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# A Study on Impact of The National Education Policy 2020 on Arts and Science Colleges in Virudhunagar

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**Abstract**

*The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has innovatively transformed university education, resulting in a greater emphasis on skills, interdisciplinary programs, and flexibility in the curriculum. This study is informed by changes to the roles of the agents (teachers, students, and institutions) in the shifting culture of educational practice since the NEP heavily capped on adaptability to both agency (teachers) and outcomes (students). It examines outcome assessment for NEP 2020 in arts and science colleges in Virudhunagar, TN and its impact on educational systems, paradigms of pedagogy, and employability opportunities. Data was gathered through both qualitative and quantitative methods. There were concerning findings regarding the efficacy of resources and time for implementation of NEP 2020, yet unexpected findings revealed a positive development for integrated education. The article concludes with recommendations for useful approaches for local university implementation strategies.*

**Keywords: NEP 2020, Arts and Science Colleges, Virudhunagar, higher education reform, curriculum development, multidisciplinary learning**

## Introduction

The Indian government's release of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, after nearly four decades of experience with the National Policy on Education, is considered a milestone in terms of the education system's architecture and design. The goal of the NEP is address issues around higher education that consider creativity, cognitive criticality, global competitiveness and a comprehensive, diverse, and flexible education experience. The NEP has put an emphasis on employability and has made connections between academic learning and employability through characteristics associated with outcome-based education, integration of skill-based education and course flexibility and diversity. The arts and sciences colleges in higher education are vital in supporting the local enactment of NEP 2020. These colleges are located in tier-two and tier-three districts - such as Virudhunagar - and often serve a diverse mix of students with various social and economic backgrounds. While the introduction of NEP 2020 might present Arts and Science colleges with new avenues for learning, it also has associated challenges. Aspects of NEP 2020 promote technology learning, credit transfer, and inter-disciplinary learning possibilities, which have been shown to be favourable for learning. However, it is clear that administrative restructuring, developing faculty, and upgrading facilities is paramount. Colleges in Virudhunagar (those offering arts and science degrees) that are connecting rich cultural heritage with changing educational ecosystems are currently in the process of making that transition to better align to the NEP guidelines. In order to provide quality policy outcomes that are equitable and effective, policymakers, administrators

and faculty need a complete understanding of the connotations of the change. Accordingly, this study's goal is to understand the implications of NEP 2020 on academic processes, student learning, and quality of teaching and learning outcomes in favoured arts and science colleges in Virudhunagar.

**Review of Literature**

Kumar, A., & Rani, S. (2021) The authors explain how NEP 2020 offers an opportunity for change in higher education; flexibility, possibility for multi-"disciplinary" learning, and pathways to vocational education and learning. With multiple entry-exit options and transitional credit transfer mechanisms, NEP 2020 will reduce student attrition/completion rates and generate a student workforce for transition into the labour market. The authors view that the implementation of NEP 2020 is critically important for aligning the Indian higher education system to global standards for credentials and subsequently to labour market needs.

Sharma, R. (2022) Authors examine faculty preparedness for reforms introduced by the National Education Policy 2020. Faculty indicate rapid possibilities for digital learning and interdisciplinary experience, while voicing concerns with infrastructure, push back and training. Overall, faculty support exists, while underpreparedness does as well. The authors argue that successful policy implementation and sustainable reforms depend on professional learning opportunities, capacity building, and support from institutions.

Sundar, P., & Priya, M. (2021) The authors examine the influence of the NEP 2020 policy document on both disciplines of arts and sciences. The sciences receive gains in terms of fostering innovation and critical thinking, while the arts are provided benefits of vocational integration and skill-based study. The authors suggest there needs to be consideration of curriculum redesign parameters, research foci, and faculty training to foster the NEP's vision of integrated, student-centred learning outcomes, objectifying the holistic aspect of the learning experience.

