

TOWARDS A HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT : EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF NEP-2020'S PROPOSED TECHNIQUES

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the comprehensive development of children by introducing innovative assessment techniques. Regular classroom assessments, self-assessments, and summative assessments are promoted by the NEP-2020 as essential instruments for gauging student progress. Additionally, the policy supports the use of online tests and e-learning, especially in secondary and postsecondary education. The suggested assessment methods include quizzes, role plays, project-based assessment, peer assessment, and self-assessment. In order to accurately assess student performance, the NEP-2020 also recommends the development of State and Central Level Evaluations, including board exams and achievement surveys. The policy also places a strong emphasis on creating special education zones to serve the needs of underprivileged kids and planning Olympiads for talented pupils. This article carefully explores the responsibilities played by significant stakeholders including NCERT, SCERT, and the Board of Assessment while offering helpful recommendations to address the unique needs of pupils who are struggling academically. The research approach used in this study incorporates a thorough analysis of qualitative data drawn from policy documents, research journals, and news articles, giving the findings a solid basis.

Keywords: NEP-2020, Assessment, Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

The aim of education is to ensure the holistic development of children. In this context, the NEP-2020 (National Education Policy 2020) placed significant emphasis on evaluating students' progress across various domains, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) - 2005 indicates that regular classroom assessments, including self-assessment, and summative assessments will be necessary for recording student progress. The Indian Ministry of Education is preparing to introduce new textbooks based on the 5+3+3+4 structure recommended by the NEP 2020.

To achieve its vision NEP-2020 introduced several assessment techniques for teachers and educators. These techniques include self-assessment, peer assessment, project-based assessment, quizzes, and role plays. Assessment techniques should allow the recording and tracking of development without adding to the child's workload. A thorough summative evaluation should be carried out at the conclusion of the preparatory phase. Portfolios and self-assessments can be used to document student development holistically. The intermediate stage of learning (classes 6 to 8) should be assessed using classroom assessment strategies such projects, discussions, presentations, experiments, investigations, role plays, journals, and portfolios. New curricular and pedagogical guidelines for the foundational, preparatory, middle, and secondary levels will be included in the NCF's fifth revision. Additionally, the NEP-2020 proposed the implementation of State and Central Level Evaluations, such as board exams, State Achievement Survey (SAS), National Achievement Survey (NAS), and PRAKASH. With a specific emphasis on e-learning, the New Education Policy 2020 sought to revolutionize and digitalize India's educational system. The pandemic hastened the transition to online learning, spurring rapid technology advancement in educational institutions and the creation of a variety of software and portals for learning. Implementing online assessments and exams is the responsibility of the National Assessment Centre PARAKH, School Boards, and NTA. The NEP 2020 has sped up e-learning in secondary and post secondary education (With two years of NEP 2020, How did it pave the way for e-learning in India?, 2022).

Furthermore, to evaluate gifted students, the NEP-2020 recommended organizing different Olympiads at national and international levels, as well as establishing project-based clubs. For the evaluation of dis-advantaged students, special education zones will be established. Beside supporting students with special talents NEP-2020 tried to uplift the students through different evaluation, assessment and pedagogical techniques under "Equitable and Inclusive Education campaign" (NEP 2020).

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The Study was conducted to understand the specific contributions and responsibilities of the stake holders like National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), The Board of Assessment (BoA), in implementing the assessment techniques proposed by the NEP-2020. The study aimed to address the needs of students with learning difficulties. By analyzing the roles of these stakeholders, the study intended to identify potential challenges and opportunities in providing holistic assessment approaches for students with diverse learning needs. By highlighting suggestions at the end of the study, the researchers aimed to contribute to the discourse on inclusive education and provide actionable recommendations for supporting common students, differently abled students and gifted students through appropriate assessment techniques.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

- To know the transforming Evaluation and Assessment pattern as proposed by NEP-2020.
- To find the role and functions of the major educational stakeholders such as SCERT and NCERT.
- To Know how much support is given by NEP-2020 to the gifted students and to uplift the students with special needs (CWSN) or Divyang.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research project is based on a document analysis, where qualitative data from various sources such as research papers, journals, Government policy document, reports, and online newspapers were collected and analyzed using an interpretative approach.

Findings and Discussion on Assessment and Evaluation reform for Student Development as proposed by NEP - 2020

To measure “core capacities, competencies rather than months of coaching or memorization”, the NEP 2020 suggests changing the format of the board exams for grades 10 and 12. Tests based on cognitive abilities will be given to students in grades 3, 5, 8, 10, and 12. PARAKH standard-setting organization is suggested by the NEP 2020 to direct testing and recognize school education boards. Students’ progress cards for school-based assessment will be revised to include a “holistic, 360-degree, multidimensional report” that includes teacher, peer, and self-evaluation. For the purpose of establishing norms, standards, and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation, the Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH) will serve as a standard-setting organization. Universities can take a high-quality common aptitude test from the National Testing Agency (NTA), which can also be used for specialized common subject exams. Universities will not be required to use the NTA’s provision for testing (Deka, 2020).

