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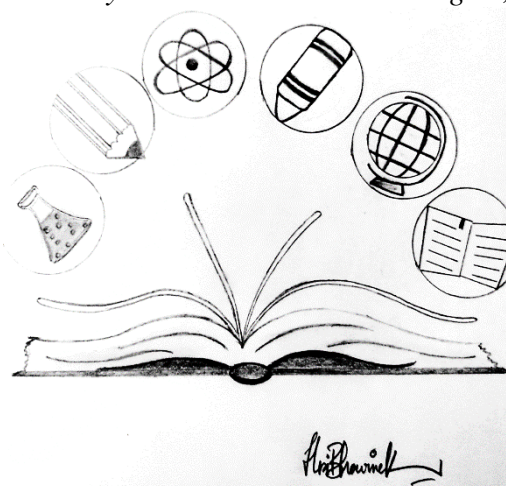
Education Reform in India: A SWOT Analysis of NEP 2020 and its Interaction with Constitutional Values

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Abstract

India's education system is at the cusp of transformation with the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP, 2020), a forward-looking policy aimed at modernizing the sector to meet the evolving demands of today's world and revolutionizing how education is structured, governed, and delivered. This research paper employs a SWOT analysis to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the NEP 2020, and its interaction with constitutional values in India. The paper aims to identify the key factors that impact the implementation and effectiveness of the NEP 2020, and its alignment with the constitutional values of India, such as equity, social justice, and inclusivity. The research methodology involves a



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comprehensive review of the NEP 2020 document and related literature and an analysis of the policy's alignment with constitutional values and potential impact on education outcomes in India.

The paper concludes that although the NEP 2020 is a broad and ambitious plan for transforming education in India, its success in aligning with constitutional values and improving education outcomes will hinge on the efficient implementation of the policy. Additionally, policymakers and stakeholders must work together to address challenges and threats that may arise in the process. The findings of this paper can inform policy recommendations and provide insights for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders to improve the alignment of education policies with constitutional values and promote more equitable and inclusive education systems in India.

Keywords: National Education Policy, Constitutional Values, Education Reform

Introduction

The Government of India recently released the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP, 2020), which supersedes the previous education policy that had been in place since 1986 and was revised in 1992. The NEP 2020 is a comprehensive and ambitious framework for education reform in India, aimed at transforming the education system to meet the needs of the twenty-first century. Policy envisions an education system that is holistic, integrated, and multidisciplinary, promoting critical thinking, creativity, and innovation. The policy targets the issues of low learning outcomes, unequal access, and the need for skilled workers in India's changing economy. It proposes significant changes, including a new curriculum, skill development integration, early education expansion, and a new higher education regulatory framework. The policy also seeks to promote equity, social justice, and inclusivity in education, and to bridge the digital divide and rural-urban divide in India. Overall, NEP 2020 presents a new roadmap for the education sector and has generated enthusiasm and criticism from various stakeholders. Its effective implementation is expected to have a far-reaching impact on the education system and the social and economic development of the country.

In this context, the Constitution of India serves as the backbone of the country's education system, providing guiding principles and values that shape education policy. These constitutional values have helped to define the purpose of education in India and the goals that education policies are

designed to achieve. From the right to education (Article 21-A, Article 45, Article 51A (j)) to the promotion of diversity and social justice (Article 15, Article 16, Article 46, Article 29(1)), the Constitution of India has played a critical role in shaping education policy and ensuring that education is accessible to all individuals.

SWOT analysis technique is used to further explore the Constitution's implications on education policy. It evaluates a policy's internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats, providing a practical framework to assess its feasibility and effectiveness. The tool can help identify the most advantageous areas to concentrate resources and effort (Start & Hovland, 2004). The study seeks to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the NEP 2020, and to identify the key factors that may impact its implementation and effectiveness in achieving the education reform goals in India.

Review of Literature

The review is comprised of two parts. The first part analyses the past education policies in India and the reasoning behind creating a new policy framework. The second part critically analyses the NEP 2020 document, drawing on various research articles and newspaper reports published in reputable news outlets. This approach enables a comprehensive evaluation of the policy's strengths and weaknesses. It provides insight into how the NEP 2020 aligns with constitutional values and the broader social and economic goals of the country.

