

A Critical Analysis of Marketisation, Competitiveness and Equity in India's National Education Policy 2020 through the Lens of Globalisation

Alokesh Sharma

Scholar, School of Education, University of Glasgow, Scotland

Abstract

The National Education Policy 2020 of India (NEP 2020) presents an aspiring programme to reposition the nation's education system within the global knowledge economy while expanding the access of education, quality and inclusion. This paper critically examines how globalization has moulded the policy's priorities, underlying assumptions and instruments. Drawing on policy sociology and literature concerning global education governance, human capital theory and neoliberalism, it explores NEP 2020 as both a national reform agenda and a response to transnational policy norms. The discussion focuses on technology-enabled learning, internationalisation, teacher development, flexible learning pathways, public and private partnerships, vocational education and performance-based accountability. The analysis indicates that NEP 2020 combines progressive commitments to foundational learning, curricular flexibility, educational access and international collaboration with market-oriented emphasis on competitiveness, institutional performance, employability and workforce development. This produces a persistent tension between education as an instrument of economic productivity and education as a public and socially transformative entity. The paper further argues that the policy's ambitions may be constrained by the digital divide, unequal infrastructure, uneven implementation capacity, teacher workload and the continuing marginalisation of rural and socio-economically disadvantaged learners. It concludes that the success of NEP 2020 will depend not simply on adopting global standards, but on translating them through meaningful teacher participation, sustained public investment, culturally responsive implementation and robust safeguards for equity. India can develop a globally engaged education system only if internationalisation and innovation remain subordinate to the objectives of accessibility, inclusion and social justice.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, Globalisation, India, Educational Equity, Neoliberalism, Internationalisation.

1. Introduction

The role of control and power in shaping policy making was astutely recognised by Ball's (1990) analysis, which portrays policies as representations of the authoritative values held by the people who govern, rather than just tools of administration. Such a perspective requires an analysis of the association

between power and policy. It proposes that policies are inherently and intricately intertwined with the values and motives of the creators, even if they are presented as ways for development or reforms. This understanding is relevant when we look into the context, where political motivations often merge with policies in education. It is important to question the degree to which these values of the policy makers truly resonate with or are imposed upon the population at large, as we understand Ball's (1990) emphasis on alignment of policy with policy makers. In India, dual purposes are being served by policies related to caste-based reservations in educational institutions. They are important tools to address social injustice; however, they are also used to appease specific voter groups. There is an alignment of this duality with the viewpoint of Olssen et al. (2004), which states that the ideologies and ambitions of those in power are the source of emergence of the policies, which are inherently political in nature.

The process of policy making is not only about administration. Power dynamics, strategic political manoeuvring and ideological beliefs are intricately intertwined with it. Although presented as beneficial for the public or promoting justice, policies have intricately and varied motivations, driven by an intent to achieve power or influence. Comprehending this complexity would enable us to recognise the aspects that shape and implement policies.

Hill's (2014) analysis puts forward an understanding of how a crucial role is played by different actors at different levels of authority in the world of public policy. Hill (2014) highlighted that people within the state and supra state institutions add their interpretations and intentions to shape policy and thereby influence its formulation and public perception. An example of this complexity is visible in India's National Education Policy set forth in 2020. There are dynamics among different stakeholders and external influence from international educational frameworks that are involved in its development and implementation. The struggle for influence between nation states and supra state entities (which are superordinate states in nature) like The United Nations, The World Trade Organisation, etcetera, can be seen through such intricate interactions. There exists a tension between needs and global education paradigms, where local requirements constantly interact global standards through dialogue or negotiation.

Education policy is an important thread in the fabric of public policy. It encapsulates aspects ranging from childhood to higher education and diverse domains like Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), teacher certification and behaviour management, etcetera. Education policy was defined as a constellation of principles and actions aimed at achieving desired outcomes by Trowler (2003). Within this spectrum National Education Policy of India – 2020 (NEP-2020) reflects the zeitgeist of prioritising excellence, accountability and quality in education and stands out as a paradigm shift.

The NEP-2020 resonates with the global narrative on education and is more than a plan for transforming education. It displays an allegiance to the Goal 4 of the United Nations' 'Sustainable Development Goals', which emphasizes opportunities for lifelong learning along with fair and excellent education. This alignment can be viewed as what Mundy et al. (2016) described as a force shaping relations across continents which is also bringing in a deliberate orientation towards global discourse on education.

