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National Education Policy 2020: A Historical Perspective

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Abstract: ***India introduced the first education policy in 1968 during the government of former Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Rajiv Gandhi government formulated the second education policy in 1986. Narasimha Rao government made some amendments to this policy in 1992. And finally, after 34 years, the government took the step to introduce the National Education Policy 2020. It is very important to discuss the historical perspectives of NEP 2020. The present study is going to highlight the history of educational policies in India since independence and tries to focus on the important developments made in the field of education starting from the independence towards the revolutionary step made for NEP 2020. The present study describes the stages of development in each national education policies introduced in 1968, 1986 respectively and the lacunas which leads to the continuous change in the education road map of the country and framing a broad design for the national education 2020.***

Index Terms: ***NEP 2020, NEP 1968, NEP 1986, NCF 2005, RTE 2009, pedagogy, school education, higher education, and teacher education.***

I. INTRODUCTION

Change is the law of nature. When man wants to develop, he wants change in something. Human development of a civilization depends on its education system. Quality education enhances the ability of the human being to build a good society and nation. High quality education is the key to see the nation on global platform in terms of economy, social equality, art, culture, science and technology. Presently, the world is undergoing rapid changes in knowledge and employment landscapes. So, an education system must be build and shaped with character, ethics, reason and at the same time it should have capacity to generate employment. Time to time, reforms are necessarily to bring about quality, equity and integrity into the system, from Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to Higher Education (HE).

India introduced the first education policy in 1968 during the government of former Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Rajiv Gandhi government formulated the second education policy in 1986. Narasimha Rao government made some amendments to this policy in 1992. And finally, after 34 years, the government took the step to introduce the National Education Policy 2020.

In order to formulate a new education policy, a committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. K.K. Kasturirangan and the National Education Policy was drafted in 2019. The National Education Policy 2020 was approved by the Central Government in July 2020. Before studying the national education policy 2020, we must understand the historical perspective. The historical development of national education policy since independence must be understood before understanding NEP 2020.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The National Education policy 2020: a historical perspective is studying about the past remarkable developments in national education policy in India and the need of the NEP 2020. The objectives of this study are:

1) To highlights and overview the national education policies before NEP 2020.
2) To compare National Education Policy 2020 with the earlier policies in India.
3) To identify the innovations in new education policy 2020.
4) To discuss the need of NEP 2020.

III. HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY

India has a very huge history with education. Major education policies were introduced in post independence era. And the first national education policy was introduced in the year 1968.

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IV. FIRST NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY ON EDUCATION (1968)

The first national education policy was introduced by the Govt. led by, Smt. Indira Gandhi under the recommendations of Kothari commission. The policy had the following highlights.

A. The aim of Directive Principle Under Article 45 was fulfilled

Article 45 of the Indian constitution says that there should be a provision for free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years. NPE 1968 was aimed to fulfil this directive principle. It was also aimed at eliminating the barriers to quality education across all parts of the nation.

It was also focused on students from rural, backward, or tribal areas and was given special emphasis to the education of the girl child. Thus the policy introduced the 'three-language formula' as per Article 351 of the constitution and encouraged the development of 'Hindi' throughout the country.

B. Secondary and University Level Education improved

The policy emphasised the need to increase the facilities for secondary education, especially in the areas that were denied of these. Vocational education was also focused in order to improve employment opportunities.

Special emphasis was made to improve the facilities in the fields like agriculture, trade, medicine, arts, crafts, commerce, home management, secretarial training, etc. It also took emphasis to open new universities.

C. Adult Education was emphasized

The policy aimed at promoting functional literacy within the masses through adult literacy. It was targeted to impart education to the employees in the industries through literacy campaigns and emphasize the training of the youth for improved self-employment opportunities.

D. Teacher Training and Professional Competence

The education policy of 1968 highlighted the need to uplift the condition of teachers. It promoted teachers' academic freedom. More importance was given for their professional competence, their emoluments and service conditions. The policy also focused on their training and education.

E. Restructuring The Indian Education System

A new structure of the educational system was introduced. That was in the form of 10+2+3. By this the idea of retaining students within the mainstream education system was helped. By this overall infrastructure and educational opportunities was developed across the nation.

V. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 1986

The government led by Shri. Rajiv Gandhi introduced this national education policy. The major highlights are,

A. Student Retention and Quality Improvement

The most important step under this education policy was to get all children under 14 years of age into schools. To achieve this, it was aimed at improving the school environment, student handling, and teaching methodologies. It was intended a no-failure policy at the elementary school level. It was also arranged for non-formal education for out-of-school students. Navodaya Vidyalayas and primary schools were opened in remote areas.

