

Opportunities and Challenges for Women's Education as Envisaged in New Education Policy (NEP) 2020: A Critical Review

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Abstract:

The education of women is not only the issue of the nation, but also the worldwide development for women. Education defines the development of a nation and the society. Today is the time rapidly changing. Women play the crucial role in the growth of socio-economic development. After a long time, the new education policy has been introduced on 29th of July 2020, which aims to improve the education access and equality for each learner in a particular manner. NEP (2020) and women rights in India are two critical aspects that significantly impact the nation's development and progress. This study deals with the elaborate relationship between NEP (2020) and the education of women offering insights into the historical background presenting issues concerning women's rights, and potential opportunities and obstacles introduced by this policy framework. The objective of this paper is to apply to descriptive and qualitative research approach. Secondary types of data sources are used in this study, like books, eBooks, articles, generals, website reports and etc. National education policy NEP (2020) help to empower the women by ensuring equitable accessibility to education and skill programs, which can be greatly increase their empowerment and engagement in every area of development. So, the objectives of women's education to make them aware about of their rights and enable for the development of the country.

Keywords: New Education Policy NEP (2020), Women's Education.

Introduction

Education is the primary way for getting full human potential. It is the path to achieving the quality of life for every person. With the help of education, a person builds confidence. How would he solve problems and achieve the essential skills to grow up professionally? In our society women faced many hindrances to education, like socio-cultural standards, economic restraints, and injustice. So, The National Education Policy (NEP) (2020) wants to transform the India's education environment with

the aim of having the numerous challenges of educational reaches and quality for women's, according to the gender inequalities in education among women encountering obstacles such as, early marriage, poverty and social expectations. Males to female education ratio is higher than the female's education. These challenges create the lower enrolment ratio for girls and the reason for drop out and limited reach to education and skill programmes. In India, education is a fundamental right and the variable for women's empowerment and social change. The policy has various targets increasing women's involvement in education. It provides implementation a flexible learning way and training for vocational programmes and digital literacy. For example, the NEP-2020 promotes the girl's dormitories in rural areas to provides facilities girl's students who are facing transportation and safety issues. In spite of the opportunities for proper implementation for this policy shows a necessary and hurdle.

NEP 2020 promotes digital literacy and digital devices mainly in rural areas whereas the technology and internet resources are unavailable. Without tackling the challenges, we cannot shake up education, which may be limited. The initiatives of vocational and skill development must be accompanied by remove socio-economic hurdles and preventing women from pursuing these opportunities. The grassroots of the policy are effective stakeholders, student participation and implementation awareness activities are organised and sustainable merits for women's education. The national education policy (2020) provides the background context of previous policy and highlights the gradual programmes for women in India, while addressing present barriers like as gender bias, the wage gap and educational disparities. The women's right framework of NEP-2020 integration to cell for comprehensive strategies and the gap between policy and meaningful impact.

In the process of evolution, every civilization has been affected by the law of change and the effect of life a new world. The history of Indian society has shown numbers of social and economic policies. Which required the right course, of time the modern era. There are two types of transformation: 1 incremental and 2. Radical, the first change is brought by nature, and the second effect caused is human. The cause nature has not been controlled by humans. However, we can improvement life and society through human change. So, we should work together for education and empowerment for women. Literacy and skill development. If the education spreads without any challenge to every single girl, it will be a great evolution for women's empowerment.

Status of Women's education in India before Independence

During the British era in India, the educational system was Fastly deteriorating. This is why the instability and growing poverty affected people; Women and Harijan were no allowed to be educated by society. The administrator of the British company promoted only the English language for the education. The English replaced all Indian languages, like Hindi and other native languages, and English made the medium of instruction. Women's education has suffered tremendous challenges indoors, like being impacted by society and cultural political considerations. Traditional gender roles hindered women's access to formal education and inhibited involvement in public life (Bhatia,2021). This biased culture was created as a pattern for imbalance in the society.

In the early 19th century, social reformers, Raja Rama Mohan Rai, condemned Sati and Kulin polygamy. Ishvara Chand Vaidya Sagar is known for women's upliftment and education.

In 1819, the Christian missionaries were the first to set up the Kolkata female juvenile school. They played a dominant key role in changing the traditional norms and promoted the education for women. They Believed, "Education is the key to the empowerment of women and their participation in community." Though, there were many legal changes in favour of women like the closure of the sati Partha, however these changes were not looked at boards level.

