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### Review Article

# Sustainable Development Goal 4 and National Education Policy: A Review on Quality Education in India

Triveni Debbarma<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Graduate Teacher, Hariram Sardar Para S.B School, Mungiakami, Khowai Tripura, India

Corresponding Author: \*Triveni Debbarma

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Abstract	Manuscript Information
<p>This article analyses the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (which stands for Quality Education) and the National Education Policy in India. The United Nations initiated the targets for sustainable development in 2015, by the 2030 Roadmap. The fourth Sustainable Development Goal concerns quality education. The New Education Policy 2020 replaces the New Education Policy 1986, as announced by the Union Cabinet of India on July 29, 2020. The National Education Policy 2020 aims to reform the educational framework in India. This paper provides an overview of the National Education Policy in India. This presentation provides a comprehensive analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals and NEP 2020. The results will provide crucial insights for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders to improve the alignment of educational policies with constitutional values and promote a more equal and inclusive education system in India.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ISSN No: 2583-7397</li> <li>▪ Received: 26-01-2025</li> <li>▪ Accepted: 19-02-2025</li> <li>▪ Published: 05-03-2025</li> <li>▪ IJCRM:4(2); 2025: 35-38</li> <li>▪ ©2025, All Rights Reserved</li> <li>▪ Plagiarism Checked: Yes</li> <li>▪ Peer Review Process: Yes</li> </ul>
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**KEYWORDS:** Sustainable Development, SDGs Goal 4, National Education Policy, Quality Education.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital and artificial intelligence, the increasing number of wars, conflicts, crimes, and climate change are the alarms of the need for the quality of education, which not only enhances knowledge, value, and skills through education but also for the overall development of the individual is the need of the present society. We are aware that the COVID-19 pandemic altered the landscape of education, necessitating the provision of

high-quality education to shape students' personalities and foster a society where all individuals possess the necessary skills to enter the workforce. It unveils a realm of opportunities for individuals by equipping them with knowledge. An individual possesses the right to education regardless of caste, religion, creed, or socio-economic status for the advancement of society and the nation as a whole.

Every individual is unique and born with a special God-given quality; quality education empowers students to enhance their God-given potential. If a child refines their qualities further, they have the potential to conquer the world. Quality education focuses on the overall development of a child, be it social, emotional, mental, physical, or cognitive development. Thus, quality education gives wings to children to dream big and fly high. Recently, the Indian Government has introduced a revolutionary step for the transformation of the Indian education system. The sunrise of National Education Policy 2020 [4] happens in the year 2020 in July (Radha & Arumugam, 2023a) [7]. With a focus on accessibility, hands-on education, and whole-child growth, the NEP 2020 marks a dramatic change in India's educational system (Parmar *et al.*, 2024a) [5]. It focuses on quality education in India. On the other hand, the fourth Sustainable Development Goal stresses the availability of a quality education (D. Sharma, 2024) [10]. In addition to this, it seeks to encourage chances for continuous education for everyone. To bring about a sustainable development, it is only feasible to do so while simultaneously raising the levels of knowledge and skills possessed by all men and women. Through an in-depth analysis of the complexity of the New Economic Policy 2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this paper seeks to present an analysis of National Education Policy in India (Jan Kirmani & Almad Sheikh, 2024) [2]. It attempts an in-depth investigation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and NEP 2020 as a whole (Radha & Arumugam, 2023b) [8].

## 2. OBJECTIVES

1. To highlight the National Education Policy in India.
2. To draw attention to Sustainable Development and Goal 4 on excellent education.
3. To study about quality education as per the National Education Policy 2020 [4] and the Sustainable Developmental Goal.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

By NEP 2020, the primary objective of the research by Parmar *et al.* (2024) [5] is to examine physical literacy as a means of enhancing inclusive learning during the initial phase. The research employs a qualitative methodology. The methodology encompasses both primary and secondary sources. The study critically examines India's early childhood care and education legal structure, analyzing global best practices and providing pragmatic recommendations for addressing diverse learning needs and promoting equity. Ray & Ghanta (2022) conducted a study on "Present Status of Inclusive Education in India." The primary aims of the study are to clarify the context of inclusive education in India, to evaluate the current status of inclusive education in India, and to analyze various kinds of legislation, policies, and activities related to inclusive education in India. The study employs a qualitative methodology. The researcher employed the technique of documentary analysis. The document delineates the various measures enacted by the Indian government, examined through the perspective of inclusive education. Jana and Halder (2023) did an analysis of his findings

of the research revealed a multitude of approaches and challenges associated with the execution of inclusive education in both elementary and secondary school. A number of deficiencies may be found in the strategies and problems that are associated with the advancement and execution of inclusive education in the National Education Policy 2020 [4].

