

Awareness and Perception of Undergraduate Students on the Indian National Education Policy 2020

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ABSTRACT Every country's educational policies must be updated, and how they are implemented depends on the facilities and resources that are available for education. With the help of teachers and other stakeholders, all upgraded educational policy aspects are successfully implemented at the grass root level. The main aim of this study was to know how well the undergraduate students are aware of the Indian National Educational Policy 2020. Survey method of study was applied for collecting the essential data from the selected 120 sample students of three higher education institutions by administering the research tools such as Student Awareness Test and Student Perception Scale on NEP 2020. The results of the survey show that most students' awareness of NEP 2020 was at moderate level, and there was no significant difference between the perceptions of students on NEP 2020 in terms of their gender.

INTRODUCTION

Perception and awareness of individuals on particular events or situations facilitate them to gain many benefits in their life (Agosti et al. 2021). Due to the technological advancement in society, most of the students have much awareness in using technological gadgets for their learning new things (Hendawi and Nosair 2020). Therefore, nowadays, utilisation of technological gadgets has a vital role in classroom instruction (Backfisch et al. 2024). To cope up with this technological world, there is a need for modification in the national educational policy with particular period gaps. All the stakeholders of the educational system have a responsibility in implementing the modified new educational policies in the country successfully. The successful implementation of new educational policy in the country depends upon the awareness and positive perceptions of the students and other stakeholders on the features and benefits of policy (Maruthavanan 2020).

In India, the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), announced by the Indian government, marks a dramatic turning point in the country's educational history after 34 years since the National Policy on Education (NPE 1986). The goal is to completely overhaul the nation's educational system to meet the evolving needs of the twenty-first cen-

tury and to encourage innovation, excellence, and inclusivity at all educational levels. With the aim of fostering innovation, global competitiveness, and holistic development, the policy plan pledges a paradigm shift in Indian education. The primary goal of the policy is to significantly alter the Indian educational system by demonstrating its superior quality to everybody. Based on the Indian Knowledge System, India's education system contributes significantly to the nation's transformation into an equitable and thriving knowledge society (Swargiary and Roy 2023).

The country must appropriately implement the NEP 2020 suggestions, and if they are successful, India will have all it needs to become the world's top nation in education by 2030 (Kumar 2022). For the NEP 2020 process to be successfully implemented throughout the nation, every relevant stakeholder must have an understanding of the policy's aspects. In addition, teachers and students equally need to understand the components of NEP 2020 within the ever-changing framework of every level of education. Creating awareness among the stakeholders leads to better understanding of the processes of educational policies. The role of educational institutions and government is crucial and they should take necessary actions to create awareness and importance of educational updating among students (Pirakatheeswari et al.

2020). A key element of its effectiveness is the teachers' and students' knowledge and comprehension in NEP 2020.

The road map for implementing the policy lays out a course that attempts to resolve historical problems while acknowledging contemporary realities. Its broad approach addresses everything from post-secondary education to early childhood education. The NEP 2020 sought to broaden students' possibilities in a variety of subjects including language, literature, experimentation, and the humanities, arts, and sports, in addition to cultivating extremely talented participants (Khattak et al. 2022).

Key Aspects Focused in NEP 2020

A person's total development is the main objective of holistic education, which encourages people to reach their goals and be the best versions of them (Forbes 2003; Wortham et al. 2020). Rather than restricting human capabilities, a holistic approach of thinking aims to incorporate and integrate numerous layers of meaning and experience. Further, the underlying worldviews or paradigms in order to transform the foundations of education are the purpose of holistic education (Ojha 2020).

NEP 2020 and UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework for Action both emphasise that equity and inclusion in the education system are essential elements of the educational system that set the foundation for high-quality education. The practice of inclusive education seeks to identify and eliminate obstacles to the attendance, engagement, and academic success of all students (Ainscow et al. 2006; Ainscow 2020). A focus on equity suggests a concern for justice, according to UNESCO (2017).

A higher education institution's success is determined by the motivated, energised and capable faculty members. Teachers should have opportunities for professional development. Faculty motivation can be increased by providing adequate infrastructure, service conditions, optimal teaching loads, responsibility and accountability, and optimal student-teacher ratios, among other things (Aithal and Aithal 2019).

