

Role of National Education Policy2020 in Viksit Bharat2047 through the lens of Sustainable Development Goals2030

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Abstract – The National Education Policy is a transformative revolution aimed at reshaping India's education structure and mechanisms to meet the demands of the future. This manuscript explores how the NEP2020 is a necessity in achieving the dream of “Viksit Bharat2047” (Developed India) by aligning its objectives with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG2030). We have attempted to correlate NEP2020 and SDG2030 in areas like quality education, gender equality and sustainable economic growth to demonstrate how the NEP2020 can serve as a catalyst to the nation's overall development and attainment of the global sustainability agendas.

Keywords – *National Education Policy2020 (NEP2020), Sustainable Development Goals2030 (SDG2030), Education, Viksit Bharat, Skill.*

INTRODUCTION

India with its Gurukul system was the founder for a holistic education system that nurtured the learner's critical abilities, moral values as well as the complete persona(Sahoo & Vadranam, 2024). However, post-Independence, India lost its knowledge supremacy to the West. This could be attributed to many factors including post-colonial legacy challenges like poverty, illiteracy lack of infrastructure, adoption of Western models of education and sidelining of the indigenous knowledge systems(Pandya, 2024). The focus of our education policy thus drifted from holistic education to a more segmented, exam-oriented mechanism that promoted rote learning over individual creativity and critical thinking(THAKKAR, 2024). However, the COVID19 pandemic forced us to a digital medium of education popularly called Online Education(Bordoloi et al., 2021; Dziuban et al., 2018). This cultural, societal and economic shift in the functioning of the nation during the time of the crisis necessitated the overhaul of our education mechanism(Badyal & Sharma, 2022). Long-term vision of our leadership to be a “Vishwa Guru” by achieving Viksit Bharat 2047 and a partner to SDG2030 further added fuel to the demand for the revival of our education policy(Aithal & Aithal, 2020b). The lawmakers, educationist, researchers and policy makers have accepted the fact that to ensure survival and success of the fittest in the current digital world calls for a robust, dynamic education system that can empower its citizens with the skill and knowledge required for sustainable development(Aisha, 2020).

The National Education Policy2020 (NEP2020) is a significant transformation from the previous education policies of 1968 and 1986(Lata et al., 2022). It emphasizes on a holistic, flexible and multidisciplinary approach to a holistic, lifelong learning experience that allows the learner to remain part of the productive

workforce by relearning, reskilling and retraining at any stage of their life(Kalyanpur, 2008). In the preceding sections of this manuscript, we shall first provide an overview of NEP2020 in section ii. Section iii shall then establish an alignment between the NEP2020 and SDG2030. Following this section iv shall detail the execution plan of ViksitBharat2047. Section V shall further conclude the analysis by also laying down the current challenges that have to be met in the near future to realize the vision of Viksit Bharat2047.

NEP2020: AN OVERVIEW

The NEP2020 was introduced by the Government of India on 29th July,2020 to guide the overhaul of the current Indian education system by fostering skills like critical thinking, creativity and innovation in the individual learners(Panditrao & Panditrao, 2020). The policy emphasizes on a holistic, flexible and multidisciplinary education system with strong base in ethics and human values(Badyal & Sharma, 2022). It advocates equal access to education for all irrespective of any disparities due to gender, age or geography(Sahoo & Vadranam, 2024). It also prioritizes an all-inclusive education that integrates general education, vocational training as well as technology(Kumar & Kumar Singh, 2023). Table I below details the key features of the NEP2020:

Table I- Major Features of the NEP2020 (Aithal & Aithal, 2020a; Kharche, n.d.; Sahoo & Vadranam, 2024)

S. No	Feature	Characteristic
1	5+3+3+4 school structure	Replaces the conventional 10+2 pattern. New structure is aligned with the cognitive development stages of the child. The new structure corresponds to various cognitive development stages of the child, namely: 3-8 years →Foundational Stage; 8-11 years → Preparatory Stage; 11-14 years → Middle Stage and 14-18 years →Secondary Stage.
2	Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)	Foundational Literacy and numeracy from ages 3-6 years to be national priority. This shall be achieved through Anganwadi’s, pre-school etc.
3	Flexible Higher Education	Course selection to be the learner autonomy with no distinction between arts, science and commerce. This shall promote multidisciplinary learning. Multiple Entry Multiple Exit (MEME) possible to reduce drop-out rates. Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) to be raised to 50% by 2035.
4	Multilingualism	Regional Language or mother tongue to be the medium of instruction till at least grade V. Atleast 2-3 languages to be mode of instruction. Development of course material in regional languages to be embarked upon.
5	Technology in Education	Digital Literacy, coding skills and data science to be promoted from early stages. Blended Learning to be used as a means of imparting education.
6	Holistic & Multidisciplinary Education	Encourages integration of arts, humanities and sciences across disciplines and empowering students to choose subjects according to their interest.
7	Overhaul of Curriculum Content	Focus to be on experiential learning and development of critical thinking and vocational skills. Rote Learning to be discontinued.
8	Multiple Entry and Exit Options	Education to be lifelong learning. Undergraduate programs to have multiple exit options like a certificate after 01 year, diploma after 02 years,