## 4. METHODOLOGY

The study is qualitative and descriptive. Data was gathered from the secondary sources, including websites, journals, books, and government publications.

## 5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### National Education Policy of India and National Education Policy 2020 [4]

The education policy is a set of rules and regulations. It includes education and certification, teacher selection, teaching methods, curriculum content, school infrastructure, etc. The education policy includes education and certification, teacher recruitment, pedagogical approaches, curriculum material, school infrastructure, and more. Since independence, the Indian government has initiated many efforts to address the issue of illiteracy in India. The number of education policies set up from time to time are the University Education Commission (1948), the Secondary Education Commission (1952), the Indian Education Commission (1964-66), the National Education Policy, the Right to Education (2009), etc. The Indian government must formulate the country's educational strategy. Up to this moment, India has implemented three distinct national education strategies: the first one was implemented in 1968, the second one was implemented in 1986, and the third one has been scheduled for implementation effect in 2020. The first national education policy is the National Education Policy 1968. The Prime Minister of India originally promulgated it in 1968. The NEP 1968 is a response to the recommendation to the Kothari Commission. The policy seeks to ensure compulsory education until the age of 14, emphasizing proficiency in the regional language through a three-language formula that includes Sanskrit and English as vital components of the curriculum, given Sanskrit's significance in Indian culture. Rajiv Gandhi is in charge of formulating the country's second policy on education. The official name of this educational program is NEP 1986, which stands for the National Education Policy 1986 [3]. In parliament during the budget session, the National Education Policy 1986 [3] was adopted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The NEP 1986 initially covered 23 task forces. Eminent educationists, experts, and representatives of state and central government were associated with the task force. The task force was content with the processes of school education, education for women on equality, education for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward sections, education for minorities and operation blackboard, secondary education and Navodaya Vidyalaya's, open education and distant learning, media, and educational technology, which includes computers in education, etc. The task force reviewed and modified the NEP 1986 to create the Programme of Action 1992, resulting in a

comprehensive action plan. A new approach to schooling in India is outlined in the country's National Education Policy 2020<sup>[4]</sup>. This shift results from the pursuit of a future-oriented educational system that meets the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As India aspires to become the world's biggest economy, there is an increasing need for education of the highest caliber to achieve global standards. The National Education Policy 2020<sup>[4]</sup> has been implemented. It is the goal of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) to promote holistic development in children by the year 2040, to encourage critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and individual potential, regardless of the children's social and economic conditions (Radha & Arumugam, 2023c; D. Sharma, 2024)<sup>[9, 10]</sup>. A consortium of specialists, headed by former Indian Space Research Organization Director Dr. K. Kasturirangan, assesses the present global situation and acknowledges the necessity for an educational framework that will revolutionize our nation by delivering superior education to all and establishing India as a global knowledge powerhouse. The National Education Plan 2020<sup>[4]</sup> has five key pillars: access, equality, quality, affordability, and accountability (Tushar Dhar Shukla *et al.*, 2023a)<sup>[12]</sup>. It aims to bring out unique and gifted qualities in every student. It seeks to cultivate the distinctive and exceptional attributes in each learner.

#### Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable development is a global goal developed as a guiding principle to end poverty and protect the planet so that the world enjoys peace and prosperity. The concept of sustainable development refers to a kind of development that satisfies the requirements of the present without jeopardizing the capacity of future generations to fulfil their need (Haripriya V, 2023)<sup>[11]</sup>. The sustainable development stands with three pillars: economic development, social development, and environmental protection. "Peace and prosperity for people and the planet" is the stated objective of these worldwide goals. Its importance resides in promoting sustainable economic development while safeguarding social welfare and environmental integrity. In the year 1972, the international community first explored the connection between quality of life and environmental quality, after the UN Convention on the Human Environment convened in Stockholm. After that, the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development released the Brundtland Report, sometimes referred to as 'Our Common Future.' The Brundtland Commission first proposed the idea of sustainable development in their 1987 report. Following the meeting, a sustainable development goal was established in 2015 by the United Nations with the Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the goal is to "transform the world". The International agenda includes 17 goals and 169 targets. All members of the United Nations (UN) ratified the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which established global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Radha & Arumugam, 2023c)<sup>[9]</sup>. The United Nations' 17 objectives include the eradication of poverty, the elimination of hunger, the promotion of good health and well-being, the provision of excellent education, the

advancement of gender equality, and the assurance of clean water and sanitation. Economical and pristine energy. Quality employment and economic advancement, industrial development, innovation, and infrastructure. Mitigate disparities. Sustainable urban areas and communities, Responsible consumption and production practices, Climate action initiatives, Marine life conservation, Terrestrial ecosystem preservation, Peace, justice, robust institutions, and ultimately, partnerships for the objectives. Goal 4 is identified as the most important component among the seventeen goals which "promise inclusive and equitable quality education and foster lifelong learning for everyone" (Yadav, 2023)<sup>[14]</sup>. Its contribution is to transform education on a global level. It is a comprehensive action plan in which all stakeholders are involved including governments, citizens, and the United Nations system. Access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability (Tushar Dhar Shukla *et al.*, 2023a)<sup>[12]</sup> in education, which are the cornerstone of quality education, are prioritized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is NEP aligns with. Sustainable Development goal 4 seeks to achieve universal literacy and affordable primary and secondary education. The National Education Policy 2020 is aligned with Sustainable Development goal 4, which seeks to transform the education system in India (Tushar Dhar Shukla *et al.*, 2023b)<sup>[13]</sup>.

#### Quality Education as Per National Education Policy and Sustainable Developmental Goal

In today's society, high quality education is crucial for global development as it provides the foundation for advancement and prosperity, equipping individuals with knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities to navigate complex worlds (D. Sharma, 2024)<sup>[10]</sup>. A high level of education can help to shape productivity of a human being (D. Sharma, 2024)<sup>[10]</sup>. Quality education can reduce poverty. High quality education can change a nation all over the world. SDG 4 is a lighthouse within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework, calling for countries to prioritize and support universal access to high-quality education (Haripriya. V, 2023)<sup>[11]</sup>. It is an urgent demand to guarantee that everyone, irrespective of background, has access to the best possible education that is both inclusive and of the greatest quality (Haripriya. V, 2023)<sup>[11]</sup>. The Ministry of Education strives to provide quality education for its citizens. The NEP's commitment to ensuring equitable access to education aligns with SDG 4. Some indicators of quality education are: ensure primary education in the mother tongue, establish a school within 1 Km from their residence, reduce inequality among students, establish an ICT classroom, maintain a proper teacher student ratio. The National Education Policy (NEP) advocates for educational reforms to break down barriers to access, including universalizing early childhood education and emphasizing multidisciplinary learning (Parmar *et al.*, 2024b)<sup>[6]</sup>. It aligns with SDG 4's focus on holistic development and critical thinking skills. The NEP also acknowledges the need for vocational training and skill development, contributing to inclusive and equitable quality education by making it more accessible to marginalized communities and enhancing their

livelihoods. This synergy could transform India's educational landscape and contribute to sustainable development.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

As a conclusion, education is an instrument which can change individuals' lives and can help a human being to achieve a good quality of life. In general, education is usually related to the process of imparting information, imparting skills, and instilling values among individuals (P. Sharma, n.d.)<sup>[11]</sup>. An education of high quality equips all students with the skills they need to become economically productive, to build sustainable livelihoods, to contribute to societies that are peaceful and democratic, and to improve the overall well-being of individuals (Sharma, n.d.)<sup>[11]</sup>. Thus, the National Education Policy and Sustainable Development Goal 4 is a revolutionary policy for quality education in India, which can bring a transformative change to society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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### About the Corresponding Author



**Triveni Debbarma** is a Graduate Teacher at Hariram Sardar Para S.B School in Mungiakami, Khowai, Tripura, India. Dedicated to education, they contribute to shaping young minds with their knowledge and expertise.