

COGNITIVE DISCOURSES

INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

ISSN 2321-1075 ISSN 2347-5692

VOLUME 11

ISSUE 1

JULY 2023

cdimj.naspublishers.com

Published Since 2013

Empowering Transgender Education: Analyzing NEP-2020's Impact and Opportunities

Prakasha C.

Research Scholar, Department of Education, Kuvempu University, Shankaraghatta,
Shivamogga, Karnataka, India

Abstract

Transgender individuals are defined as people who act in unique ways, have different physical traits, or defy assumptions about what men and women are "supposed" to look like. They can be any age or gender. When they were counted for the first time in the 2011 Census, between 4 and 9 lakh people in our nation identified as transgender. Global interest in and discussion around the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 have increased. This abstract provides a succinct analysis of the NEP-2020's impact on transgender education and the opportunities it presents. Recognizing the historical marginalization of transgender individuals in education, this study delves into the policy's potential to bring about positive change. It explores the key provisions of NEP-2020 that directly or indirectly affect transgender education, such as inclusive curriculum development, the promotion of non-discriminatory practices, and teacher training. Additionally, this abstract highlights the practical challenges and barriers that may hinder the policy's effective implementation, emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts among policymakers, educators, and transgender communities. To establish an inclusive and inspiring learning environment for all students, regardless of gender identity, this paper discusses the distinct viewpoints and experiences of transgender people in education. The worldwide background of advancing social justice and equitable access to education makes this topic extremely important.

Keywords: transgender, inclusivity, nep-2020, bullying, empowerment, social justice

Introduction

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) has ushered in a new era of

transformation in India's educational landscape. The policy document offers millions of students around the nation hope for a better future with its aspirational goal of a comprehensive, inclusive, and equitable education system. Central to this vision is the belief that education is not merely a means of acquiring knowledge but a pathway to empowerment—a force that can break down barriers, challenge biases, and pave the way for social change. However, as we embark on this journey of educational reform, it is essential to cast a discerning eye on those whose experiences have long been overshadowed and voices muted—the transgender community. The term "transgender" is used to describe people who do not conform to conventional, binary gender classifications (Prakasha, C., 2023). Transgender students face multiple layers of trauma and challenges in schools, such as coming to terms with their own sexuality, internal challenges and confusions, emotional, behavioral, and physical trauma, violence, the use of washrooms, uniforms, mocking, bullying, and teasing, and choosing a character or role in school play, games, or other activities (Dange et al., 2022). The question that emerges is whether the NEP-2020, with its grand ambitions, will also be the catalyst for empowering transgender education and dismantling these age-old barriers. The national education policy draft was released in March 2019 by the Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee. The revised policy paper was approved by the government on July 29, 2020. The 34-year-old education policy was replaced by the new education policy of 2020 in order to promote transformation and holistic growth in education (Thakur, P., & Kumar, R. 2020). Transgender individuals were counted for the first time in the 2011 census after the government decided to include them as another group in the population count. There were just two gender categories in the 2011 census: male and female. There was no option for a third gender. Nonetheless, the Indian Supreme Court accepted transgender people as a third gender in 2014 (Pallav Das, 2019).

The goal of this article is to critically examine the NEP-2020 through the lens of

transgender education, shining a spotlight on the policy's impact, potential, and challenges in this regard. While the NEP-2020 addresses several aspects of educational reform, including curriculum diversification, quality enhancement, and the promotion of critical thinking, its specific provisions for transgender education remain somewhat limited. This, in itself, highlights the need for a focused analysis that highlights both the policy's strengths and its shortcomings. The significance of transgender education cannot be overstated. It is a question of social fairness and human rights as much as admission to universities and other educational institutions. Education has the power to transform lives, instill confidence, and open doors to economic opportunities. By recognizing the challenges faced by transgender individuals in accessing quality education and providing solutions to overcome these challenges, India can move one step closer to realizing the principles of inclusion and equity enshrined in the NEP-2020. A journey that begins by dissecting the key highlights of the NEP-2020 and understanding its vision for education in India. From there, we will delve into the historical exclusion of transgender individuals from educational spaces and the unique challenges they face. The heart of this article lies in the examination of these challenges, ranging from a lack of awareness and sensitization to discrimination, barriers to higher education, and the glaring gaps in data collection and research. Yet, this journey does not stop at identifying challenges; it extends into the realm of solutions. We will put forth a series of practical, actionable steps that policymakers, educators, and advocates can take to empower transgender education. These recommendations include fostering an inclusive curriculum, providing teacher training and sensitization, establishing anti-discrimination policies, offering scholarships and financial support, and engaging the transgender community itself in the educational process. In conclusion, this article is a call to action. It recognizes the potential of the NEP-2020 to be a transformative force in the lives of transgender individuals. It underscores the need for proactive, targeted measures to ensure that the policy's promises of inclusiveness and equity are extended to every corner of the

