



Assessment Reforms in Indian Education: A Study of NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at the proposed assessment changes in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and their possible effects on the Indian educational system. The study assesses the transition from conventional exam-based evaluations to a more comprehensive and ongoing evaluation method. The research paper establishes a contextual framework that enables readers to more fully understand and appreciate the assessment reforms proposed in NEP 2020 through a thorough review of the literature, policy documents, and empirical data.

KEY WORDS

Assessment, National Education Policy 2020, Examination System, Indian Education System.

INTRODUCTION

Any educational framework must have an assessment system since it shapes learning results and offers suggestions for improvement. An important educational policy in India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, calls for a paradigm shift in how assessments are conducted. This essay will examine the NEP 2020 assessment reforms, looking at their goals, how they work, and how they can affect students, instructors, and the larger educational ecosystem.

Objectives of Study

1. To understand objectives of Assessment Reforms in NEP 2020.
2. To find challenges in its implementation.
3. To know the mechanisms of Assessment in NEP 2020.

Literature Review

P. S. Aithal & Shubhrajyotsna Aithal. Their paper highlights various policies announced in the higher education system and compare them with the currently adopted system. Various innovations and predicted implications of NEP 2020 on the Indian higher education system along with its merits were discussed.

Hemakumar G and Vijay D Joshi have discussed about the growth of new educational policies and their implementations across the nation. It also engrossed some major problems in previous policy which is urgently needed to be overcome for the betterment of the young mindsets to contest with growing competition in the global knowledge and economy.

Amlesh Kumar and Laxmidhar Behera have stated that the academic quality and relevance of examinations in Indian education system has been a matter of concern for a long time. Thus, their paper attempts to analyse the examination reforms in India: Towards quality and excellence in higher education.

Background

Historical Perspective of Assessment in Indian Education

It is essential to first place the proposed assessment reforms in the historical context of Indian educational assessment practices in order to comprehend the relevance of the NEP 2020 assessment reforms.

The Indian educational system has always placed a heavy emphasis on summative evaluations, frequently in the form of final exams. This strategy placed a strong emphasis on knowledge repetition and rote memory. This technique of evaluation was criticized for not adequately gauging students' critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and ability to apply their information in real-world situations, even though it had advantages in terms of testing students' recollection of facts. Additionally, it resulted in a high-stakes exam culture that could make children feel stressed out and anxious.

With time, a rising understanding of the need for a more comprehensive evaluation system that evaluated a wider variety of abilities and competences evolved. Due to this, formative assessments, projects, and practical evaluations were added to standard exams to create continuous assessment processes. With these modifications, teachers hoped to help pupils build a more thorough set of skills and a deeper comprehension of their subject matter.

Overview of the National Education Policy 2020

A turning point in Indian education was reached with the ratification of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in July of that year. It is a thorough policy statement that lays out a vision for the restructuring of India's educational system at every level, from pre-kindergarten to higher education.

The modernization of assessment procedures is one of the major issues covered by NEP 2020. The strategy promotes a change to a more complex and varied evaluation system in recognition of the shortcomings of conventional examination-based assessments. This change indicates a commitment to preparing students for the needs of the 21st century and is consistent with global trends in education.

Continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE), which combines formative and summative assessments, is emphasized by NEP 2020. This method seeks to offer a more comprehensive understanding of a student's educational path by considering not only academic achievement but also traits like critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and knowledge application in real-world situations.

The policy also emphasizes the value of lessening exam pressure and promoting an environment in the classroom that fosters creativity and innovation. It also emphasizes how technology is incorporated into evaluation procedures, creating new opportunities for adaptive and customized evaluation techniques.

Objectives of Assessment Reforms in NEP 2020

- **Moving Beyond Rote Memorization:** The Indian educational system has historically come under criticism for prioritizing rote memory, in which students learn facts without really understanding the underlying principles. This method frequently results in surface-level learning, where students may perform well on tests but have trouble applying their information in real-world settings.

Here, it is intended to shift the emphasis from rote memorizing to a more comprehensive comprehension of the principles. This entails encouraging learners to go deeper into material, investigate its real-world applications, and understand the guiding concepts. Instead, then focusing on a student's ability to repeat facts, the NEP 2020 assessment method tries to gauge their understanding and application of knowledge.

- **Fostering Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills:** Effective problem-solving requires the capacity to critically assess data and make defensible decisions. Both in the classroom and in the real world, these abilities are essential for success. In the past, India's assessment practices frequently prioritized memory and recall tests above critical thinking tests.

