



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO RE-EVALUATE THE NEP 2020 AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN ORDER TO ENSURE ITS EFFECTIVENESS

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The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant step towards revamping the educational landscape in India. One crucial aspect of this policy is the incorporation of comprehensive sexuality education into the curriculum. This paper emphasizes the importance of re-evaluating the NEP 2020 and its approach to sexuality education to ensure its effectiveness. By examining the societal, cultural, and educational contexts, as well as drawing from international best practices, the paper highlights the need for a well-rounded and age-appropriate approach to sexuality education. The effectiveness of the NEP 2020's goals in promoting informed decision-making, gender equality, and healthy relationships depends on the inclusivity of its content and the proficiency of educators. This paper advocates for a comprehensive review of the curriculum's content, teacher training methods, and engagement with various stakeholders. Through careful re-evaluation and potential revisions, the NEP 2020 can better address the diverse needs of students, foster a more open and informed society, and contribute to the overall well-being of young individuals in the ever-evolving landscape of India.

Keywords: *Sexuality Education, Effectiveness, Re-Evaluation, Gender Equality, Inclusivity.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

The NEP (National Education Policy 2020) has brought many changes with it. After 34 years, the government has re-launched the education policy with the aim of imparting education with 'full equity and inclusion' (George, M., Lim, H., Lucas, S., & Meadows, R. 2015). While the government is focusing on sensitizing the faculty and students on gender-related issues, including providing equitable quality education to transgender students, it is important to note that

the NEP has somehow overlooked another topic that is considered crucial for the overall development of students: sexuality education and sexual orientation.

The International Technical Guidance for Sexuality Education (NEP) makes it easier for people to learn about sexuality in the context of Human Rights and Gender Equality. "Gender and sexuality are often seen as the same thing by the majority of people, but that's not the case," says Azoulay (Bengtsson, J., & Bolander, E. 2020).

"Sexuality goes beyond gender identity and roles and encompasses sexual orientation, reproduction, and more. I'm focusing on education that takes into account an individual's sexual orientation, which is not included in the NEP."

According to a UNESCO report, the lack of sexual orientation-based education is one of the causes of homophobia that results in more violent bullying in schools (Roien, L. A. 2018). Students, who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) are vulnerable to discrimination because of their sexuality. They are also vulnerable to harm from other students. As a result, the system failed to protect LGBTQIA+ students from harassment, stigma, and discrimination because of their sexual orientation. All of these reasons are enough to drive LGBTQIA+ students to depression, anxiety or dysphoria. Education on sexuality and sexual orientation is essential if the government is truly committed to equality (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2018).

2. EDUCATION POLICIES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Many countries have implemented education policies that incorporate sexual orientation into the study of sexuality. Here are a few examples:

2.1. England: Under England's Equality Act 2010, schools are legally required to include sexual orientation and sex reassignment in their curriculum. Schools have the freedom to decide which age group should be taught about the sexual orientation of an individual, whether as a separate unit or as a one-off lesson. It is important for students to be able to learn about lessons based on what they understand, and this must be supported by sensitive and well-judged education.

2.2. Norway: Norway's inclusion of sexuality, identity and equality in the curriculum comes after the introduction of the national curriculum statement for elementary and secondary education in 2011. This would integrate sex education with broad, equality-oriented broad perspectives of the 21st century. This calls for the exploration of gender, sexuality, plurality and its empowerment.

2.3. Denmark: But the Danish approach is seen as the most up-to-date way to tackle the current problem. It's more about having an open-minded, pragmatic approach to sex education, rather than sticking to a strict moralistic approach.

Topics are tailored to the age group, and sex education is seen as the teacher's responsibility. So, the course isn't tied to any specific time in the school schedule. Danish sex education is basically based on the idea of heteronormativity.

3. METHOD OF PEDAGOGY

The foregoing examples demonstrate that our educational system is partially responsible for the prevalence of homophobia in the country; however, the manner in which it is taught must also be examined. The National Endowment for Education (NEP) states that it will adopt Experiential-Learning Pedagogy, which states that knowledge, is acquired through the combination of understanding and transforming experience. Additionally, two additional types of Pedagogy are identified, namely Normative Pedagogy and Tolerance Pedagogy, which is the method of teaching where the majority is taught to accept the minority. In other words, under tolerance pedagogy, the "straight" students are taught to tolerate the LGBTQIA+ students. This can lead to a schism in the student body, as the 'straight' students feel a sense of power and control over the 'LGBTQ' students, and are encouraged to look down on them. From this, we can conclude that tolerance pedagogy isn't the best way to teach sexuality (Department of Education. 2019).

The focus of normative teaching is on a tolerant and non-racist approach to teaching. Students are taught to ask questions about how the oppression started in the past, and how to critically analyse it. Therefore, there is an urgent need to empower normative teaching to which the students are subject and not just objects of acceptance in the arena of sexual orientation. When it comes to sex education, the concepts of inequality, exploitation, oppression and dominance are more important than simply "accepting" the minority.

