



Educational Paradigm Shift: National Education Policy 2020 and Karnataka Experience

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Abstract: From the research conducted using primary and secondary data, it is observed that Central Government of India has done extensive planning with numerous inclusions while implementing the National Education Policy in the year 2020, to upgrade the education system of India to meet the global standards.

Karnataka being the first state in the country had the task to start everything from the scratch. All the universities, colleges, teaching fraternities, administrative offices had the responsibility to reach the expectations and impart world class, quality education to the students enrolling for various courses.

The impact of the sudden announcement and the hasty implementation of the NEP 2020 by the then State Government and its repercussions over the 2 years are studied and presented in the paper.

Key words:

NEP 2020, Karnataka State, life and soft skills, job market, education, Academic credit, critical thinking, stakeholders, youth empowerment.

Introduction

The National Education Policy of 2020 (NEP) is a striking example of India's endeavour to attempt a paradigmatic change in its educational system. It offers a comprehensive framework made to foster in students important skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and holistic development. NEP attempts to capture the enduring philosophy of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a prominent figure in Indian education, and is grounded in the conviction that education has a dynamic effect capable of stimulating societal transformation. Dr. S Radhakrishnan ardently promoted the harmonic blending of ancient wisdom and modern knowledge, creating an educational environment that not only promotes practical skills but also ethical ideals and a deep understanding of one's cultural heritage. His aspiration for education underscored the need to produce intellectually curious and morally upright citizens. The vision outlined in NEP 2020 resonates in a number of ways with the symbiotic ideals shared by Dr. Radhakrishnan for India – a fusion of global perspectives with India's rich intellectual traditions.

By ushering in NEP 2020, the Central Government of India has arranged a comprehensive framework with numerous key features in an effort to improve the educational environment. The policy reflects a determined effort to align India's educational system with international benchmarks. However, the success of the vision largely depends on appropriate and informed execution of these ideals at multiple levels. Karnataka, a pioneering state in terms of inclination towards implementation of the policy, is riddled with the burden of mounting complexities associated with the issue. The issue involved not only sustaining lofty values but also providing a world-class education of quality to the expanding student population, with the onus falling upon universities, institutions, educators, and administrative authorities. In-depth analysis of Karnataka's history as the forerunner of educational reform is provided in this article, with a focus on the nature of the implementation, challenges involved and possibilities that lay ahead.

Objectives: Currently in the education sector, NEP 2020 is the most trending topic for discussion. In this paper, the focus is given on the topics such as, basic information about the NEP 2020, discussion is done about its impact on the faculties and students, pros and cons, vision and mission in the view of the paper presenter.

Research methodology:

1. To understand the ground reality, survey was conducted involving over 200 undergraduate students who are currently pursuing their Higher Education across various Education Institutions in Karnataka as per the NEP 2020.
2. Telephonic conversation was done with the faculties who are currently in academia and serving for over a decade or two.
3. Referred to various journals and UGC guideline materials

Secondary sources: Dailies, journals, various articles were referred to give a brief about the basic information about the NEP

Scope – findings of the study: From the research, it is learnt that, NEP 2020 in Karnataka has resulted in inconvenience, confusions in the implementation stage. The concept of major courses, minor courses, skill and ability enhancement even though is designed for the betterment of course giving opportunities for the students to explore themselves, requires much more time to fulfil its every objective.

Lack of full-fledged training, introduction of the syllabus, infrastructure to the teaching faculties has directly affected on the quality of content delivery. There is a need for the proper channel for the communication of all the circulars for the uniformity in the functioning which could not be achieved as per the requirement.

Awarding UG Certificate, UG Diploma, and Degrees

UG Certificate:

Students who opt to exit after completion of the first year and have secured 40 credits will be awarded a UG certificate if, in addition, they complete one vocational course of 4 credits during the summer

vacation of the first year. These students are allowed to re-enter the degree programme within three years and complete the degree programme within the stipulated maximum period of seven years.

UG Diploma: Students who opt to exit after completion of the second year and have secured 80 credits will be awarded the UG diploma if, in addition, they complete one vocational course of 4 credits during the summer vacation of the second year. These students are allowed to re-enter within a period of three years and complete the degree programme within the maximum period of seven years.

3-year UG Degree: Students who wish to undergo a 3-year UG programme will be awarded UG Degree in the Major discipline after successful completion of three years, securing 120 credits and satisfying the minimum credit requirement as given in table 2 (Section 5).