		Bachelor’s degree on completion of 03 years and a bachelor with research upon completion of 04 years.
9	Establishment of Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)	To allow seamless continual of education transfer of credits to be enabled through the Academic Bank of Credits.
10	Single Regulator	Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) to be single regulator for all higher education except medical and law.
11	Integration of Vocational Education	Skill Development through vocational courses to be introduced in a phased manner beginning as early as grade VI onwards.
12	Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	All teachers shall be expected to complete atleast 50 hours of CPD every year.
13	Equitable and Inclusive Education	Ensuring education of female as well as transgender students, as well as special emphasis on socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) and disabled learners.

Table I above highlights how the NEP2020 aspires to create an education system on the lines of ancient Gurukul system aligned with current global standards. The NEP2020 policy aims to revamp the Indian educational framework to establish an unbiased and lively knowledge society that imparts quality education to all and paves way for reestablishing India as a global knowledge superpower or “Vishwa Guru.”

ALIGNMENT OF SDG2030 & NEP2020

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) established 17 universal goals as part of its 2030 schema for sustainable development(UNESCO, 2019). These goals address global challenges critical to the survival of humanity like inequality, poverty, climate change, peace, justice and environmental degradation(Boeren, 2019). These SDG’s are designed to be a blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable planet to ensure a more prosperous future for all by 2030(Nirzam & Ramadhan, 2023). Each goal in this case has a specific target and associated indicator to measure relative progress. All the goals are interconnected in a way that action in one area shall affect the outcome in others(Ohta et al., 2022). Together these goals shall ensure balanced social, economic and environmental development(Khan et al., 2022).

India with its significant population, economic influence and being a signatory to SDG2030 has already integrated the SDG goals into its national development agenda(Ferguson & Roofoe, 2020). The NITI Aayog, India’s policy think tank is tasked with coordinating and monitoring the implementation of these SDGs. The Aayog regularly assesses progress of states and union territories on various SDG parameters by publishing SDG India Index(Aithal & Aithal, 2020b). The government has also made significant efforts towards its commitment to SDG 2030agenda. This is demonstrated through various policies and programs as outlined in Table 2 below:

Table II- Government Initiatives to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (Bahar Chowdhury AssttProfessor, 2023; Saini et al., 2023)

S.No	Initiative	SDG	Remarks
1	Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojna (PMGKY)	SDG1- No Poverty	Relief package for poor especially during calamities and emergencies including free food grains, cash transfer etc.
2	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Aims at enabling affordable housing to the urban and rural poor.
3	Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)	SDG2- Zero Hunger	Enables insurance coverage and financial relief to farmers in case of crop failure.

4	Public Distribution System (PDS)		Realizes the distribution of essential food grains at subsidized rates
5	Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)	SDG3- Good Health and Well Being	Health care of upto 5 lakh per family for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.
6	National Health Mission (NHM)		Aimed to improve healthcare services delivery across urban and rural India
7	Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)	SDG4- Quality Education	Ensures inclusive and equitable quality education till grade XII
8	Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)		Enables funding to higher education to promote quality education access to all.
9	Mid-day Meal Scheme (MMS)		Free lunches to students in government schools to encourage enrolment
10	Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)	SDG5-Gender Equality	Improve the girl sex ratio and protect and educate the girl child.
11	Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)		Financial assistance to pre-gestant and lactating mothers to ensure their proper care and nutrition.
12	Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)	SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	Eliminate defecation and improve solid waste management across rural and urban India
13	Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)		Safe and adequate drinking water through individual household connections.
14	Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	Free LPG connections to women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households
15	National Solar Mission		Establish India as a global leader in Solar Power generation
16	Make in India	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	Encourage both domestic and multinational companies to manufacture in India thus generating employment.
17	Digital India	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	Convert India into a digitally empowered, knowledge economy.
18	Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY-NRLM/NULM)	SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	Promotes poverty alleviation through entrepreneurial funding in urban and rural India.
19	National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	Promotes sustainable production and consumption patterns.
20	Zero Defect Zero Effect (ZED) Certification Scheme		Promotes MSMEs to adopt clean and sustainable practices
21	International Solar Alliance (ISA)	SDG 13: Climate Action	Promote global use of solar energy.
22	National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA)	SDG 14: Life Below Water	Conservation of aquatic ecosystems like lakes, wetlands etc.
23	Green India Mission	SDG 15: Life on Land	Restore India's diminishing forest cover
24	Bharat Net Project	SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	Enable high-speed digital connectivity to 2.5 lakh gram panchayat to help in transparent governance.
25	India-UN Development Partnership Fund	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	Supporting projects in developing nations.

