

Conceptual Study of the National Education Policy 2020

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Abstract:

The New Education Policy announced by the Government of India (NEP 2020) was a greeting change and fresh news amidst all the negativities surrounding the world due to the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic. The announcement of NEP 2020 was purely unexpected by many. The changes that NEP 2020 has recommended were something that many educationists never noticed. Though the education policy has impacted school and college education equally, this article mainly focuses on NEP 2020 and its impact on Higher Education. This paper also outlines the salient features of NEP and analyses how they affect the existing education system.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research questions of this study are pursued using a systematic theoretical analysis. We conducted this research by systematically searching and screening for relevant research articles through secondary sources and analyzing them to answer our scientific study. This research is a descriptive study. The necessary secondary data was collected from various websites including those of the Government of India, magazines, journals, other publications, etc. This data was then analyzed and reviewed to arrive at the inferences and conclusions.

Expected Outcomes of National Education Policy 2020: The major focus of the NEP 2020 is to bring holistic and major changes in the educational system upgrading the levels. It aims to concentrate on bringing forth inclusiveness in the education system.

Keywords: Higher education, National Education Policy 2020, NEP-2020.

1. Introduction:

The National Education Policy (NEP) was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on July 28th, 2020. After a gap of 34 years, the Indian government consolidated feedback from 2.5 lakh village-level stakeholders to two national parliamentary-level committees, over more than 50 months of consultations and workshops. However, the extent to which the policy has incorporated recommendations remains unknown. The National Policy on Education (NPE) is a policy formulated by the Government of India to promote education among India's people. The policy covers elementary education to colleges in both rural and urban India. The first NPE was promulgated by the Government of India by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1968, the second by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986, and the third by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and

urban India. The policy aims to transform India's education system by 2021. The language policy in NEP is a broad guideline and advisory in nature; and it is up to the states, institutions, and schools to decide on the implementation. The NEP 2020 enacts numerous changes in India's education policy. It aims to increase state expenditure on education from around 4% to 6% of the GDP as soon as possible

2. Objectives of the study:

The National Education Policy 2020 has many initiatives to enhance the quality of the education system in India.

The objectives of this study on National Education Policy 2020 are:

- (1) To identify the salient features of NEP and analyze how they affect the existing school education system
- (2) To study the impact of New Education Policy 2020 on higher education.
- (3) To discuss the importance of various educational stages to be implemented as per NEP 2020
- (4) To examine the merits and the concerns of National Education Policy 2020.

3. Methodology:

Methods of research

The goal of qualitative research methodologies is to examine and comprehend complex events in their natural environments. Researchers collect and analyze data using non-numerical techniques to identify the underlying attitudes, behaviors, motives, and perceptions. The 2020 National Education Policy's conceptual analysis made use of the following qualitative methods:

The Indian government created the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 as a comprehensive framework to reform the nation's educational system. To comprehend the theoretical underpinnings, possible influence, and practical implications of the NEP 2020, a conceptual analysis of the proposal would probably include qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The following research techniques could be used in this kind of study:

- 1. Literature research:** To comprehend the theoretical foundations, historical context, and reasoning behind the NEP 2020, one must research the body of current literature, which includes scholarly articles, policy documents, government reports, and pertinent publications.
- 2. paper Analysis:** Read through the NEP 2020 paper to find important themes, objectives, tactics, and methods of execution that the policy suggests.
- 3. In-depth Conversations:** To gain insight into the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of stakeholders about the NEP 2020, conduct in-depth interviews with politicians, education experts, teachers, students, parents, and other relevant parties. These interviews might yield insightful qualitative information on the possible obstacles, openings, and areas in need of development that various stakeholders have pointed out.
- 4. Surveys:** To acquire quantitative information on educators, students, parents, and other pertinent stakeholders' awareness, comprehension, and attitudes on the NEP 2020, surveys are given to a representative sample of these parties. Additionally, surveys can be used to gather information on particular policy features, like the policy's implementation status, resource allocation, and perceived impact.