Ravichandran, K. (2023) This study, focusing on Tamil Nadu, outlines a rural-urban divide in their readiness for NEP 2020, specifically regarding technology, faculty development, and interdisciplinary experiences. Colleges based in urban areas are adapting to these changes more rapidly than those in rural areas due to various constraints imposed on rural colleges. The author argues for more funding to rural colleges, faculty development, and appropriate local opportunities to minimize an increase in inequalities surrounding educational opportunities in higher education.

Bhatia, R., & Singh, P. (2022) This research investigates the effect socioeconomic factors have on the student body's awareness of NEP 2020. Students from urban, higher-income backgrounds reflect a greater level of awareness, while rural and disadvantaged students exhibit a lower level of awareness associated with the digital divide. The study encouraged awareness campaigns, development of multilingual resources and approaches and the issues of equity and targeted participation in the benefits of policy (NEP 2020).

Menon, S., Gupta, L., & Iyer, V. (2023) The paper stresses institutional autonomy in the implementation of NEP 2020. Autonomous colleges implement reforms more quickly than bureaucratic institutions, as they introduce flexible credits, research, and multi-disciplinary programs where bureaucratic institutions do not. The authors emphasize creating balance, where autonomy coexists with accountability, enabling institutions to interpret reforms and innovate within the local context while ensuring policy coherence and standardization across higher education.

Lakshmi, R. (2021) The author analyses a regional perspective on NEP 2020 through a lens of social justice, language promotion, and access, in connection to the wider national objectives of flexibility and creativity. Even as it recognizes the challenges that remain associated with language policy, socially just decision-making regarding language issues and university autonomy, the author indicates that local operationalizing fulfills the aim of delivering effective policy implementation while respecting diversity and inclusion.

**Statement of the Problem**

With an emphasis on flexibility, interdisciplinary learning, and vocational integration, the National

Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to change higher education in India. However, implementation of these policies differs both within and across institutional typologies and regions, for example, there are unique resources, faculty readiness of staff, and technology infrastructure that impact government funded, aided or self-financing institutions. Urban institution colleges can likely adapt relatively quickly however there is often a lack of alignment in course, structure and curriculum implementation. For higher education institutions in rural areas they often face daunting barriers when enacting interdisciplinary models and the challenges of digital pedagogy. The NEP is important, however, there is little empirical evidence available that provides evidence of the NEP 2020 impact particularly at the district level. The proposed study will examine the landscape of NEP 2020 implementation; its opportunities and challenges to arts and sciences colleges in Virudhunagar to enact better action for effective policy implementation.

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To connect the gap between policy intentions and institutional realities we must investigate the lived experience and understanding of NEP 2020, in the context of Virudhunagar Arts and Science Colleges.
2. To understand how the implementation of NEP 2020 has influenced curriculum development, teaching and learning practice, and assessment practice.
3. To understand the impact of NEP 2020 on students' employability, multi-disciplinary learning and skilling.
4. To understand the barriers faced by Arts and Science Colleges in implementing the changes suggested in NEP 2020.
5. To understand the impact of faculty readiness, technology and infrastructure on the successful implementation of NEP 2020.
6. To make recommendations for action to increase the effectiveness of NEP 2020 in rural and semi-urban higher education institutions.

**Research Methodology**

This study will utilize descriptive research design to problematize the perceived and real effect of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 on the arts and science colleges operating in Virudhunagar district. Descriptive research design facilitates and is appropriately useful in collecting data, documenting patterns or trends, and examining consequences of policies implemented on operational and academic matters.

**Population**

Undergraduate students and faculty at Virudhunagar district's arts and science colleges. 300 responders (150 students and 150 faculty) make up the sample size.

**Sampling Design**

**Stage 1:** Colleges categorized by location (rural, urban) and management type (government, assisted, self-financing).

**Stage 2:** Respondents in a chosen college were categorized by role (faculty/students).

**Data Collection Method**

Limited interviews with administrators and structured questionnaires (categorical questions plus Likert scale).