Evolution of Education Policy in Independent India

In 1968, the First Education Policy of independent India was implemented based on recommendations from the Kothari Commission. The Commission was established to evaluate the Indian education system, and its report, "Education and National Development," submitted in 1966, is a significant benchmark in the history of education policy in India. However, despite its extensive scope, the 1968 Policy was primarily focused on establishing a national education system and needed to be more adequately implemented and reviewed for over 15 years. One of the reasons for its limited scope was that education was a state subject, and state governments were not particularly interested in policy proposals from the central government. Although education became a concurrent subject in 1976, the implementation of the policy continued to be weak (Dewan & Mehendale, 2015).

During the mid-1980s, there was a growing recognition of the practical importance of education in developing human resources, which influenced the approach to education policy (Dewan & Mehendale, 2015). India's second National Policy on Education was launched in 1986 to provide education to all members of society, particularly those who had been historically marginalised. The policy prioritized providing fellowships for disadvantaged individuals, promoting adult education, recruiting teachers from marginalized communities, establishing new schools and colleges, and developing open universities. Additionally, the policy encouraged the integration of information technology into education. In preparing for the policy, a status paper was created that acknowledged the challenges facing the education system and outlined policy directions (Ministry of Education, 1985). The resulting policy was adopted by Parliament in May 1986, along with a Programme of Action.

In 1990, a commission chaired by Acharya Ramamurti was appointed to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Policy of Education in 1986. However, in 1991, a committee appointed by the cabinet, the Central Advisory Board of Education, led by Janardhan Reddy, reviewed the report and rejected many of its critical recommendations. In 1992, the committee submitted its report, the National Programme of Action, which aimed to improve education quality and promote national integration while emphasizing practical applications and moral values in education (Ranganathan, 2007).

The latest education policy, the Nation Education Policy 2020, is the first all-encompassing educational policy since India's liberalization in 1991, which marked a transition from a centralized economic model to an open-market approach to globalization. Therefore, the policy caters to the requirements of a new economy, distinct from that of 1986. India's liberalization in 1991 significantly impacted the country's education system. With the opening up of markets and increased competition, there was a shift like jobs and skills required for the workforce. The traditional focus on rote learning and academic excellence was no longer enough, and education was needed to be more practical, job-oriented, and industry-relevant. Thus, a new education policy is warranted.

Critical Analyses of the NEP 2020

India's education system is at the cusp of transformation with the National Education Policy 2020, a forward-looking policy aimed at modernizing the sector and revolutionizing how education is structured, governed, and delivered. This critical analysis examines the key features of

the NEP 2020, its potential strengths and weaknesses, and its implications for the future of education in India.

NEP and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is a critical component of a child's development, and India's National Education Policy (NEP) recognizes this by emphasizing the importance of a strong and holistic ECCE system. Its emphasis on ECCE aligns with Article 45 of the Indian constitution. According to findings from the Indian Early Childhood Education Impact Study conducted in 2017, children who have received quality early childhood education are more likely to achieve higher learning levels, particularly during the early years of primary education. However, while the NEP has some positive aspects related to ECCE, there are also areas for improvement.

One of the strengths of the NEP's approach to ECCE is its emphasis on play-based and activity-based learning. Research has shown that throughout history, play has played a crucial role in early childhood education, and open-ended play, in particular, has been considered significant in enabling children to interact with materials in a manner that permits them to investigate and form their own conceptual interpretations of the world (Langford, 2010). This approach is developmentally appropriate for young children and helps them develop a love for learning. Additionally, the policy's recommendation for the professional development of ECCE teachers is a positive step towards ensuring that children receive high-quality education.