Assessments that actively promote the development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities are intended to be incorporated into NEP 2020. This entails developing examinations that call for students to use their knowledge in analytical ways, come up with solutions to challenging issues, and reflect critically on a range of topics.

- **Reducing Exam-Induced Stress and Anxiety:** Students who take traditional exams may experience significant levels of stress and anxiety. The stress of passing a single, important exam can be harmful to a student's mental health and may not be an accurate indicator of their overall aptitude.

NEP 2020 aims to reduce this stress by implementing a continual evaluation mechanism. This entails periodically evaluating pupils during the school year so they may show their understanding and development throughout time. The approach intends to lessen the severe strain associated with one-time, high-stakes tests by distributing assessments across a variety of formats and periods.

- **Ensuring Comprehensive Skill Development:** Students are increasingly understood to require a wide range of abilities in addition to academic knowledge to succeed in the modern world. These include, among other things, digital literacy, creativity, teamwork, and communication skills.

NEP 2020 aims to make sure that examinations analyse a student's development of these more general, transferrable skills in addition to their academic proficiency. In order to prepare students for an increasingly diversified and competitive global economy, it is necessary to provide examinations that let students demonstrate their skills in areas outside the traditional subject matter.

NEP 2020 seeks to provide a more balanced and thorough evaluation process that more accurately represents a student's general abilities and readiness for the challenges of the 21st century by incorporating these objectives into the assessment system.

Mechanisms of Assessment in NEP 2020

The Indian educational system's evaluation practices have undergone substantial modifications as a result of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. It places a focus on an evaluation of a student's performance that is more comprehensive and ongoing. These are the assessment procedures listed in NEP 2020:

1. **Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE):** One of the main elements of the evaluation changes suggested by NEP 2020 is Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). It entails a constant and ongoing evaluation of a student's progress over the course of the academic year. This method emphasizes on giving students regular feedback and evaluating their learning in terms of their academic knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and values.

- **Continuous Assessment:** Instead than depending merely on sporadic exams, this CCE component entails regularly monitoring students' progress over time. Quizzes, assignments, participation in class, and other formative evaluations carried out during routine classroom activities may be included.
- **Comprehensive Evaluation:** CCE considers a variety of elements besides academic performance. It takes into account a student's total development, including extracurricular activities, behaviour, social skills, and emotional health.

In order to help students and teachers discover areas for improvement and implement remedial measures, CCE aims to provide timely and constructive feedback to both parties.

2. Formative and Summative Assessments

- **Formative Assessment:** This kind of evaluation is carried out throughout the learning process to keep track of a student's development and comprehension of the subject matter. Formative evaluations sometimes involve low-stakes exercises including quizzes, conversations in groups, projects, and observations. Formative assessments provide feedback that is used to modify teaching methods and improve students' conceptual understanding.
- **Summative Assessment:** Summative evaluations are carried out at the conclusion of a learning session (such as a semester or academic year) to gauge a student's general comprehension and level of skill in a subject. These tests usually have high stakes, just as final exams, and they give an overview of a student's achievement.

NEP 2020 aspires to give a complete picture of a student's educational path by combining formative and summative evaluations.

3. Portfolios, Projects, and Practical Assessments:

To assess a student's abilities and use of information, NEP 2020 promotes the use of alternative assessment techniques such as portfolios, projects, and practical evaluations.

- **Portfolios:** To show their development and accomplishments throughout time, students build a portfolio of their work, which may contain essays, projects, artwork, or other tasks.
- **Projects:** Students can apply their knowledge and skills to actual circumstances by participating in project-based learning, and the project itself serves as a kind of evaluation.
- **Practical Assessments:** Practical evaluations offer a technique to measure a student's performance in topics that call for practical skills, such as science experiments or vocational training.

Beyond the confines of conventional written exams, these techniques provide a more nuanced view of a student's talents.

4. Technology-Enabled Assessment Tools:

The potential of technology in assessment is acknowledged by NEP 2020. It promotes utilizing digital tools and platforms to carry out assessments, monitor progress, and give tailored feedback.

- **Online Tests and Quizzes:** Online tests can be created and administered thanks to technology, which also allows for automated grading and rapid feedback.
- **Learning Management Systems (LMS):** These tools make it easier to handle assignments, exams, and student-teacher communication.
- **Data Analytics:** By utilizing data analytics, instructors can learn more about trends in student performance and better adapt their curriculum to the needs of each student.

Technology integration in assessments supports NEP 2020's objective of updating educational methods and improving assessments.

Taking a step away from a system that is only exam-focused and toward a more comprehensive understanding of a student's abilities, these assessment methods work together to provide a more thorough

and student-centric approach to evaluating learning outcomes.