**Impact of NEP in Arts and Science Colleges**

1. Curriculum Flexibility: A multidisciplinary approach was facilitated, enabling students in the arts and sciences to take courses from other fields (for example, a student of B. A. can take courses in Environmental Studies or Data Science as electives).
2. Academic Changes: The introduction of the Strengthened Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) and the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) allows for transfer of credits between institutions. The curriculum is multidisciplinary and holistic, which emphasizes digital literacy, ethics, languages, and environmental awareness; integrating vocational training into mainstream curricula in science and the arts.
3. Pedagogical Changes: A focus on outcome-based education (OBE) with an emphasis on the application of knowledge in practice. The use of technology based approaches to learning, such as MOOCs (SWAYAM, NPTEL)

digital platforms, virtual labs and online courses. Increased emphasis on teamwork, communication, creativity and critical thinking skills.

4. Reforms to the Assessment and Examinations: Replace rote-learning with an ongoing, holistic assessment. More emphasis on the assessment in progress through fieldwork, internships, projects, and other presentations. Reforms of board college and examinations that assess practical learning within the semester system.
5. Innovation and Research: Creation of the National Research Foundation (NRF) that promotes research opportunities for researchers (faculty and students) in arts and sciences universities. Support for undergraduate led research projects. To improve partnership opportunities in education, academia, and industry.
6. Inclusive and Equity: Special consideration to education for disadvantaged communities and populations, such as women, viably disabled students, SC/ST students, OBC students. Increased funding for financial aid or scholarships. To enhance access, regional languages are to be supported in addition to English.
7. Faculty Development: Increased latitude for institutions to hire and develop faculty. Institutions shall develop continuous professional development (CPD) programs for faculty. Research, creativity, and community service are a part of faculty evaluation.
8. Restructuring Institutions: By 2035, colleges will undergo a transformation into multidisciplinary institutions. They may either be an independent degree-granting institution or exist as part of universities in the transition away from the affiliated college system. A single regulatory body, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), has been established.
9. Employer Skill Development: Integration of digital literacy, entrepreneurship, innovation and soft skills into the curriculum. Establish incubation centers and skill labs in colleges of arts and sciences. Partner with industry to embed internships and on-the-job training as part of the curriculum.
10. Implementation Challenges: Resistance of the established order. Lack of financial support and infrastructure in colleges for rural/semi-urban institutions. Faculty willingness to use digital tools and new pedagogical approaches. Capacity building is required to allow institutions to operate a flexible and multidisciplinary curriculum.

**Data Analysis Tools**

Excel and SPSS were used to code and analyze the collected data. The statistical instruments listed below were used:

1. Descriptive statistics: means, percentages, and frequencies
2. Chi-square Test: To determine whether associations are significant

**Analysis and Interpretation**

**Descriptive Statistics**

| Demographic Factor | Category | No. of Respondents | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age group | 18–20 | 140 | 46.67 |
| Gender | Female | 155 | 51.67 |
| Residence | Rural | 180 | 60.00 |
| Year of Study | I Year | 90 | 30.00 |
| Stream | Arts | 160 | 53.33 |
| Family Income (INR/month) | 10,000 - 25,000 | 120 | 40.00 |
| Parental Education | Secondary | 120 | 40.00 |
| Employment Status (Part-time) | Not Employed | 240 | 80.00 |

**Interpretation**

- The sample mostly comprised students just starting college, with almost half of the participants being 18 to 20 years old (46 %).
- There is almost equal distribution across gender of respondents, although there are slightly more female (51.67%) respondents than male.
- Most participants (60%) were from rural areas which could influence access to resources, educational background, and career aspirations.
- Most students (30%) were first-year students, which indicates that many participants are relatively new to higher education and are still adapting to college life.
- More students (53.33%) are pursuing Arts than Science which could possibly stem from institutional strengths or regional trends in student interest. Most students (40%) identified as belonging to lower middle class households, meaning their family income was in the range of 10,000- 25,000 INR a month.
- Most students have parents with some education at the secondary (40%) level suggesting a moderate level of educational exposure in their home.
- Most students prioritized education over part time work, as shown by 80 % of respondents indicating they were not working part-time while studying.

