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Role of National Education Policy 2020 in Promoting Human Rights Awareness in India: An Analytical Study

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Abstract: The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) outlines a radical transformation of India's education system, emphasizing not only academic knowledge but also the development of students' moral and constitutional values. The primary objective of this research paper is to analyse the role of NEP 2020 in promoting human rights awareness from the grassroots level to higher education in India. This study identifies that the policy integrates fundamental human rights concepts- justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity directly into the pedagogical framework. The goal is to cultivate a rights-aware future generation by instilling empathy, social responsibility, and an understanding of gender equality in children from the primary level. Furthermore, the policy's commitment to inclusive education and special provisions for socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) is a cornerstone in ensuring the right to education for all. This analytical study demonstrates that NEP 2020 aims to move beyond theoretical discussions and cultivate human rights as a way of life. However, its successful implementation depends on teacher training and infrastructural development. Finally, this research evaluates the importance of human rights education and the effectiveness of this policy in strengthening India's democratic framework.

Keyword: NEP 2020, Human Rights Education, Inclusivity.

Introduction:

Human rights are the inherent and inalienable rights of every human being, equally applicable to all regardless of race, religion, caste, gender, or location. The protection of human rights and public awareness regarding them are crucial for building a democratic and progressive society. Education is the primary means through which citizens can be made aware of their rights and responsibilities. In the Indian context, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, introduced after three decades, aims to bring about a revolutionary transformation in the country's education system.

The core principles of this education policy are the development of the full potential of every individual, the creation of an equitable and inclusive society, and the acceleration of national development. A significant aspect of NEP 2020 is the modernization of the curriculum and its



emphasis on human rights, ethics, and constitutional values. This policy advocates not only for academic knowledge but also for fostering empathy, mutual respect, and a sense of global citizenship among students.

By ensuring the right to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs), women, and children with disabilities, this policy embodies the fundamental spirit of human rights. In this research, we will analyse how the National Education Policy 2020 is structurally integrating human rights awareness into India's education framework and what its practical challenges are. The central theme of this discussion is how effectively this education policy can play a role in protecting human rights as a blueprint for India's bright future.

Operational Definition:

NEP 2020: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 refers to the educational framework approved by the Government of India, which aims to bring about a radical transformation in education by introducing a '5+3+3+4' structure in place of the existing '10+2' system and we are committed to delivering the message of human rights to students at every level in India and playing a supportive role in building a non-discriminatory society.

Human Rights Education: Human rights education refers to a planned and continuous process through which individuals not only learn about the theoretical aspects of human rights but also acquire the skills and mind-set to apply them in real life.

Inclusivity: Inclusivity is a well-planned system or practice where every individual is given equal importance, regardless of their race, religion, caste, gender, physical ability, or socio-economic status. It is not merely about bringing everyone together, but about creating an environment where everyone feels safe and their opinions and talents are valued.

Objective of the Study:

- Examining the main features and guidelines of the National Education Policy 2020, which are directly related to instilling human rights and moral values among students.
- To analyse how human rights issues (such as equality, justice, and freedom) have been incorporated into the school and higher education curricula under this new education policy.
- To assess how this policy's role in addressing socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) and gender inequality contributes to the protection of human rights.
- Identifying potential obstacles or challenges (such as infrastructure and linguistic diversity) in implementing this policy within India's diverse education system.

Research Questions:

Q1. What specific strategies and guidelines are included in the National Education Policy 2020 that directly contribute to developing human rights awareness and moral values among students?



Q2. How are the core principles of human rights—specifically equality, justice, and liberty—integrated into the school and higher education curricula as envisioned by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020?

Q3. To what extent does the emphasis of NEP 2020 on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) and gender parity serve as a structural mechanism for the protection and promotion of fundamental human rights in India?

Q4. What are the systemic, infrastructural, and socio-cultural barriers that hinder the effective implementation of NEP 2020's human rights education framework across India's diverse educational landscape?

Research Methodology:

This research has followed qualitative and analytical methods. The official document of NEP 2020 and various journals and UNESCO reports (secondary sources) were used as sources of information. The content analysis method was applied to analyse the collected data, which enabled a comparative evaluation of various proposals of the education policy—such as inclusive education and gender awareness—with the fundamental principles of human rights.