Challenges and Implementation Hurdles

Teacher Training and Capacity Building

Explanation: Ensuring that instructors have the necessary training and resources to effectively use the new assessment methods is one of the major obstacles in implementing the assessment reforms specified in NEP 2020. The principles of continuous evaluation, the creation and administration of formative assessments, and the interpretation of assessment results for useful feedback are all covered in this.

Significance: Since teachers are crucial in putting the new assessment system into place, they must receive the proper training. They must be adept at creating tests that correspond to the learning objectives and at giving pupils helpful criticism.

Actions Needed: Institutions and educational authorities must fund extensive initiatives for teacher preparation. Both theoretical and practical facets of evaluation methodologies should be covered in these programs, which should be ongoing to accommodate evolving needs and technological advancements.

Infrastructure and Technological Requirements

Explanation: NEP 2020's assessment changes rely greatly on having access to the right infrastructure and technology in order to be implemented successfully. This includes having the right equipment for conducting digital exams, dependable internet connectivity, and appropriate places for carrying out various tests.

Significance: It becomes difficult to conduct assessments in a way that is in keeping with the NEP 2020 principles without the required hardware and software. Based on the availability of resources, this may result in differences in educational experiences and outcomes.

Actions Needed: Infrastructure and technology need to be invested in by educational institutions and authorities, especially in areas or communities where these resources are inadequate. This can entail supplying laptops or tablets to schools, maintaining dependable internet access, and establishing comfortable conditions for exams.

Alignment with Existing Examination Boards and Systems

Explanation: India has numerous boards and states with their own testing procedures. The NEP 2020 assessment reforms must be carefully coordinated and aligned with these current systems. Addressing potential conflicts or overlaps in evaluation practices is part of this.

Significance: A seamless transition depends on the new assessment methodologies complementing and integrating with the current systems. It avoids misunderstandings between teachers, parents, and students.

Actions Needed: To ensure that the reforms are understood and that there is a clear plan for how they will be integrated, educational authorities and policymakers should engage in communication with the current examination boards and systems. This could entail changing the structure of current exams or offering advice on how to adjust to the new assessment methods.

Cultural and Societal Perceptions of Assessment

Explanation: Assessment-related attitudes and ideas may vary among cultures and nations. Standardized testing may be prioritized by some while practical skills and project-based assessments may be emphasized by others. In order to implement NEP 2020's reforms, it is necessary to take into account these various viewpoints.

Significance: To ensure that the reforms are embraced and accepted by all stakeholders, evaluation processes must be modified to conform to cultural and societal standards. It aids in preventing opposition to or distrust of the new system.

Actions Needed: To explain the justification for the assessment reforms, policymakers and educational institutions should interact with communities, parents, and other stakeholders. They should also be receptive to criticism and ready to make changes that honour social and cultural norms while still achieving NEP 2020's goals.

Comparative Analysis with Previous Assessment Systems

Contrasts with the 10+2 System: The “10+2 system” is a reference to the previous structure of school education in India. Under this system, students went through 10 years of primary and secondary education followed by 2 years of higher secondary education. This system culminated in board examinations at the end of the 10th and 12th grades. Here are some key contrasts between the 10+2 system and the assessment reforms proposed in NEP 2020:

- **Emphasis on Continuous Assessment:** NEP 2020 emphasizes a shift from a primarily examination-based assessment model to a more continuous and comprehensive evaluation system. In contrast, the 10+2 system heavily relied on high-stakes board examinations as the primary method of assessment.
- **Reduction of Exam Stress:** One of the key objectives of NEP 2020 is to reduce the stress and anxiety associated with high-stakes exams. The 10+2 system, on the other hand, was often criticized for the immense pressure it placed on students due to the weightage of board exams.
- **Holistic Evaluation:** NEP 2020 encourages a more holistic evaluation approach, which takes into account various aspects of a student’s performance including academic, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities. In contrast, the 10+2 system tended to focus primarily on academic achievements.
- **Greater Flexibility and Choice:** NEP 2020 provides greater flexibility for students to choose subjects based on their interests and strengths. The 10+2 system had a more rigid subject selection process, especially in the science, commerce, and arts streams.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, NEP 2020’s assessment reforms have the power to completely transform the Indian educational system by promoting a more thorough and student-centered evaluation strategy. Although there are implementation issues, the intended benefits of these reforms can be achieved with coordinated efforts in teacher training, technological infrastructure, and stakeholder involvement. This strategy is a brave move in the direction of developing well-rounded, critical-thinking people prepared for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

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