**Hypothesis**

The degree of awareness of NEP 2020 is not significantly correlated with the type of institution (government, assisted, or self-financing).

The adoption of NEP 2020 in Arts and Science colleges is not significantly correlated with faculty training in digital pedagogy.

Faculty members' perceptions of the advantages of NEP 2020 do not significantly correlate with the number of years they have taught.

**Table 1: Cross-tabulation - Awareness Level vs. Type of Institution**

| Awareness Level | Government | Aided | Self-financing | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| High | 28 | 25 | 40 | 93 |
| Moderate | 35 | 30 | 42 | 107 |
| Low | 22 | 18 | 60 | 100 |
| Total | 85 | 73 | 142 | 300 |

Chi-square value ($\chi^2$) = 16.52, df = 4, p-value = 0.0024

**Interpretation**

The null hypothesis is rejected because $p < 0.05$. There is a significant correlation between the type of institution and level of awareness of the NEP 2020. Overall, government and assisted colleges tended to be more moderate in awareness, while self-financing colleges exhibited a more even distribution, as they had higher proportions of low and high awareness.

**Table 2: Cross-tabulation – NEP Adoption vs. Digital Pedagogy Training**

| NEP Adoption Level | Trained Faculty | Untrained Faculty | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| High | 65 | 18 | 83 |
| Moderate | 72 | 45 | 117 |
| Low | 35 | 65 | 100 |
| Total | 172 | 128 | 300 |

Chi-square value ($\chi^2$) = 54.37, df = 2, p-value < 0.0001

**Interpretation**

The null hypothesis is rejected because p is less than 0.05. The adoption of NEP 2020 is strongly and significantly correlated with faculty training in digital pedagogy. Adoption rates were higher at colleges with faculty who had received training.

**Table 3: Cross-tabulation – Perceived Advantages vs. Teaching Experience**

| Perception Level | <5 Years | 5–10 Years | >10 Years | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| High | 45 | 28 | 20 | 93 |
| Moderate | 32 | 42 | 33 | 107 |
| Low | 18 | 25 | 57 | 100 |
| Total | 95 | 95 | 110 | 300 |

**Interpretation**

The null hypothesis can be rejected since p is less than 0.05. The perceptions of the benefits of NEP 2020 are significantly correlated with the amount of teaching experience. While faculty members with more than ten years of teaching experience had lower perceived advantages, faculty members with less than five years of experience were more positive.

**Findings**

- Most are aging (18–20 years), living in rural areas, and taking Arts stream
- There are more female students (51.67%) than male, however most are from lower middle-class backgrounds.
- Students who self finance have both the highest and lowest awareness of NEP 2020 based on the type of institution
- Colleges with educated faculty in technology have higher rates of ajustment to NEP changes.
- Older faculty are more uncertain about NEP 2020; younger faculty feel it has more benefits.

**Suggestions**

1. Provide awareness programs on NEP to the government and the aided colleges.
2. Have all faculty trained in digital literacy/ pedagogy.
3. Use workshops as a means to address issues senior faculty may have.
4. Provide additional support for students in rural communities.
5. Provide opportunities for interdisciplinary education.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the research indicates that NEP 2020 has provided a transformative vision for higher education at the Arts and Science Colleges in Virudhunagar, with a view toward promoting skills, interdisciplinary learning, and holistic growth. Even though the National Educational Policy has effectively generated momentum and interest for change, its promise is being limited by faculty readiness, poor infrastructure, and inadequate resources. Closing these gaps will require practical collaboration among government, universities, industry, and faculty. NEP 2020 can significantly improve quality, relevance, and employability for students in semi-urban and rural contexts, if sustained commitment and training with dependable oversight continues.

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