However, NEP-2020 should be appreciated for its aspirations to align with educational standards and to address contemporary challenges while embracing global agendas. It has aligned educational requirements with cultural contexts. It has tried to make universally applicable educational standards

sensitive to local cultures. These are important aspects that have real life implications in the Indian education scenario. For instance, NEP-2020 has considered how the emphasis on STEM education can cater to the socio-economic and educational actualities of India's vast and diverse population of students (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). It has also focussed on creating a balance between the indigenous knowledge and culture and creating a workforce in the realm of climate and social science. NEP-2020 underscores that it is vital to approach the path of aligning Indian Education System with global trends and standards in a critical and reflective manner. Cultural sensitivity, fostering inclusivity, blending aspirations with local requirements are the key factors that are necessary in realizing the potential of this policy.

Initiation of Globalisation into Indian Education System

Due to a closed economy and strict regulations, the Indian education system faced challenges after India's independence. Chakraborty (2021) explained that because of the mismatch between low fees charged by domestic institutions and the high operational costs of foreign universities, transnational education in India encountered difficulties. Furthermore, it was arduous for educational entities to enter and thrive in the country due to a rigid bureaucratic environment.

A development was highlighted by Kaur and Sing (2020), when an Education Commission was established in 1964. Efforts were made to revamp the education system. Due to resources and demographic pressures, achieving education remained elusive. The importance of a school system intending to break down caste, religion and economic inequality, was emphasized by the commission. Unfortunately, financial constraints became more salient in the 1990s for India with the 'structural adjustment loan' from the World Bank International Monetary Fund (Kaur and Singh, 2020).

As India's present educational reforms grapple with the long standing structural and financial limitations, the relevance of this account is evident. A complex situation was created for the policymakers, educators and international partners alike, by the contract between the objectives and challenges posed by the economic and bureaucratic obstacles.

The Jomtien Conference in 1990 passed a resolution calling for fundamental education for children and adults, which marked a consequential moment in educational discussions. Ten years later at the 'World Conference on Education' in Dakar, the commitment to achieve 'Education for All' was reaffirmed and was also connected to the Millenium Development Goals leading to significant progress in educational policy planning in developing nations (Kaur and Singh, 2020).

As discussed by Goddin et al. (2008), the emergence of networked governance represents a shift in power dynamics that was traditionally dominated by the influential stakeholders. After the World War II, states promoted development by aligning technological requirements of planned economies with education systems. However, education was reconceptualised as a market commodity to the liberalisation and privatisation forces, with the rise of neoliberalism during the 1980s and 1990s. This paradigm shift, as observed by Olssen et al. (2004), saw business models replacing educational policy discourses, that notably modified how success and performance were measured.

In the context of India, Kaur and Singh (2020) stated that The National Policy on Education (1986) and the subsequent Programme of Action (1992) aimed to establish free and compulsory education. However, hurdles existed towards achieving universal education, which was ignored in the policy. Since 1991, there has been a shift in India's policy framework reflecting the global trend of market oriented educational reforms that recognises the importance of collaboration and investment in higher education.

While this trajectory aligns with global patterns it is crucial to critically assess the balance between the rudimentary purpose of education as means of empowerment and societal progress and market demands. The educational landscape in India is complicated by the mix of policies, market influences and socio-cultural dynamics. Both challenges and opportunities are highlighted by such a complexity which is associated with formulating and implementing policies while navigating the intersections between trends and local contexts.

Impact of Globalisation on Indian Education System

The contrast in Indian education system is highlighted by Chakraborty (2021), where despite possessing around 990 universities with 40,000 colleges, only 21 institutions make it to the top 1,000 in the global academic rankings. Lack of quality as an issue is reflected by this situation, even though the India's constitution guarantees education as a birthright. The Indian government has initiated efforts to internationalise education strategically to address this gap in quality (Chakraborty, 2021). However, challenges persist as institutions like the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) known for their brilliance struggle to go beyond top 200 list globally. This reality calls for refinement within Indian Education Framework in quality and global competitiveness.

Highlighting the link between literacy rates and a nation's economic growth as supported by global data, the importance of literacy as a right for everyone is emphasised by the NEP-2020 (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). India's journey towards an empowered society is greatly supported by the 'Digital India Campaign', where a lot of emphasis is placed on technological integration in education. Evidently the policy focusses on platforms that encourage discussion related to technology utilisation for the enhancement of educational aspects such as teaching and learning methods, evaluation processes, governance, etcetera.

