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**NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020: STUDENTS PERSPECTIVE IN RELATION TO HIGHER EDUCATION, PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY****K. Gnanaselvi**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Employability skills refer to the transferable skills that individuals utilise in their workplace. Employers often seek these diverse set of skills in candidates in addition to their academic qualifications. In order to stay relevant and improve their efficiency, employees should focus on building up their employability skills. In this article, we analyse the various employability skills that are much in demand in the workplace. Today's graduate jobs market is an extremely competitive one. This means it's no longer enough to achieve a degree in a valuable subject. If you want to stand out above all the other job applicants and you're serious about making the most of your career potential, you may need to put in a little extra work. There are courses could help you achieve those additional lucrative skills that are highly valued by today's employers.*

*Keywords: National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), Higher Education, Quality Education, Education System, Paradigm Shift, Sustainable Development*

**INTRODUCTION**

Long back India's first Education Policy was introduced in the year 1986. About thirty-four years thereafter, a new policy called National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is introduced by the Government of India. NEP 2020 thus replaces National Policy on Education of 1986. The policy signifies a huge milestone for India's education system, which will certainly make India an attractive destination for higher education world-wide.

The Government of India had taken initiative in January 2015, and the actual consultation process for the New Education Policy was started under the chairmanship of former Cabinet Secretary Shri. T. S. R. Subramanian. Based on the committee report, in June 2017, the draft NEP was submitted in 2019 by a panel led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman Dr. K. Kasturirangan. The Draft New Education Policy (DNEP) 2019 was then released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), followed by a number of public consultations. Thereafter, the Ministry undertook a rigorous consultation process in formulating the draft policy. In the process of emergence the new policy document has been updated, revised and finally approved on 29th July, 2020.

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29th July, 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The policy envisions an India-centred education system that contributes directly to transforming the nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all. The policy provides a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The policy aims to transform India's education system by 2021. The policy unequivocally endorses and envisions a substantial increase in public investment in education by both the Central government and the State government.

**NEP 2020 and Higher Education:** National Education Policy (NEP 2020) aims to transform education, keeping the learner at the centre. It builds on the recommendations of Education Commission (1964-66) and Justice J. S. Verma Commission (2012) as well as the previous versions of the policy i.e. National Policy on Education 1986, modified in 1992, Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. In fact, it is a huge stride in the right education. It mainly focuses on to the holistic development of students by ensuring access, relevance, equity, quality and strong foundational learning. The policy offers numerous benefits for education sector stakeholders. It envisages creating synergies in the curriculum across childhood care and education to school and the higher education segments. Major focus area of the policy is quality improvement in the learning outcomes. Another focus area is bringing assessment reforms, which remained much awaited change. Most importantly, NEP 2020 is expected to put India on the track to attain goals of 2030 agenda for sustainable development by promoting lifelong learning opportunity for all in the next decade to come.

NEP2020 saying this should begin as early as class VI with '*ten bagless days*' of exposure to present-day workplaces such as industrial manufacturing units, banks, retail stores, service industries and local cottage industries. One may wonder what has necessitated the need for exposure to workplace as early as class VI. To understand this fully schools and parents, need to take stock of the current job market and compare it to what our

children are studying in their classroom and see the grave mismatch! Also understand that NEP2020 has initiated the educational reforms to make Indian education system more suited to the 4IR workplace.

The problem with current education system is twofold – firstly, the typical choice of streams -science, commerce and humanities offered at senior secondary level makes many students vie for a very small genre of jobs leading to overcrowding and cut-throat competition in certain sectors. When we as school and parents push our children to make such stereotypical choices based on their marksheets, we are inadvertently setting them up for stress & anxiety due fear for failure and ultimately failure of many students. Secondly, the theoretical, bookish, knowledge-based curriculum gives students hardly any job skills to be able to enter the job market based on what they have studied in school and college.

