

Life-long Learning with Reference to NEP-2020 as a Pathway to Achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract:

The global landscape of education is continuously evolving, shaped by changing technological advancements, shifting social needs and environmental challenges. Among the most important point of this transformation is the concept of lifelong learning, a fundamental approach that emphasizes continuous education throughout a human's life. National Education Policy 2020 stand out as a best path for successfully provide inclusive and equitable quality education all over the India has the same objectives which found in sustainable development goal 4, in view of global goals by the United Nations with the aims to promote life-long learning opportunities for all. The main target to achieve for SDG 4 is to ensure that by 2030, all youth both men and women must achieve basic literacy and numeracy. The integration of lifelong learning into education system empowers individuals with the tools needed for self improvement, critical thinking and problem solving abilities. In the context of SDG 4, lifelong learning help individuals to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to participate fully in the society, thereby fostering equality, social justice and economic well being. In order to provide equal educational opportunities for all individuals, the present author wants to explore how lifelong learning with reference to NEP 2020 indicating a pathway to successfully achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Keyword: Lifelong Learning, NEP 2020, Sustainable Development Goals. Inclusive Education, Equitable Education

Introduction

“Education is the development of skills that allow people to control their environment and fulfill their responsibilities.” (~John Dewey)

Education is one of the most powerful tools by which a country's progress can be achieved. Education, in its many forms, it helps for personal, societal and global transformation. In ancient period, the education system was not only the acquisition of knowledge but also it was based on the total realization and liberation of the self, but today's education system mostly focused on rote memorization and only job oriented. By the passing year many more committees, commissions, policies has been introduced still India's running towards to become a developed country. As we know United Nations has established Sustainable Development Goals 2030 agenda outlined the 17 goals such as –



Figure-1: Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals approved by the United Nations in 2015 offers a worldwide framework for embracing the world's highest issues like climate change, inequalities, poverty and many more. Sustainable Development Goals are designed to discover a more equitable and sustainable well developed nations by 2030 with including 17 goals.

Background of the study

The concept of lifelong learning and its integration into national policies is one of the key driven of development in the 21st century. One of the most comprehensive frameworks that have emphasized this is India's national education policy 2020. The policy aims to create an Education System which is flexible, accessible and inclusive, aiming that all individuals regardless of their age or background has the opportunity to learn throughout their lives.

The integration of lifelong learning into education system empowers individuals with the tools needed for self improvement, critical thinking and problem solving abilities. In the context of SDG 4, lifelong learning help individuals to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to participate fully in the society, thereby fostering equality, social justice and economic well being. In order to provide equal educational opportunities for all individuals, the present author want to explore how lifelong learning with reference to NEP 2020 indicating a pathway to successfully achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Review of related literature

Radha L.et.al. conducted a study on Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Curriculum and strengthening Teacher Training programs to Align with NEP 2020 & found that for promoting quality education in higher education institutions and sustainable development India's has a

greater needs to properly implement National Education Policy 2020 because of both the NEP-2020 and SDG 4 have the same objectives towards providing quality education, improving research and innovations as well as every aspects of students development, also it was found that curriculum should also revised with including improvement of teacher training program which is an essential part for improvement of students gradually and will be contribute for achieving SDG 4.

Kanungo.S.S. conducted a study on A Critical Analysis of India's National Education Policy 2020 and its Alignment with the UNs SDGs and found that as visions of national education policy 2020 is more comprehensive for transforming Indian education system which no doubt will contribute to achieving SDG 4, but successful implementation is most essential to overcomes all the barriers like limitation of resources, appointment of qualified and skilled teachers creating a culture of students centered pedagogy which will be a remarkable contributions towards create a sustainable future.

Borah C. conducted a study on the needed of equitable education in India through NEP 2020 in light of Sustainable Development Goals and found that there is a need for teacher preparedness, community awareness, inclusive curriculum development, individualized education planet, to focus mainly for disabled children and ensuring inclusive education and also suggested that development of inclusive curriculum and professional efficiency of teachers are most needed for including the disabled students with normal students simultaneously, mainly for meet the global standards.

Research Objectives:

1. To study the role of NEP 2020 towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 4
2. To study the problems & issues relating to successfully achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4

Methodology

The present investigator used a thematic analysis procedure to analyze data by using a qualitative research approach. The literature review included academic journals and other relevant resources.

Main Objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 4:

The main objectives of SDG 4 are to create the learning environment by ensuring equitable quality education and inclusive education for provoking lifelong learning opportunities for all. Also the another aim is that to provide inclusive education in such a way which will be lead towards the reduction of inequities and disparities which are the main serious issues now-a-days for compete with the whole world in every aspect. This goal is very important because it's transformation, effect on other Sustainable Development Goals.

The Concept of Lifelong Learning:

Lifelong learning is defined as the process of acquiring knowledge or skills throughout an individual's life. This concept acknowledges that learning does not end with formal education but is a continuous journey. Lifelong learning is both a personal and social activity, providing individuals with the opportunity to adapt to changing circumstances, improve their quality of life, and contribute to society in meaningful ways.

A number of worldwide developments, including the fast development of technology, globalization, and the transition to a knowledge-based economy, have increased the need for lifelong learning. In this sense, lifelong learning includes not only earning academic credentials but also learning through a range

of formal and informal channels, including self-directed online courses, community-based education, and workplace training.

By ensuring everyone in society equal access to education, regardless of their background such as caste, color, gender, lifelong learning fosters civic engagement, improves employability, fosters self-growth, and helps to lessen inequality.