As a strategic move, in the evolving field of technology, NEP-2020 proposed the establishment of a 'National Educational Technology Forum'. The aim of this forum would be to serve as hub for data collection from stakeholders like innovators and practitioners in educational technology. The aim is to engage a community of researchers for evaluation and elucidation of the data to remain at the forefront of innovation and relevance (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020).

Both the potential of technology in education and its innate risks are astutely recognised by NEP-2020. To effectively address challenges, in providing high end education it advocated for optimizing and expanding existing infrastructures and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) initiatives (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). This is evident from the suggested training program for educators that not only focusses on effective usage of online teaching platforms, but also training them to become proficient creators of top-notch digital content. The goal of promoting a student focused teaching method is aligned with this approach. DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing)

is one such government platform in India, which is providing teachers, students and parents with access, to captivating learning resources that are directly related to the school curriculum.

The NEP-2020 delineates a difference in the enrolment rates at educational levels in India, with a decline from 90% in grades 6-8 to 56.5% in grades 11-12, along with a concerning statistic of 32.2 million children being out of school as per the National Sample Survey Office's 75th round in 2017-18 (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). This decline accentuates the issue of students dropping out post grade 5 especially deteriorating post grade 8. The government's intent to attain a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 100% from pre-school to secondary education by 2030 is a strategic move to integrate the large youth population into the national development agenda with the goal of remodelling India into a worldwide knowledge economy rather than just an educational reform.

There is a shift towards strengthening public education infrastructure, which is underlined by the emphasis of NEP-2020 on improving government schools and centralizing oversight and policy reform under the 'Department of School Education' (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). With educational disparities, between urban and rural areas, such an approach is crucial for a country like India. The government's extensive network is arguably the way to ensure access to education across this vast country. While civil society organizations do a commendable job in promoting educational initiatives, government interventions are required to make significant and consistent changes on a systemic level especially in remote and underserved regions. The strategic framework of the NEP-2020 recognizes the importance of the education sector in national development apart from targeting educational inclusivity, challenging both non-governmental and governmental entities in terms of operational capabilities and strategic goals to achieve these objectives.

Chakraborty (2021) highlighted that by building strong partnerships, with international universities, Indian institutions are making efforts to align with global academic standards. The Indian Governments initiative in 2017 to designate Indian universities as 'Institutions of Eminence' demonstrated a desire to elevate the national academic landscape to international recognition and provide a push to measure up against global educational benchmarks. Additionally, India's inclusion in the Washington Accord in 2014 indicates a step towards promoting the international mobility of engineering graduates and displayed a commitment to adhering to global educational standards. The collaboration between the Maharashtra Government (a state government in India) and Google for providing quality vocational and skill development training online is an example of a trend where private partnerships are utilized to ensure quality and expand educational outreach. Similarly, the 'Study in India Program' introduced in 2018 aims at positioning India by offering financial incentives to highly talented candidates, as a destination for education among international students (Chakraborty, 2021). These initiatives reflect a strategy aimed at fostering an internationally oriented educational ecosystem, within India, along with enhancing domestic educational infrastructure.

Influence of Globalisation on the National Education Policy – 2020 (India)

According to Goddin et al. (2008) there is a growing trend, in policy making towards using relational contracts, which are based on understanding and cooperation rather than strict binding agreements. The European Union's governance structure is an example of this approach as it prioritizes

consensus and cooperation over decision making. In India, the NEP-2020 follows such a paradigm by giving importance to outcomes and transparent reporting of academic and operational metrics in school assessments (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). This policy direction not only helps India in its effort towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, which promotes excellent education for everyone, but also incorporates Global Citizenship Education (GCED). The inclusion of GCED in the NEP-2020 is with the intent to develop learners who would actively contribute towards creating societies that are more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). This initiative places educational policy within the broader context of global educational reform and societal development by demonstrating a nuanced understanding of education's role, in addressing challenges.

Trowler (2003) elucidated that the implementation of policy is often complicated by the interpretations among those involved in the process. These interpretations can deviate significantly from what policymakers intend and a discernible chasm occurs between policy formulation and its execution. This complexity is particularly evident in India, where teachers play an important role in executing education policies. As a result, the relationship, between policymakers (government officials) and implementers (teachers) becomes entangled in a web of complexity. I have witnessed firsthand the difficulties that arise from such a situation, based on my experiences of working in Rajasthan (India). When teachers, who play an important role in implementing policies, believe that the policies undermine their professional independence or fail to recognize their expertise, they often feel hesitant or resist. This resistance is further intensified by the additional administrative tasks imposed on them such as gathering demographic data and keeping records of students receiving mid-day meals. These extra responsibilities in situations where there is a disproportionate ratio of students to teachers – something quite common, in rural India – can significantly hinder teachers' ability to effectively embrace and implement new policies.