4-year UG Degree (Honours): A four-year UG Honours degree in the major discipline will be awarded to those who complete a four-year degree programme with 160 credits and have satisfied the credit requirements as given in table 2 in Section 5.

4-year UG Degree (Honours with Research): Students who secure 75% marks and above in the first six semesters and wish to undertake research at the undergraduate level can choose a research stream in the fourth year. They should do a research project or dissertation under the guidance of a faculty member of the University/College. The research project/dissertation will be in the major discipline. The students who secure 160 credits, including 12 credits from a research project/dissertation, are awarded UG Degree (Honours with Research).

Infrastructure Requirement: The Departments offering a 4-year UG Degree (Honours with Research) must have the required infrastructure such as the library, access to journals, computer lab and software, laboratory facilities to carry out experimental research work, and at least two permanent faculty members who are recognized as Ph.D. supervisors. The Departments already recognized for conducting the Ph.D. programme may conduct a 4-year UG Degree (Honours with Research) without obtaining any approval from the affiliating University.

UG Degree Programmes with Single Major: A student has to secure a minimum of 50% credits from the major discipline for the 3-year/4-year UG degree to be awarded a single major. For example, in a 3-year UG programme, if the total number of credits to be earned is 120, a student of Physics with a minimum of 60 credits will be awarded a B.Sc. in Physics with a single major. Similarly, in a 4-year UG programme, if the total number of credits to be earned is 160, a student of Physics with a minimum of 80 credits will be awarded a B.Sc. (Hons./Hon. With Research) in Physics in a 4-year UG programme with single major.

UG Degree Programmes with Double Major: A student has to secure a minimum of 40% credits from the second major discipline for the 3-year/4-year UG degree to be awarded a double major. For example, in a 3-year UG programme, if the total number of credits to be earned is 120, a student of Physics with a minimum of 48 credits will be awarded a B.Sc. in Physics with a double major. Similarly, in a 4-year UG programme, if the total number of credits to be earned is 160, a student of Physics with a minimum of 64 credits will be awarded a B.Sc. (Hons./Hon. With Research) in Physics in a 4-year UG programme with double major. Interdisciplinary UG Programmes: The credits for core courses shall be distributed among

the constituent disciplines/subjects so as to get core competence in the interdisciplinary programme. For example, a degree in Econometrics requires courses in economics, statistics, and mathematics. The total credits to core courses shall be distributed so that the student gets full competence in Econometrics upon completion of the programme. The degree for such students will be awarded as B.Sc. in Econometrics for a 3-year UG programme or B.Sc. (Honours) / B.Sc. (Honours with Research) in Econometrics for a 4-year UG programme. Multidisciplinary UG Programmes: In the case of students pursuing a multidisciplinary programme of study, the credits to core courses will be distributed among the broad disciplines such as Life sciences, Physical Sciences, Mathematical and Computer Sciences, Data Analysis, Social Sciences, Humanities, etc., For example, a student who opts for a UG program in Life sciences will have the total credits to core courses distributed across Botany, Zoology and Human biology disciplines. The degree will be awarded as B.Sc. in Life Sciences for a 3-year programme and B.Sc. (Honours) in Life Sciences or B.Sc. (Honours with Research) for a 4-year programme without or with a research component respectively.

Source: UGC NEP guidelines https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/7193743_FYUGP.pdf

Even though the implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) is a revolutionary step by the Central Government of India in the year 2020, it has got mixed opinion from the direct and indirect users of it. Basically it had two major challenges to cope up with, firstly it was introduced during COVID-19 pandemic and secondly since the Government was in a hurry to implement it, the committee had no proper time for planning and designing the syllabus and subjects.

Karnataka being the first state in India to adopt NEP 2020, the students, professors and the entire administrative section was in a position to undergo the process of trial-and-error method and it consequently led to its implementation. Even though the Central Government announced NEP 2020, there was a lack of a proper system in place to give it a boost and supporting system for the smooth functioning. Some of the major drawbacks of hasty implementation of the policy which can be noticed are;

A. No proper designing of the syllabus: Planning the subjects alone was the task which was completed to some extent, whereas the designing of the syllabus and the content is not developing at the expected level of quickness. In Karnataka NEP is adopted in the year 2021 and currently heading towards 5th semester, i.e., 3rd academic year. With 2 complete years on the hands of the committee, it was unable to communicate the syllabus beforehand to the faculties.

The committee developed the custom of communicating the syllabus at the eleventh hour. As a result, faculties will not be getting enough time to plan the course, refer and prepare for the classes as the target will be to finish off the portion before deadline when the semester begins.