Findings of the Study:

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) outlines a transformative roadmap for the Indian education system, where human rights awareness and moral values are treated as integral components of learning. Based on the research questions, here are the key findings:

- **Ethical and Constitutional Values:** The curriculum emphasizes empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, democratic spirit, spirit of service, and universal human values (such as Truth, Righteous Conduct, Peace, Love, and Non-violence). As part of ethics, the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family) and responsibility towards the environment have also been included. Preventing climate change and caring for nature have been identified as one of the biggest moral duties of our time.
- **Experiential Learning:** Rather than rote learning, the policy emphasizes learning ethics through community service projects and practical social engagement. To instil empathy and a spirit of service among students, participation in various social activities is encouraged. For example: Spending time at orphanages or old age homes, participating in tree plantation or cleanliness drives to protect the environment, engaging in community service activities. It has been suggested that traditional Indian stories (such as Panchatantra and Jataka tales) and folk tales be used to make value-based education enjoyable.
- **Blending Tradition with Modernity:** It adopts a strategy to balance traditional Indian values with 21st-century skills, such as scientific temper and critical thinking.
- **Equality:** The policy aims to ensure equal access to high-quality education for all students, regardless of caste, religion, gender, or geographic location.
- **Justice:** It proposes the establishment of Special Education Zones (SEZs) for socio-economically disadvantaged areas and provides scholarships to ensure social justice.
- **Liberty:** By promoting multilingualism and providing flexibility in subject selection, the policy ensures students' freedom to learn and think according to their interests.



- **Gender Inclusion Fund:** The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places special emphasis on the creation of a 'Gender Inclusion Fund' to address gender inequality in India's education system. The primary objective of this fund is to ensure quality education for female and transgender students and to prevent them from dropping out of school.
- **Targeted Attention:** By creating inclusive curricula and safe environments for SC, ST, OBC, and minority students, the policy seeks to protect their fundamental rights. The policy calls for the implementation of strict anti-discrimination policies in schools and higher education institutions. Instructions have been given to design textbook content in a way that does not demean any race or gender. This instills the core principle of human rights, 'mutual respect', in students from a young age.
- **Infrastructural Support:** Building hostels and Ashram schools in remote areas acts as a physical mechanism to realize the "Right to Education."
- **Teacher Training (CPD):** 50 hours of mandatory Continuous Professional Development (CPD) have been introduced for teachers. Through this, teachers are being trained in human rights, gender sensitivity, and inclusive education methods.
- **Integrated Curriculum:** NCERT is developing a new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) that incorporates civic rights, fundamental duties, and constitutional values from the primary level onwards through storytelling and real-life examples.
- **Technology and Accessibility:** Efforts are being made to ensure the 'right to education' by delivering quality education to even remote areas through platforms like 'DIKSHA' and 'SWAYAM'.
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Major Challenges:

The implementation of NEP 2020 faces several serious obstacles:

- **Financial Constraints:** Although there is a goal to allocate 6% of GDP to education, mobilizing such massive resources remains a major challenge.
- **Digital and Infrastructural Disparities:** The digital divide between rural and urban India is extremely pronounced. Equal opportunity is a fundamental condition of human rights, but the lack of electricity or internet access can undermine the 'right to education' for many students.
- **Social and Cultural Conservatism:** In many cases, rural or conservative societies show reluctance to accept concepts of gender awareness or inclusive education. Deep-seated social issues like gender discrimination, the caste system, and orthodox mind-sets often prevent marginalized children from entering mainstream education. Changing this mind-set to promote human rights education is a time-consuming process.
- **Teacher-Student Ratio and Resources:** Schools in marginalized areas lack sufficient teachers. The kind of individual attention required to teach sensitive subjects like human rights is often not possible in large classrooms.
- **Lack of Teacher Training:** Many educators lack specialized training in modern pedagogical methods for teaching human rights and ethics.



- **Linguistic Complexities:** The NEP emphasizes education in the mother tongue. However, in a multilingual country like India, creating appropriate textbooks and training teachers for numerous dialects and regional languages is a huge administrative challenge.

Recommendations:

The following steps can be taken to overcome these challenges:

- Involving educational institutions, as well as local panchayats and NGOs, in human rights awareness campaigns.
- Swiftly implementing the promised allocation of 6% of GDP to the education sector.
- Forming a monitoring cell in each district to ensure that no child is deprived of their fundamental rights.
- Implement mandatory, periodic training modules for teachers focusing specifically on Human Rights Education (HRE) and inclusive pedagogy.
- Prioritize the "National Educational Technology Forum" (NETF) to bridge the digital divide in Special Education Zones (SEZs).
- Establish a social audit mechanism to monitor the utilization of the Gender Inclusion Fund and the progress of SEDGs.

Conclusion:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a historic shift away from a purely education-centric model towards a value-based and inclusive framework. By incorporating the principles of equality, justice, and freedom into the curriculum, it directly aligns the Indian education system with global human rights standards.

However, the transition from "policy to practice" remains a significant challenge. While the emphasis on socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) and gender equality provides a strong structural foundation for upholding human rights, the success of this framework largely depends on overcoming systemic financial constraints and deeply ingrained socio-economic prejudices. If implemented effectively with political will and public participation, NEP 2020 has the potential to cultivate a generation that is not only professionally competent but also deeply committed to India's ethical and constitutional framework.

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