Although NEP 2020 acknowledges the significance of ECCE, some issues need to be resolved. The policy's objective of achieving universal access to quality ECCE needs more clarity on how this goal will be accomplished, particularly about ensuring the provision of high-quality ECCE. The IECEI (2017) report published by UNICEF reveals that 70 per cent of sampled four-year-olds in India already attend a preschool program, indicating progress in expanding access to ECCE. The main issue plaguing ECCE is quality. The current provision of early childhood education (ECCE) in India operates through two models, Anganwadi Centres and private preschools, which differ significantly across various factors. While Anganwadi Centres primarily serve as centres for nutrition and daycare, private preschools are an extension of primary schools. Nevertheless, neither model offers an optimal environment for the comprehensive development of children at this stage. These findings suggest the need to

prioritize enhancing the quality of ECCE in India to support the optimal development of young children.

NEP and Medium of Instruction

NEP 2020 recommends using the mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction in schools till at least Class five. While this proposal has been put forth to promote the use of local languages and encourage multilingualism, it could have significant implications for students from marginalized communities. While learning in one's mother tongue has advantages (Akintola & Rafiat, 2020), it also means that students may begin learning English later in life, which can be more challenging. This may result in a divide between those with access to English-medium schools and those without, leading to discrimination based on language proficiency. In India, proficiency in English is often associated with intelligence and capability, leading to its association with class and caste privilege. NEP's insistence on the medium of instruction in the mother tongue may unintentionally widen the social hierarchy based on proficiency in English (Kumar, 2020). This will ultimately lead to an economic disadvantage for those who do not have easy access to English. English is widely viewed as the language of privilege and employability, particularly in the globalized economy. Focusing on regional languages in schools under NEP could inadvertently reinforce existing social and economic disparities, especially for underprivileged students who lack access to English-medium schools. These students may struggle to gain the English proficiency required to compete in higher education or the job market, further entrenching existing inequalities.

Moreover, the NEP's language policy may have gendered implications. Studies have shown that parents prefer private schools for their sons, (ASER Report, 2020), where English is often the medium of instruction, while girls are often sent to government-run schools where instructions are mostly given in the local language. This could result in boys gaining a competitive advantage over girls regarding English proficiency and access to opportunities. The NEP's language policy also needs to consider the needs of students whose parents have transferable jobs. These children may be required to move frequently, making it difficult to maintain continuity in their education, particularly if the local language changes with each move.

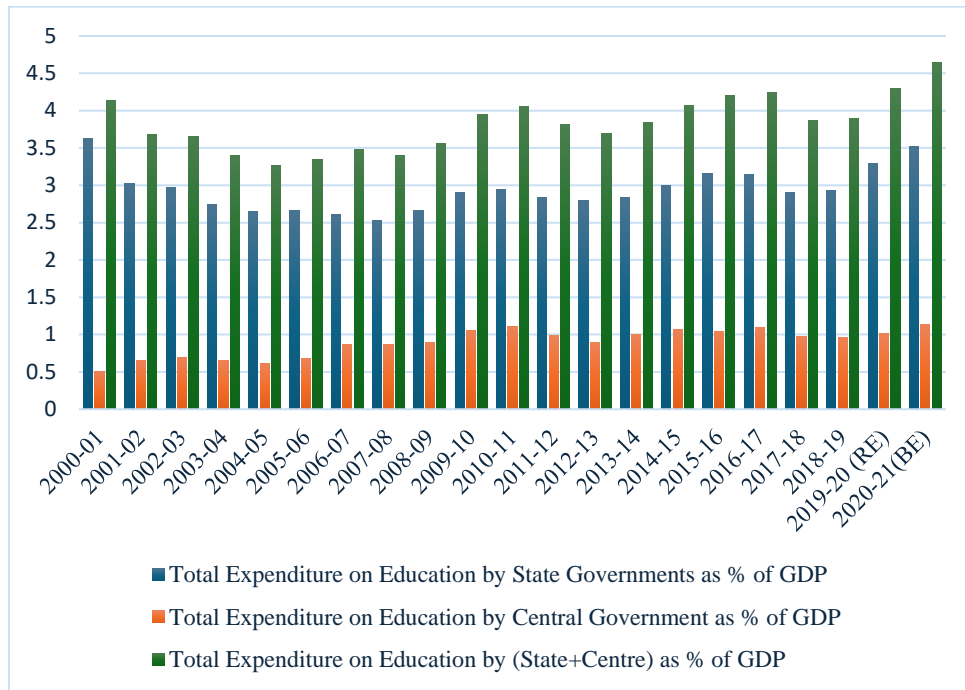
The Indian Constitution acknowledges the significance of regional languages and promotes their advancement by incorporating 22 languages in the Eighth Schedule. The National Education Policy's proposal to use

