

TRANSFORMING ASSESSMENT: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF NEP 2020'S EVALUATION REFORMS

¹Pratibha Kumari, ²Dr. Yudh Veer

¹Research Scholar, ²Associate Professor

Department of Education, Himachal Pradesh University,
Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India

Abstract- Any programme or policy is incomplete without its evaluation. In education system, we do come with multiple policies related to content, syllabus and teaching methods. However, focus should also be upon the evaluation system. Earlier evaluation used to happen using traditional ways like summative exams which needs to be upgrade. In this research paper, we have analysed the examination and evaluation system suggested by NEP. NEP marks a transformative shift in India's educational system, particularly in the realms of assessment and examination. This policy emphasizes a departure from rote learning, advocating for competency-based assessments. This research critically explores the potential benefits and challenges of NEP assessment reforms, highlighting the need for resource allocation, capacity building, and teacher training to ensure successful implementation. By fostering a competency-based, flexible, and inclusive assessment system, the NEP aims to create a more equitable and dynamic educational environment that supports the development of well-rounded individuals prepared for the demands of the 21st century.

Index Terms- Assessment, Evaluation, Examination and National Education Policy (NEP)

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, learners require a flexible form of education that is more skill-based and related to real-world challenges. Education is becoming increasingly important as learners require more than just academic knowledge they need critical thinking, creativity and adaptability due to the high pace of technological change and globalization. Also, digital literacy and cross-discipline learning are all vital too. The bottom line is education must target at individual level too, so that the pace and style suite your need, with an emphasis on constant learning as industries evolve over time.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 tries to cater these modern needs by moving towards holistic and

multidisciplinary approach. NEP 2020 focuses on skill building, critical thinking and flexible pathways to learning. A very important step in this reform is a flexible curriculum, offering the students the opportunity to select from different streams and ensuring a holistic profile. It also seeks to introduce vocational education right from a young age, encouraging practical learning and skill-based development. Emphasizing on technology in education, NEP promotes online courses & digital learning; importance of lifelong learning moreover, it wants to eliminate rote learning by giving more attention to experiential and practical learning. The new education policy attempts to make the teaching learner focused, skill and knowledge incorporating required in the 21st century through these means.

The traditional approach to examination and evaluation in India has often emphasized rote memorization and high-stakes, end-of-year exams. This structure can sometimes create pressure for students to perform within a limited timeframe, which may encourage a focus on memorization over deeper understanding. While grades and marks remain important indicators, they might not fully capture a student's broader skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.

NEP 2020 proposes a significant shift in this approach by moving towards a more comprehensive and continuous evaluation system. The policy emphasizes reducing the importance of high-stakes exams and shifting towards regular assessments that focus on students' learning outcomes, critical thinking, and conceptual understanding. It introduces the idea of formative assessments, which are conducted throughout the year, allowing for a better understanding of a student's progress. These assessments are designed to be more competency-based, measuring not only what students know but how they apply their knowledge in real-life

situations. NEP 2020 also suggests the use of AI-based software to assess students' strengths and weaknesses, enabling personalized learning. The goal is to create a stress-free, student-friendly assessment system that promotes learning over memorization, ensuring that the focus is on overall development and lifelong learning skills.

In order to improve India's examination and evaluation system, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 proposed significant changes. The objectives of this policy are to eliminate rote learning, promote holistic development, and emphasize competency-based learning. The most significant modifications under NEP 2020 are listed below, with explanations for each heading:

1.1. Holistic and Multidimensional Report Cards

A comprehensive approach to student evaluation is proposed by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which calls for an important shift from traditional, one-dimensional examinations that only include exam results. The combination of several aspects of pupil development is emphasized by this fresh approach that embraces non-cognitive skills like leadership, teamwork, and interpersonal traits in addition to cognitive skills like subject knowledge. Also, proposed report cards will include student self-assess that encourages them to think about their own growth and learning direction. Peer review will be essential in fostering a comprehensive assessment that honours a diversity of perspectives. This comprehensive approach seeks to promote students' holistic development while embracing the significance of both academic achievement and critical life skills.

