

OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL SUSTAINABILITY: TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION UNDER NEP 2020 IN INDIA

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a major change in India's education system. Its goal is to improve skill development, encourage learning across different subjects, and use curricula that focus on what students can do. In this context, Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has become more important as it fits well with the goals of the policy. OBE focuses on clear learning outcomes and puts the student at the center of learning, with a strong emphasis on measurable achievements. This research looks into the link between the changes made by NEP 2020, the use of OBE, and how these efforts help in making higher education more sustainable for professionals. Professional sustainability means that graduates can keep their jobs over time, adapt to new work environments, and behave ethically and responsibly in the global workplace. The study uses a conceptual and analytical approach by looking at existing literature, policy documents, and education reforms related to NEP 2020 and OBE. Based on this analysis, a theoretical framework is created to explain how these educational strategies help build sustainable professional skills. The research shows that properly using OBE within the framework of NEP 2020 can greatly improve students' chances of getting jobs, encourage ongoing learning, and support continuous professional growth. However, there are challenges in adopting OBE, such as not enough training for teachers, limited resources in institutions, and resistance to changing how courses are designed. The study concludes that combining OBE with the goals of NEP 2020 can help build a stronger, more sustainable higher education system that better prepares graduates for future professional challenges. It also suggests some policy ideas for educational institutions and teachers to help implement OBE better and promote sustainable professional development in higher education.

Keywords: *NEP 2020, Outcome-Based Education, Professional Sustainability, Higher Education, Sustainable Development, Employability Skills*

1. Introduction

Education is very important for helping society and the economy grow in a sustainable way. As the needs of society and the global economy keep changing, education systems around the world are slowly moving away from old teaching methods that focus mainly on content to newer approaches that focus on developing skills and competencies. In India, the introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a big shift in the education sector by focusing on skill development, learning across disciplines, innovation, and a more balanced approach to education. One teaching method that supports the goals of NEP 2020 is Outcome-Based Education (OBE). OBE is a framework that sets clear learning goals for students to achieve by the end of a course or program. Unlike older methods that mainly focus on teaching content and processes, OBE emphasizes what students can do and the practical skills they gain that are useful in real-life situations. In today's job market, being able to keep up with changes is very important. Technology is advancing quickly, the world is becoming more connected, and job requirements are changing all

the time. As a result, professionals need to have skills that can adapt, strong ethics, and a habit of learning throughout their careers. Higher education institutions are key in helping students prepare for long and meaningful careers. By including Outcome-Based Education in the NEP 2020 framework, students can gain the right knowledge, skills, and the ability to keep learning. However, making this approach work well needs strong support from institutions, changes to the curriculum, and proper training for teachers. This paper looks at how the reforms in NEP 2020, the use of Outcome-Based Education, and professional sustainability are connected in higher education. The study aims to create a framework that shows how using OBE can help support sustainable professional growth within the context of NEP 2020 changes.

1.1 Overview of NEP-2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 outlines a vision for an education system that is deeply connected to India's cultural heritage, traditions, values, and knowledge systems. The policy aims to create a more fair, sustainable, and knowledge-based society. It draws on India's rich intellectual

history and contributions from various fields of study to offer high-quality, multidisciplinary learning at both the school and higher education levels. One of the main goals of NEP 2020 is to greatly increase access to education by raising the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). The policy has set a big target of achieving a 50 percent GER in higher education by 2035. This will be done through major changes in the education system, expanding institutions, and creating more learning opportunities for students throughout the country.

1.2 School Education

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 sets out several key ideas to improve school education. These include valuing cultural diversity and local traditions, making sure education is fair and inclusive for everyone, involving communities in the learning process, focusing on understanding big ideas rather than just memorizing facts, helping each child develop their unique talents, encouraging thinking and creativity, using technology in smart ways, and regularly checking how well students are learning. The policy also stresses the need for every child to have access to early childhood care and education (ECCE). This will be done by creating strong learning programs, using flexible teaching methods, and offering special classes for young kids at the start of their education. Another major focus of NEP 2020 is making sure education is available at every level. The changes in school education aim to offer different paths for learning, bring back students who have dropped out, improve school facilities, and set up new learning centers that use creative teaching methods. The policy also backs up teamwork in learning, like peer support and tutoring, to make sure every child gets a fair chance to learn and succeed.