regional languages as the medium of instruction until at least Class five aligns with this constitutional provision. While the NEP's proposal to promote regional languages and multilingualism is well-intentioned, it must be implemented cautiously to avoid inadvertently exacerbating existing social and economic inequalities. The government must ensure that students from marginalized communities have access to quality education in English and that the focus does not compromise their proficiency in the language on regional languages.

NEP and Expenditure on Education

Academicians have also raised concerns regarding the much-needed funds to implement NEP 2020 (Pillai, 2020). One of the critical aspects of the policy is the pledge to increase the education expenditure to six per cent of GDP. However, the analysis of the education expenditure as a percentage of GDP in the table below reveals a different picture. The data presented in Chart 1 was sourced from the “*Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education 2018-19 to 2020-21*” (2022). The expenditure on education has remained around four per cent of GDP. When adjusting for inflation (Chart 2), the expenditure on education appears to have decreased in the early 2000s, peaked in 2009-10, and has since remained relatively stable. This differs from the pattern seen in nominal values, where the expenditure appears to have steadily increased over the years. The adjusted values provide a more accurate representation of the actual purchasing power of the funds allocated for education, as they account for the effects of inflation. This pattern of funding can limit the prospects of the NEP in reforming Indian education. The NEP aims to bring about fundamental changes in the education sector by focusing on key areas such as skill development, teacher training, and curriculum reform. However, the lack of funding can hinder the implementation of these initiatives. For example, the NEP proposes establishing a National Research Foundation to fund research projects in the education sector. However, the foundation's effectiveness will depend on its funding, which remains uncertain given the low education expenditure in the country.

Chart 1
Expenditure for Education



From “Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education 2018-19 to 2020-21,” by

Ministry of Education, Government of India. 2022. Retrieved from

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/budget_exp.pdf

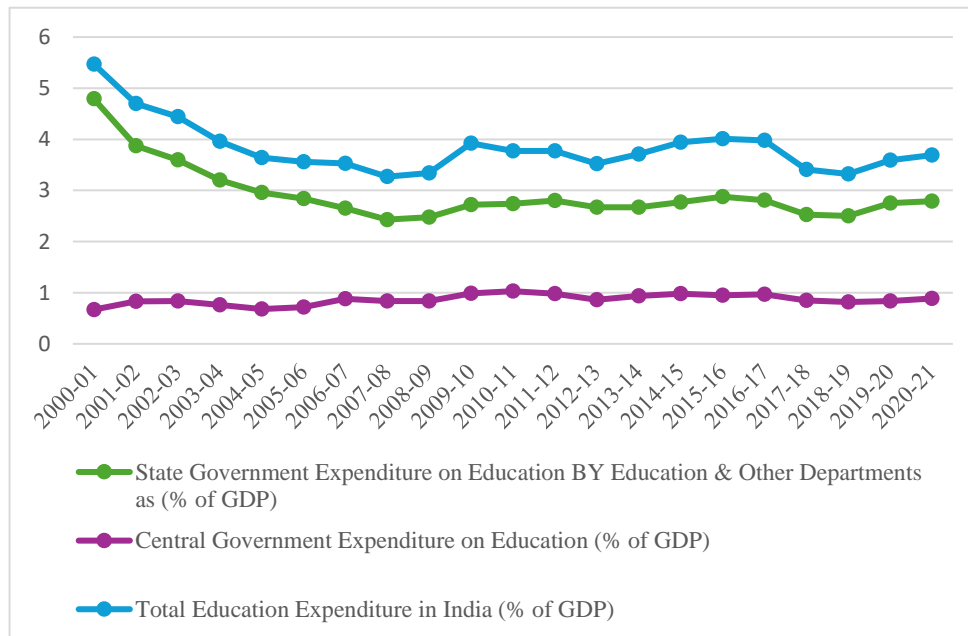
The neoliberal policy pursued by the post-1991 opening of the Indian economy has decreased spending in the social sector, including education (Venkatanarayanan, 2015). The government's focus on liberalization and privatization has shifted priorities toward economic growth at the expense of social justice. The trend has particularly affected the education sector, with a decrease in government spending and an increase in private sector investment. The NEP's plans to phase out the university affiliation system and grant autonomy to colleges in 15 years raise concerns about the potential for increased privatization of education, which could have negative implications for social justice (Priya, 2020). Private institutions charge higher fees, making education less accessible to marginalized communities. The concern regarding the standard of education

