



# Vision to Ground Reality: Evaluating Rural School Education in Kandhamal in the Light of NEP-2020

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## Abstract

This study was evaluated the implementation of National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 in the context of rural elementary education (from classes I-VIII) of Kajuripada block, Kandhamal district, Odisha. Here the investigator considered 10 rural elementary school and from these sample school 50 teachers, 100 students were considered. From the community 20 parents and 3 community members were considered by the investigator. The researcher was used self-developed structure questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, classroom observation checklist. For the data analysis the investigator used descriptive statics for the percentage calculation and adapted narrative analysis for qualitative analysis of the data. This research focused on policy implementation in elementary school, infrastructure and pedagogical transformation after NEP 2020, learning outcomes, fundamental literacy, multilingual education, community participation and challenges faced in line with NEP-2020 guidelines. This study approached in Khajuripada block, providing insights into gap between National Education Policy (NEP) -2020 vision and the ground reality.

## Key words

This study has the key words: National Education Policy (NEP)-2020, School Education, Rural Education, Vision, Ground Reality.

## Introduction

Indian education system has faced various reforms from the years of age, but the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is the most comprehensive education policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It prioritizing on transforming the system to meet the developmental needs of the nation and its people. Nation Education Policy concentrating Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE), Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), flexible and multilingual learning, equity, equality and inclusion with teacher development. The rural education system in India and particularly in the tribal district like Kandhamal in Odisha experiences several challenges such as limited infrastructure, lack of qualified teacher, socio-economic barriers and linguistic diversity. Kandhamal a large tribal population and confronts various issues serve as a critical study to assess how effectively NEP 2020's vision transforms into reality in rural India. Whatever may be NEP 2020 lay out several provisions for the benefit of rural education. Among the all provisions some are promotion of mother tongue (home language) as medium of teaching learning process up to grade 5<sup>th</sup>, holistic and multidisciplinary education system (5+3+3+4), Special Education Zone (SEZ) for social economically disadvantage groups, boosting of FLN, empowering in teacher recruitment process and training in rural areas.

While policy facilitate a visionary direction, implementation remains a hurdling part in geographically and socio-economically complex regions like Kandhamal. Kandhamal is a tribal commanded district of Odisha with low literacy rate as compare to the state average literacy. After seeing the overall aspects of Khajuripada for this study the researcher selected the Khajuripada block, including the numerous remote villages with multigrade teaching, limited digital access, and varying school infrastructure. This research aims

to evaluate the prolongation of NEP 2020 in the rural school of Kandhamal and how it implemented and impacts students, teachers, stake-holders and the quality of education.

## Significance of the Study

This study includes importance for a handful of factors or reasons like provide fact data from a tribal-rural district, offer assistance to the policy makers for identifying implementation gaps of policy, contribution to academic point of views on rural education under NEP 2020, highlights local innovative and practices and informs different NGOs and education stake-holders those are working in similar situations.

## Review of Related Literature

The review of related literature facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the different dimensions of implementing the NEP 2020 specifically in rural areas of India. Panda (2024) studied the digital divide in rural Odisha which is pointing out the limited assessment of technology and internet connectivity and affection of learning outcome during and after COVID 19. Kumar and Sahu (2023) concentrated on practical challenges faced by rural schools in Eastern India; here the researchers were focused on infrastructural availability, teacher scarcity and lack of information and resources among stake-holders which is the crucial hindrance of the policy implementation. National Council of Educational Research and Training NCERT (2023) state report of Odisha focused insights in to the regional improvement and NEP implementation by targeting the localization of planning, healthy infrastructure and community involvement.

Singh (2022) studied an analytical overview of NEP-2020 and focusing its developmental vision for Indian School Education (ISE) and the structural transformation of education which is lead to equality, equity and inclusion aspects of learning outcomes. The Government of India's (GOI) official document of NEP 2020 accountable for the outlining the policy's prime provisions intend to holistic, flexible and multidisciplinary education in India.