educational landscape. It serves as a reminder that real empowerment comes from everyone's commitment to putting policy texts into practice and upholding the values they represent. We are starting a journey, not just of understanding but of promotion, as we examine the impact and opportunities presented by NEP-2020 in the context of transgender education. This journey aims to empower marginalized people, give voice to their concerns, and create a future in which education genuinely becomes a beacon of hope and opportunity for everyone, regardless of gender identity.

Objectives

Assess NEP-2020's Impact: Evaluate the impact of NEP-2020 on transgender education by examining its potential to address the challenges and create an inclusive and equitable educational environment for transgender students.

Propose Recommendations:

Offer comprehensive recommendations to foster inclusion and equity in the education system for transgender individuals. These recommendations include practical strategies for policymakers, educators, and advocates.

Explore the Role of Education in Empowerment:

Discuss the transformative power of education as a means of empowerment and social change, emphasizing its potential to break down barriers and challenge biases.

Transgender Rights Campaign:

Establish a platform to advocate for the rights and fair treatment of transgender individuals inside the educational system, emphasizing the importance of education as a fundamental human right.

Raise Awareness:

Inform readers about the special difficulties experienced by transgender people in the educational system and the need for action. This includes legislators, educators, and the general

public.

Promote Evidence-Based Policy:

Stress the importance of data collection and research in understanding the extent of challenges faced by transgender students and in developing evidence-based policies and interventions.

Inspire Action: Inspire action by emphasizing the role of individuals, institutions, and the government in implementing the recommendations and creating a more inclusive educational environment.

Contribute to Academic Discourse:

Contribute to the academic discourse on transgender rights and educational equity in India, providing a comprehensive analysis that can inform future research and policy making.

Advance Social Justice:

Advocate for social justice and equality by highlighting the significance of transgender education within the broader context of human rights and social inclusion.

Empower Transgender Individuals: Ultimately, empower transgender individuals by shedding light on the challenges they face and providing actionable solutions to improve their access to quality education, thereby enhancing their life prospects and contributions to society.

Status of Transgender in Education

The largest gap in the system is that no one is aware of what transgender actually means. Sensitization won't help in the hopes that people will be willing to embrace change; acceptance can only occur via education. According to the Indian Constitution, transgender people are the new gender or the third gender. This new gender appears in significant numbers. They lack social and cultural participation, which limits their access to healthcare, education, and public areas. This further robs them of the constitutional guarantee of equal protection under the law and equality

before the law (Ashok Raj, 2019).

Educational Status:

In India, there is no formal school system that is popular for transgender individuals. Transgender persons lose their family and their educational environment; they stop their studies and jeopardize their chances of finding employment in the future. Transgender persons, who are largely illiterate or undereducated, may become reluctant to pursue higher education, according to a detailed examination of numerous publications and conversations with stakeholders and the community. Secondary (major) or senior secondary level qualifications are typical. Enrollment is obviously low, and the primary and secondary dropout rates remain quite high (RajKumar, 2016).

Problems of Transgender Education

Discrimination and Stigma:

Transgender individuals often face discrimination and stigma in educational institutions. This can manifest as bullying, exclusion, and harassment, making it difficult for them to access quality education.

Lack of Inclusive Curriculum:

The NEP 2020 emphasizes the development of a more holistic and flexible curriculum. However, it does not explicitly address the need for a curriculum that is inclusive of gender and sexuality diversity, including transgender issues.