B. Uniform pattern of Education

The uniform pattern of 10+2+3 was introduced in nationwide schools under the recommendation of Kothari Commission, This pattern included 5 years of the primary stage to be followed by 3 years of the upper primary. NPE 1986 also aimed to achieve the aim of free and compulsory education for all by the year 1995.

C. All Disparities removed

The policy aimed at the accessibility of good quality elementary education for all. The holistic development of students was promoted through better quality schools. It was focused to create opportunities for non-formal education (part-time).

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D. Retention in the Mainstream System

Retaining students within the mainstream system was the main focus in NPE 1986. To achieve this, it was suggested to undergo surveys (house to house) to check the regularity of attendance and relevance of schooling.

E. Facilities for the Girl Child

To encourage the education of the girl child, two sets of free uniforms, free textbooks, and stationery, etc. were to be given free of cost. Besides this, students attending elementary schools were also given free transportation facilities.

F. Operation Blackboard

The operation blackboard was launched to ensure minimum essential facilities in primary schools. It was proposed to provide at least two large rooms, necessary toys and games material, charts, maps, blackboards, and learning material in every school.

G. Delinking Degrees from Jobs

This proposal created a new trend of reducing the importance of degrees from jobs. It was focused on re-designing job-specific courses to help the right candidate with the required skill sets to take up a suitable job. To achieve the purpose, it promoted the vocationalisation of education. NPE 1986 did aim at eliminating the disparities from the education system. However, it did not materialize its aims of standard education opportunities across various groups of the society. This policy contributed to the chain of educational reforms in India. And it was again scrutinized again in the year 1992.

VI. MODIFICATION IN 1992

The National Education Policy 1986 was required reformulation. A committee was made to review the NPE 1986 and come up with a detailed programme/plan of action. The review committee included six education ministers, eight educationists under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri N Janardhana Reddy. Other than this, twenty-two taskforces including educationists and government officials were also constituted (for varied subject areas) along with a steering committee.
The major changes were made in the following ways

A. Early Childhood Care and Education

To materialize the aims of the NPE 1986, it suggested a coordinated functioning of the government and non-government agencies to meet the goals of the ECCE programs. Special training (through training centres) was arranged for the Anganwadi workers to improve the quality of early childhood education.

B. Universalization of Elementary Education – UEE

Many innovations and revised schemes were suggested. They were like the 'Non-Formal Education' for students who cannot attend full-time schools. Besides this, it also focused on 10 states (educationally backward), wherein the responsibility was shared between the centre and state government in the ratio of 50:50.

C. Secondary Education

Further opportunities were expanded to fulfil the need for secondary education under the Plan of Action 1992. POA 1992 increased the autonomy of the Boards of Secondary Education by reorganizing them. By this action plan, it was also kept a visionary idea to improve digital literacy and technological skills in students.

D. Quality of Education through Navodaya Vidyalayas

The POA 1992 emphasized opening of Navodaya Vidyalayas across the nation. These schools were planned to help the high achiever students irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. By this proposal, improvement was made in the stream of the quality of schooling for the masses.

E. Education for women

Women education was also given a top priority as per this programme of action. It proposed more development programs and also aimed at enhancing their legal literacy (awareness about their rights). It was aimed to run gender and poverty sensitization programs to curb issues like gender disparity. Teachers were to be trained on women empowerment. It also envisioned creating new women study centres through institutions and women organizations.

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F. Adult Education and Micro-Planning

Suggestions were made to improve the educational opportunities for adults under the Non-Formal Education initiatives. To fulfil this aim, innovative programs like distance education and open school system were suggested for female students residing in remote, rural, and urban areas. Educational micro-planning was suggested for students living in tribal areas, Special focus was also made on the education of adult illiterate women.

G. Education for Students With Disabilities

The committee suggested some important steps for the 12.59 million children with disabilities. To achieve the needs of special students, teacher training was to be reoriented as per the inclusive classrooms. The need to reorient non-formal and adult educational programs was also highlighted.

VII. NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK, 2005

NCERT (The National Council for Educational Research and Training) published the most recent document The National Curriculum Framework in 2005. It was suggested for a new pathway for the teaching and learning process. It was aimed at shifting the focus from teacher-led instructions to 'active learning' of the student. This framework designed more effective teaching programs using appropriate.