Technology has become a part and parcel of everything in today's world, including the field of education. Technology tends to increase access to education. When technology was used in the

classroom, it increased participation and interest. Knowledge transmission becomes much simpler, more convenient, and efficient. It is the primary tool for institutionalising a country's talent and creativity while also hastening globalisation (Kaur and Ahuja 2023). It comprises building a more globally focused and inclusive environment that promotes cross-cultural understanding, diversity, and intercultural competency. Initiatives such as study abroad programs, foreign collaborations, joint research projects, exchange programs and cultural integration activities are examples of internationalisation attempts. It comprises building a more globally focused and inclusive environment that promotes cross-cultural understanding, diversity, and intercultural competency. Initiatives such as study abroad programs, foreign collaborations, joint research projects, exchange programs and cultural integration activities are examples of internationalisation attempts.

To keep pace with global changes and progress in the twenty-first century, all higher education institutions must engage in effective international outreach to improve the quality and relevance of their academic programmes (Hillman and Baydoun 2019). International educational partnerships advance research and learning by bringing together students, teachers, and academics from around the world for a rich and diverse exchange of knowledge and ideas. Such exposure assists students in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to succeed in today's global society (Karthikeyan and Xin Liu 2017). Internationalisation initiatives include study abroad programmes, foreign collaborations, joint research projects, exchange programmes, and cultural integration activities (Dwivedi and Joshi 2023).

The knowledge of the rich diversity of India should be imbibed first hand by learners. Languages influence how people in a given culture communicate with one another, including family members, authority figures, peers, and strangers, as well as the tone of conversation. Culture is thus embedded in the languages. Without language, art, such as literature, plays, music, and films, is meaningless. To preserve and promote culture, languages must also be preserved and promoted (Mandavkar 2023). The National Education Policy 2020 envisions an educational system modelled after India's rich linguistic, cultural, and artistic heritage.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

- To study the undergraduate students' awareness levels on NEP 2020
 - To study the perspectives of undergraduate students on NEP 2020
 - To study the effect of gender and locality on students' awareness on NEP 2020
 - To study the effect of gender and locality on students' perspectives on NEP 2020.
4. Technology use and integration
 5. Global outreach of higher education
 6. Promotion of Indian knowledge, system, language, culture, and values

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Survey method of research was undertaken in this study. To conduct the research process successfully, a sample of 120 students from three higher education institutions at the Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu State, India was selected using simple random sampling technique. Out of the selected 120 samples, there were 63 male and 57 female students, and 67 rural and 53 urban students, respectively.

Instruments and Procedures Used

To collect the required data, the researchers used the Student Awareness Test on NEP 2020 and Student Perception Scale on NEP 2020. Both these tools were constructed by the researchers following the proper research tool standardisation procedures. Student Awareness Test on NEP 2020 consisted of 25 multiple choice question items and each right response of the sample in this test item will be given one point score. The maximum score of the tool is 25. If the score of a sample in the Student Awareness Test on NEP 2020 is below the score of mean – 1 SD (standard deviation), then it will be considered as low awareness on NEP 2020. If the score of a sample is above the score of mean + 1 SD, then it will be considered as high awareness on NEP 2020, and if the score of a sample is between mean – 1 SD and mean + 1 SD, then it will be considered as moderate level of awareness on NEP 2020.

The Student Awareness Perception Scale on NEP 2020 consisted of 6 dimensions and each dimension has 5 statements. The names of tool dimensions are:

1. Multidisciplinary and holistic education
2. Equity and inclusion in higher education
3. Motivated, energised, and capable faculty

The sample is expected to respond to each statement in the relevant column and responses of the sample are structured into a five-point rating scale, namely, SDA, DA, N, A, SA respectively with scoring patterns as 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, respectively. Here the maximum score of the perception scale is 150 (=30 x 5). The perception level of students on NEP 2020 is classified into two such as high and low perceptions. If a students' score is below 50, then it is assumed that the student had low level of perception on features of NEP 2020, if a score is ranges between 51 and 100, then it is assumed that the student had moderate level of perception, and if a score is above 100, then it is assumed that the student had high level of perception.

While comparing the mean scores of students dimension wise, if the mean score of a student in one dimension is below the grand mean score of dimensions, then it is assumed that the student had low perception on the features of that particular dimension of NEP 2020.