offered by private institutions arises from the possibility that their profit-driven approach might compromise the caliber of education.

Furthermore, the existing disparity in the quality of education across various regions and social strata can be attributed to insufficient investments in the education sector (Agrawal, 2014). The low expenditure on education is reflected in the poor infrastructure, lack of basic facilities, and shortage of qualified teachers in many schools. The quality of education in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas needs to catch up to urban areas due to inadequate funding. The NEP 2020 seeks to bridge this gap and improve access to quality education, but insufficient funding may hinder its success. The policy proposes to set up a new education financing agency to provide funding for education. However, the success of this agency will depend on the government's commitment to increasing education expenditure.

Chart 2

Expenditure for Education (Inflation-Adjusted Value in 2011-2012 Terms)



Data adapted from “Analysis of budgeted expenditure on education 2018-19 to 2020-21

by Ministry of Education, Government of India. 2022”. Retrieved from

“https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/budget_exp.pdf. Inflation adjustment based on Consumer Price Index”

The Indian Constitution acknowledges education as a fundamental right for all citizens, specifically for children between six and fourteen, as stated in Article 21-A. Additionally, it obligates the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children, guaranteeing equal opportunities for marginalized communities. These directives are enshrined in several articles of the Constitution, including Articles 15, 16, 46, and 335. Inadequate investment in education has led to unequal education quality among different regions and social groups, violating the constitutional right to equal opportunities. The low expenditure on education has also led to a lack of basic facilities, poor infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified teachers in many schools. The NEP 2020 aims to address these disparities and promote equitable access to education. However, the success of these initiatives will depend on the government's commitment to increasing education expenditure and ensuring that education remains a public good rather than a commodity.

NEP and School Complexes

The NEP 2020 proposal to merge smaller schools into larger ones has been a topic of much debate among educationists and activists. While the idea behind school mergers is to create larger schools that can offer more facilities and better-quality education, the reality is often quite different, especially in rural areas where schools are the only source of education for many children. One of the significant concerns regarding school mergers is the increase in dropouts that it may lead to. When smaller schools are shut down, and students must travel longer distances to attend school, many may drop out due to the increased travel time and expenses. This is especially true for girls, who may not have the same level of mobility as boys, and may not be allowed to travel long distances to attend school (Chowdhury, 2017). Sharma (2020) pointed out the ill effects of school mergers. A project (SATH-E1) undertaken by NITI Aayog, along with some state governments, has resulted in the merger of 40,000 schools in four different states in India, illustrating the possible adverse effects of school mergers. The amalgamation of schools in these states has led to a significant increase in the dropout rate, especially among girls. Another concern with school mergers is the impact on the quality of education. Merging smaller schools into larger ones may lead to a decline in the quality of education due to difficulties in management and a lack of individual attention to students, which can discourage attendance (Arias & Walker, 2004). Lastly, the NEP suggests rationalizing small schools deemed "economically sub-optimal and operationally complex to run" (p. 28).

The implementation of the NEP could lead to the shutdown of schools located in underprivileged regions, thereby exacerbating the educational inequities faced by children from marginalized communities (Pallavi, 2014). This can have severe implications for gender justice and equity in Education. While school mergers may seem like a good idea on paper, the reality is much more complex. Before implementing such policies, The government must carefully consider the potential impact of school mergers, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, it is imperative to implement measures that safeguard against any compromise in the quality of Education and ensure that access to education for marginalized communities is not restricted.

