

National Education Policy 2020 and Sustainable Development Goals: A Roadmap for Education Reform in India

Dr. Shakera Parveen^{1*}

¹ Associate Professor, LQ-7, University Staff Quarters, Mirza Ghalib Road, Maulana Azad National Urdu University Gachibowli Hyderabad 500032, Telangana State India.

Abstract

A vital human right, education gives individuals the information and skills they need to enhance their health and well-being, expand their work opportunities, and combat poverty. Education policy is the means by which high-quality education, the cornerstone and foundation of every society's growth, may be achieved. Research the papers that discuss the Sustainable Development Goals and the national education strategy for 2020. Based on a study of the literature, it was determined that NEP 2020, which aligns with the 2030 Goals for Sustainable Development, aims to establish India as a global knowledge centre by promoting technology-driven, flexible, and interdisciplinary education. SDG 4 provides a universal blueprint that guides education policies to prioritize foundational literacy, inclusivity, and digital learning. Higher education institutions are essential to this shift because they include sustainability ideas into their courses, giving students the abilities, information, and moral perspective they need to tackle global issues. Furthermore, teacher training programs must be strengthened to incorporate SDGs into education, ensuring that educators are well-prepared to impart sustainability-driven learning.

Keywords: National education policy 2020 (NEP 2020), Sustainable development goals, Digital learning, Teacher training programs.

1 Introduction

With the potential to change the educational landscape of the country for future generations, "the

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National Education Policy (NEP) 2020" is a ray of hope in India's fight for educational reform. The ambitious goal and comprehensive plan of NEP 2020 not only address the shortcomings of the current system but also envision a future where each student have access to an excellent education [1]. The Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs, are a global plan set by the United Nations to create a more sustainable and fair society by 2030. SDG 4 stands out among these objectives as a pillar, highlighting the significance of high-quality education as a driving force for advancement in all spheres of development. The SDGs and NEP 2020 provide a rare chance to align national education strategies with international sustainable development goals [2]. In addition to achieving its educational goals, India may make a substantial contribution to the larger aims of gender equality, poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion by coordinating NEP 2020 with the SDGs. This essay aims to investigate the relationship between NEP 2020 and the SDGs, with an emphasis on how bringing both frameworks into alignment might help India achieve equitable and high-quality education. In order to identify the possibilities, problems, and synergies that come with this alignment, this study will thoroughly analyse the main goals, characteristics, and planned changes of NEP 2020 in addition to the educational targets and indicators of the SDGs [3].

A. Significance of Sustainable development goals (SDG-4)

Initiatives by modern international governments to improve living circumstances globally seem to be based on sustainable development goals. A long-term sustainability strategy, these SDGs are especially committed to advancing sustainable development. More specifically, compared to its predecessors, the Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs are more inclusive and successful. In order to provide wealth to the world and ensure its preservation, the United Nations members decided to design a plan. Today, "the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" are the name given to the framework [4]. Rich and poor nations alike are being urged to move quickly to establish international cooperation by means of these SDGs. "Poverty, gender equality, economic growth, climate change, and excellent education" are just a few of the concerns that these SDGs seek to address. For sustainable development to be achieved by 2030, all countries must pledge to adopt global goals [5]. The United Nations established a department to provide significant assistance to countries in their pursuit of sustainability. The exploration of SDG 4 insights is the primary subject of this study. We also want to examine the implementation and achievement of SDG 4 as it stands now. Furthermore, we're dedicated to examining the several important steps the Indian government has done to meet SDG 4 objectives [6].