Gender-Segregated Facilities:

Many educational institutions in India have gender-segregated facilities, which can be challenging for transgender students who do not fit into traditional gender binaries. The NEP 2020 does not address the need for gender-neutral facilities.

Teacher Training:

The policy does mention the importance of teacher training, but it does not specifically address the need for training teachers on how to create inclusive and safe environments for transgender students.

Data Collection:

The NEP 2020 emphasizes the use of data for planning and policy development. However, there is a lack of data on transgender students' enrollment, retention, and performance in educational institutions, making it difficult to design targeted interventions.

Affirmative Action:

The NEP 2020 does not mention affirmative action measures for transgender students, such as scholarships or reservations, to improve their access to education.

Mental Health Support:

Transgender individuals often face mental health challenges due to societal discrimination and family rejection. The policy does not explicitly address the need for mental health support services within educational institutions.

Parental and Community Engagement:

In many cases, families and communities may not be supportive of transgender individuals' education. The NEP 2020 does not emphasize strategies for engaging parents and communities to create a more inclusive environment.

Challenges

Inclusion in School, College, and University:

It might be difficult to include transgender students in both high school and college. Giving transgender pupils the same educational opportunities as other students of the same gender is extremely difficult due to the inclusion issue with male and female students (Prakasha C., Jagannath K. Dange, 2023).

Narrow-mindedness:

Transgender students frequently encounter narrow-mindedness, bullying, and prejudice from their peers, educators, and administrative staff within educational institutions, hindering their ability to learn and participate fully.

Teacher Training and Sensitization:

Teachers often lack adequate training and sensitization regarding transgender issues, which impacts their ability to provide a supportive and inclusive environment for transgender students.

Lack of Comprehensive Sexuality Education:

One major deficiency in the education system that affects transgender students' awareness of their own identities and rights is the lack of comprehensive and inclusive sexuality education covering a range of gender identities and sexual preferences.

Bullying and Harassment:

Transgender students face a higher risk of bullying, harassment, and violence within educational institutions due to societal prejudice and lack of understanding. The NEP 2020 does not outline specific strategies to combat such issues.

Mental Health and Well-being:

Because they are stigmatized and discriminated against in society, transgender people frequently have mental health issues, such as increased rates of anxiety and depression. Transgender pupils' mental health support is not given priority in the educational system by the NEP 2020.

Lack of Affirmative Action:

The NEP 2020 does not highlight specific affirmative action measures, such as scholarships or reserved quotas, to enhance access to education for transgender individuals.

Lack of Ideal Personality:

Transgender youth experience significant loneliness. Libraries and youth programs often lack information about gender identity, biological sex and gender, and transgender identity (Raj Kumar, 2016).

Solutions

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India aims to provide inclusive and equitable education for all, including transgender individuals. Here are some recommendations for incorporating transgender education into the NEP 2020 framework:

Inclusive Curriculum Development:

Develop and implement a curriculum that is inclusive of transgender history, issues, and perspectives across subjects such as social studies, history, and gender studies.
Introduce age-appropriate content about gender diversity and transgender experiences in school textbooks.

Teacher Training and Sensitization:

Provide mandatory training for teachers and educators on transgender community issues, including transgender awareness, cultural sensitivity, and classroom management strategies.
Create a safe and inclusive environment in schools where transgender students can express their gender identity without fear of discrimination.

Safe and Inclusive School Environment:

Develop and enforce anti-discrimination policies that explicitly protect transgender students from bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

Establish gender-neutral restroom facilities and dress codes to accommodate transgender students.

Counseling and Support Services:

Ensure that schools have trained counselors who can provide mental health support to transgender students who may face unique challenges.

Provide resources and peer support groups for students who identify as transgender and their families.

Gender Identity Recognition

Allow students to self-identify their gender and name, regardless of legal documentation or medical transition status.

Unless the student specifically requests disclosure, keep information about their gender identification private.

Inclusive Sexuality Education

Integrate comprehensive and inclusive sexuality education that covers topics related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Ensure that this education is age-appropriate and culturally sensitive.