The NEP-2020 gives priority to hiring teachers in marginalised regions and aims to address these challenges with an intent to achieve a proportionate student teacher ratio of 30:1 (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). It acknowledges the need for finding a common ground and accepting that the outcomes may not always perfectly align with the policy objectives. This effort demonstrates an understanding of the complexities associated with policymaking as described by Trowler (2003). The importance of fostering a symbiotic relationship between policy makers and educators is underscored by the nuanced understanding of policy implementation, especially within the sprawling and diverse educational landscape of India. There is a critical need for policies to facilitate a more coherent and effective implementation process by not only recognising but also accommodating the realities of teachers' professional environments. Aiming to bridge the divide between policy intent and its accomplishment on the ground, the NEP-2020 represents a tactical step in this direction, albeit within the context of the intrinsic complications and mixed-up outcomes as characterized by Trowler (2003).

The NEP-2020 places an emphasis on the development of teachers. Through a combination of workshops and digital training modules, it aims to enhance their skills, showcasing a rounded approach to teacher education (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). One notable initiative is the proposed establishment of 'National Professional Standards For Teachers' to be overseen by the 'Professional Standard Setting Body'. Within the General Education Council, this body will involve

stakeholders such as ‘National Council for Educational Research and Training’, ‘State Council of Educational Research and Training’ from all Indian states, educators from different regions and levels as well as expert organizations in teacher preparation. Additionally, the NEP-2020 suggests the implementation of a ‘National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education’ that aligns with the core principles of this policy (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). The objective is to ensure high quality teacher education addressing needs while preparing for future challenges by creating a framework across India. This represents a shift, towards improving teacher competence and educational outcomes on a scale.

The NEP-2020 accentuates the role that technology plays by breaking language barriers and promoting inclusivity for students with special needs and making education accessible to all. This policy is promoting the emergence of educational technology startups in India, which utilize platforms to provide easily accessible educational materials, such as private companies like Byju’s and Unacademy. Additionally, the NEP-2020 aims to position India as a hub for knowledge by nurturing individuals who possess the skills to advocate for human rights, sustainable development and global welfare. To support this vision the NEP-2020 suggests the creation of a repository through DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) that will curate high quality educational resources with a focus on foundational literacy and numeracy (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). This initiative represents a step towards digitizing knowledge in order to achieve equality and excellence, in education.

The NEP-2020 recognizes the impact of advancements in data, machine learning and artificial intelligence on the global job market. While emphasizing the growing need for a workforce proficient in mathematics, computer science and data science, it predicts a decrease in demand for labour. Moreover, it stresses the importance of integrating knowledge from fields such as sciences, social sciences and humanities. In response to this changing employment landscape, educational strategies must focus on developing thinking abilities, problem solving skills, creativity, innovation and the capacity to absorb new information across different domains (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). The NEP-2020 promotes a teaching approach centred around learning to learn aiming to prepare students for the interdisciplinary nature of workplaces. This shift is crucial, for India’s goal of nurturing an adaptable workforce.

Goddin et al. (2008) shed light on the challenges faced by the government in controlling localized execution. As a result, there has been an increased reliance, on outsourcing services forming partnerships between the private sectors and adopting arm’s length governance. This shift in approach is also reflected in the NEP-2020 which emphasizes the importance of collaborating with workers to integrate students into educational frameworks through community involvement (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). Based on my observations in Indian states of Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, I have seen evidence of synergies emerging. For instance, Delhi has partnered with an organisation named STiR Education to enhance teacher development initiatives. Notably, organizations like Pratham, Teach for India and Central Square Foundation have played a role in improving quality of education and reducing dropout rates through strategic collaborations with state governments in India. Furthermore, the NEP-2020 highlights the significance of distance learning opportunities provided by institutions like the National Institute of Open Schooling and State Open Schools (Ministry of Human

Resource Development, 2020). These avenues aim to meet the needs of individuals who are unable to attend traditional schools. These initiatives reflect a shift, towards education by leveraging collective efforts to bridge gaps within existing systems and promote accessible learning environments.