Reliability and Validity of the Tools

To know the reliabilities of constructed tools, the *test-retest method* was followed with use of 10 selected small sample students. The correlation coefficients found to the tools of Student Awareness Test and Student Perception Scale are 0.72 and 0.87 respectively, which indicate that the constructed tools are worthy to use in the research field. Further, to get experts' opinion on the usefulness of these tools in the research field, the tools were distributed to five college teachers and five university teachers, and they were requested to give their opinion. After the scrutiny of the tools by these experts, they opinionated that the tools selected were valid for research purposes.

RESULTS

Students' Awareness on NEP 2020

The mean and standard deviation scores of selected students in the Awareness Test on NEP 2020 are 11.19 and 4.51, respectively. Based on these values, the awareness level of students in NEP 2020 is classified as *low, moderate and high level*

of awareness on NEP 2020. Accordingly the number of students under these three categories is listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of students having low, average and high awareness in NEP 2020

<i>Students' awareness level</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Low	19	15.83
Moderate	87	72.50
High	14	11.67

The data in Table 1 shows that out of the 120 students in the sample that was chosen, 15.83 percent had a low level of awareness in NEP 2020, 72.50 percent had a moderate level of awareness, and 11.67 percent had a high level of consciousness. These findings show that most of the undergraduate students in higher education institutions were having a moderate level of awareness about NEP 2020.

Comparison on Students' Awareness: Variable Wise

Table 2 indicates the comparison of students' awareness on NEP 2020 based on the variables of gender and locality.

The mean scores of male (11.47) and female (10.94) students mentioned in the above Table 2 indicates that male students' awareness on NEP 2020 is better than that the female students and further the calculated t ($=0.65$) and p ($=0.52$) val-

ues, which indicate that there was no significant difference exist between the awareness of male and female students about NEP 2020 at 0.05 significant level since the p ($=0.52$) value is greater than 0.05.

The locality wise comparison on mean scores of rural and urban students indicates that there was a significant difference between the awareness of rural and urban students about NEP 2020 at 0.05 significant level since the p ($=0.00$) value is less than 0.05. Further, the awareness of urban students ($=12.72$) is better than that of rural students ($=9.99$).

Findings in this section show that there was a significant difference in awareness among students on NEP 2020 in terms of their locality but not in terms of gender. Mostly the urban students may have better awareness in knowing new information from different social media platforms. They have more opportunities than rural students to know about the news about NEP 2020 through the internet, newspapers, television, and other media channels.

Students' Perspectives on NEP 2020

The mean and standard deviation scores of selected students on the Student Perspective Scale on NEP 2020 are 92.67 and 19.81, respectively. The mean perspective score of students shows that the undergraduate students had a moderate level of perception on features of NEP 2020 since the students' mean score is between 51 and 100. The students' mean perspective scores on selected six dimensions of NEP 2020 are analysed in Table 3.

Table 2: Mean comparison on students' awareness on NEP 2020 - Variable wise

<i>Variable</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t- value</i>	<i>p- value</i>
<i>Gender</i>	Female	63	10.94	4.38	0.65	0.52
	Male	57	11.47	4.67		
<i>Locality</i>	Rural	67	9.99	3.97	3.45	0.00
	Urban	53	12.72	4.72		

Table 3: Mean perspective scores of students in the different dimensions of NEP 2020

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Dimension of NEP 2020</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean- GM</i>	<i>Remark</i>
1	Multidisciplinary and Holistic Education	16.16	0.72	< GM
2	Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education	15.37	-0.07	< GM
3	Motivated, Energised, and Capable Faculty	15.40	-0.04	< GM
4	Technology Use and Integration	15.48	0.03	< GM
5	Global Outreach of Higher Education	14.99	-0.45	< GM
6	Promotion of Indian Knowledge, System, Languages, Culture and Values	15.28	-0.17	< GM
	<i>Grand Mean (GM)</i>	15.44		

The data in Table 3 shows the mean scores of students on the Student Perspective Scale on NEP 2020 in general and dimension wise as well. While comparing the students' dimension wise mean scores with their mean score in general, it reveals that the selected students had better perceptions in the dimensions of multidisciplinary and holistic education (=16.16), and technology use and integration (=15.48) since the students' mean scores in these dimensions are greater than their mean score in general (=15.44). Hence, it is found that the undergraduate students had high perception on the NEP 2020 dimensions of multidisciplinary and holistic education, and technology use and integration, whereas they had low level of perception on the remaining dimensions of NEP 2020.

