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Analytical Observation on the Journey Towards *Viksit Bharat* Through the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

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Abstract

The *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020* marks a transformative overhaul of India's education system, seeking to align it with 21st-century demands while contributing to the national vision of *Viksit Bharat* (Developed India) by 2047. This paper analytically examines NEP 2020's vision, key reforms, implementation progress, challenges, and its broader implications for socioeconomic development. Drawing on government documents, implementation reports, and independent analyses, it situates NEP 2020 as a critical human-capital strategy underpinning India's long-term development ambitions.

1. Introduction

India's quest for *Viksit Bharat* encompasses economic growth, social inclusion, and technological advancement. Fundamental to achieving this vision is transforming the education system to produce a skilled, creative, and globally competitive workforce. The *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020* was promulgated to replace the *National Policy on Education 1986*, introducing systemic reforms across preschool to higher education and lifelong learning. Importantly, NEP 2020 is not merely an educational document but a roadmap for inclusive development, aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (quality education) and human-capital imperatives for national progress.

2. Vision and Objectives of NEP 2020

NEP 2020 envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and holistic development. Its core objectives include:

- **Universal foundational literacy and numeracy**, ensuring all children acquire basic competencies by Grade 3;

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- **Flexible and multidisciplinary education** across school and higher education;
- **Skill and vocational integration** from early grades to enhance employability;
- **Expansion of digital education and teacher professional development;**
- **Equity and inclusion** for disadvantaged groups; and
- **Global integration** of Indian education.

Collectively, these objectives aim to shape an education ecosystem capable of supporting India's socio-economic aspirations, particularly towards a developed nation by 2047.

3. Structural Reforms

NEP 2020's hallmark structural changes include:

3.1 School Education Transformation

The policy replaces the old 10+2 structure with a 5+3+3+4 model, introducing early childhood care and pre-school education into the formal system. It emphasizes holistic, competency-based learning over rote memorization, extending multilingual education and foundational skills.

3.2 Higher Education Reconfiguration

NEP introduces multidisciplinary institutions, flexible curricula, and multiple *entry-exit* options in undergraduate programs, facilitated by an *Academic Bank of Credits*. It also proposes a unified regulator — the *Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)* — and fosters research through the *National Research Foundation (NRF)*.

3.3 Vocational and Skill Integration

Vocational education is mainstreamed from Class 6 onwards, with linkages to industry and internships, aiming to reduce skill gaps and link education with employment.

4. Implementation Progress and Impact

Since its adoption, NEP 2020 implementation has shown early milestones:

- Digital learning platforms like *DIKSHA*, *PM eVIDYA*, and *SWAYAM* have substantially broadened access and content delivery.
- Early childhood initiatives such as *Adharsila* and *Navchetana* under the *NIPUN Bharat Mission* are enhancing enrollment and early learning outcomes.

- Teacher training programs like *NISHTHA* have engaged millions of educators in pedagogical reform.
- Enrollment and infrastructure indicators in school and higher education have shown improvement, though targets for gross enrollment ratio (GER) and literacy still require sustained effort.

These developments indicate meaningful progress, while also highlighting the expansive scope of systemic change required to realize NEP goals fully.

5. Challenges and Critical Assessment

NEP 2020's ambitious reform agenda also faces challenges:

- **Resource and funding gaps** remain, with experts calling for consistent allocation to meet GER and quality outcomes.
- **Skill-industry linkages and employability** need strengthening, as institutional readiness varies across regions.
- **Implementation disparities** exist between urban and rural schools, especially in digital and infrastructure readiness.
- Stakeholder confusion around new assessment patterns and transitions in higher education persists, underscoring the need for clear communication and capacity building.

Addressing these challenges will determine the policy's long-term success and its contribution to *Viksit Bharat*.

6. Contribution to *Viksit Bharat* Vision

NEP 2020's alignment with national development trajectories positions education as a *human capital driver*. By fostering innovation, inclusivity, and global competencies, it enhances economic potential and social equity — essential pillars for a developed India by 2047. The policy's emphasis on research, digital transformation, and vocational skills dovetails with broader economic goals, such as increasing productivity and global competitiveness.

7. Conclusion

NEP 2020 represents a comprehensive, forward-looking educational reform, with the potential to contribute significantly to India's *Viksit Bharat* agenda. While early implementation gains are evident, achieving the full transformational impact demands sustained commitment, systemic coordination, and stakeholder engagement. Continued evaluation, adaptive reforms, and inclusive policymaking will be vital as India moves towards consolidating its education system for future generations.

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