5. **Case Studies:** Performing in-depth case studies of certain communities, regions, or educational institutions to find out how they are putting the NEP 2020's provisions into effect and to pinpoint lessons learned, obstacles, and best practices.
6. **Comparative Analysis:** Find parallels, discrepancies, and possible takeaways from global experiences by contrasting the NEP 2020 with educational programs from other nations or areas.
7. **Policy Modeling:** Estimating the possible impacts of implementing different NEP 2020 components on workforce development, social equity, economic growth, and educational outcomes by quantitative modeling tools like impact assessment and cost-benefit analysis.
8. **Participatory Approaches:** Including stakeholders in participatory research techniques, such as workshops, focus groups, or participatory action research, to enable them to share their viewpoints, participate in the research process, and jointly develop solutions to the problems the conceptual study identified.

4. Literature review

A conceptual study on the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 would include a literature review section that looks at previously published academic works, policy documents, government reports, and other pertinent sources to obtain an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings, historical background, and reasoning behind the NEP 2020. The literature review could look like this and include the following:

1. **Historical Context:** Before the creation of the NEP 2020, the literature assessment will probably begin by examining the historical development of Indian education policies. This can involve going over earlier education policies, including the National Policies on Education from 1968, 1986, and 1992, to see how changes, priorities, and goals have changed over time.
2. **Theoretical Frameworks:** Scholars may examine conceptual models and theoretical frameworks pertinent to the development and application of education policies. To provide one a theoretical lens to study the NEP 2020, could entail looking at theories of educational change, policy diffusion, governance, equality, and social justice.
3. **Rationale and Objectives:** The literature study will explore the main justifications, goals, and tenets mentioned in the NEP 2020 statement. To comprehend the fundamental reasons for reform and the intended goals of the policy, this would entail synthesizing debates from academic articles, policy analyses, and official reports.
4. **Comparative Analysis:** Scholars can examine how the NEP 2020 compares to educational strategies in other nations or areas. This comparative analysis could draw attention to parallels, discrepancies, and possible takeaways from experiences across borders, offering insightful information on international trends and top educational reform strategies.
5. **Stakeholder Perspectives:** Aside from lawmakers, education specialists, educators, parents, and civil society organizations, the literature study would also aim to include the viewpoints of these stakeholders. This can entail combining the results of qualitative research, surveys, and interviews to examine stakeholder perspectives, worries, and suggestions about NEP 2020.
6. **Implementation Challenges and Accomplishments:** Using case studies, empirical research, and policy assessments as a guide, researchers would examine literature addressing possible implementation challenges and accomplishments related to education policy implementation. This would clarify whether the proposed NEP 2020 reforms and initiatives are feasible and effective.

7. **Critical Views and Debates:** The literature review will cover critical viewpoints and discussions about the NEP 2020, including questions regarding social inclusion and equity, criticisms of the program's ideological foundations, and discussions of the viability of its implementation plans. This would offer a fair grasp of the various points of view and problems brought up by academics and professionals.
8. In general, the conceptual study's literature review section would provide a basis for comprehending the theoretical frameworks, historical background, conceptual underpinnings, and important discussions surrounding the National Education Policy 2020, guiding further analyses and research questions.

5. Highlights of National Education Policy 2020 on school education:

1. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Extends the Right to Education eligibility window from 6-14 years to 3-18 years. To have 100 percent of children 'school-ready' by 2030, the policy pushes for universalization of ECCE.

- Investment in infrastructure such as play equipment and child-friendly buildings, as well as continuous professional development (CPD) of ECCE teachers and Anganwadi workers through a six-month certification program, including some online components.

2. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)

A three-month preparatory course for students, access to digital content through energized (ETB-DIKSHA), student-led peer learning, and community tutoring are recommended as some of the means to achieve 100 percent foundational level (up to Grade 3) learning by 2025.

- Teacher vacancies to be filled in a time-bound manner, with a priority to disadvantaged areas and sections of society.