Comparison on Students' Perspectives on NEP 2020: Variable Wise

Table 4 indicates the comparison of male and female students' perspectives on NEP 2020.

From Table 4, it is understood that the gender wise comparison in general reveals that there was a significant difference between the perspectives of female and male students on NEP 2020 at 0.05 significance level since the p (= 0.01) value is less than 0.05. Further, the dimension wise comparison indicates the important outlines. There was no significant difference between the perspectives of female and male students on the dimension of multidisciplinary and holistic education of NEP 2020 at 0.05 significance level since the p (= 0.71) value is greater than 0.05. However, significant differences

were observed between the perspectives of male and female students in all other dimensions of NEP 2020 at 0.05 significant level since their p -values are less than 0.05. These findings imply that the gender of students plays a vital role in shaping their perceptions on the NEP 2020.

Further, Table 5 indicates the comparison of rural and urban students' perspectives on NEP 2020.

From Table 5, it is understood that the locality wise comparison in general reveals that there was no significant difference between the perspectives of rural and urban students on NEP 2020 at 0.05 significance level since the p (= 0.34) value is greater than 0.05. Further the comparison of rural and urban students' perspectives on different dimensions of NEP 2020 indicates that there was a significant difference only on the dimension of multidisciplinary and holistic education of NEP 2020 at 0.05 significance level since the p (= 0.00) value is less than 0.05. In contrast, there were no significant differences found between the perspectives of students on other dimensions of NEP 2020. These results infer that, except for the dimension of multidisciplinary and holistic education, the rural and urban students holds similar perception on key aspects of NEP 2020.

DISCUSSION

Out of the 120 students at undergraduate level in higher education, 15.83 percent had a low level of awareness about NEP (2020), 72.50 percent had a moderate level, and 11.67 percent had a high level

Table 4: Mean comparison on students' perspectives on NEP 2020 - Gender wise

S. No.	Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t- value	p- value
1	Multidisciplinary and Holistic Education	Female	63	16.29	3.44	0.38	0.71
		Male	57	16.02	4.24		
2	Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education	Female	63	16.35	4.04	2.68	0.01
		Male	57	14.28	4.37		
3	Motivated, Energised, and Capable Faculty	Female	63	16.33	3.62	2.77	0.01
		Male	57	14.37	4.1		
4	Technology Use and Integration	Female	63	16.33	3.89	2.39	0.02
		Male	57	14.53	4.35		
5	Global Outreach of Higher Education	Female	63	15.95	3.78	2.79	0.01
		Male	57	13.93	4.11		
6	Promotion of Indian Knowledge, System, Languages, Culture and Values	Female	63	16.1	4.19	2.23	0.03
		Male	57	14.37	4.27		
	<i>Students' Perspective Total</i>	Female	63	97.35	18.07	2.78	0.01
		Male	57	87.49	20.51		

Table 5: Mean comparison on students' perspectives on NEP 2020 - Locality wise

S. No.	Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t- value	p- value
1	Multidisciplinary and Holistic Education	Rural	67	14.72	3.29	5.04	0.00
		Urban	53	17.98	3.70		
2	Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education	Rural	67	15.39	4.44	0.06	0.95
		Urban	53	15.34	4.18		
3	Motivated, Energised, and Capable Faculty	Rural	67	14.96	3.99	1.39	0.17
		Urban	53	15.96	3.89		
4	Technology Use and Integration	Rural	67	15.55	4.36	0.23	0.82
		Urban	53	15.38	4.01		
5	Global Outreach of Higher Education	Rural	67	15.22	4.28	0.71	0.48
		Urban	53	14.7	3.78		
6	Promotion of Indian Knowledge, System, Languages, Culture and Values	Rural	67	15.31	4.34	0.11	0.91
		Urban	53	15.23	4.29		
<i>Students' Perspective Total</i>		Female	67	91.15	20.87	0.96	0.34
		Male	53	94.58	18.41		

el. This means that the majority of the students have moderate level of awareness on NEP (2020). The result of this research is also consistent with the findings of Chandvekar et al. (2023), Ashokkumar et al. (2024). Moreover, Chatterjee et al. (2022) found that 35.71 percent students of higher education institutions had low knowledge, 32.46 percent had high knowledge, 29.22 percent had average knowledge, and 2.59 percent had very low and very high knowledge of National Education Policy 2020. The study by Chakraborty and Nouskit (2025) revealed that significant number students were aware of NEP 2020 but many of them were lacked in their knowledge on it. This shows that there was a gap between the students' knowledge and their awareness on NEP 2020. Further the study findings also reveal that the female students had more knowledge about NEP 2020 than that of male students. A few possible reasons why students may be aware of NEP 2020, according to Swargiary and Roy (2023), include their academic curriculum, conversations with peers and teachers, and the availability of educational platforms and resources.