The first formal school named "The Bethune Girl School" for females was established in Calcutta in West Bengal in 1849 by the efforts of John Eliot Drinkwater. Ishvara Chandra Vidyasagar was appointed as the first secretary of this school. There were 21 girls enrolled in this school. After some time, it was transformed into the Bethune College, known as the first women's college in the Asia continent.

In 1854 Wood's dispatch, also known as the "Magna Carta of English Education in India" recommends the importance of female education and established schools and training centres for female teachers. The early 20th century saw the rise of social reform movements that advocated for women's education. Pioneers such as Savitribai Phule and Dr B.R. Ambedkar were instrumental in encouraging education for girls and women while questioning conventional social standards. In 1914 women's medical college and nurse training centres was established by lady Hardinge in Delhi. Banaras Central Hindu girl's school founded by Annie Basant in Uttar Pradesh Karve's. Indian women university, which was designed for curriculum vocational courses also was provided in these institutions. Scholarship facilities were also helped in education for socio-economic poor girls. It was seen that 3214860 women were acquiring education in different institutions in India.

Status of Women's Education in India after Independence

After the independence 1947, the new government formed in India that time was taken many important decisions for woman education. The constitutions were adopted on 26th of January in 1950. Indian constitutions gave the news new shape to education. The great challenges for their periods were the format the social status of women education. Article 40s holds the education for all children up to age of 14 and Article 15 provided the Equal rights for all Indian citizens that also emphasise that status wouldn't any discriminate with any citizen as religion, caste, gender and birth. There were various committees and commissions were becoming which emphasised women's education for the development of the nation such as, the University Education Commission, (1948-49), the Mudaliar Commission (1952- 53), the Kothari Committee (1964-65), The National Policy on Education (1968) and the National Policy on Education (1986). Dr B.R. Ambedkar, Parliament passed during 1955-56 a series of acts known collectively as the Hindu Code Bill. These were (a) the Hindu Marriage Act, which abolished polygamy, fixed the marriage age of both boys and girls and granted the right of divorce to Hindu women; (b) the Hindu Succession Act which granted Hindu women the right to inherit and hold property on the same terms as men. Property was to be equally divided between sons and daughters.

In 1958, Mrs Durgabai Deshmukh's committee recommended for women's education. The main objective of this committee to measure and develop women's education at the primary, secondary and higher education levels to survey the nature and extend the material and other facilities for welfare in the field of women's education,

In 1962, the Hansa Mehta Committee was based on equality of status and opportunities for women, addressing social, economic, and political justice for education. The main objective of the national educational policy on education (1986) to is provide equal access to the higher education for all categories of girls. The operations blackboard was launched to improve elementary education. In Delhi, The Indira Gandhi National Open University was established in 1985 as the part of open and distance education system. New action plans in 1992 were revised by P. Narasimha Rao. It was shifted to post-secondary education. This plan stressed the significance for women's education and taking steps to decrease the gender gap in education. The Mahila Samakhyas scheme was started by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 1989 and focused on gender disparities in rural areas. The role of education learning, the global commissions like the Millennium Development Goals MDGs. the second goal is based on the achievement of universal primary education, it provides that all learner to compete their elementary education, and the third goal is based on the gender equality and women's empowerment and aims to eliminate gender disparities in elementary and secondary education by the 2015.

Education for All 2015: There are 3 goals is based on the quality education for all. Goal 5 emphasises s to eliminating gender disparities in elementary and secondary education and ensuring the girl's full and equal access to achieving his basic education. Sustainable development goal framework on the gender equality in education and women's empowerment for holistic development in the world .NEP 2020 is concluding the historical efforts and tracking many challenges in education to create an inclusive and equitable environment at flexible learning roots, skill programme and the use of ICT in education on a practical ,basic in rural and underprivileged areas .The policy recommends many girls education skills, centres to encounters the barrier to women's education.

The policy goal is to the economically empower women by supporting skill development and vocational training, allowing them to actively engage in the workforce. (Sardar and Australia, 2024). The National Education Policy 2020 advocates all-round developments for inclusive learning. This policy aims to achieve universalisation of education by having 100% enrolment of girls by the year 2030 and 50% enrolment in higher education by the year 2035. It ensures the quality time in all the education at various levels.

There are so many schemes like as Beti Bachao Beti pasha schemes (2015) ,Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya 2004 Samakhyas Samriddhi Yojana ,National girl's child day ,Serve Shiksha Abhiyaan, Samakhyas Samriddhi Yojana ,Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan 2015 Kanaya Saglam Yojna scholarship for girl in higher education , Right to Education Act (2009) Girl's child protections running in both Central as well as the state levels of government, many others shareholders are taking several efforts, but the challenging right up to the low enrolment, drop out and retention rate of woman education, still existing in our country .

