-0.541 percent, Nepali-0.242 percent, Garhwali-0.205 percent, Bodo-0.120 percent, Garo-0.093 percent, Khasi-0.086 percent etc. The verities speakers of languages belong to different caste and communities. (Source, Census 2011).

India is a welfare country, where common people development and socio-economic improvement is the prime objective, prior to the National Education Policy 2020, the average budget allocation for the education sector was within 2 percent to 3 percent. But the NEP 2020 has mentioned it that the minimum budget allocation for the education sector should be 6 percent, because as a developing country India has a lot to do for the infrastructure development. In the rural and hilly areas there is lack of proper infrastructural facilities for higher education.

According to the U-DISE data of 2016-17, there are about 19.6 percent students belong to the Schedule Caste categories at the primary level, but this percentage reduces to 17.3 percent at the higher secondary level. During the period the drop-offs of Schedule Tribes students are higher, that is 10.6 percent to 6.8 percent, and differently-abled students drop-offs percentage is 1.1% to 0.25%. The main reasons of educational gap among the students of SC and ST are the multiplicity of factors, which includes lack of access to quality schools, poverty, customs, languages and historical and geographical factors. Bridging the gap among the students of SC, ST and Minorities is one of the major goals of the NEP 2020. The policy also emphasizes on the importance of providing learning mechanisms to the Children With Special Needs (CWSN) or Divyang, so that the CWSN also get the same opportunities for their education like any other school children.

The last National Education Policy published in 1986, was based on the suggestion of the Kothari Commission. The uniform proposed pattern of Kothari Commission was 10+2+3 structure. It has been noticed that since 1986 to 2020, the long 34 years of planned education policy could not reduce the gap of equitable and inclusive education among the students of ST, SC, Minorities and General categories etc. The purpose of the education policy is to develop good citizens, capable of rational thoughts and actions, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination with good moral values. It aims at producing productive and contributing citizens for building an equitable and inclusive educated society as envisaged by the Constitution of India.

The Education Minister of India, Dharmendra Pradhan, said that the NEP 2020 is a visionary education policy for the 21st Century. In the NEP 2020, the school curriculum has been changed from its traditional activities to include artificial intelligence and financial literacy. One of the important aspects of the NEP 2020 is that it has given more emphasis on the mother tongue or regional languages so that the indigenous people of the country can learn their past history or culture, tradition or customs etc at least effort. With a view to ensure unity and integrity of all knowledge the NEP 2020 has introduced the concept of multidisciplinary and a holistic education across all streams, such as sciences, arts, humanities, social science and sports. (The Sentinel, date: 24-02-2022)

The Educational Policy lays emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities—both the foundational capacities of literacy and numeracy and ‘higher-order’ cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving—but also social, ethical and emotional capacities and dispositions. The basic purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings with rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage with social responsibility, innovation and creative imagination with proper moral values. The Constitution of our country has envisaged for building an equitable, inclusive and prosperous country. Therefore, the NEP-2020 has also given more stress on the equitable and inclusive education to all the citizens of the country irrespective of region, caste, community and culture.

NEP 2020 in Assam

The Government of Assam has decided to adopt NEP 2020 from the session 2023-24. As a part of the policy the Government of Assam has decided to merge the Secondary Education Board of Assam (SEBA) and Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC) and to upgrade 1000 high schools to Higher Secondary schools because the class XI and XII will be no longer with the college courses. The Chief Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that the implementation of the NEP 2020 will bring a paradigm shift all over the country. In the different academic and ministerial levels the pros

and cons or prospects and problems of the policy are discussed for several times. The NEP 2020 is a universal policy for the country as well as the state. To implement the policy in the state there should have a universal academic calendar, uniform credit grading system, minimum common course framework, parallel entries and exits provision, digital courses and resource repository, the inclusion of papers Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), self financing courses, the Common Entrance Test (CET) for getting admission in to the UG and PG courses of all the universities and a common syllabus among all the universities (state universities) of Assam. as a part for implementation of the NEP 2020 the Secondary Education Board of Assam (SEBA) has made an important announcement that the pattern question paper of four subjects for the HSLC examination will be revised from 2023. The question papers of 100 marks will have 45 marks as objective questions in four subjects, the subjects are English, General Mathematics, General Science and Social Science. For the time bound implementation of the NEP 2020 one of the basic problems is the developing physical infrastructure and human resource within an integrated framework. The policy emphasized on the holistic development of the students both in the academic and non-academic spares. To make equitable and inclusive education the NEP-2020 has made no any hard distinction between arts and science, vocational and non-vocational or academic streams. One of the important features of the policy is the conceptual understanding by the students rather than rote learning or learning for passing the examination. Equitable and inclusive education system is the result of the multidisciplinary education system, hence the skill like communication, cooperation, teamwork, resilience, vocational, technology, sports etc. are included in the curriculum of the new education policy. So that, each and every student of the country can take the minimum education, which is mentioned in the Right to Education Act, 2009. To make equitable and inclusive education the NEP-2020 aims to remove the language barriers and at the same time increasing access for Divyang students. Infrastructure development is one of the main hurdles for implementation of NEP 2020 in Assam. The Chief Minister of Assam has said in a Conference that the Government will spend 6% of its total state GDP for infrastructure development in the coming years. It is mentioned in the policy that those region with larger population from educationally disadvantaged SEDGs should be identified as Special Education Zones (SEZ), which will help to minimize the gap of education. As a part of the policy the Government of India will constitute a “Gender-Inclusion Fund” to build the nation’s capacity to provide equitable quality education to all girls and transgender students. Moreover, the government will provide free – boarding facilities to the students , where students have to come from far areas or the students who comes from the economically disadvantage groups.

Conclusion

The NEP 2020 is the milestone for removing knowledge and geographical differences among the students of various categories in different geographical locations. It is seen from the past experience that in most of the state education system is running with under funded. It is lacking behind for innovation and capacity building of the students. This indicates that hundreds of schools and colleges will be needed capacity building and reorientation with regards to operational aspects of the NEP 2020, which will require many experimental goals and learning. Assam is the pioneer state of the North Eastern Region. Assam is called as the mini India, because the inhabitants of the state are belong to all the states of the country in general and north eastern region in particular. As the population of the state is belongs to various caste and communities of the NER states, the languages of the people are also different. According to a study done by an organization, it is found that there 55 languages (including dialogue)

are speaking by the people in different parts of the state. The languages in Assam are varied, ranging from Assamese as the official language to the Bodo, Bengali, Karbi, Rabha etc. The speakers of the bodo, karbi, Rabha languages are the indigenous tribes of the state. With having the diversity of languages the NEP 2020 is trying to bring a common platform for improvement of education system in Assam. Considering the importance of vernacular languages the policy will be able to club all the students of different background under one umbrella. The government of Assam has already decided to implement the NEP-2020 from the 2023-24 session, therefore, immediately the government should develop the infrastructural facilities both in the schools and colleges, should make more provisions for appointing brilliant teachers with proper training, at the same time the equitable and inclusive education system will be possible in Assam if it gives more important in research and development of education system of Assam.

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