The Role of Lifelong Learning in Sustainable Development Goal 4:

The establishment of educational systems that support equity, inclusivity, and chances for lifelong learning is mandated by SDG 4. Despite covering a wide range of educational objectives, integrating lifelong learning is one of the most crucial aspects of reaching the goal. Continuous, voluntary, and self-motivated knowledge acquisition for personal or professional growth is known as lifelong learning, and its significance has only increased in light of the world's rapidly changing technological landscape, environmental issues, and shifting global dynamics.

NEP 2020: A Vision for Lifelong Learning:

A revolutionary initiative to education in India is envisioned by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Its primary goal is to offer high-quality, inclusive, and equitable education that meets the requirements of all students, including those from underrepresented groups, children with disabilities, and lifelong learners.

The following are some essential NEP 2020 elements that directly support the advancement of lifelong learning:

1. Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education

The NEP 2020 highlights the importance of holistic education, which incorporates competencies, values, and skills in addition to the conventional academic curriculum. This strategy is in line with the ideas of lifelong learning since it emphasized that people have both the academic knowledge and the practical skills necessary to prosper in a fast dynamic society. The goal of the policy is to enable students to acquire a wide range of skills by integrating subjects like the arts, sciences, technology, and sports at every educational level. Students ensuring this multidisciplinary approach in education are encouraged to recognize the connections between different fields, which supports them to adapt for the progressive lifelong love of learning.

2. Flexible and Inclusive Learning Opportunities

The NEP 2020 recognizes that education is not only limited to formal classrooms and that people at different levels of life need to have access to a wide variety of learning opportunities. The policy upholds the notion that education is a lifelong process that should be available to all people, irrespective of age, geographical location, or socioeconomic background, by encouraging open and distance learning. The policy also promotes the development of adult education programs and online learning environments that serve people who want to continue further their education or improve skills later in their life. This is particularly crucial for employed adults who have to juggle their professional obligations and education.

3. Integration of Technology in Education

The incorporation of technology into education is a key component of NEP 2020. Through the utilization of digital resources, the policy promotes the growth concerning possibilities for a lifetime of learning. With the help of e- libraries, virtual instruction rooms, and online courses, people can learn whenever

they want, from any location. The focus on modern technology affirms that acquiring knowledge is not restricted by conventional schedules or physical locations.

4. Focus on Skill Development and Vocational Education

The National Education Policy 2020 majorly emphasized on skills training and vocational education. In order to make students viable for employment and able to adjust to changing professional environments, the policy seeks to provide them with real-world skills that are closely related to meet the requirements of the current job market. Vocational education is regarded as a crucial part of perpetual learning, because it stimulates people to continuously learn new skills and remain relevant in their fields of interest. In order to further cement the connection between education and employment, the policy additionally inspires official acknowledgment of skills acquired beyond conventional educational settings, such as by means of community-driven learning, practicum, and apprenticeships.

5. Promoting Adult Education and Community Learning

Lifelong learning is greatly aided by adult education. In order to assure that people who were denied access to formal schooling continue to pursue education throughout the course of their lives, NEP 2020 emphasizes the value of literacy initiatives for adults and communal learning. The approaches for raising adult literacy rates and developing learning environments for individuals of varied ages are laid out in the policy. By giving adults the literacy and numeracy skills that are required to enhance their economic security and support the growth of their communities, this program helps end the cycle of impoverishment.

Lifelong Learning and the SDGs

It is prominent how achieving SDG 4 is linked to lifelong learning. Education systems must adopt a lifelong, inclusive, and accessible strategy to learning in order to fully accomplish SDG. By offering the resources and frameworks for lifelong learning, India is moving closer to accomplishing this objective with the NEP 2020. By fostering personal growth, expanding employment prospects, and tackling social and environmental issues, lifelong learning also advances other Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 5 Gender Equality, for example, encourages women and girls to have greater exposure to education, thereby advancing gender equality and enabling them to fully engage in social and economic affairs. SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth: Lifelong learning helps people become more adaptable in their employment and boosts economic efficiency by giving them the competencies and knowledge they need. SDG 13 Climate Action: Lifelong learning helps people learn fundamental facts about climate change, which empowers them to take sustainable actions and support international initiatives to lessen environmental problems.

Challenges and the Way Forward

While the NEP 2020 presents a robust framework for promoting lifelong learning, several challenges remain:

Digital Divide: For many people, particularly those living in rural areas, access to technology continues to be a major obstacle. Policies must guarantee universal access to digital infrastructure in order to close this disparity.

Teacher Training: Teachers must embrace technology and promote new teaching approaches in order to support lifelong learning. Teachers must engage in ongoing professional development in order to facilitate this change.

Cultural and Social Barriers - Ancient social customs and beliefs restrict the chances of some groups, particularly women, to embark on lifelong learning in many regions of India. In order to guarantee that everyone has access to lifelong learning, these obstacles must be removed.

Quality Assurance: As the use of informal and technology-based avenues for lifelong learning grows, it is crucial to preserve the caliber and legitimacy of educational materials.

The government, academic institutions, business community, and civic organizations must work together to figure out these issues. To establish a collaborative learning atmosphere, funding must be allocated for fundraising efforts, teacher preparation, and infrastructure.

Conclusion

Achieving SDG 4 and building a future where every individual have access to inclusive, high-quality, equal educational access depend heavily on lifelong learning. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 offers a revolutionary blueprint for developing an educational system that supports everyone's ability to learn throughout their lives. The NEP seeks to establish an educational setting where all people, irrespective of age or background, have the chance to develop and make a contribution to society by emphasizing holistic, interdisciplinary education, incorporating technology, encouraging skill development, and guaranteeing inclusivity. By doing this, it contributes significantly to the development of a sustainable and just future for both India and the rest of the world.

In order to accomplish SDG 4 and other Sustainable Development Goals and create a more robust and prosperous contemporary world, India can leverage the potential of lifelong learning through cooperation and ongoing educational expenditures.

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