1.2. Competency-based Learning and Assessment

NEP 2020 focuses a significant value on shifting from memorization to competency-based education (CBE), in which evaluations are meant to assess students' actual understanding of concepts as well as abilities for application. Rather than memorizing, the focus will be on analytical skills, problem-solving techniques, and critical thinking. rather than focusing just on factual memory, the policy promotes the creation of examinations that evaluate higher-order abilities like creativity and analytical thinking.

1.3. Introduction of Semester System

NEP 2020 proposes establishing a semester-based system for classes 9–12. This decreases the demand

on annual final exams and rather fosters continuous evaluation. It ensures that evaluations are given to learners frequently and in concentrated, small learning groups.

1.4. Formative and Summative Assessments

Formative and summative assessments differentiate effectively in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, emphasizing the significance of both in the learning process. Throughout the year, formative assessments are going to be performed with the goal of monitoring students' progress in their learning and giving immediate feedback that will promote development. Summative tests, on the other hand, have become less common and used to assess a student's overall learning at the end of a term or academic year. In spite of official and unofficial means including projects, portfolios, quizzes, and classroom participation, the policy promotes a continuous assessment approach. By providing a more complete and comprehensive view of each student's development, this holistic method aims to promote their overall development.

1.5. Technology-based Assessment

Technology for assessment is one of the main aspects of NEP 2020. Applying AI-driven tools to create better assessments and use data analytics to learn about student learning practices has been recommended for educational institutions and examination boards. The application of technology will make it possible to provide tests and feedback that are specific to the individual needs of each student.

1.6. Examinations in Mother Tongue

NEP 2020 supports the use of mother tongues or regional languages for examinations, particularly in primary and secondary education. The purpose of this change is to guarantee that language barriers do not negatively impact students' understanding of the subject matter.

1.7. Reduced Curriculum Content

NEP 2020 supports reducing the curriculum in order to concentrate on essential ideas and competencies in order to conform to the new assessment criteria. The assessments will examine this reform's focus of experiential learning and ability in helping pupils go beyond textbooks.

1.8. Focus on Vocational and Life Skills

The scope of examinations has been broadened by NEP 2020 to encompass interpersonal abilities and

career preparation. As well as to their academic subjects, students will be assessed on their interpersonal skills, internships experiences, and vocational abilities, which will prepare them for hurdles they may face in real life.

1.9. National Testing Agency (NTA)

The National Testing Agency (NTA) has a larger operates today that the NEP has been implemented. For the purpose of to decrease the number of distinct entrance examinations conducted by particular universities, it will provide common entrance exams for various kinds of college admissions. These tests will not only evaluate students' the subject knowledge; they will also evaluate their aptitude and capabilities.

1.10. Teacher Training and Evaluation Reforms

Educators will be prepared to create more effective assessment plans, emphasizing the need of giving honest feedback rather than to just grades. This is an aspect of a larger initiative to turn educators into learning and evaluation facilitators.

In the future, exams are supposed to be tools for learning and development rather than a cause of stress, according to NEP 2020. In order to modernize India's examination and assessment system and bring it into line with the demands of the twenty-first century, it places a strong emphasis on competency-based assessments, flexible learning methods, and holistic growth.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Competency-based learning (CBL) has gained prominence in India, particularly with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the development of specific competencies knowledge, skills, and attitudes over traditional content-based approaches. CBL advocates for a learner-centred model that prioritizes mastery of skills and offers flexibility in learning pathways, thereby addressing the rigidities of conventional education (Mishra & Ranjan, 2020). While CBL is being integrated into school and higher education frameworks, significant challenges remain, including resistance to change, lack of infrastructure, and a focus on standardized testing that hampers effective implementation (Nanda & Bhattacharya, 2022).

Competency-based learning (CBL), emphasized in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, aims to transform the Indian education system by promoting meaningful learning experiences and reducing rote

memorization. This shift builds on the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005, which advocated for constructivist and experiential learning approaches (NCERT, 2005). NEP 2020 emphasizes critical thinking and problem-solving skills through revised curricula and formative assessments (Ministry of Education, 2020). Despite these reforms, challenges persist, including outdated teaching methods, insufficient teacher training, and large class sizes, which hinder the effective implementation of CBL and deeper learning practices (Kumar & Gupta, 2021; Pathania, 2020).