(i) Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH)

The National Assessment Centre (PARAKH), a standard-setting organization to be established by the Indian Ministry of Education. It would provide standardized assessment and evaluation for all recognized school boards throughout India. The PARAKH would oversee all student assessment work in India and be a part of the National Council for Educational and Research Training (NCERT). In order to track learning outcomes across the nation, the organization will also conduct the National Achievement Survey (NAS) and direct the State Achievement Survey (SAS). Besides overseeing examination boards, including state education boards, PARAKH will

be in charge of all student evaluation activities in India. In order to create and build capacity for national and sub-national assessment centers to incorporate international evidence and strengthen assessment systems in India, the center has requested bids from consulting firms with international experience. In order to track the country's progress towards its learning objectives, the proposed organization will also conduct the National Achievement Survey (NAS) and direct the State Achievement Survey (SAS). The objective is to increase collaboration between school boards, guarantee academic standards are equivalent across all school boards, and change the assessment pattern to focus on meeting skill criteria that take into account the most recent research. NEP 2020 recommends switching from tests that only measure memorization to one that also measure higher-order abilities like analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity. The organization will create and execute technical standards for different types of standardized tests in primary, middle, and secondary education (Radhika, 2022).

(ii) Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)

The National Education Policy 2020's suggested three-core subject test, semester exams, and continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) systems to promote development of students. Board exams may not always be the best indicator of a student's aptitude, and new methods of assessment are required to prevent the digital divide from getting worse. Instead of concentrating primarily on old tests, governments and institutions should place a higher importance on remediating children and bridging learning gaps maintaining equivalent academic standards across all the school boards. The NEP 2020 acknowledge the need to move towards formative assessment methods that gauge performance throughout the learning process rather than at the conclusion. It is essential to create a more effective student evaluation system now for use in the future (Scindia, J., 2021).

(iii) School Level Assessment and Evaluation

A solid foundation for transformational reforms in India's education system has been established by the National Education Policy (NEP). The way students are currently assessed in India simply takes grades into account, not their overall growth. Due to the existence of several boards and grading systems, there is a need for standardization and universalization of the student assessment. The current student assessment solely assesses memory and is not descriptive. The NEP plans to evaluate children using technology, track student growth through descriptive metrics, create a comprehensive progress card, and involve parents in the evaluation procedure. With a clear representation of the students' actual level of knowledge and performance, the emphasis should be on inspiring pupils to grow their skills in the appropriate direction and work intelligently (Redesigning student assessment under National Education Policy 2020, 2022).

The educational philosophy known as outcome-based learning (OBL) emphasizes student-centered learning as per defined goals. It is a major area of emphasis for India's National Educational Policy (NEP 2020). The emphasis is on evaluating student performance or results, and it is a student-centric educational technique that gives students the freedom to decide why and how they want to learn. In order to encourage higher-order learning, application, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, teachers have a difficult job as co-learners and collaborators. Learning outcomes are different from learning objectives and the outcomes are the responses to the questions that the teacher wants a course to raise. A learning outcomes-based curricular framework must be created in order to implement outcome-based education. The NEP 2020 calls for the creation and adoption of pedagogies that place a strong emphasis on the holistic development of students, such as discussion-based learning, art-integrated learning, flipped classrooms, etc. To ensure that learning objectives are being met, assessment is essential. A strong assessment and evaluation system should place emphasis on thorough assessment that emphasizes formative rather than summative evaluation (Ubaidullah, 2022).

For the academic year 2022–2023, CBSE is making modifications to the evaluation procedure for the Class 10 and Class 12 Board Exams. The National Education Policy (NEP-2020) will serve as the foundation for the new evaluation procedure, which will be comprehensive, skill and competency-based. To provide a comparative review of a child's growth, the CBSE assessment method will be based on the evaluation of a student in Classes 3, 5, and 8. Students will be evaluated using competency and skill-based questions to promote critical thinking. The question papers will include two different sorts of structural alterations, and 20% of internal evaluations will be based on feedback from peers, parents, and teachers. In addition, CBSE intends to implement holistic assessment cards for students as a pilot project. In these cards, teachers, parents, peer groups, and the students themselves will evaluate the pupils (Pathak, 2022).