Women's education is increasing the large qualities of families and society and helpful for decreasing negative habits as early marriage, the Sati Partha, the Prada Partha among peoples. Education helps them with various professional options that enable them to work abroad and support their families, which reduces the economic poverty and lifestyle would be increased.

Status of women's Education Envisaged in New Education Policy (NEP) 2020

The New Education Policy was introduced on 29th July 2020, which ensures the need for inclusive and equal education for all children. Though they belong to the social and economic disadvantages. NEP- 2020 has centred many programmes that show the woman can access free education opportunities.

- **Equitable quality education**

This policy promotes equitable quality education for all children so that each child gets his equal opportunity. It may enhance to prevent the contest to establish a more supportive environment for each learner.

- **Increase gender inclusion fun**

NEP-2020 has the provision for a gender inclusion fund for special for girls' women's education movement and transgender. Its aim to create the capacity for such learners and proper allocation of education resources.

- **Flexible learning environment**

NEP 2020 has flexible learning as entry and exit way in higher education. According to general convenience, NEP has flexible entry and exists as a point in higher education. One of the significances in NEP-2020. This policy not only allows women to take gaps in education, but also returns to education without any penalties. Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) works for multiple entry/exit ways. It secures the student's credits.

- **Promote the vocational training programmes**

The policy also focuses on skill development; vocational training provides more probability to learn talent and increase employability, which provides opportunity for practical skill and enter the workplace.

- **Early Childhood Education**

NEP-2020 highlights early childhood education for every girl child and enhances the girl's contribution to long-term academic progress in a proper manner. This policy ensures that every girl gets a solid foundation education and improve their profession.

- **Addressing context-specific hindrance**

This policy stresses innovative strategies in context of local hindrances opportunity access to school enrolment and retention. It identifies the hindrances like age, socio-economic barriers, gender, stereotyping and cultural disadvantages to improve the resources and tools for quality education for all learners.

- **Ensuring a GER 100% of Women's School Education** This policy wants to achieve GER 100% ratio of girl's students in school education by 2030. So various initiatives have been adopted to improve the enrolment of girls and lower dropout rates.

- **Provision for hostel facilities**

The hostel facilities are being provided free by the government for the girl students. It will be beneficial a number of students who are traveling and a long-distance cover to go to school.

- **Community participation**

This policy involves local communities to supporting and advocating for women's education. This strategy would help the dropout and support system particularly in rural regions.

- **Digital and distance learning education**

Today, education is ready for all through digital and distance modes which help the human to use their time and resources. That woman who is facing challenges and bounded by society. This type of education opens many doors for their learning and development of skills.

- **Empower empowering female teachers**

The policy emphasises the teacher training programme to improve their skill. Female teachers play role models for girls. The policy increasing the requirement of female teachers in rural and remote areas, Empowering female teachers not only help with tracking norms, but also benefits for girl's achievement.

- **Focus on Hoisting and Multidisciplinary Education**

This policy promotes the comprehensive and multidisciplinary education pursuing them variety of vocational skill such as (Art, humanities and science programs).

- **Focus on lifelong learning**

Women can seek learning at any part of their lives. NEP-2020 has included the concept of lifelong learning for their learning and profession. The lifelong learning also helps to understand that work goes beyond the transmission of crucial and environmental of achievement.

- **Scholarships and Financial support**

NEP-2020 has a provision for scholarships to make education easier more inclusive and more affordable for unprivileged backgrounds.

- **Increase the research and leadership skills**

NEP 2020 focuses a participation in research across multiple sectors. This change for women would have contributed to knowledge production and leadership in education. It will be making institutions safe and supportive.

- **Curriculum and pedagogy** The policy is providing the curriculum with removal of gender stereotypes, includes and learning materials, textbooks teacher training programmes with female role models in textbooks like literature, sciences, maths and political sciences etc.

Challenges Regarding women's Education in the Implementation of New Education Policy (NEP) 2020

- **Implementation gap**

This is the significant challenging of effective implementation of the policy provision. While policy has various initiatives for gender inclusion gaps can acquire; lack of resources and infrastructure. The stay in remote area is a crucial problem.