Table II above is not a complete list of all government initiatives, but it reflects the government's commitment to addressing the SDGs by addressing all the critical areas of concern. As one of the largest democracies in the world, India's commitment to achieving SDG2030 agenda is commendable. However, challenges remain in major domains like gender equality, poverty reduction and environment sustainability. Success in these domains calls for a change in the social mindset and structure which can only be achieved through quality, holistic education that also instils basic human ethics and values. Hence, the NEP2020 policy documents is actually in direct correlation to SDG 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 17 as detailed in Table iii below:

Table III- Correlation between Sustainable Development Goals and the National Education Policy

S.No	SDG	NEP2020 recommendation	Remark
1	Good Health and Well Being (SDG3)	Sports and physical education advocated to be core part of the curriculum. Emotional well-being of students also catered through counselling and reducing stress.	Realizing the importance of healthy mind and body the NEP2020 propagates holistic education with compulsory physical education component.

2	Quality Education (SDG 4)	Aims to enable inclusive and equitable holistic education through experiential learning and skill development to produce globally competent graduates. It also emphasizes on ECCE.	The holistic, multidisciplinary, multilingual, blended learning strategy of NEP2020 is targeted at ensuring education for one and all irrespective of age, status, gender or ability. Hence, the nation shall enhance its workforce.
3	Gender Equality (SDG 5)	Advocates the elimination of gender biases in educational content and practices. Promotes gender sensitive curricula and increased female participation in STEM fields.	Promotion of female and transgender education shall pave way for equivalent or gender-neutral leadership opportunity thus creating a balanced society.
4	Decent work and economic growth (SDG8)	Fosters a skilled and employable workforce. Emphasises vocational education from grade VI, internships and industry partnerships to bridge the gap between education and employment.	Promotion of decent work and employment for all targeted through promotion and apt development and training of individual skills and ability.
5	Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG9)	Research culture to be promoted across the nation through establishment of the National Research Foundation (NRF) to promote scientific research and innovation.	A robust digital infrastructure for learning alongwith NRF shall promote creation of new avenues for innovation and research.
6	Reduced Inequalities (SDG10)	Promotes inclusivity in educations. Focus is on reducing disparities in access to quality education for the marginalized communities like rural and backward classes	Scholarships, digital education, regional language learning and blended learning are being adopted to level the playing field.
7	Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG12)	Incorporates environmental education into the curriculum, fostering an education into sustainability and responsible consumption.	Encourages students to adopt sustainability practices and become responsible global citizens.
8	Partnerships for the Goals (SDG17)	NEP2020 promotes collaboration with global institutions of higher education and research. Thus, promoting knowledge exchange.	NEP2020 is committed to enhancing global partnerships.

Table III above significantly highlights how the NEP2020 is not just in alignment with SDG4.0 pertaining to quality education. Instead, it drives the nation towards the achievement of several SDGs by fostering gender equality and reducing inequalities, enhancing economic growth through skill development and training etc. The policy is a landmark policy that integrates principles of equity, inclusion, multidisciplinary and sustainability to prepare a future-ready education system for realizing a developed nation.

VIKSIT BHARAT2047 – THE EXECUTION PLAN

While the NEP2020 provides a comprehensive framework for aligning our education as a mechanism for achieving the SDGs, the implementation of the same in our diverse nation is not a simple task(Kumar & Kumar Singh, 2023). Significant challenges like the need of robust infrastructure, digital resources, sufficient funding, teacher training and adequate manpower are the major challenges. Despite these imminent challenges the NEP also presents immense opportunities to leverage technology, foster public-private partnerships and create a more adaptable education system.