III. COMPARISON

Throughout the years, India's examination and evaluation system has come under severe criticism, mostly for its focus on rote learning, high stakes testing, and inadequate attention to students' overall development. In order to solve these widespread problems, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduces a number of transformative reforms that shift the emphasis from high-stakes exams to continuous and comprehensive assessments, from rote memorization to competency-based learning, and from academic-only evaluation to a more comprehensive and multidimensional approach. This comparison of the NEP 2020 changes with the current system highlights how the new policy aims to build a more flexible and student-centred system that encourages creativity, critical thinking, and practical skills.

3.1. Focus on Rote Learning vs Competency-based Education

The present Indian examination system places a strong emphasis on memorizing, testing students' capacity to retain information accurately and replicate as it is in written tests. The format of exams often leads students to depend on memorization, which can restrict the extent of their comprehension. The present system's evaluations mostly focus on factual recollection, which may limit students' abilities to develop skills like creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Question papers are often designed to test a student's memory rather than their ability to apply knowledge in real-world scenarios.

In contrast, NEP 2020 advocates a shift to competency-based education (CBE). The proposed system emphasizes developing a deeper understanding of subjects and the ability to apply knowledge in practical settings. Assessments under NEP 2020 will focus on evaluating students'

conceptual clarity, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking abilities. The policy suggests restructuring exams to include higher-order thinking questions, where students are encouraged to think critically, analyze situations, and propose solutions, instead of merely recalling information. This shift aims to foster intellectual curiosity and encourage students to engage more deeply with the learning material.

3.2. One-dimensional Report Cards vs Holistic Evaluation

In the current system, students are mostly evaluated on their academic performance, and their report cards reflect their scores in subjects like mathematics, science, and language. This one-dimensional assessment overlooks other crucial aspects of a student's development, such as emotional intelligence, creativity, leadership qualities, teamwork, and moral values. The present approach focuses on academic success, which may not completely capture other elements of students' ability like strengths and weaknesses.

In stark contrast, NEP 2020 introduces the concept of holistic and multidimensional report cards, where students will be assessed not only on their academic performance but also on their co-curricular activities, life skills, personality development, and overall well-being. The holistic report card will include self-assessment by students, peer evaluations, and teacher assessments, providing a more balanced and inclusive picture of a student's abilities. This system encourages the development of well-rounded individuals, helping them discover their interests and strengths in areas beyond academics. By including evaluations of non-cognitive skills such as communication, leadership, and empathy, NEP 2020 aims to nurture students' emotional and social intelligence, making them more prepared for real-world challenges.

3.3. Uniform Board Exams vs Flexible Modular Exams

The existing board exams, especially at the secondary (Class 10) and higher secondary (Class 12) levels, follow a rigid format with little flexibility. Students across the country sit for the same exams in a standardized format, and their scores in these exams play a decisive role in their future educational and career choices. The standard format of board examinations might be difficult for students because it follows a standard format and may be difficult for them to navigate their academic journey. A single

board test score can have considerable impact on their future academic career.

NEP 2020 proposes to introduce flexible modular exams, allowing students to take board exams in smaller, more manageable segments. For instance, students could take exams in subjects when they feel most prepared rather than appearing for all subjects at once. Additionally, the policy allows students to take board exams twice a year, offering them the opportunity to improve their scores without waiting an entire academic year. This modular approach also enables students to focus on specific subjects of their choice, promoting a more personalized learning pathway and reducing the one-size-fits-all pressure of the current board exam system. The new system seeks to reduce the undue stress on students and shift the focus from simply clearing exams to mastering content at their own pace.

3.4. Limited Use of Technology vs Technology-based Assessment

In the current system, technology is underutilized in the examination and evaluation processes. Although some schools and boards have experimented with online assessments and digital classrooms, the overall system remains largely traditional, relying on pen-and-paper exams. The existing system offers limited options for creative and interactive evaluations that can enhance the learning process because of its restricted use of technology.

NEP 2020 envisions a future where technology plays a pivotal role in assessment and evaluation. The use of AI-based tools, data analytics, and adaptive assessments will enable more personalized and tailored evaluations. These technological tools can help track students' progress more effectively, provide real-time feedback, and identify learning gaps that need immediate attention. Online platforms will also allow for remote assessments, making the system more flexible and inclusive. Additionally, the integration of technology will ensure that assessments are more dynamic, with interactive learning simulations and virtual labs being used to assess students' understanding of complex concepts in subjects like science and mathematics. This marks a significant departure from the static, paper-based evaluations currently in place.