Its repercussion will be in students due to lack of effectiveness in teaching with prescribed methodologies of the NEP.

B. **Training programme for the lecturers:** No advanced and specialized training sessions have been organized for the teaching faculties on adoption of NEP 2020. Even though recently IGNOU came up with free online training, it was also not far from various technical glitches.

C. **Practical application of subjects:** Some of the subjects like, Yoga, Health and Wellness isn't feasible and practically applicable as it isn't possible to serve the purpose practically. Subjects like Yoga, Health and Wellness are expecting the involvement of students to the fullest and education institutions started facing trouble in finding the qualified faculty who can take up the subjects and can give impetus to the purpose it has to serve.

D. **Double pressure post-COVID 19:** Firstly COVID 19 came as a challenging period especially in the education sector to adapt to the latest technology and virtual classes. Secondly, lockdown, suspension of physical classes, pause in all the academic activities resulted in undue delay in completion of the academic year.

When the system reversed to normalcy, education institutions, especially UG and PG centers, had too many challenges in front of them, especially regarding bringing back the academic Calendar back on track. Gradually NEP was also introduced and the institutions had to sail through two boats such as, striving to bring the academic year back on the track and to adopt to the NEP.

D. **Pressure on students:** Even though majority people and educationists opine that NEP has given vast opportunities for students to explore, this particular factor would take some more years to become reality. Institutions with not enough workload to the faculties as a result of less number or no students in any specific subject, feared loss of job. This turned out as a disadvantage to the students too.

Under the category of Open Elective Papers, against the policy of giving the liberty to students to opt any subject as per their interest, some institutions are seen, making it mandatory to the students to take up the subject allotted to them. This is to provide the workload to the faculties who were falling short of workload. This is against the basic policy of NEP.

E. **Documentation and submission of IA marks:** Cumbersome task of documentation and finalizing the Internal Assessment marks is another challenging task up in front of the institutions. Uploading in the Unified University and College Management System (UUCMS) may have unique features to keep record of students' data under one umbrella by providing a unique Identification Number to each student. But it was also not far from the lacuna. To the administrative department with zero knowledge about the website and its features came as a nightmare and in no time they had to explore it and adapt to the new system.

F. **Challenges in accepting technology:** Just like all other sectors, even the education sector has faculties of all ages from 24 to 60 years. When the NEP 2020 focuses more on introducing technology in every possible way, it has put pressure on the teaching fraternities who are at the edge of retirement age.

The challenge in front of them is, inculcating the knowhow of the technology at the earliest and also using them every day at work. In some cases, even when the teaching faculties had all the enthusiasm to learn and adopt the technology, the fear factor of facing students who are well versed with technology than them was another concern.

G. Misinformation spreading at a faster pace than the authentic verified information:

When the new system is put in place and if no proper communication is done, it creates space for all the possible misinformation.

Since Karnataka was the first state to implement the NEP, prior to the implementation, along term training and developed programme for the teaching and non-teaching fraternities would have benefitted and allowed for the smooth functioning of the NEP. This is because, the concept of multidisciplinary courses and it's mission and visions being new to all, the possibility of misconceptions, misinformation are of high possibility.

Every negative has a positive side too. Likewise in numerous ways, the NEP 2020 has also gained appreciation from stakeholders. The old system of education which was drafted nearly 4 decades ago, was not able to sync itself to the Gen-Z as we are far ahead and technology has started replacing human beings in all given sectors. When the generation and the entire world is facing and focusing on technology adoption and implementation of various technological tools and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in all the sectors including education, it was the need of the hour for India too to bring changes in the education system to provide ample opportunities to the youth to find themselves competitive in all the fields across the world.

Therefore, there is no doubt that bringing the changes in the Education Policy of the nation was a ray of hope for the students. To mention some of the pros of NEP 2020 for students,

A. Academic Bank of Credit : Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) has become the most unique and student friendly option. This allows students to opt for exit and entry to the course whenever and wherever they wish to. Like earlier, there is no concept of 'drop-off' suppose the student is unable to continue due to the reasons like finance, health etc.

B. UUCMS access to students: To keep the system transparent, in the recently introduced Unified University and College Management System, the portal has student login option too allowing them to view their details. This system also provides unique ID for each student which is unique to that particular student.

