



Research Article

A Study of Students' Awareness and Perceptions of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: A School-Level Study

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Abstract

This study examines students' awareness and perceptions regarding the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 at the school level. It aims to understand students' knowledge of NEP 2020 and their views about its student-oriented approach, changes in the education system, impact on student life and implementation. Primary data were collected from 60 students of Classes 9, 10, 11 and 12 through a questionnaire containing Yes/No/Maybe questions. Fifteen students from each class were selected randomly. The responses were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The findings show that only 23.3% of the students reported knowing about NEP 2020, while 66.7% reported that they did not know about it. Only 1.7% reported knowing about the previous education policy. A majority of students selected "Maybe" when asked about the student-oriented nature, changes and implementation of NEP 2020. The study is limited to one school and a sample of 60 students, so its findings cannot be generalised to all students. The study highlights the importance of creating greater awareness and clear communication about educational policies among students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is an important part of the development of an individual as well as society. Changes in society, technology, employment and the needs of learners also require changes in the education system. For this reason, education policies play an important role in deciding the direction of education and in bringing reforms according to changing needs.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 was approved by the Government of India on 29 July 2020. It replaced the National Policy on Education, 1986, which was modified in 1992. NEP 2020 was introduced with the aim of transforming the education system and making it more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary and focused on the overall development of learners.

NEP 2020 gives importance to foundational learning, critical thinking, creativity, communication, skills, vocational education and the use of technology. It also emphasizes that education should not be limited to memorising information. Instead, students should get opportunities to understand concepts, develop skills and connect learning with real-life situations.

One of the major changes proposed in NEP 2020 is the 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure. It replaces the earlier 10+2 structure and divides school education into the Foundational, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary Stages. The policy also gives importance to flexibility in subject choices and encourages multidisciplinary learning.

The policy is broad and covers many areas of education. However, the success of a policy cannot be judged only by reading its objectives. Its implementation and the experience of students at the school level are also important. Students are the direct participants in the education system, and therefore their awareness and perceptions can provide useful information about how educational reforms are understood.

The present study was developed from this school-level perspective. Instead of studying the entire implementation of NEP 2020, the study focuses on a smaller and more specific issue: whether students are aware of NEP 2020 and what they think about its role in the education system and student life.

The study was conducted among students of Classes 9, 10, 11 and 12 at Sacred Heart Senior Secondary School, Dalhousie. The school has an approximate total strength of 1,000 students. By collecting responses directly from 60 students, the study attempts to understand their level of awareness and their views regarding the policy.

It is important to make clear that the present study does not claim to represent all students of India. It provides a school-level picture based on the responses of the selected participants. The findings are therefore useful for understanding the selected group and for identifying areas where greater awareness may be required.

2. NEED OF THE STUDY

Educational policies are generally discussed at the level of governments, schools, teachers and institutions, but students are also important stakeholders. A policy may introduce changes in curriculum, teaching methods, assessment and subject choices,

while students may not always know the name or details of the policy responsible for these changes.

During interaction with students, it was observed that there was uncertainty about NEP 2020. This created the need to examine how much students actually know about the policy. The study also attempts to understand whether students feel that NEP 2020 is student-oriented and whether they perceive changes in the education system or student life.

The study is also important because awareness of the previous education policy was included in the questionnaire. Knowing about the earlier policy can help students understand that educational reforms develop over time and that NEP 2020 is part of a longer history of education policy in India.

Thus, the purpose of the study is not to judge the complete success or failure of NEP 2020, but to understand the awareness and perceptions of a selected group of school students.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The National Education Policy 2020 itself provides the main policy background for the present study. It describes the need for transforming school education and emphasizes holistic development, critical thinking, flexibility, skills and multidisciplinary learning. The policy also proposes the 5+3+3+4 school structure and several changes intended to make education more learner-centred.

Government publications on the implementation of NEP 2020 describe different initiatives in school education. These include work related to foundational literacy and numeracy, teacher development, vocational education, technology and other areas. Such official information shows that implementation of the policy involves several stages and different stakeholders.