Universal education has long been a major component of the "Sustainable Development Goals". Around the world, education for sustainable development, or ESD, is becoming more and more recognised as a vital component of excellent education and a major facilitator of sustainable development [7]. SDG 4, which has seven objectives and three implementation methods, seeks to provide everyone access to high-quality, inclusive, egalitarian education and to opportunities for lifelong learning. Despite the fact that the objectives were developed via a protracted consultation process headed by member nations, the commercial sector, research organisations, endowments, educators, unions, civic society, intergovernmental organisations, and regional organisations were all involved [8]. UNESCO, UN-

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DESA, UNEP, Global Compact, and UNU subsequently partnered to form "the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI)", which aims to promote teaching and research on sustainable development at higher education institutions. This include supporting local sustainable practices and greening campuses. In addition to helping institutions in making sustainability a part of their academic administration, strategy, management, and operations, GAP and HESI want to provide a hand as they craft community-wide sustainability plans. The next paragraphs provide an explanation of SDG 4's specifics and its elements [9].

B. Aligning SDG and NEP

In an effort to improve human and environmental well-being, two important frameworks are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and "the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)". Education may be changed to become more fair, sustainable, and relevant by bringing the SDGs and NEP 2020 into alignment. This will help pupils develop into conscientious citizens of the world who will work to improve everyone's future [10]. In order to update the country's educational system, the Indian government created the NEP 2020 policy framework, which was based on "the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" set forward by the UN in 2015. Education might become more equitable, sustainable, and relevant if the SDGs and NEP 2020 are in line [11].

C. Impact of SDG and NEP on Education

Aligning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with "the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)" may have a revolutionary impact on education and society at large by teaches learners to be responsible global citizens who can contribute to the creation of a brighter future for everyone. High-quality, inclusive, and relevant education may be ensured by aligning SDGs with NEP [12]. This might enhance learning outcomes and prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21st century, while also advancing sustainability education and fostering responsible global citizenship by helping them comprehend environmental issues and their consequences on society [13]. By acknowledging the diversity of students and their needs, aligning SDGs and NEP can support social inclusion and gender equality in education, as well as innovation and entrepreneurship in the classroom and the development of skills that are applicable to the world's evolving needs. Additionally, it promotes sustainable development and aids in the accomplishment of the SDGs by ensuring that education is in line with the global development objectives [10].

2 Literature Review

(Sunita, 2022) [14] After three decades, the present Indian government has finally enacted "the National Education Policy (NEP-2020)". Long-term development and the enhancement of the nation's educational system are the aim of this strategy. NEP 2020, provides a path forward for a better India. The NEP 2020 and Goal 4 of the UN Sustainable Development objectives (SDG 2030) are compatible because both acknowledge that long-term progress towards those objectives requires a strong educational foundation. Everyone in the country will be more capable of contributing to the development of the country with the aid of NEP 2020. From pre-primary to higher education, India's educational system will need to be

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completely modernised, including curriculum and institutional change, in order to make progress towards "the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".

(Patil, 2022) [15] The NEP 2020 is a roadmap for a future India that reforms education. The NEP 2020 aligns with Goal 4 of the UNSDG 2030, which states that excellent education underpins sustainable development. The skills and knowledge gained via NEP 2020 will benefit all people. Lifelong learning for sustainable development is essential to great education. Sustainable development education cultivates the behaviours, attitudes, abilities, and knowledge necessary to create a sustainable future. In addition to providing knowledge, skills, and values, it empowers students of all ages to address global concerns such as inequality, climate change, loss of biodiversity, and unsustainable resource usage. In order to better society and save the environment, it empowers students of all ages to act both individually and collectively and make informed decisions. It addresses intellectual, socio-emotional, and behavioural learning, content, results, pedagogy, and the learning environment.

(Sonawane, 2022) [16] The goal of educational sustainable development is to solve development difficulties by imparting the requisite values, information, skills, and attitudes. UNESCO has established learning goals and criteria for the "Education Sustainable Goal," and tools and information have been created to help stakeholders, educators, planners, and others. In order to acquire the necessary skill set from early childhood care to secondary school, these ESD objectives must be implemented via educational institutions. Through the implementation of educational reforms, adjustments, and new ideas, "the National Education Policy-2020" has recognised and approved almost all of the SDG-2030 goals. This essay aims to provide more detail about NEP-2020 and upcoming opportunities and challenges connected to sustainable development in education. Additionally, provide an agenda for an action plan addressing socioeconomic issues in education and a roadmap to sustainable growth via implementation tactics.