## Rationale of the Study

From the above reviews related literature the investigator found that implementation of NEP 2020 is a prime challenging aspect of this current situation. As the nation of India is diversified by their geographic regions, socioeconomic constructs and tribal population. The digital divide in rural Odisha which is an extra layer of complexity for the students of Kandhamal. As many rural areas of Kandhamal faced the low internet connection and limited access to digital tools. The barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers and limited awareness affect rural area school in Eastern India. These challenges are related to the Kandhamal district in Odisha. The transformative shift towards equality, equity, inclusion and holistic learning practices in rural and tribal area regions remain a major challenge. The NCERT provide the report on NEP implementation in Odisha in relation to state level data but that data is lack of district specific insights for the necessary target and movement.

From the above finding discussion point of views, the researcher feels that there is no particular study for the Kandhamal unique demographic profile which is highly tribal populated, economic backwardness and geographical isolated region of rural Odisha. For these reasons there is a clear need to study the implementation of the NEP 2020 in this specific context and the explore the actual impact of NEP 2020 in ground reality. Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate the implementation status, infrastructure and pedagogical changes and challenges faced by the stake-holders in the rural elementary education system of the Kandhamal district. The purpose of this study to fill the knowledge gap by giving authentic localized evidence that can inform policy makers, teachers and community leaders for more effective and context sensitive education reformation.

## Statement of the Problem

From the above rationale of the study the problem may be stated as "Vision to Ground Reality: Evaluating Rural School Education in Kandhamal in the Light of NEP 2020".

## Operational Definition of the Study

**Vision to Ground Reality:** It refers to the comparison between the developmental goals mentioned in NEP 2020 and the actual implementation success result at the ground zero level of Kandhamal rural elementary school.

**Evaluation:** In this study evaluation refers to procedural assessment of how far the rural elementary school education system in Kandhamal aligns with NEP 2020 vision and objectives.

**Rural Elementary School:** It refers to the elementary school (provide classes I-VIII) located in rural regions of Kandhamal district.

**Kandhamal District:** A tribal populated district in Odisha. This study particularly focuses on elementary school of Khajuripada block of Kandhamal district.

**NEP 2020:** Here NEP refers to its vision and ground realities of elementary education in Kandhamal district.

## Objectives of the Study

- I. To study the implementation status of NEP 2020 in rural elementary school.
- II. To examine the infrastructural and pedagogical transformation after NEP 2020.
- III. To identified the challenges faced by the stake-holders in adapting to NEP 2020 guidelines.

## Methodology of the Study

For this study the researcher was used mixed-method approach for the data collection. The objectives are, to study the implementation status of NEP 2020 in rural elementary school, to examine the infrastructural and pedagogical transformation after NEP 2020 and to identified the challenges faced by the stake-holders in adapting to NEP 2020 guidelines. Here the investigator was considered 10 rural elementary school from Khajuripada block. In this study the researcher considered 50 teachers, 100 students, 20 parents and 3 community members. For the data collection, the researcher was used self-developed structure questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, classroom observation checklist. For the data analysis the investigator used descriptive statics for the percentage calculation and adapted narrative analysis for qualitative measures.

## Major Findings of the Study

The major findings of the current study are pointed out as follows;

- Over 76 % of rural elementary school students of Khajuripada block had minimal awareness about NEP-2020.
- Less than 30 % of elementary school students partially aware about implementation of NEP-2020 guidelines.
- Students and Teachers were not 100 % rich ideas in NEP-2020 rules and guidelines. Left about students even some teachers listened that NEP-2020 as an aback like English word, first time.
- Researcher was not found well implemented NEP-2020 environment in any one rural elementary school in Khajuripada block of Kandhamal district.
- 80 % of rural parents were not knowing about the NEP-2020 points of views where as 20 % parents were aware about it.
- From the research the investigator was found that the policy implementation is very poor in rural elementary education in khajuripada block.
- From sample school above 70 % classrooms were well functioning well where as some school had not held minimum required class room.
- Some schools were faced scarcity of teacher student ratio.
- After discussion of the parents and community member it was found that more than 90 % rural elementary schools had not possesses the well-developed toilet facility, which is very essential for the students.
- Some of the school had not connectivity with a good road. More than 50% of the school road had made with soil without any advance concrete and any means.