In order to better meet the requirements of the hour, the National Education Program (NEP) can be restructured by combining the current Educational Pedagogy (normative) with the proposed Educational Experiential-Learning Pedagogy (experiential-learning). This is due to the fact that under the Educational Pedagogy, the "straight" students will be placed in the "LGBTQ+" student's position. Furthermore, through the Educational Experiential Learning Pedagogy, "straight" students would be able to gain

knowledge through the experiences of LGBTQIA+ learners. This would improve the students' rational thinking and lead to a greater comprehension of the concept of sexuality and sexual health in its fullest sense (UNESCO. 2024).

4. SUGGESTIONS

- Students should receive comprehensive and medically sound sexuality education that is tailored to their individual needs. The absence of such a curriculum can lead to ongoing bullying, sexual assault and discrimination. Sexual assault among students can have long-term detrimental effects, such as posttraumatic stress disorder, addiction, depression and even suicide.
- The curriculum should be tailored to the target students by taking into account their age. Since an individual comes to terms with their sexual orientation between 12 and 20 years of age, the curriculum should be called the 'development – appropriate' and not 'age appropriate'. Everyone is developing at their own pace and cannot be expected to grow at the same rate as everyone else.
- Students aged 15 and over should be educated about sexuality in its entirety. Efforts should be made to reduce the potential for negative expression and the occurrence of homophobia. The goal of the curriculum should be adopted from within. The historical factors that determine the relationship should be communicated to the students and the aim should be to open their eyes to a new world.
- Bringing in experts for the particular topic is the reason for the hour for this part of the program. Countries such as Estonia and Sweden, allow the students to visit the youth health centres. Psychologists, therapists, counsellors, and youth workers; specially trained in sexuality education; must be contacted for this purpose. This reduces a person's mental barrier to seeking help due to social stigma and allows them to continue attending in the future if they feel they need to.
- It is possible to utilize the Anganwadi as a training ground for individuals specifically trained to address the needs of LGBTQIA+ students. The area can be utilized as a safe space for them.
- You can also make sure that every school has a therapist that students can go to for help without worrying about being seen as a problem.
- The second factor to consider is the character of the adult providing instruction to the student in the field in question. The implicit pedagogy that addresses the pre-existing relationship between the adult and the children with a "personal socialization history" should also be taken into consideration.
- Teachers can get trained to teach LGBTQIA+ students after they're already well-equipped. This training Programme would give them the skills they need to meet the needs of LGBTQIA+ students. Every adult's values are challenged by their own thought processes and personal quirks. That's why it's important to bring about change in their way of thinking.
- The personality of the adult is very important when dealing with the subject matter of the study. The morals and values of the teacher are also very important in the background. Therefore, not only what is just to be thought about but also what is going behind the curtains should be taken into consideration in the new policy.
- In addition to the teacher's overall knowledge of the subject, you are also made to consider the role of the parent in the comprehension of the education for their child. The role of the parents in the education of sexuality should be one of the fundamental needs of the education system. It is true that the strict supervision and control exercised by the parents can restrict the independence of the individual. This can seriously affect the behaviour of the student and the decisions they make. Therefore, there should be a sensitive and caring environment in the home.
- Inclusion of parents in the curriculum is therefore essential to ensure the best possible education for a child to cope with their formal and informal education, with their guidance in school and home respectively. This can only be encouraged if

the parents are taught about the world in a new light.

- It is mandatory that at least one parent attends the session on the weekend. Education is about the development of an individual and this can only be accomplished if the parents are connected with the students. The development of an individual is directly linked to how they are treated at home.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the re-evaluation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and its approach to Sexuality Education is a crucial step towards ensuring its effectiveness in addressing the needs and concerns of students in our rapidly evolving society. As societal norms, values, and challenges continue to shift, it is imperative that educational policies remain adaptable and responsive to these changes. By re-evaluating the NEP 2020 and its approach to Sexuality Education, we can ascertain whether the goals outlined in the policy are being met and whether the curriculum is promoting a comprehensive and age-appropriate understanding of sexuality, relationships, and personal well-being. This process should involve a multidisciplinary approach, engaging educators, parents, students, healthcare professionals, and experts in the field of sexuality education. Furthermore, the re-evaluation process offers an opportunity to address any gaps or shortcomings in the existing policy. This could involve refining the curriculum to ensure that it fosters open and informed discussions around topics related to sexual orientation, gender identity, consent, and healthy relationships. It also provides an avenue to assess the training and support provided to educators to facilitate effective delivery of Sexuality Education in the classroom. Importantly, involving all stakeholders in the re-evaluation process can lead to a policy that is more inclusive, relevant, and sensitive to the diverse needs of students across different age groups, backgrounds, and cultures. By taking into account feedback from various perspectives, the re-evaluation can contribute to the creation of a safer and more supportive educational environment for all students.

In conclusion, the re-evaluation of the NEP 2020 and Sexuality Education is not only essential but also reflective of a commitment to delivering a

holistic and empowering education. It signifies an acknowledgment of the evolving social landscape and the need to equip students with the knowledge and skills they require to navigate the complexities of their lives. Through a thoughtful and comprehensive re-evaluation process, we can work towards a policy that is not only effective but also attuned to the changing needs of our students and society as a whole.

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