According to Olssen et al. (2004) neoliberalism supports a government system that emphasises on reducing bureaucracy rather than diminishing governance. The responsibility of the state is to facilitating market efficiency than promoting equity or maintaining public monopolies. This philosophy aligns with the vision of NEP-2020, for the future of education in India by 2040, which aims to transform Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) into entities with larger student enrolments (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). The goal is to optimize infrastructure utilization, academic communities and ensure that both public and private HEIs offer education in local or bilingual languages with the aim of achieving universal access at the district level by 2030.

In alignment to this intent one can notice an increase in private educational institutions over the past decade. These institutions also get subsidies. However, these institutions have a high fee structure to match international standards, which can limit access for many individuals. Additionally, this shift towards marketization in education as mentioned by Olssen et al. (2004) has led to an emphasis on performance and accountability while unintentionally marginalizing the traditional role of academics as critics within society. This shift highlights a conflict, within the higher education system, where the need for market efficiency and equal educational opportunities are constantly being balanced. This mirrors a larger worldwide discussion on how education has become a commodity and its impact on access and academic autonomy.

Olssen et al. (2004) highlighted the importance of adjusting funding systems to align compulsory education with market dynamics and viewed this as a way to integrate institutions into the market framework. In line with this, the NEP-2020 aims to internationalize education in India. It seeks to attract students and enable greater academic mobility for Indian students through credit transfer and research opportunities abroad (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). The goal of this policy is to raise standards to meet benchmarks and promote internationalization within the country.

The rise of this ideology has brought about a change in how we approach reforms shifting towards market driven approaches. This shift views education as a commodity within a market emphasizing the need for competitiveness and meeting market demands. In India's landscape we have witnessed a surge in institutions, an increased emphasis on employability skills and the commodification of knowledge. These trends reflect patterns, towards restructuring education based on market-oriented principles.

Olssen et al. (2004) pointed out that the changing landscape of knowledge and the demands of the workforce have led universities to adapt their offerings. The NEP-2020 reflects this trend, by introducing different structures for Master's Programmes in higher education. These options include a two-year programme with a focus on research for those who have completed a three-year undergraduate degree, a condensed one-year Master's Programme for graduates of four-year research based Bachelor's Programmes and a five-year Bachelor's/Master's Programme (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). These innovations aim to align India's education system with international standards thereby enhancing the competitiveness and relevance of Indian graduates, in today's dynamic professional world.

The NEP-2020 has brought in a flexible pathway for students in Indian education. Now students have the option to leave their education after completing grade 10. Then return later for vocational or other academic streams in grades 11 and 12. This change aligns with the goal of fostering development focusing not only on cognitive growth but also on nurturing well rounded individuals with essential skills for the 21st century (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). To achieve this the NEP-2020 emphasizes reforms that include incorporating subjects like environmental education, design thinking, artificial intelligence and global citizenship into the curriculum. Additionally, there is a shift in assessment strategies towards evaluating application of knowledge than mere memorization. A notable change is the introduction of a grade 3 examination that assesses literacy, numeracy and other foundational skills. To oversee these evaluations, a nationwide assessment centre called Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development was established.

The Indian government's NEP-2020 aims to position India as a leader, in education by focusing on providing high quality and affordable higher education (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). To achieve this goal the policy requires education institutions to establish International Student Offices that will provide support for students. It also suggests forming partnerships with countries to enhance research teaching collaborations and facilitate exchange programs between faculty and students at leading global institutes.

One notable aspect of the NEP-2020 is its encouragement for internationally ranked universities particularly those in the top 100 to establish campuses in India. In return Indian universities are encouraged to expand their presence as well. This mutual academic mobility is made possible through a framework that grants universities autonomy in terms of regulations, governance and curriculum standards while aligning them with India's autonomous educational institutions (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). Moreover, the policy highlights the importance of promoting research collaborations and facilitating student exchanges. This allows credits earned from foreign universities to be acknowledged by institutions in India, towards obtaining degrees. Adoption of this policy shows a readiness to embrace globalization and signifies an endeavour to encourage internationalization. The ultimate aim is to elevate the reputation and attractiveness of higher education in India.

The influence of globalization on university management is causing changes in the core elements of academia such as educating process, inquiry and academic engagement or service. This shift has the potential to challenge the roles of these pillars. According to Chakraborty (2021) as Indian higher education welcomes foreign universities, it becomes crucial to protect the sector from any risks associated with foreign partnerships. To ensure that Indian higher education can effectively address challenges without compromising on quality due to indiscriminate collaborations a strategic approach is necessary.