- More than 90 % of the surveyed schools were lacking the digital infrastructure (like internet connectivity, availability of smart boards, digitalised work frame in official etc.).
- Rare school access the digital class room for the students benefit towards digital age.
- For the development of pedagogical practices, the teachers were not used smart approach where as some teacher accept some modern activities along with local day to day activities.
- According to NEP 2020 STEM curriculum is most important for students 360-degree development whereas schools were not resourcefully. That's why the teachers were not able to facilitates students for their STEM attitude development.
- Scarcity of classrooms and teachers were found at the data collection time. Even some school was running with lack of students.
- In rural elementary school of Khajuripada block nearly 100 % students were comfortable with their mother tongue which is also enhanced by the NEP 2020 by three language formula. The rural elementary school students of Khajuripada block is Kui dominated but the Multi Lingual Education (MLE) teacher was not available as per the need ratio. So that the students and teacher faced language barrier at the time of teaching learning process.
- Mother tongue as a medium was also seen in the parents but after the adaptation of NEP 2020 the teaching material support had not available in local mother tongue so that they were not able to guide their students properly.
- Without the availability of sufficient human resources, physical resources and financial support the schools and stakeholders of elementary education were faced very difficult situation for the adaptation of guideline of NEP 2020.
- Policy communication was not clearly reached in the rural area of Khajuripada block so that the students, teachers, parents and community participation in NEP 2020 implementation was found in poor result.
- More than 85 % of the parents were poor in economic status, so that they were not able to take interest in NEP 2020 changes as they were not able to attained the students need under the adaptation of NEP 2020 guidelines.
- All the information of government which are facilitates to education was not known properly by the students, teachers, parents, community members and stakeholders of the education so that they are not fully interested to adapt NEP 2020 guidelines suddenly.

### **Educational Implications of the Study**

The present study has some educational implications as follows;

- The present study will be need for policy implementation monitoring, localised teaching training programme on NEP pedagogy at the block level.
- The study will help to focused for the investment of ICT infrastructure, human resources and financial support to the rural elementary school.
- The proposed study will helpful to use community-based support system for elementary education system.
- The study will helpful to teachers, parents and community stakeholders for developing the curriculum content which is suitable to learning style of rural elementary school education.
- The study will helpful for the elementary teacher to adapt innovative teaching method to improve the classroom climate and to creation of interactive classroom which is mentioned in NEP 2020.
- The study will helpful for the policy maker and officials to know about the ground reality of implementation and challenges of the NEP 2020 in rural elementary school education.
- The current study will be helpful for the overall development of the rural elementary school education.

### **Limitations of the Study**

- This study was limited to elementary school of one block (Khajuripada) and may not reflect entire district.
- Only 10 sample school were considered.

- Only 50 teachers, 100 students, 20 parents and 3 community members were involved in the study. Total 173 sample was taken by the investigator.
- Language barrier may be influenced at the time of data collection in rural area school.

## Conclusion and Suggestions

In 21<sup>st</sup> century, while NEP-2020 contains a optimistic vision, rural district like Kandhamal district faced several barriers to its realization in ground level. There is a crucial need to localize the implementation process, improvement of resources and bridge digital divide in grass root level of Kandhamal district. NEP -2020 policy must be come with by ground zero level planning and robust feedback mechanism.

For the empowering of the implementation of the NEP-2020 in rural and tribal areas, the present research paper suggests some approaches. Firstly, assigning NEP ambassadors at the block level, who are work as a prime link between policy and real practice, ensuring effective communication, community engagement and localization of educational shift. Secondly, establish healthy infrastructure with the Rural Digital Evaluation Hubs along with internet access, digital learning tools and trained facilitators who are bridging the digital divide and promote inclusive technology-based education. Lastly, give chances to tribal representation in curriculum framing that will education more culturally responsive, ensuring that the voice, traditions and knowledge system of indigenous tribal or cultural communities are reflected in book content. When these strategies integrated, it may lead to more equitable, participatory and inclusive outcomes in the rural elementary education topography under NEP -2020.

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