3. Universal access to education at all levels

A commitment to achieve a 100 percent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) across all levels by 2030.

- Investment in resources such as infrastructure and teachers for students till Grade 12; as well as ensuring social workers and counselors are made available to students, so they can address factors contributing to dropout rates.
- Rigorous tracking of 100 percent of children, through a technology-based platform to ensure no one is left behind.
- Encouraging different public-private partnership school models to curtail the number of dropouts and out-of-school children.

4. Curriculum and pedagogy in schools

The policy encourages local languages to be the medium of instruction for at least up to Grade 5; promotes bi-lingual education and textbooks for learning; as well as multiple languages at middle and secondary levels.

- The suggested 5+3+3+4 class system focuses on defining learning levels at each critical juncture, taking a multi-disciplinary approach, and reducing content by targeting core learning competencies.
- New age subjects such as coding and computational thinking (among others) were introduced at a middle school level.
- Students can now choose subject courses in secondary school (primarily in arts, physical, and vocational education).

5. Testing and assessments

Focus on measurable learning outcomes at all levels of the newly proposed schooling system, with testing at 3rd, 5th, and 8th-grade levels.

- Promoting formative assessments (those that are conducted on an ongoing basis covering smaller portions of the syllabus), peer assessment, and holistic progress reports, to measure the ongoing academic progress of the children.
- Student choice to be incorporated in the 10th and 12th grade board exams. The policy suggests doing so by offering freedom of subject choice, allowing the best of two attempts, and choice of difficulty (standard and higher level).

6. Teachers and teacher education

The policy proposes the minimum teacher education degree requirement to change from the current two-year D.El.Ed /B.Ed degree to a four-year B.Ed undergraduate program, by 2030.

- Excessive teacher transfers to be halted, in principle, leading to better continuity with students, as well as provision for local residence.
- Policy strongly suggests promotion based on merit, rather than on seniority and teaching level (elementary/primary/secondary). There are also options for vertical mobility of teachers, where high-performing teachers can be promoted to work at a district or state level.
- Promotion of blended learning teacher training programs (MOOCs) for CPD of teachers and school principals, with at least 50 hours of CPD mandated per year.

7. Equitable and inclusive education

The ‘Gender Inclusion Fund’ supports female and transgender students by driving state-level inclusion activities, developing sufficient infrastructure for safety, and targeted boarding.

- Special Education Zones (SEZs) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) /KVs to be set up in aspirational districts, with a targeted focus on improving the quantity and quality of learning

8. School complexes

Re-organizing smaller schools with very low enrolment into a ‘school complex’ structure, which connects 10-15 such small schools into one administrative unit, will help reduce school isolation, efficiently use teaching learning resources, and increase governance and accountability, especially in rural/Adivasi parts of India.

- Providing autonomy to plan and implement the initiative locally is a good idea in principle. School Complex Management Committee (SCMC) and public representation at a school complex level will encourage decentralized implementation as well as higher engagement of parents.

9. Standard setting and school accreditation

A strong push to bring transparency and accountability across schools by setting standards through a dedicated agency (State Schools Standards Authority, or SSSA), which incorporates learning-related indicators as well as student feedback into school ratings.

- Development, performance, and accountability to be three key pillars of supporting officers and teachers in the system, promoting greater alignment and clarity in job roles, periodic performance measurement structures, and timely feedback mechanisms.

6. Detailed analysis of the impact of NEP on higher education

Regulatory System of Higher Education:

HECI (Higher Education Council of India) is aiming to reform the higher education sector; the Bill will

separate the Academic and Funding aspects of the sector. According to the new Bill, HECI will not have any financial powers. The funding processes which were handled by the University Grants Commission (UGC) will be taken care of by the Ministry of Education, previously known as the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). This change however is expected to clear the regulatory mess in India's Higher Education system. HECI is expected to have four independent verticals - the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulation, the General Education Council (GEC) for standard-setting, the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding, and the National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation. To have uniformity in education standards, a single umbrella body was always a requirement and this has been a vision of numerous educationalists. This is considered the right step in streamlining education policy. However, to ensure the quality of higher education, institutes must be measured on relevant parameters like research, industry linkages, placements academic excellence, etc. If the HECI can manage this, the benefits to its biggest stakeholder, the youth of India, might be significant.