(Radha & Arumugam, 2023) [10] Enhancing learning outcomes, encouraging innovation and research, and expanding access to high-quality education are all goals that the SDGs and NEP 2020 have in common. By include the SDGs in their operations and curriculum, Indian higher education institutions may help their students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to promote sustainable development both at home and abroad. The article also offers instances of Indian higher education establishments that have embraced the SDGs and integrated them into their operations and courses. It is anticipated that NEP 2020's linkage with the SDGs would promote the SDGs' incorporation into Indian higher education even further.

(Ghai, 2023) [6] Universal education has long been an important component of the "sustainable development goal (SDGs-4)". Around the world, education for sustainable development, or ESD, is becoming more and more recognised as a vital component of excellent education and a major facilitator of sustainable development. SDG-4, which has seven targets and three implementation methods, seeks to provide everyone access to high-quality, inclusive, egalitarian education and to opportunities for lifelong learning. One of the most significant goals of the SDG is to provide pupils with an excellent education (SDG 4).

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(Ghai, 2023) [17] There has been a paradigm change in the field of education, and India has to adjust. The NEP 2020 is a deliberate attempt to change India's educational system, acknowledging the need of a thorough overhaul. Its objective is to analyse the policy's provisions and how they could improve education at the school and university levels. The research will also look at the difficulties in putting these laws into practice within India's current educational system.

(Sharma, 2024) [18] This article examines the connections between SDG 4 and NEP 2020, which seek to improve education globally and nationally. SDG 4 and India's ambitious strategy NEP 2020 support education sector transformation. It discusses how NEP 2020's focus on fundamental literacy, vocational training, and technology for learning helps achieve SDG 4 at the national level. The document emphasises global and national cooperation to achieve great education. This article analyses SDG 4 and NEP 2020 to better understand how to achieve the common goal of excellent education for sustainable development.

(Kirmani et al., 2024) [3] In India's educational history, "the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020" marks a significant turning point with the aim of revitalising and reforming the nation's educational system. With an emphasis on its main characteristics, goals, and consequences for sustainable development, this study offers a thorough examination of NEP 2020. In order to promote equitable and high-quality education in India, this study examines how NEP 2020 may be in line with "the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" set out by the UN. By carefully analysing the provisions of NEP 2020 and how they relate to certain SDGs, this article finds possibilities, obstacles, and synergies for promoting sustainable development in India via education.

3 Conclusion

As the cornerstone of sustainable development, accessible and equitable quality education for everyone is emphasised in Goal 4 of the "Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030)", which is closely aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. By integrating SDG targets into its framework, NEP 2020 supports India's self-reliance campaign, aiming to empower citizens through skill enhancement and knowledge development. The policy's emphasis on flexible, holistic, and future-ready education ensures that both school and higher education systems are aligned with 21st-century needs, fostering a dynamic knowledge-based society and strengthening India's position as a global knowledge leader. NEP 2020 is focused on inclusive practices, technological integration, and basic literacy, all of which are promoted by SDG 4, which acts as a global blueprint for educational reform. Colleges and universities in India may help students get involved in sustainable development by incorporating sustainability principles into course work. Additionally, strengthening teacher training programs will ensure that educators are well-equipped to incorporate SDGs into their teaching, preparing future generations to address global sustainability challenges. The importance of ICT integration and digital education in improving learning experiences has been further brought to light by the COVID-19 pandemic. NEP 2020 recognizes this shift, advocating for technology-driven learning models to improve accessibility and adaptability in education. By leveraging innovative teaching methods, interdisciplinary learning, and sustainability-

driven policies, NEP 2020 lays a strong foundation for an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable educational ecosystem that contributes to India's long-term development goals.

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