1.3 Deserves of NEP 2020 for higher education

NEP 2020 introduces several significant improvements in the higher education sector:

1. **Flexibility:** The policy creates a more flexible and student-focused learning environment, giving students the chance to pick courses, decide how fast to learn, and choose how they study based on their personal interests
2. **Exit Options:** Multiple Entry and Students can now start or leave their academic programs at different times, allowing them to explore various educational paths based on their personal situations
3. **Emphasis on Research:** The policy focuses on strengthening the research and

innovation environment by increasing funding and encouraging partnerships between universities and industries.

4. **Vocational and Skill-Oriented Education:** Practical skills training is included in higher education courses to help students gain job-ready abilities that are in demand in the workforce
5. **Teacher Development:** NEP 2020 highlights the importance of well-rounded training for teachers to improve teaching quality and support their ongoing growth as professionals.
6. **Integration of Technology:** The policy supports the use of technology in teaching, such as online learning, digital tools, and open educational materials to enhance the learning experience.

1.4 Teachers Education:

1) All independent Teachers Education Institutions must become Multi-disciplinary Higher Education Institutions by 2030, offering only the four-year integrated B.Ed. program.

2) All schools at foundation, preparatory, middle, and secondary levels should hire teachers who have completed a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree with dual specializations in Education and a subject area.

3) Until 2030, there will be a two-year B.Ed. program for students with a three-year undergraduate degree and a one-year B.Ed. program for those with a four-year undergraduate degree, as well as individuals with a Master degree in other fields.

4) The M.Ed. program will be one-year and will focus on research. The faculty in Education departments will have diverse backgrounds, including Ph.D.'s in various fields.

5) All interested senior or retired faculty members will be used for short or long-term roles to guide, mentor, or provide professional support in research, training, and innovation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to change India's education system by introducing a more complete, adaptable, and cross-disciplinary way of learning. Instead of focusing mainly on teaching through rote memorization, the policy highlights the importance of developing higher-level thinking skills like critical thinking, creativity,

and problem-solving. NEP 2020 encourages schools and colleges to use education that focuses on what students can do, along with learning through experiences, so that students gain real-world knowledge and skills. It also urges educational institutions to use new teaching methods that help students improve their abilities and increase their chances of getting good jobs. Additionally, the policy supports learning across different subjects, allowing students to study from multiple areas. This helps students gain broader views and a better understanding of complex topics, making them ready for various academic and career paths.

2.2 Outcome-Based Education

Outcome-Based Education, or OBE, is a way of teaching that focuses on what students should learn and be able to do. It's centered around students and makes sure they meet specific goals. This idea was popularized by William Spady, an educational expert, who believed that schools should build their programs around clear outcomes. These outcomes help shape what's taught, how it's taught, and how students are assessed. In OBE, educational institutions set up Program Educational Objectives, Program Outcomes, and Course Outcomes. These are meant to make sure students gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to do well in their chosen careers. Assessments in OBE are linked to these outcomes, so teachers can check if students are really learning what's expected. Research shows that using OBE leads to more engaged students, better skill development, and improved chances of finding jobs. By focusing on what students can actually do, OBE helps graduates be more prepared for the real world.

2.3 Professional Sustainability

Professional sustainability means a person's ability to keep doing well in their career over a long time, even as their job and the industry change. It includes things like always learning new things, being flexible, making good decisions based on ethics, and being responsible toward others. In college and university settings, helping students develop professional sustainability means giving them skills that work in many different jobs. These skills help them stay useful and up-to-date in quickly changing work areas. Schools and colleges have a role in creating learning programs that build skills like thinking critically, working with others, being creative, and coming up with new ideas. Putting sustainability ideas into professional education also matches up with global efforts like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4, which focuses on

making education fair, high-quality, and accessible for everyone.

2.4 Implementation Challenges

Common barriers include:

- Faculty readiness and training gaps
- Resource and infrastructure limitations
- Resistance to changing assessment methods from rote learning to outcome-based evaluations
- Difficulty in measuring soft skills and affective competencies

3. Research Objectives

The key objectives of this study are:

1. To look into how NEP 2020 is helping to support Outcome-Based Education in higher education institutions.
2. To understand how Outcome-Based Education connects to the long-term success and sustainability of professions.
3. To create a conceptual framework that shows how NEP 2020 reforms, the implementation of Outcome-Based Education, and the development of sustainable professional skills are related.
4. To find out the main challenges that come with applying Outcome-Based Education within the NEP 2020 framework.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and conceptual research design based on policy analysis and literature review. Relevant academic journals, government policy documents, and scholarly publications related to NEP 2020, Outcome-Based Education, and professional sustainability were examined.

The research process involved the following steps:

1. Looking at books and articles from around the world about OBE and how sustainability is taught in schools.
2. Studying the official papers and guidelines related to the NEP 2020.
3. Finding out the main ideas that link what students learn with their ability to work sustainably in their professions.
4. Creating a model that shows how different factors are connected in this area.