- **Socio-economical barrier.**

While this policy has many initiatives. It cannot resolve the deep-rooted inequalities, which creates hurdles to access the education barriers in healthcare and poverty and can entrench cultural norms prevent safe girls from continuing their education. to support girl's education programmes.

- **Early Marriage and Child Care Responsibilities**

Most of the girls left their school due to the care and responsibility for their sibling. In many areas, early marriage is one of the most serious problems in India. These exceptions many girls drop out from the school.

- **Digital divide**

NEP-2020 prescribes the utilization of digital tools for improving education through the digital gaps, basically in remote area, where there is no access to digital devices and internet connectivity. Women have no access to digital equipment likes as smartphones, tablets and internet speed data.

- **Inadequate Awareness of NEP-2020 Provision**

Most of the woman are not aware of the opportunities of the policy to advocate for education, which has a negative impact on education. We should have organized many programs for awareness about policy and its initiatives.

- **Teacher bias and gender in sensitivity**

Many institutions have prejudiced low exceptions of girl and achievement and do not support in specific subjects, such as science, engineering and technology. This teacher bias and insensitivity towards a female student is a barrier for skills and professional growth.

- **Less Skills Training and Career Counselling for Women**

NEP-2020 advocates the skill training programmes and counselling centres education. However, lack of access to quality programmes and exploring limited, especially in unprivileged area.

Still, there is no skill programmes separated for girls according to their need and interest.

- **High dropout rate and retention challenges**

The provisions of the policy are continuously reducing the drop out and retention rate in education, but social, economic, financial and family obligations are high at the secondary and the higher education levels. Increase the high workplace and less retention in women's education.

- **Language and geographical barrier**

Isolation places, where school is far from home, do not reach to secure any convenient transportation. Rural families faced many challenges to send their girls in school . Our country has many languages for instructions, many time teachers don't understand other languages.

- **STEM Gender Gaps**

The policy emphasises many disciplinary education, but cultural and regional stereotypes continue to hinder people from enjoying (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) which makes them highly paid professional roles.

- **Balancing education and household responsibilities**

Women are continuously paying attention at home task. It is the cause of their school and academic tiredness and decrease the performance .

- **Safety and security concerned**

It is a great challenge for girls' student who live far distance from the school .Parents always pay attention and are hesitant to bring the daughter from school ,Fearing of harassment and self-safety concerns. NEP-2020 does not have full concern about these challenges .

Suggestions to overcome the Challenges for Women's Education as envisaged in New Education Policy (NEP) 2020

Women's education access not only improve esteem but, will be helpful to remote existence to Barriers for every girl's student .More previous researchers' analysis that:

- Awareness programmes should be organized block and district levels and Support early childhood care and development the programmes for disadvantages group.
- Provides non formal education for girls out of school and ensure that sufficient female teachers to be support and act as role model for girls.
- Encourage highly involvement of parents in learning process and Stakeholders participation is required in society, identify the challenging and work together.
- provide the digital technology in unprivileged area. Which will be helpful for women's education.
- School management should be distribute fund carefully after preparing in needy areas, and fill the gap of requirement of teachers, infrastructure ,and healthcare tools.
- More teachers should be hired by the government to develop the quality management and ensures the safety and security before the enrolment in school; hostel should be facilitated for girls.
- The shape of comfort and safety purpose private school provide familiar structure to the transportations follow the connectivity in order to their reach.
- Health and hygiene education should be include in curriculum for the girl's safety.

Conclusion

National education policy includes many important reformative frameworks for women. with tracking gender bias and injustice for women.

For the women's Education the fundamental rights in our country and play the great weapon for social and economic growth in our country, where cultural, social and financial challenges, have rooted in high hurdles and access to the education for women that highlighted by inclusion and gender bias. Furthermore, the policy is participating with the local communities' non-governmental organisations and institutions will be crucial in fostering culture that values

promoting the education during in COVID -19 pandemic. Has exacerbated exactly disparities, resulting in high dropout rates among women in education. The policy 2020 enhances the skill training programmes and vocational courses in this context and contributes to economic development,

The effectiveness of NEP 2020 in addressing women's educational issues will be determined by effective implementation, continuous awareness efforts, and the establishment of a supportive atmosphere that encourages women to fully engage in and benefit from educational change.

In India, it is a positive for women's education. The literacy ratio has been increased up to 91.95%. Kerala stands on first position with 95% enrolment of girls in Indian school education. To provide the high educational opportunity to women. The state Bihar literacy ratio girl's education is 50 %. Uttar Pradesh, has only 63.40% literacy ratio of women's education.

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