3.5. Single Language Exams vs Multilingual Assessments

The current evaluation system in India is often conducted in English or Hindi, depending on the

school board. However, for many students, these may not be their first languages, and the language barrier can sometimes hinder their performance. Exams that are mostly administered in Hindi or English might occasionally provide difficulties for students whose first language is different, which may have an impact on their performance.

NEP 2020 advocates for conducting exams, especially at the primary and secondary levels, in students' mother tongues or local languages. This reform ensures that language does not become a barrier to students demonstrating their understanding of a subject. The emphasis on multilingual education and multilingual assessments also aligns with the broader goals of promoting linguistic diversity in the country. By offering students the option to take exams in a language they are comfortable with, NEP 2020 makes the evaluation process more inclusive and equitable.

3.6. Teacher-centric Assessments vs Student-centric Assessments

In the current system, teachers are primarily responsible for conducting assessments and grading students. The current system mainly involves teachers in assessments, with limited direct participation by students in their own evaluation process. While teachers' assessments are undoubtedly valuable, they do not always capture the full range of a student's abilities, especially in areas like creativity, teamwork, and leadership.

IV. TRANSFORMING EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS: THE IMPACT OF NEP 2020 ON INDIAN EDUCATION

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), Delhi University (DU), Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), and many state education boards have all seen important modifications to their examination and evaluation systems as an effect of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The main objective of NEP 2020 is to shift away from rote learning and toward critical thinking, conceptual understanding, and creativity in order to make education more holistic, adaptable, and in line with the demands of the twenty-first century.

The modified examination system is one of the main features of the NEP. In India, examinations are usually memory-based and high consequences. The NEP suggests that the primary focus be shifted from formative assessment, which is continuous and diagnostic, to summative assessment, which

involves once exams. This method seeks to give pupils regular feedback so they can get better over the course of the academic year. Numerous organizations, like KVS and CBSE, have already started putting this idea into practice by increasing the number of competency-based questions, case studies, and problem-solving situations in their exams.

In higher education, the NEP 2020 promotes a multidisciplinary approach to teaching at places like Delhi University and the IITs. With less focus on final exams, the new grading system encourages research, internships, project-based learning, and peer evaluation. For example, Delhi University is gradually moving away from semester-based exams and toward continuous internal review in order to create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment. In a similar vein, the IITs are fusing multidisciplinary education with real-world applications to make sure that students are assessed on their capacity for creativity and problem-solving as well as their academic knowledge.

The latest examination guidelines under the NEP are being adopted by state governments as well. New standards are already being implemented in states like Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh. These states are shifting away from traditional rote-based tests toward assessments that emphasize analytical abilities and practical knowledge.

In conclusion, by encouraging a more comprehensive, skill-based, and flexible approach to learning, NEP 2020 has started a paradigm shift in India's examination and evaluation system. The goal of the strategy is to lessen the stress that comes with high-stakes tests while preparing students for real-world difficulties through the emphasis on multidisciplinary education, ongoing evaluation, and critical thinking. The progressive implementation of these modifications by establishments such as the CBSE, DU, IITs, and other states is a positive step in the direction of revamping the Indian educational system.

V. CONCLUSION

India's approach to evaluating student learning has gone through a significant change with the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 assessment and evaluation system. NEP 2020 emphasizes continual, thorough, competency-based evaluations in place of high-stakes, memory-based tests. It aims to lessen the anxiety that is typically connected to exams while encouraging

students to think critically, be creative, and solve problems.

The strategy brings in formative evaluations, which give students continuous feedback and support their overall development by challenging them to emphasize comprehension over memorization. Eventually, organizations like as the CBSE, DU, IITs, and state boards are implementing these changes, making case studies, project-based learning, peer reviews, and research integral components of student assessment.

NEP 2020 embraces multiple disciplines and real-world applications to further enhance a multidisciplinary approach, particularly in higher education. In order to match education with the demands of a fast-changing global world, it encourages the development of an inclusive, student-centric evaluation system that acknowledges a variety of learning approaches.

To sum up, NEP 2020 seeks to restructure India's examination and evaluation systems in order to promote a more purposeful, adaptable, and equitable approach to education, equipping learners for both academic success and real-world problems.

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