The strategic vision of the government aims to nurture a youth workforce that can contribute significantly to the national economy. This vision is aligned with the trend of emphasizing knowledge-based economies, where nations compete for skilled employment opportunities. The quality of a country's workforce directly impacts its economy. Recognizing this, it is crucial for national education policies to focus on developing a world class labour force, which is seen as an asset, in today's world.

However, the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17) brings attention to a disparity in vocational training in India. Less than 5% of individuals between 19 and 24 years of age have received formal vocational education while countries such as Germany, the United States of America and South Korea with 75%, 52% and 96% respectively, have made significant progress in this area (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). These disparities highlight the need to accelerate the integration of vocational training across India particularly within the wider educational framework.

Traditionally vocational education in India has been limited to students in grades 11 and 12 as well as those who leave school after completing grade 8. Many graduates who have received training often face difficulties when trying to move back into education institutions. This is because higher education institutions do not consider vocational qualifications to be at par with academic credentials, leading to students with vocational qualifications getting limited chances to advance in education and careers. However, this issue is being addressed with the introduction of the 'National Skills Qualifications Framework' in 2013 by the Government of India (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). This framework aims to recognize and value training, which is an important step towards removing barriers and promoting educational and professional growth for individuals who have received vocational training. It also brings India's strategy in line with global standards. The focus is now on creating pathways that integrate training, with education and other opportunities, which will allow India's human capital to thrive in the competitive global economy.

According to Sweetland's (1996) perspective on Human Capital Theory, economic progress is driven by investments in education and training. This suggests that when individuals acquire levels of education and skills they tend to earn more and contribute to the prosperity of society. Thus, education becomes a factor in achieving economic productivity. However, this theory has faced criticism for its focus on skills and employability overlooking the purpose of education. Olssen et al. (2004) argued against this viewpoint by emphasizing the importance of learning as advocated by organizations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and European Round Table. The aim is to develop a workforce that is adaptable and flexible in a changing world. However, this shift towards lifelong learning also implies a privatization of responsibility within a post welfare society. It portrays citizens as consumers who are responsible for their re-skilling in an environment that increasingly moves away from traditional welfare state principles. This critique highlights the tension, between promoting workforce adaptability and upholding the values of education.

2. Conclusion

According to Goddin et al. (2008) the emergence of the knowledge economy is seen as a confirmation of Human Capital Theory indicating that prosperity now depends on the development and investment in skills. This means that both individuals and countries economic success increasingly relies on how personal skills are developed and utilized. The NEP-2020 reflects this idea by aiming to ensure that at least 50% of student population have access to vocation-based education by 2025 aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4.4, to maximize India's demographic advantage (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). It envisions incorporating vocation into schools by forming partnerships with Industrial Training Institutes, Polytechnics and local industries. This represents a step, in integrating

vocational training into the broader educational system (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020).

The NEP-2020 brings about a change, in the direction of education, experiential learning and the integration of technology. It highlights its strengths in reforms. However, it faces the challenge of balancing needs with demands to ensure cultural relevance and inclusivity. One crucial aspect for implementation is addressing stratification and creating education accessibility for learners from diverse social, cultural and financial backgrounds.

A detailed examination within the context of globalization reveals both the potential and challenges of National Education Policy of India – 2020. While it aims to align with trends and promote competitiveness, careful execution is essential to safeguard fairness, inclusion and overall student development. By navigating through requirements, global dynamics and influences from neoliberalism, India sets out on a path to shape an education framework that upholds equity and inclusivity. This will create a blend of aspirations, with indigenous needs.

The success of NEP-2020 depends on its ability to embrace the benefits of globalization while also addressing the potential for inequalities. It is commendable that the policy focuses on integrating vocational education, experiential learning and digital literacy at all levels of schooling. However, it is crucial that the implementation strategy prioritizes bridging the divide and ensuring that rural and marginalized communities are not left behind in India's educational reform journey. For example, along with education initiatives there should be a focus on developing infrastructure in areas to ensure fair access to technology and internet connectivity. Additionally vocational training programs should be conceived in association with leaders from the industry to provide skills that are in demand thereby increasing employability among young people. In conclusion, achieving the vision outlined in NEP-2020, requires an effort that places emphasis on accessibility, quality and relevance of education. This will enable India to leverage its dividend, for development and social equality.

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