(iv) National Achievement Survey (NAS)

On November 12, 2021, more than 5 lakh educators from 1.18 lakh schools spread across 720 districts in both urban and rural areas participated in the National Achievement Survey. The assessment was done in 22 distinct languages and encompassed government, government-aided, and private schools in India. 44% of school teachers in India do not have enough workspace, and 65% of them are overworking, according to the Union Education Ministry. The National Education Policy was only discussed by 58% of the teaching staff. Only 52% of teachers participated in programmes for professional growth run by DIETs, CBSE, and NCERT (65% percent teachers overburdened, only 58% participated in NEP discussions: MoE survey, 2022).

For students in Classes 3, 5, 8, and 10, the National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021 was conducted in 24 states and UTs, with 92% of the intended sampled children participating. This

accomplishment survey is the first to be conducted following the publication of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The test item development, testing, and finalisation of NAS 2021 were handled by NCERT. The test was administered by CBSE in coordination with the states and UTs at the sampled schools. To comprehend the varied situations and viewpoints of students, teachers, and schools, student achievement tests, pupil questionnaires, teacher questionnaires, and school surveys were gathered. The NAS 2021 outcomes will assist to strengthen the capacity of educators and government representatives involved in providing education to the nation and offer a rich source of evidence and data for study and development (Parthiban, 2021).

(v) Assessment of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) or Divyang

The Indian government has taken several steps to support differently abled children in their education. These include provision for reservation in Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs), barrier-free access in school buildings, training for teachers, engagement of special educators, procurement of assistive devices, fees exemptions, and providing accommodations. The government has also enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, and implemented the Samagra Shiksha scheme for inclusive education. These measures align with the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 (Steps Taken by The Government for Differently Abled Children, 2021).

NEP-2020 emphasizes inclusive education, provides resources and assistive devices, and ensures safety and security for these children. The policy focuses on enabling children with disabilities to fully participate in the regular schooling process. Special educators with cross-disability training will be recruited for children with severe or multiple disabilities. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) will develop modules to teach Indian Sign Language. Home-based education will be an option for children who are unable to go to schools, with equal treatment. Assessment and certification guidelines will be formulated to ensure equitable access and opportunities for students with learning disabilities. Teacher education programmes will include training on teaching children with specific disabilities. The reforms aim to improve the quality of life for children with disabilities through increased access to education, employment, and services (Education for Children with Disabilities and NEP-2020, 2021).

The Samagra Shiksha programme provides interventions for inclusive education, such as special training, remedial teaching, vocational education, and financial support for CWSN children. The programme offers financial support, aids and appliances, and provision for special educators at the cluster/school level for CWSN children studying in government, government-aided, and local body schools (Education for CWSN: NEP's Recommendations SS's Provision, 2021).

(vi) National and International Olympiad

A number of Olympiad platforms for teacher upskilling have grown in popularity in India, with an emphasis on the government's goal of empowering educators who are passionate, highly qualified, professionally sound, and well-equipped with contemporary teaching standards. Some of the Olympiad platforms for teachers in India are the Indian Association of Physics Teachers (IAPT), the Centre for Teacher Accreditation (CENTA) Olympic Programme, the HBCSE Olympiads, the International Teachers' Olympiad from Suraasa, and the Mathematics Teachers Association India (MTA-I). To give maths teachers access to training programmes and instructional resources, the Mathematics Teachers Association of India (MTA) hosts an activity-based olympiad. Teachers can understand instructional methods that make mathematics more interesting and pleasurable because of MTA. Teachers participating in these Olympiads have the chance to develop, grow, and improve their teaching techniques besides earning certificates, acknowledgment at the state and national levels, and nominations for teacher impact awards (NEP focused 'teacher olympiads' to upskill Indian educators, 2022).

Olympiads give students the chance to compete outside of the scope of the classroom while honing their talents in subjects like science, math, and language. Examples of Olympiads that aid in enhancing youths problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and financial literacy include the Primary Olympiad and the International Finance Olympiad. Over the course of seven years, the International Finance Olympiad (IFO) has served more than 48,000 students in 162 cities and five nations. IFO collaborates with many schools in Dubai, Qatar, Kuwait, and Sharjah in addition to more than 1000 schools in India. The Global Economics Olympiad (GEO) was established to inspire students to study economics and understand its importance. Students in classes VIII through XII can compete at the international level in the Global Olympiad on Aptitude (GOA), sponsored by PRATHAM Test Prep, to improve their aptitude abilities. Students who participated in Olympiads learn how to recognize their potential and refine their analytical and problem-solving abilities (Enhancing students' aptitude through Olympiads for holistic development, 2020).