Program for International Student Assessment (**PISA**) is a worldwide study to evaluate educational systems of member nations by measuring a 15-year-old students' scholastic performance on reading, mathematics, and science literacy. Last time Indian schools participated in it they were ranked 72nd out of 73 nations, outranking only Kyrgyzstan. This brought to attention the fact that despite being in the formal education system most students have failed to acquire literacy and numeracy skills commensurate to their age.

In 2018 **Ministry of Education, GOI** decided that Indian students will again participate in PISA Assessment in 2021 and a pilot will be conducted in 2020 to test their readiness. This decision was result of the realisation that avoiding **PISA** will not improve the academic competencies and skills of Indian youth but identifying shortcomings in our education system, correcting them by bringing in reforms will. Therefore, NEP2020 has brought in *pedagogical restructuring* with enhanced curricular focus on literacy and numeracy at foundational and preparatory stages and introduced hands-on learning and experiential pedagogy with mandatory testing at class III, V & VIII to keep a track of learner progress. Our continued participation in international assessments such as PISA will keep us informed how competent Indian students are vis-à-vis other nations. Finland has consistently carried out common-sense educational reforms that aim to create a happy, healthy, and harmonious learning environment where learner's innate intelligence and personality will flourish. The children study 2-3 subjects daily therefore the learning is more in-depth, hands-on, less regimented, more relaxed, and therefore an enjoyable and engrossing experience. Finland has totally given up standardized tests that lead to rote learning and exam focus in classroom. The teachers assess students using *individualized assessment* designed by them specifically for each student. The National Matriculation Exam is totally voluntary and conducted by government at the end of class X to facilitate admission to Universities. Most learners opt for three-year vocational courses for training in job or trade at the end of schooling and they do not need to take this exam.

### **Self-Reliance-The spirit of Entrepreneurship**

The new world of work is powered by the creativity, entrepreneurship, and networking. These values must be engrained in the learner through the learning process and environment. For teachers to bring ignitions of entrepreneurship n creativity to classrooms, Schools will have to give teachers the autonomy to design lessons that give learners opportunities to research, explore, experiment, and innovate while balancing the curricular load. Schools may even tie-up with Industry to start incubators. All vocational courses must be delivered with an underlying focus on inculcating financial literacy and skills of personal financial management in the learners with aim to make our learners *atmanirbhar*.

Finland's performance in PISA has created considerable interest in the country's education system, to ascertain what has made Finland so successful in the survey. In reference to the phenomenon, this chapter discusses cross-national attraction, policy borrowing, the effect of Finland in PISA, and its influence on education policy. This chapter explores at length the theoretical background of cross-national attraction and policy borrowing, also investigating cases that have already occurred. It discusses Finland's role as the new object of cross-national attraction and eventual policy borrowing. The chapter incorporates research into the reasons for Finland's success in PISA, the possibilities of policy transfer from Finland, and delves into the likelihood of policy implications as a result of Finland in PISA. This cross-national attraction denotes the first stage in policy borrowing; however, comparative educationalists, for years, have warned about the uncritical transfer of education policy. Research in Finland has revealed many reasons for the country's PISA success stem from contextual factors: those related to historical, cultural, societal, and political features of Finland. Therefore, policy borrowing from Finland needs to heed warnings of past comparativists. The new phenomenon of Finland in PISA has generated much curiosity from those in education, educational policy, and politics. Policymakers are keen to incorporate Finland's educational features into their education systems. PISA and Finland's performance in the survey influence educational policy. This illustrates the importance the warnings of past and present comparative educationalists in order to prevent uncritical policy borrowing.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS:**

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is a welcome and ambitious re-imagination of India's education system into a modern, progressive and equitable one. Built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability, NEP 2020 is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD). It aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower by making both school and college education more holistic, flexible, multi-disciplinary, suited to 21st century needs. The policy calls for a large-scale implementation of a magnitude never before attempted anywhere in the world. The actual transformations will start from the academic year 2021-22 and will continue until the year 2030, where the first level of transformation is expected to be visible. The mission is aspirational but the successful implementation depends upon how would implementers understand the challenges and try to overcome it. It requires great deal of acceptance, commitment, optimism, change in attitude, and mind-set.

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