The findings of the research also showed that the chosen students had low perception of the other NEP 2020 elements and high perception of the multidisciplinary and holistic education, technology use, and integration dimensions. This result is also consistent with the findings of Kulal et al. (2024). Students' low perception of NEP 2020 features could be the result of their ignorance of them, their lack of desire in learning more about them, or both (Ghatak 2024).

The study findings of Chatterjee et al. (2022) revealed that there were differences in perspectives found among the students on NEP in terms of their gender and locality. The findings of study by Mazumdar (2025) reveal that there was a significance difference between the perceptions of male and female students on NEP. Additionally, this study's results indicate that there was a significant difference in the perception of undergraduate students on NEP in terms of their gender but not in terms of locality. Additionally, gender and NEP knowledge were found to be significantly correlated by Sudhagar and Binu (2022).

Mondal (2024) pointed out that the New Education Policy 2020 emphasizes a dynamic and integrated approach towards holistic learning. Further, it serves as a pathway to nation-building by addressing the developmental goals across all domains of learning. The implementation of NEP (2020) in India marks a significant shift from rote learning to fostering critical and meaningful understanding in learning subject. Supporting this view, Neelofar and Bai (2024) gathered students' opinions on the efficacy of NEP (2020), and the results indicated that students appreciated the policy, acknowledging that it enables them to learn at their own pace. This highlights the need to help students understand the key aspects of NEP (2020) in order to truly nurture holistic learners.

However, Heena et al. (2024) found that 52 percent of teachers were unaware of the role of NEP in the higher education system and national education schemes. They attributed this lack of awareness to limited understanding of technological

tools and insufficient training on policy implementation. Similarly, Divyabharathi and Veliappan (2023) observed that teachers displayed only an average level of awareness (81.4%) regarding key dimensions such as holistic and multidisciplinary education and the creation of an optimal learning environment, as envisaged in NEP (2020). Without creating adequate awareness among teachers about the key features and importance of NEP (2020), the student community is unlikely to gain a proper understanding of the policy and may remain unaware or indifferent to it. Therefore, it is imperative for educational authorities to prioritize and actively promote teacher awareness of NEP (2020), as it is the need of the hour.

CONCLUSION

The higher education stage is vital to all the student learners to get all the latest developments. The purpose of implementing NEP 2020 in the country is to revamp the existing system of education. To avail the benefits of NEP 2020 in the future all the stakeholders must have enough awareness and interest to gain knowledge on it. The main findings of the study revealed that most of the undergraduate students in higher education institutions knew just a moderate level about NEP 2020. Further the findings of study also indicate that there was a significant difference in awareness among students on NEP 2020 in terms of their locality but not in terms of gender. The outcomes of this study may be beneficial to the administrators at higher education levels to understand the gap in transmitting the important features of NEP 2022 to all the stakeholders, including the student community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Everyone in the nation has an innate right to high quality education, and nobody should be forced to choose an alternative to the established educational framework. To fully reap the benefits of these initiatives, it is imperative for all stakeholders to be informed of the government's policies regarding education. Additionally, as they are the primary stakeholders at the grass root level, teachers and students stand to gain from the benefits suggested by government educational initiatives. Thus, it is imperative that educational administrators take the required steps to disseminate

the policy efforts of the Government of India, particularly NEP 2020. Campaigns for teacher and student awareness must be carried out by the government and educational institutions. The majority of urban people might be more aware of new information available on various social media sites. Through the internet, newspapers, television, and other media outlets, they have greater access to news regarding NEP 2020 than do students in rural areas. It is also necessary to arrange localised workshops, teacher training, and seminars on NEP 2020 in order to solve the gaps in awareness. Educational institutions have the option to provide questionnaires to gauge students' understanding of NEP 2020's features. Additionally, they can encourage students to express whatever inquiries or concerns they may have about the initiative. Educational administrators can ensure that all students have a sufficient understanding of NEP 2020 by implementing initiatives such as these to narrow the awareness gap among students.

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