Graded Accreditation and Graded Autonomy:

The concept of "empowerment and autonomy to innovate" is one of the key features of NEP 2020 which supports a "phasing out" strategy from Affiliated Colleges to Autonomous Institutions. The increased flexibility offered to autonomous institutions also gives hope for curriculum enrichment. It also says that with appropriate accreditations, Autonomous degree-granting Colleges could evolve into Research-intensive or Teaching-intensive Universities, if they so aspire. The announcement of setting up Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) in the country gives more hope. These institutions will be at par with the existing IITs and IIMs and will aim to showcase multidisciplinary education for Indian students.

Another important change in the NEP 2020 suggests that the National Testing Agency will serve as a premier, expert, autonomous testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for undergraduate and graduate admissions and fellowships in Higher Education Institutions. The high quality, range, and flexibility of the NTA testing services will enable most universities to use these common entrance exams - rather than having hundreds of universities each devising their entrance exams - thereby drastically reducing the burden on students, universities, colleges, and the entire education system. It will be left up to individual universities and colleges to use NTA assessments for their admissions. It also surely helps the students to easily transfer their degrees and credits to universities abroad.

Internationalisation at home:

NEP 2020 also allows foreign universities and colleges to come to India and this brings out a challenge for the native institutions to improve the quality of education provided by them. The Indian higher education sector is buzzing all around as the opportunity to pave the way for foreign universities to set up campuses in the country. India has one of the largest networks of higher education systems in the world, with more than 900 universities and 40,000 colleges. But the GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) of India in higher education is 26.3%, which is significantly low when compared to other BRICS countries like Brazil (50%) or China (51%), and very much lower when compared with European and North American nations which would be more than 80%. India must achieve significant growth in the area of global higher education for obtaining sustainable economic growth, which should not be driven by natural resources, but by knowledge resources. As per the reports, India will need more than 1,500 new higher education institutions by 2030 to accommodate a huge inflow of students, that's why the Indian

government wants to promote FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) and open up the ECB (External Commercial Borrowing) route to strengthen the capital investment for the education sector.

The ministry is also trying to boost India's image as an education center because already more than 7 Lakhs of Indian students are studying abroad. So, the intention of this policy is that, allowing foreign universities will enable world-class education available locally at a significantly lower cost without traveling and will considerably reduce the human capital migrating to other countries for study and job prospects. According to different global surveys, cross-border education is beneficial for the economy and brings a wider level of global awareness, cultural perception, and competitiveness. Foreign collaborations enable local institutes to design their curriculum in alignment with international pedagogy and offer a diverse portfolio of subjects and specializations to students.

More Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education:

The NEP 2020 claims that a holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings -intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner. Such an education will help develop well-rounded individuals who possess critical 21st-century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication, discussion, and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. The NEP 2020 envisions one large multidisciplinary Higher Education Institution (HEI) in or near every district, by 2030.

Towards the attainment of such a holistic and multidisciplinary education, the flexible and innovative curricula of all HEIs shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education. Environment education will include areas such as climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, management of biological resources and biodiversity, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development and living. Value-based education will include the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal human values of truth (Satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (shanti), love (prem), nonviolence (ahimsa), scientific temper, citizenship values, and also life-skills; lessons in seva/service and participation in community service programs will be considered an integral part of holistic education.

As the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), a response to contemporary global challenges, will be provided to empower learners to become aware of and understand global issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies. Finally, as part of a holistic education, students at all HEIs will be provided with opportunities for internships with local industries, businesses, artists, crafts persons, etc., as well as research internships with faculty and researchers at their own or other HEIs/research institutions, so that students may actively engage with the practical side of their learning and, as a by-product, further improve their employability.