The Indian Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to Education through Article 21-A. This right encompasses access to schools that cater to the specific needs of local communities, particularly in rural and remote regions. When evaluating the NEP's proposition to consolidate schools, assessing its compatibility with constitutional provisions on education and equality becomes crucial. Merging schools may lead to limited education access for rural and remote children, potentially infringing upon their right to Education. Moreover, the closure of schools that serve disadvantaged communities, such as those in economically backward or marginalized areas, could be seen as discriminatory, as it may disproportionately affect certain groups of students. Implementing the NEP's school merger and rationalization proposals in line with the constitutional principles of education and equality is crucial. All children, irrespective of their background, should have access to quality education in nearby schools that meet their needs.

NEP and Education as a Right

The Right to Education Act has established primary Education as a free and compulsory right. However, it is also necessary to extend this policy to include secondary education. NEP 2020 shows that while there has been significant progress in achieving near-universal in Elementary Education, there is a significant drop in enrollment in later grades. This suggests that there are significant barriers to accessing and completing secondary Education, which may be preventing children from realizing their right to Education. The NEP 2020's goal of achieving a 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio in preschool to secondary levels by 2030 is in alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Education. However, the policy's failure to recognize secondary Education as an explicit right may limit its effectiveness in addressing challenges faced by children in accessing and completing Education.

To achieve SDG target of relevant and effective learning outcomes for all, it is essential to ensure that children not only have access to Education but also receive a quality education that equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge. Consequently, extending the right to education to the secondary level can impose a legal obligation on the state to guarantee access to education. However, the policy has been criticized for its lack of clarity in achieving universal access (Rampal, 2020). The government must offer more specific details concerning its strategy to achieve universal access to education and the precise measures it intends to implement to address the specific challenges faced by children in attaining and completing secondary Education. By doing so, the policy can effectively address the systemic barriers that are preventing children from realizing their right to education beyond the primary level and contribute to achieving SDG's objective of inclusive and equitable education for all.

NEP and Higher Education

The NEP 2020 has several positive proposals for higher Education. One of the most significant changes proposed is the shift towards multidisciplinary and flexible Education. The policy advocates for the breaking down of disciplinary silos and the creation of flexible programs that allow students to choose courses across disciplines. By adopting this approach, students can cultivate a more extensive array of skills and knowledge, ultimately preparing them to meet the evolving demands of the job market (Vereijken et al., 2022).

Another favourable proposition involves the establishment of the National Research Foundation (NRF), tasked with funding and overseeing research endeavours spanning various disciplines. The NRF aims to promote research that addresses societal challenges and encourages collaboration between academic institutions and industry. This proposal is expected to help India's research ecosystem become more robust and innovative (Dubey, 2021).

The NEP 2020 seeks to integrate vocational education into the mainstream education system by establishing a National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) that will recognize and certify vocational skills. This will give students comprehensive knowledge of the skills necessary for their future careers. The NEP 2020 suggests integrating vocational education with conventional academic programs in higher education institutions. This integration will allow students to acquire both academic knowledge and vocational skills, enhancing their employability and career prospects (Wadia, 2021). The policy emphasizes the need for industry-academia

collaboration to develop vocational education programs relevant to the industry's needs. It proposes the establishment of industry-led sector skill councils to identify the skill requirements of different sectors and develop vocational courses accordingly.

The NEP also places significant emphasis on utilising technology in higher education. It proposes the establishment of the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) as a platform for national discussions on technology's role in education. Additionally, the policy suggests creating an online education platform that would grant students access to high-quality courses from renowned institutions worldwide. This approach is expected to democratise education and increase access to quality education, particularly for students in remote areas (Pokhiriyal, 2020).

The NEP also proposes the entry of foreign universities, which is expected to increase competition and raise the quality of education in India. The policy suggests that foreign universities will have to comply with Indian regulations, including the reservation policy and fees regulations. This proposal is expected to benefit Indian students, as they will have access to a more diverse range of courses and teaching styles.