Research on NEP 2020 has also examined the views of stakeholders. Kulal et al. (2024), for example, studied perceptions and concerns of students, teachers and experts regarding NEP 2020. Their work highlights the importance of understanding stakeholder experiences while considering the implementation of a large education reform.

Other studies have examined the awareness and perceptions of students and educators regarding NEP 2020. Such studies suggest that awareness and understanding are important factors in how educational reforms are received by stakeholders.

The literature therefore provides a useful background for the present study. However, the present research has a narrower school-level focus. It directly asks selected students about their awareness and perceptions through a simple questionnaire. The study therefore adds a small, local perspective to the wider discussion about NEP 2020.

4. RESEARCH GAP

NEP 2020 has received considerable attention in policy documents and academic discussions. Many studies discuss its objectives, implementation, teacher education, curriculum reforms and stakeholder perceptions. However, students' direct awareness of the policy at an individual school level remains an important area for simple, school-based investigation.

The present study attempts to address this gap by focusing specifically on school students and asking them whether they know about NEP 2020, whether they know about the previous

policy and how they perceive the student-oriented nature, changes, impact and implementation of NEP 2020.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the awareness of NEP 2020 among selected school students.
- To examine students' knowledge of the education policy that preceded NEP 2020.
- To understand students' perceptions regarding the student-oriented nature of NEP 2020.
- To examine students' perceptions regarding changes in the education system after the introduction of NEP 2020.
- To understand students' perceptions regarding the impact of NEP 2020 on student life.
- To examine students' perceptions regarding the implementation of NEP 2020 in the education system.

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are school students aware of NEP 2020?
2. Do students know the full form of NEP?
3. Are students aware of the education policy that preceded NEP 2020?
4. Do students consider NEP 2020 to be student-oriented?
5. Do students perceive changes in the education system because of NEP 2020?

Class	Number of Students
9th	15
10th	15
11th	15
12th	15
Total	60

7.5 Sampling Method

Random sampling was used for selecting participants. Fifteen students from each of the four classes were included in the sample. The selection was made randomly so that students from the selected classes could have an opportunity to participate.

7.6 Data Collection

Primary data was collected from the selected students through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contained seven questions and three response options: Yes, No and Maybe. The questions covered awareness, knowledge of the previous policy, student-oriented nature, perceived changes, impact on student life and implementation.

7.7 Secondary Data

Secondary information was collected from official publications of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, along with relevant research papers and other sources related to NEP 2020. The secondary sources were used mainly to understand the policy background and connect the findings with existing discussions.

7.8 Data Analysis

The collected responses were organized into tables and analysed using frequencies and percentages. Each question was considered separately and the results were interpreted in

6. Do students perceive a positive impact of NEP 2020 on student life?
7. Do students think that NEP 2020 has been implemented in the education system?

7. METHODOLOGY

7.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The design was selected because the study aims to describe students' awareness and perceptions regarding NEP 2020 rather than test a causal relationship.

7.2 Study Area

The study was conducted at Sacred Heart Senior Secondary School, Dalhousie, Chamba, Himachal Pradesh. The approximate total strength of the school is 1,000 students.

7.3 Population

The population for the study consisted of students studying in the school. For the purpose of this research, students of Classes 9, 10, 11 and 12 were considered.

7.4 Sample Size and Distribution

A total of 60 students participated in the study. Fifteen students were selected from each of Classes 9, 10, 11 and 12.

relation to the research objectives. Since the questionnaire included a Maybe option, the analysis also considers uncertainty among students instead of forcing every response into Yes or No.

8. QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions were asked from the students for collecting the primary data:

Q1. Do you know about NEP 2020?

() Yes () No () Maybe

Q2. Do you know the full form of NEP 2020?

() Yes () No () Maybe

Q3. Do you know about the previous policy launched before NEP 2020?

() Yes () No () Maybe

Q4. Do you think NEP 2020 is student-oriented?

() Yes () No () Maybe

Q5. Do you think NEP 2020 has brought any changes in the education system?

() Yes () No () Maybe

Q6. Do you think NEP 2020 has had a positive impact on student life?