The structure and lengths of degree programs:

In the context of the National Education Policy 2020 scheme, any undergraduate degree in any institution will be of duration of three or four years. One can leave the degree within this period. Any educational institution will have to give the student a diploma degree after the student completes two years of study, a degree after the student completes three years of study, and a certificate to those students who complete one year of study in any professional or vocational course of their choice. The Government of India will also help in establishing an Academic Bank of Credit for storing the academic

scores digitally. This will enable the institutions to count the credit at the end and put it in the degree of the student. This will be helpful for those individuals who might have to leave the course mid-way. They can start the course later on from where they left off and not start from the beginning once again. Even though NEP 2020 says that Higher education institutions will be given the freedom to start PG courses there may be some difficulty in designing One One-year PG Degree for students who have completed 4 four-year UG Degrees and a Two-Year PG Degrees for students who have completed 3 Year UG Degree

7. Various educational stages to be implemented as per NEP 2020

Educational life-cycle and Features

1. Foundation Stage

Five years Foundational Stage provides basic education which is flexible, multilevel, play-based, activity-based, and discovery-based learning. Using time-tested Indian traditions and cultures, this stage is continuously improved by research and innovation for the cognitive and emotional stimulation of children.

2. Preparatory Stage

The year's Preparatory stage consists of building on the play-, discovery-, and activity-based learning. In addition to it, this stage gradually introduces formal classroom learning with Textbooks. The focus is to expose different subjects to the students and prepare them to delve deeper into insights.

3. Middle school Stage

Three years of Middle school education focus on more abstract education concepts in each subject like sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities. Experiential learning is the method to be adopted in specialized subjects with subject teachers. Students are exposed to the semester system and two class-level examinations will be conducted.

4. Secondary education Stage

Four years of Secondary school education is designed to provide multidisciplinary subjects including Liberal Arts education. This stage will be built on the subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style with greater depth, greater flexibility, greater critical thinking, and attention to life aspirations, Students are exposed to the semester system and will study 5 to 6 subjects in each semester. There will be Board exams at the end of 10th and 12th standards.

5. Under-graduation Education Stage

The Undergraduate degrees in every subject will be of either three- or four-year duration with multiple exit options including a certificate after passing the first year, a diploma after passing the second year, or a Bachelor's degree after passing the third year. The four-year undergraduate degree programme is preferred with majors, minors, and research projects.

6. Post-graduation Education Stage

The Master's degree – is a one-year for four years bachelor's degree students, a two-year degree for three years bachelor's degree students, and an integrated five-year degree with a focus on high-quality research in the final year. The Master's degree will consist of a strong research component to strengthen competence in the professional area and to prepare students for a research degree.

7. Research Stage

The research stage consists of pursuing high-quality research leading to a Ph.D. in any core subject,

multidisciplinary subject, or interdisciplinary subject for a minimum period of three to four years for full-time and part-time study respectively. During Ph.D. they should undergo 8-credit coursework in teaching/ education/ pedagogy related to their chosen Ph.D. subject. The earlier one-year MPhil programme is discontinued.

8. Lifelong learning

The NEP 2020 proposes lifelong learning and research to avoid human beings becoming obsolete in society in terms of knowledge, skills, and experience to lead a comfortable life. It is believed that education and research at any stage of life will give further maturity for satisfaction in life;

8. Merits of New Education Policy 2020

The National Education Policy has been working to change the old education system by bringing modern and practical learning forms. It has numerous objectives and parameters that will cumulatively bring forth a methodical education system bringing in inclusiveness. The merits of the National Education Policy 2020 are as under-