1) By this framework, the monotonous rote learning methods was converted to the construction of knowledge and active learning. It allowed students more opportunities through hands-on experiences.
2) A new concept of moving away from the textbook culture was introduced. The frame work made it more student-centric.
3) The curriculum perspective of NCF 2005 was brought in a paradigm shift within our mainstream system. Because it focused, more on developing conceptual understanding through direct experiences integrated into life.
4) An educational system was visualized wherein learning became interesting and permanent. This curriculum framework also condemned social conventions such as gender biases.

VIII. THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT 2009

On the 4th of August 2009, the Right to Education Act was enacted. It came into effect on the 1st of April 2010. By this, each child between 6 to 14 years of age was provided the right to free and compulsory education.

1) By this act, education was made a fundamental right. The financial barriers were removed by introducing the concept of 'free and compulsory' education.
2) Now, the government was responsible for a child's education. By this Act, the government was fully responsible to ensure a child's admission, completion of elementary education along with proper attendance.
3) At conclusion, we can say that this act aimed at getting all the children within this age bracket into the mainstream schooling system. So RTE 2009 became a landmark in the history of our Indian educational system.

A. Main Recommendations of the RTE 2009

1) Indian students between the age groups of 6 to 14 years shall have a fundamental right to school education.
2) Neighborhood schools will be established to implement the provisions of this act.
3) The child need not pay any fees or expenses for this education within the defined age bracket.
4) This right to education equally applies to disabled students as well. And the ones with chronic disabilities can opt for home-based education.
5) Transfer of school in this duration (6 to 14 years) is now a right to do so. The concerned authorities of the previous school must issue a transfer certificate without any delay.
6) Every school will be ensured with appropriate pupil-teacher ratio within three years from the date of commencement of this act.
7) In each school, separate toilets for girls and boys and safe school buildings to be maintained with all the necessary amenities.
8) There will be 25% reservation for EWS (economically weaker sections) students.

IX. THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 is the recent addition to the list of comprehensive education policies in India. It is a revolutionary step to create a holistic education system by 2030 and provides equitable and lifelong learning opportunities for students.

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NPE 2020 envisions the new education system that can meet the needs of the dynamic landscape. And it is the first of its kind that aims to make India a global knowledge superpower.

A. The Origin

Keeping in mind the development goal of the whole country, the Indian government decided to change the educational policy of India after 34 years. To formulate a new education policy, the Central Government in 2017, under the chairmanship of the Kasturirangan committee, drafted the National Education Policy 2019. In India, in July 2020, the Central Government approved the National Education Policy 2020. In relation to this approval, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi tweeted and Human Resource Development Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishak informed the public at the press conference. It was also clarified that the Ministry of Human Resource Development has been renamed "Ministry of Education".

B. Goals of NEP 2020

Educational policies in India have been instrumental in improving the conditions of education at the basic level. However, recent educational policy faces the greatest challenge of all time. As announced right in the middle of the pandemic.

Overall, the need for this policy was to improve general life skills training to develop employability skills in students. However, the pandemic created an additional opportunity to revamp the outdated education system.

NPE 2020 goals include bringing approximately two crores of out-of-school students back into the mainstream system. In addition, it also aims to align the new education system with the 21st century vision of learning.

C. The Structure and ECCE

The 10+2 schooling structure is now changed to 5+3+3+4 (covering age groups from 3 years to 18 years). This makes Early Childhood Care and Education part of the main structure. Because previous children from 3 to 6 years old were not included in this structure (class 1 starts at 6 years old).

Policymakers aim to invest more in early childhood care and education as millions of students in India are deprived of ECCE. It suggests creating a framework (National Early Childhood Care and Education Curricular and Pedagogical Framework) based on research on ECCE and best practices followed in the industry. This will improve the quality and accessibility of ECCE throughout the country, with more trained workers/teachers and better infrastructure.

D. Universal Access to Education

1) With some notable results from the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and the Right to Education Act, the enrollment and retention of students at the primary levels is much better. However, the policy highlights an area of opportunity for the upper grades where the gross enrollment rate for classes 6-8 and 9-10 was only 90.90% and 79.3% respectively. In grades 11-12 it drops even further to 56.5%.

2) The policy highlights the need to retain students in the upper grades. And it aims to create opportunities for quality learning (including vocational education) from preschool through grade 12.