() Yes () No () Maybe

Q7. Do you think NEP 2020 has been implemented in our education system?

() Yes () No () Maybe

presents the frequency and percentage of Yes, No and Maybe responses.

9. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The final sample consisted of 60 students. The responses were combined across Classes 9, 10, 11 and 12. The following table

Question	Yes	No	Maybe	Yes (%)	No (%)	Maybe (%)
Q1	14	40	6	23.3%	66.7%	10.0%
Q2	16	34	10	26.7%	56.7%	16.7%
Q3	1	59	0	1.7%	98.3%	0.0%
Q4	10	11	39	16.7%	18.3%	65.0%
Q5	12	12	36	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%
Q6	13	27	20	21.7%	45.0%	33.3%
Q7	10	19	31	16.7%	31.7%	51.7%

9.1 Awareness of NEP 2020

Out of 60 students, 14 students (23.3%) answered Yes when asked whether they knew about NEP 2020. Forty students (66.7%) answered No and 6 students (10%) selected Maybe. The largest group therefore reported that they did not know about NEP 2020. This finding directly relates to the first objective of assessing students' awareness.

9.2 Knowledge of the Full Form of NEP

Sixteen students (26.7%) answered Yes, 34 students (56.7%) answered No and 10 students (16.7%) selected Maybe. More than half of the selected students therefore did not know the full form of NEP. This suggests that even basic awareness of the policy name was limited in the sample.

9.3 Awareness of the Previous Education Policy

Only 1 student (1.7%) answered Yes, while 59 students (98.3%) answered No. No student selected Maybe. This was the clearest response in the study and shows that almost all participants were unfamiliar with the education policy that preceded NEP 2020.

9.4 Whether NEP 2020 is Student-Oriented

Ten students (16.7%) answered Yes, 11 students (18.3%) answered No and 39 students (65%) selected Maybe. The high Maybe response suggests considerable uncertainty about whether the policy is student-oriented. The result should be interpreted as uncertainty rather than as evidence that students reject the policy.

9.5 Perceived Changes in the Education System

Twelve students (20%) answered Yes, 12 students (20%) answered No and 36 students (60%) selected Maybe. The majority therefore remained uncertain about whether NEP 2020 has brought changes in the education system. This finding indicates that students may not have enough information to clearly connect observed educational changes with the policy.

9.6 Positive Impact on Student Life

Thirteen students (21.7%) answered Yes, 27 students (45%) answered No and 20 students (33.3%) selected Maybe. The largest group did not perceive a positive impact on student life. However, the Maybe group was also substantial, showing that students' views were not completely clear or uniform.

9.7 Perceived Implementation of NEP 2020

Ten students (16.7%) answered Yes, 19 students (31.7%) answered No and 31 students (51.7%) selected Maybe. More than half of the students were uncertain about whether NEP 2020 has been implemented in the education system. This result reflects students' perceptions and should not be treated as a direct measurement of national implementation.

10. MAJOR FINDINGS

- Only 23.3% of the selected students reported knowing about NEP 2020, while 66.7% reported that they did not know about it.
- Only 26.7% of students reported knowing the full form of NEP, while 56.7% did not know it.
- Knowledge of the previous education policy was extremely low, with 98.3% of students answering No.
- Most students (65%) selected Maybe when asked whether NEP 2020 is student-oriented.
- Sixty percent of students selected Maybe regarding whether NEP 2020 has brought changes in the education system.
- Forty-five percent of students did not perceive a positive impact of NEP 2020 on student life.
- More than half of the students (51.7%) selected Maybe regarding the implementation of NEP 2020.
- Overall, uncertainty was a major pattern in the responses, particularly in questions about the nature, impact and implementation of the policy.

11. DISCUSSION

The findings provide a small school-level picture of students' awareness and perceptions of NEP 2020. The first two questions show that basic awareness was limited. Only 23.3% of students said that they knew about NEP 2020, and only 26.7% knew its full form. This suggests that the name and basic identity of the policy are not familiar to a large proportion of the selected students.