However, there are also some challenges associated with the NEPs proposals for higher education. One of the challenges is the potential inequities that could arise from the entry of foreign universities. There is a risk that foreign universities will cater only to the elite, as they may not be affordable for the majority of students. The policy must ensure that foreign university entry does not lead to increased inequalities in the education system (Kennedy, 2023). It could potentially impact the realisation of Article 16 and Article 41 of the Indian constitution. Another potential challenge is the digital divide. The policy's focus on technology is indeed positive, but it is essential to address concerns raised by a recent study conducted by the Azim Premji Foundation (2020), which revealed that approximately 60% of students in India face difficulties in accessing online learning opportunities. It is imperative to have adequate infrastructural support for the poor and vulnerable to reap the benefits of the digital revolution.

The NEP 2020 has put forward numerous proposals that hold the potential to revolutionise India's higher education system. The policy's focus on multidisciplinary and flexible education, the creation of the NRF and NETF, and the entry of foreign universities are all positive proposals. However, there are also some challenges associated with the policy, particularly regarding the potential inequities that could arise from the entry

of foreign universities and concerns about the digital divide. Nevertheless, the policy's proposals align with India's constitutional values of social justice, equity, and access.

Methodology

The methodology used in this paper is a review of literature based on a SWOT analysis of the NEP 2020 and its interaction with constitutional values. The review was carried out by utilising a diverse range of sources, such as academic journals, government reports, and policy documents. The SWOT analysis is a commonly employed tool in strategic planning, to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with a specific policy or program (Start & Hovland, 2004). In this paper, the SWOT analysis was used to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the NEP 2020 in terms of its alignment with constitutional values, and the opportunities and threats that the policy presents.

The first step in the methodology was to identify and collect relevant literature on the NEP 2020 and its interaction with constitutional values. This included a comprehensive search of academic databases, government websites, and policy documents. The gathered literature was subsequently subjected to a screening process, employing inclusion and exclusion criteria that centred on the study's relevance to the research question and its overall quality. The SWOT analysis was then conducted using a matrix framework, where the strengths and weaknesses of the NEP 2020 were evaluated based on their alignment with constitutional values, and the opportunities and threats were evaluated based on their potential impact on the policy. The analysis was done in a systematically and objectively, with each point backed up by evidence from the literature. Finally, the the SWOT analysis findings were synthesized and discussed in the context of the research question. The methodology employed in this paper sought to deliver a comprehensive and unbiased analysis of the NEP 2020, considering its alignment with constitutional values, and shedding light on areas that may require enhancement and potential challenges.

Findings

Below are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified through the SWOT matrix framework in the analysis of the NEP 2020 and its interaction with constitutional values:

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NEP 2020's prioritization of early childhood care and education, vocational education and training, and the integration of technology to improve learning have the potential to foster a holistic and inclusive education system. By addressing these diverse aspects of education, the policy aims to create an all-encompassing and accessible learning environment. • The policy's focus on multidisciplinary and flexible education can promote critical thinking, creativity, and innovation among students. • The proposal to establish a National Research Foundation and increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emphasis on regional languages in schools under the NEP can potentially worsen current social and economic disparities, with a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged students who lack access to English-medium schools. This could result in discrimination based on language, gender, and economic status. • The policy's proposal to merge smaller schools into larger ones may increase dropouts, especially among girls, and prevent children from realizing their right to education beyond the primary level. • Even though the policy promises to raise education expenditure to six percent of GDP, the education expenditure has remained stagnant at around four per

<p>funding for research and development can play a significant role in fostering the growth and progress of the education sector.</p>	<p>cent of GDP. This lack of funding can hinder the effective implementation of the policy initiatives.</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NEP 2020's focus on vocational education and training can nurture a skilled workforce and contribute significantly to India's economic growth. • The policy's focus on technology and online education can provide access to education for students in remote areas and those who face barriers to traditional forms of education. • The proposal to create a National Educational Technology Forum has the potential to foster the development of innovative solutions to address various challenges in the education sector. 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NEP 2020's proposition to permit foreign universities to establish campuses in India may result in the commercialization of education, potentially prioritizing profit over the delivery of quality education. • The policy's emphasis on private sector participation in education can lead to the exclusion of marginalized communities who need help to afford private education. • Concerns regarding the digital divide and lack of policy commitment to expand the scope of the right to education beyond the primary level could hinder the success of NEP 2020.