3) To do this, policymakers have drawn up two plans. The first is to support schools with the necessary infrastructure and teaching support. And restore public schools for quality learning. The second plan is to track students and their learning levels. To ensure student retention, the policy suggests that social workers and counselors work closely with students and parents.

4) Apart from this, the policy provides for a system of incentives for the same purpose. However, this will be done after the infrastructure and participation is established.

5) The policy equally supports non-formal education through options such as homeschooling, NIOS or other alternatives (such as digital education, etc.). It recognizes alternative modes of schooling similar to other educational policies in India.

Four steps of new education policy

a) *Foundation Stage:* The Foundation Stage of the New Educational Policy for children from 3 to 8 years old is included. The Foundation Stage has been set for 5 years. In which 3 years of pre-school education will be held in Anganwadi and class 1, 2 school education under which language skills and ability level of students will be tested and focus on their development.

b) *Preparatory Stage:* The time of this stage is maintained for 3 years. This stage includes children from 8 to 11 years old. In which he will have children up to grade 5. At this stage of the new educational policy, special attention will be paid to strengthening the numerical skills of students. At the same time, all children will also be given knowledge of the regional language. Along with this, the children will be taught science, art, math, etc. through experiments.
c) *Middle Stage:* The period of this stage has been set at 3 years. In this stage, children from 6th to 8th grade have been included in whom the curriculum will be taught by subjects and coding will also begin from 6th grade children. At the same time, all children will have the opportunity to take vocational tests and vocational internships, the aim of which is to make children eligible for employment only during school education.
d) *Secondary Stage:* The period of this stage is 4 years. This is from 9th to 12th grade. In this, an intensive study of the topics will be made. Here, students can choose their subjects according to their choice, not within a specific stream. Students can simultaneously take the subjects of Science and Arts or Commerce.

E. Higher education

Turning the pages of the NEP-2020 we find the plan to remodel higher education in the country. It talks about establishing renowned universities with high standards. It will establish a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund research at universities and colleges. The gross enrollment rate at HE, including vocational education, will increase from the current 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. Research will be included at UG, PG level and will have a holistic and multidisciplinary educational approach. Pedagogy in HEIs will focus on communication, presentation, discussion, debate, research, analysis, and interdisciplinary thinking. Four-year bachelor's degree with multiple exit options, one- to two-year master's depending on the number of years spent on the bachelor's degree as four or three respectively, and the option to do a Ph.D. for four years Bachelor's degrees with research are possible. Two-year master's degree with full research in the second year, one year master's degree for four-year bachelor's degree, and five years integrated bachelor's/master's degree. Student-centered teaching and learning process instead of the teacher-centered teaching model.

F. Curriculum for Better Student Engagement

The curricular and pedagogical structure will be restructured to adapt to the development needs of the students. Their goal is to create a more interactive classroom with plenty of opportunities for experiential learning. In the secondary stages, the focus will be on improving critical thinking, attention to life aspirations, and flexibility.

G. Focus on Local Languages and Mother Tongue

The policy emphasizes instruction in the home language through grade v. High-quality textbooks must be available in the native language. Because this will avoid gaps in the spoken language and the teaching medium. There is an additional emphasis on the idea of multilingualism to satisfy the formula of the three languages throughout the country. In addition, it aims to popularize language learning through the use of technology.

H. Physical Education

Under the new educational policy 2020, along with the education of students, skills will also be developed. In which all the students of the minimum class will be trained in subjects such as Horticulture, Yoga, Music, Dance, Sports, Sculpture, etc. So baby Competent in physical activities as well as other skills.

I. Teacher's Recruitment

Of all the education policies in India, NEP 2020 focused more on the critical aspect of developing the technological knowledge of teachers. It emphasized the use of online teacher training modules and with the aim of developing online platforms for teachers to share their best practices. The policy also addressed sensitive issues such as teacher transfers. And it aims to make the transfer process more transparent through automated modes. In addition, TETs (Teacher Eligibility Tests) will also be strengthened to improve the overall hiring process.

J. Education Through Online Mode

Within the framework of NPE 2020, e-learning platforms will be expanded. Through the 'Digital India Campaign', the Government of India launched various online learning platforms and tools. Platforms like 'SWAYAM', 'DIKSHA' and SWAYAMPRABHA were introduced in the system for online classes. And in the coming years, such platforms will be further developed for students.