The result for the previous policy is even more noticeable. Only one student reported knowing about the policy preceding NEP 2020. This may indicate that students are more likely to encounter current educational changes than the history of the policies behind them. However, the study does not investigate

why students have limited knowledge of the previous policy, so further research would be needed to explain this finding.

Questions 4, 5 and 7 produced a particularly high proportion of Maybe responses. In Q4, 65% of students were uncertain whether NEP 2020 is student-oriented. In Q5, 60% were uncertain about changes in the education system, and in Q7, 51.7% were uncertain about implementation. These results are important because they show that a large number of students did not feel confident enough to select either Yes or No.

The high Maybe responses should not automatically be interpreted as a negative opinion of NEP 2020. Students may be uncertain because they have limited information about the policy or because it is difficult for them to identify which changes are directly connected to NEP 2020. This is also why the present study focuses on perceptions rather than claiming to measure the complete implementation of the policy.

The findings can be connected with the broader objectives of NEP 2020. The policy gives importance to holistic development, flexibility, skills, critical thinking and learner-centred education. Government initiatives also show that implementation involves multiple areas and stakeholders. Therefore, students' uncertainty about the policy provides a useful reason to consider greater awareness and communication at the school level.

Previous research has also considered the perceptions of students, teachers and experts regarding NEP 2020. Such research supports the importance of studying stakeholder perspectives while examining educational reforms. The present study differs in scale and focuses only on selected school students in one institution.

The result regarding Q6 is also worth noting. Forty-five percent of students did not perceive a positive impact on student life, while 33.3% selected Maybe. Only 21.7% answered Yes. This does not establish that NEP 2020 has had no positive impact. Rather, it shows that within this sample, students did not generally report a clear positive impact.

Overall, the discussion suggests that awareness may be an important first step. If students understand the objectives and changes associated with an education policy, they may be in a better position to form informed opinions about it. However, larger studies with more detailed questionnaires would be needed to examine this relationship more closely.

12. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study was conducted in only one school, Sacred Heart Senior Secondary School, Dalhousie.
- The sample consisted of only 60 students, which limits the generalizability of the findings.
- Only students from Classes 9, 10, 11 and 12 were included.
- The study has limited geographical coverage and does not represent students from different regions or types of schools.
- The questionnaire contained only seven questions and mainly measured basic awareness and perceptions.
- The Yes/No/Maybe format provided limited opportunity for students to explain the reasons behind their responses.

- The study measures students' perceptions and does not independently assess the complete implementation of NEP 2020.
- The findings should therefore not be generalized to all students, ICSE students, schools or India as a whole.

13. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the awareness and perceptions of 60 selected school students regarding NEP 2020. Students from Classes 9, 10, 11 and 12 were included, with 15 students from each class. The study used a simple questionnaire to understand students' awareness of NEP 2020 and their views about its student-oriented nature, changes in the education system, impact on student life and implementation.

The findings show that awareness of NEP 2020 was limited in the selected group. Only 23.3% of students reported knowing about NEP 2020, while 66.7% reported that they did not know about it. Knowledge of the previous education policy was especially low, with 98.3% answering No.

Another important finding was the large number of Maybe responses. A majority of students were uncertain about whether NEP 2020 is student-oriented, whether it has brought changes in the education system and whether it has been implemented. This uncertainty may indicate that students need more information and opportunities to understand educational policies that affect them.

At the same time, the findings should be interpreted carefully. The study was conducted in only one school and included 60 students. Therefore, the results cannot be used to make claims about all students or about the national implementation of NEP 2020. The study provides a limited school-level picture of awareness and perceptions.

The study suggests that awareness and communication about educational policies are important at the school level. Further studies involving larger samples, different schools and more detailed questionnaires, including rating-scale and open-ended questions, may provide a deeper understanding of how students experience NEP 2020.

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Dakshayani Raina, a 16-year-old Class XI Humanities student at Sacred Heart Senior Secondary School, Dalhousie, has a keen interest in academics and research. Her curiosity and enthusiasm for learning have inspired her to explore research beyond the classroom. She is honoured to be the youngest author contributing to this journal, marking a significant beginning to her academic research journey.



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