The SWOT analysis of the NEP 2020 highlights its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and its interaction with constitutional values. The policy's focus on early childhood education, vocational training, and experiential learning has the potential to enhance the quality and relevance of education, promote equity and inclusion, and foster innovation and creativity. Moreover, the policy's commitment to increasing public spending on education and promoting multilingualism can advance social justice, cultural diversity, and linguistic rights. However, the policy's implementation faces several challenges and limitations. The policy's language policy, which prioritizes regional languages over English, may exacerbate existing social and economic inequalities, especially for marginalized communities. The policy's proposal to merge smaller schools into larger ones may lead to an increase in dropouts, particularly among girls and children from rural areas. Moreover, the policy's failure to extend the right to education to secondary education and ECCE may limit the effectiveness of policy initiatives.

The interaction between NEP 2020 and constitutional values reveals both synergies and tensions. Indeed, on one hand, the policy's emphasis on equity, inclusion, and cultural diversity resonates with the constitutional principles of social justice, equality, and plurality. On the other hand, the policy's language policy and school mergers may conflict with the constitutional values of equality, non-discrimination, and the right to education. Thus, the policy needs to balance promoting regional languages and ensuring English proficiency, creating larger schools and preserving local identities, and enhancing primary education and extending secondary education.

Discussion

The strengths of the NEP 2020 in terms of constitutional values are notable. The policy's focus on holistic development and skill-based learning aligns with the constitutional values of equality and progress. By promoting learning beyond textbooks and developing skills that prepare students for employment, the NEP 2020 emphasizes equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background. The policy's emphasis on technology integration also aligns with the constitutional value of freedom, as it promotes access to information and resources, and fosters creativity and innovation.

On the other hand, the weaknesses of the NEP 2020 in terms of constitutional values are concerning. The policy's centralization of decision-making power raises questions about its alignment with the constitutional

value of democracy. The emphasis on a top-down approach to policy implementation may hinder the participation of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and students, in decision-making processes. Moreover, the policy's emphasis on the school complex, the study of silence towards a right-based approach in education, and the privatisation of higher education raise concerns about its alignment with the constitutional value of justice. The NEP 2020 could benefit from a more comprehensive approach that acknowledges and values diversity and inclusivity. Policymakers should consider these strengths and weaknesses when implementing the NEP 2020, and work towards a more comprehensive approach that aligns with all constitutional values, ensuring that every student has access to quality education that fosters their holistic development, encourages creativity and innovation, and prepares them for employment.

Conclusion

Overall, the SWOT analysis of NEP 2020 revealed several strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the policy. The policy has several positive aspects, including its focus on providing universal education, promoting multilingualism, and integrating vocational education into mainstream education. However, there are concerns regarding certain areas that have not received sufficient attention, such as teacher training and the involvement of private players in the education sector. Moreover, the interaction of NEP 2020 with constitutional values is complex and multifaceted. While the policy appears to be aligned with certain constitutional values, such as promoting equity and access to education for all, it also raises concerns about the potential marginalisation of certain groups, particularly those economically or socially disadvantaged.

Based on these findings, it is evident that the NEP 2020 presents both opportunities and challenges for the Indian education system. While the policy holds the potential to revolutionise the education landscape and foster more significant equity and inclusion, policymakers must approach its implementation with careful consideration and vigilantly monitor its effects on diverse communities. Moreover, it is important that the policy is aligned with constitutional values and does not undermine the diversity and pluralism central to Indian society. In conclusion, NEP 2020 is a bold and ambitious policy that has the potential to impact the Indian education system significantly. However, its success will depend on several factors, including effective implementation, adequate funding, and alignment with constitutional values. If implemented carefully and thoughtfully, NEP 2020 could be a transformative policy that paves the way for a more equitable and inclusive education system in India.

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