The ”Viksit Bharat 2047” initiative, also referred to as the “Developed India 2047”, is a vision set by the Government of India to transform the nation into a developed nation by 2047, which marks the centenary anniversary of our independence(Kharche, n.d.). However, fulfilling this vision shall require a multi-faceted, long-term strategy focusing on all sectors like infrastructure, social development, governance, technology and economic. We thus, highlight the key components of the Viksit Bharat execution plan in table IV below-

Table IV-Key Components of the Viksit Bharat Education Plan (Bano & Varghese, 2023; Bhoi et al., n.d.; Kharche, n.d.; Kumar & Kumar Singh, 2023; Kumar Singh et al., 2023; Pandya, 2024; Sahoo & Vadrnam, 2024; Singh, 2024; Suthar, 2024; THAKKAR, 2024)

S.NO	Component	Goal	Aim
1	Economic Growth and Prosperity	Targeting High GDP growth	Make India to be one of the top three global economies.
		Inclusive Development	Economic Growth should benefit all sections of the society.
		Agricultural Reforms	Modernizing agriculture with advanced technology and sustainable practices to increase farmer income
2	Infrastructure Development	Smart Cities and Urban Planning	Developing smart cities with state-of-the-art infrastructure, digital connectivity, and sustainable urban planning to accommodate the growing urban population.
		Transport and Logistics	Expanding and modernizing transport networks, including roads, railways, airports, and ports, to enhance connectivity and reduce logistics costs.
		Energy Independence	Focusing on renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, and ensuring universal access to electricity
3	Social Development	Healthcare	Establishing a robust healthcare system with universal access to quality healthcare services, focusing on preventive care, and leveraging digital health technologies.
		Education and Skill Development	provide quality education and skills training, preparing the workforce for future challenges, and promoting

			research and innovation.
		Social Security	Strengthening social security measures, including pensions, insurance, and welfare schemes, to provide a safety net for vulnerable populations.
4	Governance and Institutional Reforms	Transparent and Accountable Governance	governance reforms to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public administration, supported by digital tools and e-governance.
		Judicial Reforms	Streamlining the judicial process to ensure timely justice, reduce pendency of cases, and enhance the overall efficiency of the judiciary.
		Decentralization	Empowering local governance bodies and promoting decentralization to ensure that development initiatives reach the grassroots level.
5	Technological Advancement	Digital India	Strengthening the Digital India initiative by expanding internet connectivity, promoting digital literacy, and encouraging the adoption of digital services across all sectors.
		Research and Innovation	Promoting R&D in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, quantum computing, and space exploration, with the aim of positioning India as a global leader in innovation.
		Cybersecurity	Enhancing cybersecurity infrastructure to protect critical digital assets and ensuring the safety and security of the digital economy.
6	Sustainability and Environmental Protection	Climate Action	Committing to international climate agreements and taking proactive measures to combat climate change, reduce carbon emissions, and promote sustainable practices.
		Natural Resource Management	Efficient management of natural resources, including water, forests, and minerals, to ensure their sustainability for future generations.
		Waste Management	Implementing comprehensive waste management strategies, focusing on

			recycling, waste-to-energy projects, and reducing plastic waste.
7	Global Leadership	Foreign Policy	Strengthening diplomatic relations and international cooperation, particularly in areas like trade, security, and climate change, to enhance India's global standing.
		Cultural Diplomacy	Promoting Indian culture, heritage, and values on the global stage, and using cultural diplomacy as a tool for soft power.
		Defense and Security	Modernizing the defense sector, enhancing military capabilities, and ensuring national security in a rapidly changing global environment.
8	Civic Participation and Empowerment	Public Engagement	Encouraging active participation from citizens in governance through initiatives like participatory budgeting, community-led development, and public consultations.
		Empowerment of Women and Youth	Special programs to empower women and youth, ensuring their active involvement in the nation's development, and promoting gender equality and youth leadership.

Implementation of all the above schemes shall call for a robust evaluation and monitoring framework to track the progress of all initiatives as well as perform mid-course corrections if any. To implement these large-scale infrastructure projects also calls for public-private partnership to optimize public expenditure and reduce public debt.

CONCLUSION

NEP 2020 plays a pivotal role in India's journey toward becoming a "Viksit Bharat" by 2047, aligning closely with the SDGs 2030. By focusing on quality education, gender equality, economic growth, and sustainability, the policy lays the groundwork for a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future. The successful implementation of NEP 2020 will be key to achieving these goals and positioning India as a global leader in sustainable development.

FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The NEP2020 is aimed at being an education policy with long term impact in increasing the workforce while eliminating the current social, economic, cultural as well as gender disparities. However, the actual implementation of this policy in its near future implies eroding the institutional disparities, creating

sufficient digital resources to support blended learning, redirecting sufficient financial resources as well enabling trained teachers to disperse the knowledge. At the time of this writing, the effective realization of this policy calls for unified collaboration among all stakeholders including the government, industry and academia. A major challenge to be overcome is raising the public acceptance of this policy through effective dissemination of the what, how as well as why of the NEP2020.

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