The aim of the International Teachers' Olympiad 2022 was to appreciate, honor, and reward teachers. Over 40,000 teachers from 1800+ schools in 30+countries registered for the Olympiad, and it anticipates over a million this year. Teachers can assess their own performance against national profession standards for teachers through the Olympiad and become more assured, competent, and lifelong learners (International Teachers' Olympiad 2022).

(vii) Academic Credit Bank (ABC)

Students have more freedom under NEP-2020 to switch between subjects, take breaks, and finish their degrees in seven years. With the creation of an Academic Bank of Credit (ABC), students are now able to acquire credits from numerous accredited higher education institutions

(Ishaq, M. G., 2023). Higher education institutions offering online and distance learning courses will be required to create Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) IDs for their students and deposit their credits. The ABC is a national-level initiative that promotes curriculum flexibility and academic mobility among institutions through a credit transfer mechanism. Each student will have a unique and individual academic bank account in digital form. The ABC IDs will be integrated with the learning management systems (LMS) of universities offering online programs. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions the ABC to facilitate academic mobility, allowing students to study in different higher education institutions with a credit transfer mechanism (Mandatory for HEIs offering online, distance courses to create students' Academic Bank of Credit IDs: UGC, 2022).

The Odisha State Higher Education Council (OSHEC), The Panjab University (PU) syndicate have approved the implementation of the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) following the directive from the University Grants Commission (UGC). The ABC platform, developed by the National e-Governance Division, will digitally store academic credits earned by students from registered institutions, facilitating credit transfer and academic mobility also. It will provide services like academic credit verification, accumulation, transfer, and authentication of academic awards (Pradhan, 2023; Ovais, 2023).

SUGGESTIONS TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES AND ENHANCE THE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

To enhance the success of assessment and evaluation of students as proposed in the National Education Policy 2020, the following steps can be adopted for improvement—

- ***Embrace Technology-Enabled Assessments:*** Teachers need to explore digital platforms, online quizzes, simulations, and virtual reality experiences to assess students' knowledge and skills. Technology-enabled assessments can provide immediate feedback, personalized learning path ways, and opportunities for self-paced learning.
- ***Foster Peer and Self-Assessment:*** Teachers need to encourage students to participate actively in the assessment process through peer review assessment and self-assessment. Provide guidelines and rubrics to help students assess their own work and provide constructive feedback to their peers. Peer and self-assessment not only develop students' metacognitive skills but also promote a sense of responsibility and ownership of their learning.
- ***Use Portfolios for Holistic Assessment:*** Teacher should implement portfolio-based assessments where students compile their best work across different subjects or skills over a period of time. Portfolios allow students to showcase their progress, reflect on their learning

journey, and demonstrate a wide range of abilities beyond traditional exams. They provide a comprehensive view of students' growth and development.

- **Promote Real Life Assessments:** Designing assessments that align with real-life situations is a challenge. Teacher should Create authentic tasks that require students to apply their knowledge and skills in practical scenarios. Authentic assessments could include problem-solving exercises, case studies, simulations, or real-world projects. They provide a meaningful context for assessment and enhance students' engagement and motivation.
- **Provide Professional Development for Educators :** HEIs need to encourage free professional development programs for teachers to enhance their assessment literacy and pedagogical skills. It will equip teachers with the knowledge and strategies to design and implement innovative assessment methods effectively. Continuous professional development ensures that teachers stay updated with best practices and can provide quality feedback to students.
- **Involve Parents and Guardians :** The NEP 2020 suggests to engage parents and guardians in the assessment process by providing regular updates on their child's progress, sharing assessment results, and involving them in goal-setting discussions. Collaborative partnerships between parents, teachers, and students foster a supportive learning environment and enhance student achievement.

CONCLUSION

The NEP-2020 proposes significant changes to the evaluation and assessment pattern in India. The policy emphasizes the need to move away from traditional, memory-based exams and focus on evaluating core competencies, cognitive abilities, and holistic development. It advocates for continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) systems, alternative evaluation methods, and formative assessment approaches that track students' progress throughout the learning process.

The NEP-2020 also proposed setting up of the Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH) as a standard-setting organization for assessment and evaluation. PARAKH is expected to provide standardized assessments, establish norms and guidelines, and ensure academic standards are equivalent across all school boards. The NEP-2020 highlights the significance of national and international Olympiads for evaluating gifted students and establishing project-based clubs. It also introduces the National Achievement Survey (NAS) and State Achievement Survey (SAS) to track learning outcomes and assess the progress of students at various levels.

The NEP-2020 brings comprehensive reforms to assessment and evaluation practices in Indian education. The policy emphasizes a shift towards student-centered, outcome-based learning, and

aims to create a more inclusive and equitable education system. By adopting these changes, India seeks to provide a holistic and effective education system that promotes the overall development of students.

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