- **Early Childhood Education-** The new National Education Policy was formed on the principle that a child's most important and formative years are from 3 to 8. It adopts the 5+3+3+4 model, where a child must start his education at 3 for a successful future.
- **Multi-Disciplinary Approach-** The NEP has created a strict division of science, arts, and commerce in high school.
- **Comprehensive-** The New National Education Policy addresses the whole spectrum of education from preschool to doctoral studies and professional degrees to vocational training.
- **Easy on Regulations-** The National Education Policy believes in the prescription to free educational institutions (schools, colleges, and universities) from inspections. Instead, the students must lead the path of voluntary declaration and self-assessment.
- **Promotes Inclusion-** This Education Policy promotes the idea of creating inclusion funds to help children pursue education without worrying about social and educational disadvantages.
- **Holistic-** It aims to eradicate the problems of structural inequities, rampant commercialization, access asymmetries, and pedagogy.
- **Education and Skills Integration-** With the new NEP, vocational courses were introduced for practical education that provide internships that might compel society's vulnerable sections to send their children to schools to gain an education.
- **Allowing Foreign Universities-** According to the National Education Policy 2020, almost 100 foreign universities can set up their campus in India.
- **Made Education More Inclusive-** It suggests that the children's RTE (Right to Education) must be extended up to 18 years of age.

9. National Education Policy 2020 concerns

The National Education Policy 2020 has successfully created impactful educational system changes. However, there are a few concerns related to the newly introduced policy, and these are-

- **Lack of clarity-** There is a lack of clarity regarding the Public Sector like Kendra Vidyalaya, state-run institutions, and municipal schools in the government strategies.
- **Problems related to Anganwadis-** A lot of focus was pointed toward early schooling and childhood care, yet it faced a problem related to the changes that the Anganwadis.

- The National Education Policy 2020 report failed to incorporate the ideas on contemporary global thinking like critical thinking, emphasis on creativity, and the need for learning in the non-hierarchical and non-competitive ecosystem.
- **Persistent inequity & inequality**- It fails to address the problems of inequality and inequity.
- **Short-term solutions**- The concept of peer tutoring, sharing resources, volunteer teachers, and rationalizing the school system is not the long-term solution for a better education.
- **Scepticism**- The NTA (National Testing Agency) has resulted in skepticism as the universities, and particular educational departments cannot conduct admissions autonomously because of the NTA.
- **Knowledge-Jobs Mismatch**- Since independence, the problem of the knowledge & skills imparted and the jobs have been a major concern, and NEP fails to explain this mismatch.

10. Expected outcomes of National Education Policy 2020

The major focus of the NEP 2020 is to bring holistic and major changes in the educational system upgrading the levels. It aims to concentrate on bringing forth inclusiveness in the education system. National Education Policy 2020 aims for the following outcomes in the future-

- NEP wants to attain foundational learning and numeracy skills by 2025 via the National Mission.
- It aims to universalize Secondary Education aligning with SDG 4 from ECCE within 10 years.
- To bring the Gross Enrolment Ratio to 100% in Pre-school to secondary level in the forthcoming years.
- To reintroduce 2 Cr Out of School Children.
- It aims to prepare teachers for assessment reforms by 2023.
- By 2030, NEP aims to implement an equitable and inclusive Education System.
- The purpose of conducting the board exams should be to test the core concept of students and judge their application of knowledge.
- An individual student must be adapting at least one skill during their school time.
- There should be common learning standards in private and public schools.

11. Conclusion

The new education policy has a laudable vision, but its strength will depend on whether it can effectively integrate with the other policy initiatives of the government like Digital India, Skill India, and the New Industrial Policy to name a few, to effect a coherent structural transformation. Hence, policy linkages can ensure that education policy addresses and learns from Skill India's experience in engaging more dynamically with the corporate sector to shape vocational education curriculum to make it a success. There is also a necessity for more evidence-based decision-making, to adapt to rapidly evolving transmutations and disruptions. NEP has reassuringly provisioned real-time evaluation systems and a consultative monitoring and review framework. This shall empower the education system to constantly reform itself, instead of expecting a new education policy every decade for a shift in curriculum. This, in itself, will be a remarkable achievement. The NEP 2020 is a defining moment for higher education. Effective and time-bound implementation is what will make it truly path-breaking

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