Teacher Recruitment and Diversity

Encourage the recruitment of transgender educators to serve as role models and mentors for transgender students.

Promote diversity and inclusion in the teaching workforce.

Research and Data Collection

Support research initiatives on transgender education, including surveys and studies to better understand the needs and experiences of transgender students.

Use data to track progress and assess the effectiveness of policies and programs.

Community Engagement

Collaborate with parents, community members, and transgender groups to ensure transgender youth receive the advocacy and support they need.

If a student is unwilling to disclose, do not provide any information regarding their gender identity.

Awareness Campaigns

Launch awareness campaigns aimed at reducing stigma and promoting acceptance of transgender individuals in society.

Involve students in these campaigns to foster understanding and empathy.

Review and Revision

Periodically review policies and practices to adapt to changing needs and challenges faced by transgender students and educators.

Legal Protections

Advocate for legal protections against discrimination based on gender identity in educational

institutions and ensure that these protections are enforced.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the article "Empowering Transgender Education: Analyzing NEP-2020's Impact and Opportunities" sheds light on the critical importance of inclusiveness and equity within the framework of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India. It emphasizes the need to acknowledge and address the particular difficulties transgender individuals face while pursuing education and highlights the opportunity that NEP 2020 presents for positive change. NEP 2020's focus on inclusion and flexibility in education provides a significant opportunity to transform the educational landscape for transgender students. By integrating transgender-specific measures into the policy framework, such as inclusive curricula, teacher sensitization, and a supportive school environment, strides can be made toward a more equitable education system that respects and values gender diversity. The article also underscores the importance of data collection, research, and community engagement to inform policy decisions accurately and address the needs of transgender students. Collaborating with other transgender organizations and the transgender community is crucial to creating policies that are not only well-intentioned but also effective in practice. Although the path ahead may be challenging, it holds promise. Empowering transgender education is a matter of social justice and an investment in a more inclusive and tolerant society. By recognizing the potential of NEP 2020 as a catalyst for change and actively working to implement the recommendations outlined in this article, significant steps can be taken toward a brighter future in which transgender individuals have equal access to quality education and the opportunities it offers. Ultimately, this benefits not only the transgender community but also society by fostering diversity, empathy, and progress.

References

- Balu, A. R. (2020). Confront Issues on Education of Transgender in India. ResearchGate, 9(2).
<https://doi.org/10.36106/gjra/3108674>
- Prakasha C, & Dange, J. K. (2023). Transgender Transformation : Education and Empowerment. Juni Khyat (UGC Care Group 1 Listed Journal), 13(1), 61–67..
- Dange, J. K., Prakasha C, & Mumthaz Anjum. (2022). Problems and prospects of transgender education in India. The Social Science Dialogue, 2(1).
<https://www.thesocialsciencedialogue.com/post/problems-and-prospects-of-transgender-education-in-india-1>.
- Pallav Das. (2019). Higher Education of Transgender in India: Opportunities and Challenges. International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management, 2(2), 371–375.
https://www.ijresm.com/Vol.2_2019/Vol2_Iss2_February19/IJRESM_V2_I2_95.pdf
- Lata Devi. (2023). NEP 2020 of India: Opportunities and Challenges Ahead [English]. In Emerging Trends in Education, Management, and Society (1st ed., pp. 68–76). Asian Press Books. <https://www.asianpress.in>
- Prakasha C. (2023). Concerns with Transgenders Education in India [English]. In Emerging Trends in Education, Management, and Society (1st ed., pp. 61–67). Asian Press Books.
<https://www.asianpress.in>
- Prakasha, C. (2023). Promoting safe spaces: Creating inclusive educational environments for transgender students. EIKI Journal of Effective Teaching Methods, 1(3).
<https://doi.org/10.59652/jetm.v1i3.49>
- Rajkumar. (2016). Education of Transgenders in India: Status and Challenges. International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences (IJRESS), 6(11), 15–24.

<http://euroasiapub.org>

Thakur P, & Kumar R. (2020). Educational policies, comparative analysis of national education policies in India, and challenges. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, 10(3), 13–16. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359917265>