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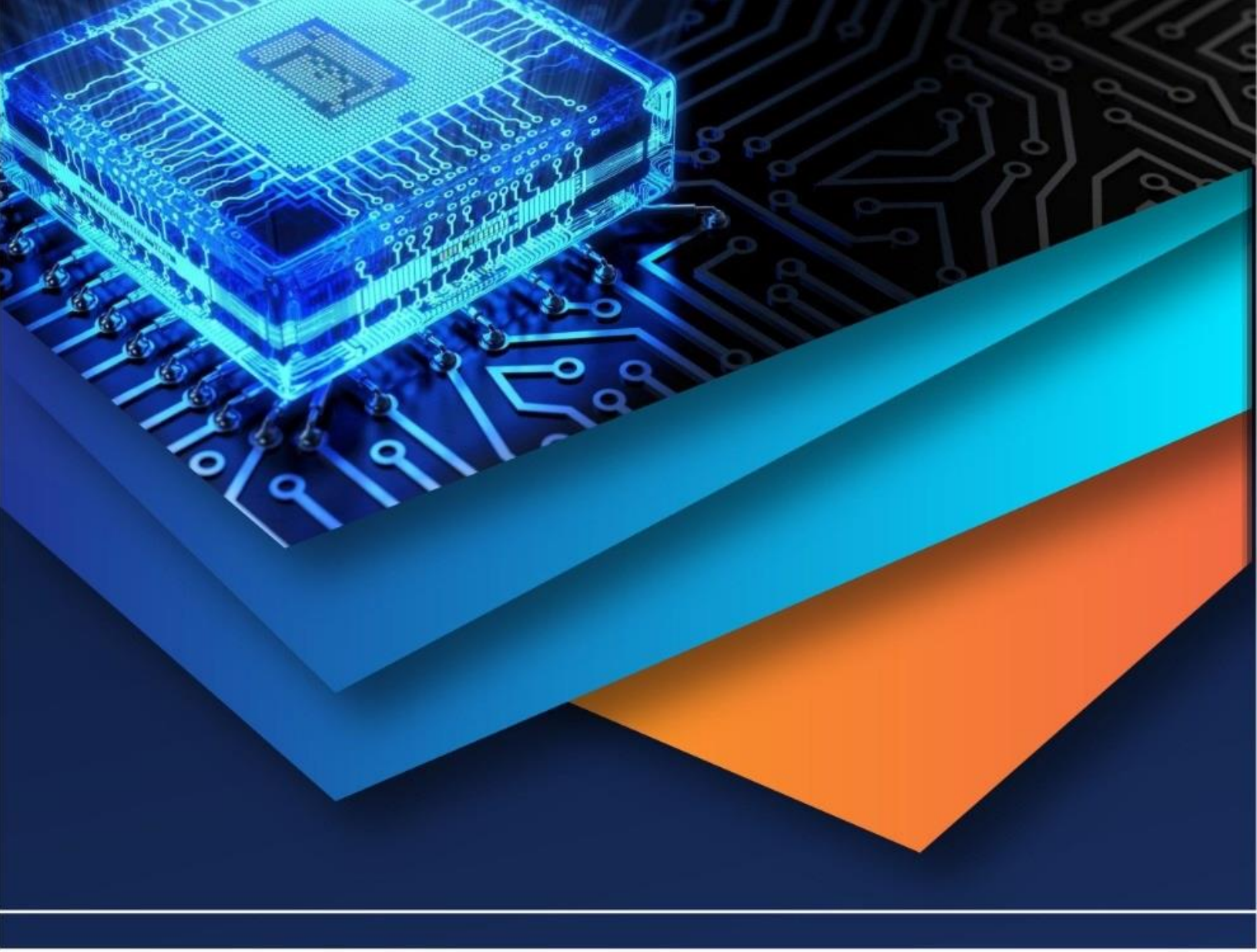
Post-pandemic, our recent education policy in India also addresses the challenge of the digital divide. And to that end, policymakers are focusing on improving the use of mass media (such as radio, television and community audio, etc.) for students who do not have enough digital support.

X. CONCLUSION

Our recent education policy has worked towards eliminating the differences within the system such as the ones like Science, arts, curricular, extra-curricular, vocational and academic, etc. It has also envisioned a more student-centric system that focuses on developing conceptual understanding and the skills required in the 21st-century. This visionary policy also suggests a shift in the assessment patterns (with more formatives). And its emphasis on online education is a great step for popularizing schooling alternatives like online schooling.

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