

# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON HIGHER EDUCATION- A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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## ABSTRACT

*The new Corona virus has hampered global education. In this situation, humanity must adapt to a new lifestyle to survive to the next phase. COVID-19's emergence has hampered the educational system as a whole. However, a new educational method has emerged as a remedy for the troubles. Online teaching-learning and educational broadcasting have helped advance education to a great extent. This paper discusses online teaching-learning, worldwide and national educational broadcasting, and Indian adaptation. Also mentioned is the educational system of Kerala in difficult times.*

**Keywords :** Educational Broadcasting, Online teaching-learning, Public Education, Victers', KITE

## Introduction

India is one of the countries with the highest young population in the world. Utilizing the talents of this young population appropriately is an important factor for the development of our country. The major goal of the SDG4 (Sustainable Development Goal) 2030 agenda for sustainable development adopted by India in 2015 is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. The entire education system should be reconfigured to acquire this target. The gap between the existing levels of learning outcomes and needed learning outcomes should be eliminated to execute the highest quality, equity, and integrity in the education system. The higher education system in India is always facing certain problems regarding access and equity among the students due to less number of institutions in remote areas, lack of disability-friendly infrastructure, etc. The previous national policies in India have given prior importance to the issues regarding access and equity. In the higher education sector in India, these aspects have great significance.

Several policies were implemented by the Government of India for the upliftment of Indian citizens from independence till now. National Education Policy 2020 is the newest one among these policies. Inclusive Education has an important role in the present Indian Education scenario. In this context, analyzing the NEP by giving special focus to the provisions on inclusion in higher education has

great significance. So, the present study is an attempt to analyze the provisions in these policies based on certain categories adopted by the investigator.

## Statement of the Problem

Inclusive Education in National Education Policy 2020 with special focus on Higher Education - A Critical Analysis

## Objective of Study

1. To analyze the National Education Policy 2020 with a special focus to access and equity in Inclusive Education in the Indian Higher Education system.

## Research question

1. Whether the provisions in National Education Policy 2020 are enough to meet the needs of Inclusive Education in the Indian Higher Education system with a special focus to access and equity?

## Methodology adopted for the study

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For the present study, the investigator adopted Deductive Content Analysis as the method of study. A provisional coding technique was adopted to analyze the qualitative data. The investigator has generated a predetermined list of certain categories of qualitative data to assess the research question generated by her. The codes were developed from a prediction about what would be found in the data before they have been collected or analyzed (Miles and Huberman, p78). Access and Equity are the categories adopted by the investigator to find out the answer to the research question. Based on these categories, the investigator developed a coding sheet based on yzed the provisions of NEP 2020 using this coding sheet.

**Provisions in NEP 2020 related to Access**

The policy provides more importance to establish high-quality higher education institutions in underserved areas. These institutions will be established in the public and private sectors. A minimum of one school will be established in each district. The use of local language or bilingual methods will be given priority in higher education institutions. The institutional buildings will be wheelchair accessible and disability friendly. A National Research Foundation will be established for the enrichment and funding of research in India. The government will adopt certain measures to increase access, equity, and inclusion. Scholarships will be provided for disadvantaged students. Online learning and Open Distance Learning will be provided all over the country. Learners with disabilities will be provided learning material according to the nature of their disability and needs. To eliminate the digital divide among the learners, digital educational access to all students will be facilitated. Special attention will be given to Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups and vocational education will be given prior importance.

**Provisions in NEP 2020 related to Equity**

High-quality Higher Educational Institutions will be established in or near every district and Special Educational Zones. Priority has been given to the use of local language or bilingual methods for getting equal opportunities for

students from different parts of the country using different languages. Students from rural areas will get adequate support for their higher education such as hostel facilities. Government should provide funds to support the students from Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups. According to NEP 2020, gender balance will be maintained throughout the admission process in higher education institutions. Outreach programs among the SDGs on education programs and scholarships should be conducted. Technology tools will be developed to maintain equity in the higher education sector. The digital divide among the students will be eliminated to enhance equitable access to higher education.

**Coding Framework used for Analysis**

A coding framework is a matrix used for the coding process. It can be regarded as a reference guide based on which coding of the NEP 2020 with a special focus on inclusion in higher education has been done.

Category	Sub- Category	Code Generated	Sections of NEP 2020
Access(A)	Institutional (I)	A.I	9(3), 10(8), 10(10), 12(5),12(9)
	Economical (E)	A.E	9(3)
	Infrastructural(In)	A.In	9(3), 14(4)(2)
	Internet(It)	A.It	9(3),24(2)
	Disability friendly(D)	A.D	9(3), 14(4)(2)
Equity(E)	Curriculum (C)	E.C	12(6), 14(4)(1)
	Institutional (Is)	E.Is	14(4)(1), 12(9)
	Economical(E)	E.E	14(4)(1), 26(3)
	Gender(G)	E.G	14(4)(1)
	Technology(T)	E.T	14(4)(1), 24(2)
	Infrastructure (In)	E.In	26(3)

**Analysis and Discussion**

NEP 2020 is an important land ark in the Indian Education System. There are several provisions in this policy regarding inclusion in higher education.

The establishment of high-quality higher education institutions in all districts has utmost importance. But, in a highly populated country like India, a single institution in one district is not enough. The distribution

of such institutions will be based on the young population of a particular area. Establishing such institutions in Special Education Zones has great significance. It will be a fortune for students belonging to disadvantaged groups.

In the present context, most higher education institutions are using local languages or their mother tongue as the medium of instruction. It will be helpful for them to understand the concepts easily. But, at the same time, it will discourage them to know and understand other languages. The influence of the mother tongue will always be a barrier to the acquisition of other languages like English.

The establishment of the National Research Foundation is a hope for the research institutions and research scholars in India. Current public expenditure on education in India has been around 4.43% (economic survey 2017-18). National Education Policy 1968 has recommended the education expenditure level in India to be 6% of GDP. This target was not achieved yet. The current level of education expenditure in India is far behind that of most developed and developing countries. Educational investment is the best investment for any nation. It will help the development of our country, to establish NRF, and make it an icon of educational investment in India.

Providing educational scholarships for disadvantaged students will help to maintain a kind of equity among the students. It also will help them to access higher education by breaking financial barriers to higher education.

The provisions regarding online and open distance learning have much importance in the pandemic scenario. But, there are problems regarding accession to learning devices and networks. Eliminating the digital divide is an important thing that should be done before implementing such learning strategies. Students from economically backward classes and rural areas are facing problems regarding accession to learning material and internet coverage. The policy also ignores the digital divide between children with special needs and typical children. Breaking up these barriers is an important task before implementing such kinds of learning methods.

The policy has given special focus on the education of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs). Government funds and outreach programs to support students from SEDGs will help them to overcome the barriers to higher education to an extent.

Mainstreaming vocational education is an important recommendation of NEP 2020. It will help the students to enhance their employability by acquiring skills in their area of interest without considering their caste or creed.

### Conclusion

NEP 2020 is an important landmark initiative of the country to achieve educational goals with excellence. The finding of the study reveals that the provisions in NEP 2020 are not enough to meet the needs of Inclusive Education in the Indian Higher Education system with a special focus to access and equity. Certain changes in some sections of this policy are necessary for its successful implementation of it. Inclusion in higher education is an important part of the Indian Education scenario, especially in the aspects of access and equity. High quality equitable higher education system is necessary for the growth and progress of the country as a whole.

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