C. Emphasizing skill development, digital fluency among the students: Current job market expects the candidates to have advanced knowledge, creativity, job skills right from the beginning when they join for the job. To fulfill this requirement, NEP is exploring wide range of methodologies in curriculum such as, lecture, tutorial, practicum/ laboratory work, seminar, internship, studio activities, field practice/ projects, community engagement and many more. Earlier education system more or less

was just limited to preparing candidates for 'clerical' jobs as no much impetus was given on overall growth of a student. External occasional training programmes, workshops were conducted to provide idea about the job market requirements to the students instead of allowing them to identify, recognise, explore, expose themselves to the challenges, etc. With the introduction of internship, community engagement and services it is expected to give opportunities to the students to understand the real world they need to deal with when they step out of institution with qualification ready for the job.

D. Multidisciplinary approach: Correlation between multiple streams is achieved under NEP 2020 enabling the student to explore their interests across all the streams irrespective of Arts/ Commerce / Science. By nature, the human mind is capable of being receptive to multidisciplinary subjects. Previous education system had strict differentiation between the streams and there was no or very less scope for exploring the interests. Integrity of knowledge is able to be achieved with the NEP 2020 since the job market is expecting it from the current generation.

E. Life skills enhancement: When multidisciplinary approach, holistic education, integrity of streams is given impetus, it encourages students for creative and critical thinking, helps in improving their communication, teamwork, co-operation, coordination skills.

When the students get to learn by exploring and with hands on experience, it enables them to be competitive in the job market and boosts confidence level.

F. Local languages: Even though currently in India there are a total of 1,369 mother tongues, basically importance is given to English as it is necessary for business communication. As a result, all the local languages are side lined and gradually losing its sheen.

To prevent this, in NEP has introduced local language in the curriculum and has given chance to the interested to learn.

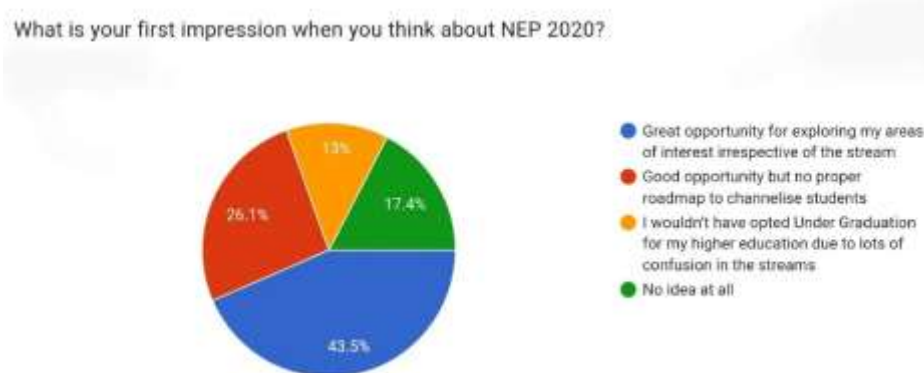
G. Generic outcomes: NEP is expected to allow students to explore themselves to the practical work culture by providing hands-on activities, pose to the real life challenges and any similar tasks. With the exposure it is possible to achieve the competitive qualities in a candidate to improve their communication skills, analytical / critical thinking, research related skills, digi / technical skills, collaboration with others, environmental awareness and action, inculcating the values and many more.

H. Mocktail of courses: Since multiple entry/ exit is possible with NEP, each semester is expected to have it's unique value across the complete course, because it should be viable for a student who wish to obtain a job just with certificate/diploma/degree/degree with honor by utilizing multiple entry/ exit and ABC.

To achieve this, the committee has designed each semester in such a way that it has major / core subjects, minor streams, Ability Enhancement Course (AEC), Skill Enhancement Course (SEC), Value Based (VB) making it a mocktail. It enables the student to attain overall basic knowledge with the help of

lecture, tutorial, practical work, internship etc. making it useful for preparing himself/herself for the job even when opt for exit in between the course.

I. **Benefit for the job providers:** Employers when appointing a candidate for the job, initially will be spending time and money on training the candidate. When the NEP with multidisciplinary activities and courses prepare students in 360° for competing in the job market, it is expected to save the resources of the employer helping them to focus on improving the business model and contribute for the development of the nation by providing job opportunities to the youth.