The proposed conceptual model demonstrates how NEP 2020 reforms influence the adoption of OBE practices, which subsequently contribute to sustainable professional development.

5. Conceptual Framework

The proposed framework suggests that the reforms introduced by the NEP 2020 act as a driving force for adopting Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in

higher education. In this approach, OBE is about developing clear and measurable skills that make students more job-ready and better able to adapt in their careers. The framework also states that successfully implementing OBE helps in maintaining professional growth by building key abilities like critical thinking, solving problems, communicating well, and staying committed to learning throughout life. By carefully building these skills, universities can better equip graduates to handle changes in the job market and achieve long-term career success.

.Key Components of the Framework

Independent Variable -NEP 2020 Reforms

Mediating Variable Outcome-Based Education Practices

Dependent Variable-Professional Sustainability

This relationship suggests that successful implementation of NEP 2020 policies can strengthen OBE adoption, ultimately supporting sustainable professional careers for graduates.

6. Discussion

This study shows that Outcome-Based Education (OBE) has a lot of potential to support professional sustainability within the NEP 2020 framework. By focusing on clear learning outcomes, OBE helps students gain the skills they need to do well in today's professional world. The NEP 2020 encourages skill-based learning, innovation, and interdisciplinary education, which match up well with OBE goals. Combining these approaches can greatly improve the quality of higher education and better prepare students for the workforce. However, there are some challenges to overcome in order to implement OBE properly. These include a lack of understanding among teachers about OBE, not enough support from institutions, and reluctance to change the curriculum. To deal with these issues, colleges need to invest in training programs for teachers and create strong ways to assess student learning. It's also important to work closely with industry partners to make sure the education students get is relevant to what employers need. These partnerships can offer important information about new skills and help shape curricula that are practical and in line with job market demands.

.7. Demanding situations of NEP 2020 for higher schooling

1. Overhauling the education system: The NEP 2020 aims to completely restructure India's higher education system to make it more efficient and effective. However, various stakeholders are worried about possible challenges and disruptions that might happen during the implementation phase.

2. Financing projects: The policy includes big initiatives like setting up new universities, restructuring the education framework, and promoting online learning. It is important to get enough funding for these projects, and the government needs to find sustainable ways to fund them without putting extra pressure on taxpayers.

3. Bridging the digital divide: While promoting online education to make learning more accessible, especially in remote areas, the policy faces the ongoing challenge of the digital divide. Many parts of India still lack reliable internet access, which creates obstacles in providing equal opportunities for online learning.

4. School development: The NEP 2020 focuses on improving school infrastructure and training programs to raise the quality of teaching. However, there is a shortage of qualified teachers in various subjects, which means there needs to be significant investment and time to build the required teaching capacity.

5. Fairness concerns: Even though the policy aims to promote fairness and inclusion in higher education, there are worries that certain initiatives, like the proposed four-year undergraduate program, could negatively affect students from marginalized communities or those with disabilities.

Addressing these concerns is important to ensure that all students benefit fairly from the policy's changes. These challenges highlight the complexity and scale of the reforms under the NEP 2020, requiring careful planning, strong implementation strategies, and ongoing engagement with stakeholders to manage the process effectively.

7.1 Case Studies and Implementation Insights

Student-centered learning focuses on students showing what they have learned through projects, portfolios, internships, and real-life tasks. There is a move away from final exams towards ongoing assessments that help track progress. Schools are working closely with industry experts to shape what students should learn. Institutions that use these methods say they have clearer goals, more engaged students, and better understanding of what students are learning. For example, discussions and workshops across the state show that teachers are aware of these approaches but face challenges when putting them into practice.

8. Conclusion

India is ready to put the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 into action across the country, with the goal of changing both school and higher education systems. This policy

aims to create a new and innovative education system that helps young people gain confidence, learn important knowledge and skills, and develop values that can help them deal with current and future challenges in society. This study shows how combining Outcome-Based Education (OBE) with the NEP 2020 changes can help graduates stay relevant in their careers. By focusing on skills like thinking critically, being flexible, and learning throughout life, universities can better prepare students for the changing job market. To make OBE work well, institutions need strong support, ongoing training for teachers, and good ways to check how much students are learning. Policymakers and teachers should work together to make sure the NEP 2020 changes lead to real improvements in education that help students grow in their careers. Future research could look into studies that measure how adopting OBE affects students' chances of getting jobs and succeeding in their careers in different fields.

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