Response received from the survey conducted among 200 students across Karnataka

Observations and summary of the survey conducted:

Even though there are many stakeholders to the NEP 2020, ultimately it is designed for the benefit of the youth of India. Hence we conducted a survey involving 200 students with a questionnaire which had 12 questions to study their opinion about the National Education Policy 2020. In the study it was found that,

- a. The survey was conducted involving the students enrolled themselves for B.Com, BCA, BBA and BSc who were in their even semesters.
- b. About 62.5% of the students expressed their confusions they have when they were asked if they have decided anything about completing the 4 years programme in one stretch. Surveyor was told that, they are in need of a proper workshop before heading towards 4th year programme as they have no seniors whom they can approach to understand the relevance of taking up 4th year programme.
- c. It is also understood that, 75% students are having positive opinion about the NEP 2020 to bring up changes in the education system giving them ample opportunities rather than pursuing old, single tracked, monotonous 3 years undergraduate programme. In NEP 1986, focus was only on one specialisation and it led to obtain basic computer application coaching from external institutions post college working hours. However in the NEP 2020 where digital literacy, Artificial Intelligence and many more such skill and ability enhancement courses are included in the curriculum itself, it is beneficial for the students to understand what the current job expects from them and what skill sets they need to have to procure a better job.
- d. Even though 75% of the respondents have positive opinion about the NEP 2020, 25% of the total respondents are still looking forward for the clear roadmap to guide them through. Nearly 21%, in spite of opting for under graduation as a further step in their Higher Education (HE), they have no idea at all

about the NEP 2020. Due to lack of knowledge about the scope of NEP 2020, they are following the old method of going for UG courses to pursue minimum goal. Then they had no option, but to give it for a toss just to pocket a job.

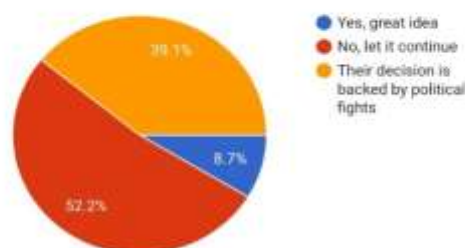
e. When the students are having doubts, queries it is the faculties whom they approach to get answer to their concerns. But in the opinion of student respondents, it is observed that approximately 17% teaching faculties are not happy with the NEP 2020, 24% are neutral with their opinion whereas only 59% of the faculties are having positive opinion about the NEP 2020. This may be due to lack of proper workshop, training and orientation programme, insufficient infrastructure facilities provided to the faculties to render the service and guide students.

f. In the opinion of 79% of the respondents, NEP 2020 should have been implemented after designing the entire structure completely so that they would have got enough materials for reference. Because 41.7% respondents are still not aware if they are referring to the proper material and whether it is relevant to the course, 21% say they aren't getting enough materials and only 37.5% say they are getting enough study materials.

g. When the objective of studying any concept is not clearly communicated to the students, it is not possible to deliver the content effectively. This does not make students to understand the importance of studying a specific subject. As a result, they end up assuming that their selected subject itself is not their cup of tea. Hence when the question was posed if the subjects are simple to understand or not, 70.8% opined that it is neither simple nor easy to understand. In contrast to this, 79% are happy that since 40 marks are allotted to Internal Assessment, they get to write semester examination for the remaining 60 marks in just 2 hours duration.

h. Concern is not just about students, they were also asked about their parents' opinion about NEP 2020 and it was understood that more or less in the equal proportion, some parents are happy with the NEP 2020, some are not and some are not at all aware of the NEP 2020 and they are neutral in their opinion.

What is your opinion about current Karnataka State Government decision with the withdrawal of NEP 2020?



i. After all, 52.2% students are of the opinion that they are expecting something big from NEP 2020 to make their life settle after proper implementation giving them better and best opportunities across the world and live the life they dreamt of. About 9% think, it is better to withdraw the NEP 2020 and implement in the later years so that a set of youths' education and career is not harmed for life time since

NEP 2020 is still there in its nascent stage and only Karnataka State students are facing these issues as things are not yet certain regarding the job opportunities in future and the viability of the course they are pursuing.

Conclusion:

Hick-ups, hurdles are part and parcel during the transition period so as in the case of NEP 2020 too. Updating self when the world is moving at a faster pace is very crucial. Bringing contemporary issues in education, inclusions related to digital literacy, recognition to local languages, skill and ability enhancement courses are the necessity as the current job market at national and international level requires competing candidate who is all set to take up high profile and high level of responsibilities even at the younger age without any work experience. To enable this, inclusion of internship, research, community services, field exposure in the curriculum is necessary. NEP 2020 even though takes time to make its base strong, is generally expected to bring a massive revolution in the field of education in the opinion of experts in the academia.

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