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A STUDY OF GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION: ISSUES OF EQUITY, QUALITY AND FUTURE READINESS

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Abstract:

Education systems worldwide are experiencing rapid transformation due to technological advancements, socio-economic inequalities, globalization, and changing workforce requirements. Despite increased access to education, persistent challenges related to equity, quality, and future readiness continue to affect learning outcomes across regions. This empirical study examines teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education and analyses the relationship between educational equity, quality education, and future readiness. The study is aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4), and the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. A descriptive survey method was employed, and data was collected from 200 secondary and higher secondary school teachers using a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, correlation, t-test, and graphical representation were used for data analysis. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between educational equity and quality learning outcomes and highlight the critical role of technology in enhancing future readiness. The study emphasizes the need for inclusive policies, teacher professional development, and equitable technology integration to build resilient and sustainable education systems.

Keywords: *Global Challenges in Education; Educational Equity; Quality Education; Future Readiness; NEP 2020*

Introduction:

Education is widely regarded as the foundation of social progress, economic development, and national advancement. In the 21st century, education systems across the globe are confronted with complex and interrelated challenges arising from rapid technological disruption, widening socio-economic inequalities, demographic transitions, globalization, and environmental concerns. While access to education has expanded significantly in many regions, ensuring **equitable access to quality education** and preparing learners for future societal and workforce demands remain persistent global challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed deep-rooted structural inequalities within education systems, particularly in terms of digital access, infrastructure, and learning continuity. Marginalized groups, including students from rural areas, economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and learners with special needs, were disproportionately affected by prolonged school closures and the shift to online learning. These disruptions highlighted the digital divide and emphasized the urgent need for inclusive, resilient, and technology-enabled education systems. Simultaneously, rapid digitalization has transformed teaching–learning processes, making **future readiness**, digital literacy, and adaptability critical priorities for educators and institutions.

In the Indian context, the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** places strong emphasis on equity, inclusion, competency-based learning, teacher empowerment, and the integration of technology across all levels of education. At the global level, **Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4)** seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. These

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policy frameworks closely align with the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**, which recognizes education as a central pillar for building a developed, innovative, and self-reliant nation.

Teachers play a pivotal role in translating educational policies into classroom practices and are key stakeholders in addressing global educational challenges. Their perceptions and experiences provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of policy implementation, institutional practices, and classroom realities related to equity, quality, and future readiness. However, despite the growing emphasis on educational reforms, there remains **limited empirical research** examining teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education and the interrelationships among educational equity, quality education, and future readiness.

Against this backdrop, the present study attempts to bridge this research gap through a systematic, research-based investigation of teachers' perceptions. By empirically examining the relationships among equity, quality, and future readiness, and situating the findings within the frameworks of NEP 2020, SDG-4, and Viksit Bharat 2047, the study seeks to contribute meaningful insights for policymakers, educational leaders, and practitioners striving to strengthen education systems in an increasingly complex global landscape.

Review of Literature:

Several studies have highlighted that educational inequality remains a global concern despite improvements in enrolment rates (UNESCO, 2021). Socio-economic status, geographical location, gender, and disability significantly influence access to quality education (OECD, 2020). The digital divide has emerged as a major barrier, particularly in developing countries, limiting students' access to online learning resources.

Schleicher (2019) emphasizes that quality education depends not only on infrastructure but also on effective pedagogy, curriculum relevance, and teacher competence. Teacher professional development is consistently identified as a key determinant of student learning outcomes.

Research on educational technology suggests that digital tools and artificial intelligence can enhance personalized learning and assessment; however, unequal access and inadequate teacher training may exacerbate educational disparities (Selwyn, 2022). NEP 2020 advocates experiential, multidisciplinary, and technology-enabled learning to address these challenges.

While existing literature provides valuable insights into equity, quality, and technology in education, there is a lack of empirical studies integrating these dimensions with global and national policy frameworks such as SDG-4 and Viksit Bharat 2047. The present study addresses this gap.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education with reference to equity, quality, and future readiness.
2. To analyze the relationship between educational equity and quality education as perceived by teachers.
3. To study the impact of technology integration on future readiness in education.
4. To compare teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education based on their teaching experience in the context of NEP 2020, SDG-4, and Viksit Bharat 2047.

Hypotheses:

- **H_1:** There is a significant relationship between educational equity and quality education.
- **H_2:** Technology integration has a significant influence on future readiness in education.
- **H_3:** There is a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education based on teaching experience.

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Research Questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education with respect to equity, quality, and future readiness?
2. Is there a significant relationship between educational equity and quality education?
3. Does technology integration significantly influence future readiness in education?
4. Do teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education differ significantly based on their teaching experience?

Research Methodology:

The present study employed a **descriptive survey research design** to investigate teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education with reference to educational equity, quality education, and future readiness. The descriptive survey method was considered appropriate as it enables the systematic collection of data from a defined population and facilitates the analysis of relationships among variables based on respondents' perceptions. This approach is widely used in educational research to examine attitudes, opinions, and trends related to contemporary educational issues.

Population and Sample:

The population of the study comprised **secondary and higher secondary school teachers**. A sample of **200 teachers** was selected for the study. The sample included teachers from different academic disciplines and varying levels of teaching experience to ensure adequate representation.

A **simple random sampling technique** was adopted for selecting the sample. This technique was chosen to provide each member of the population an equal chance of participation and to minimize sampling bias, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

Research Tool

Data were collected using a **self-constructed structured questionnaire**, designed in alignment with the objectives and hypotheses of the study. The questionnaire consisted of four sections:

- **Section A: Demographic Information** This section included variables such as gender, age, teaching experience, and level of teaching (secondary/higher secondary).
- **Section B: Educational Equity (10 items)** This section measured teachers' perceptions regarding equity in education, including access to resources, inclusion of marginalized learners, and equal learning opportunities.
- **Section C: Quality Education (10 items)** Items in this section assessed perceptions related to teaching quality, curriculum relevance, pedagogical practices, and learning outcomes.
- **Section D: Future Readiness and Technology (10 items)**
  This section focuses on the role of technology, digital skills, and preparedness of learners to meet future academic and workforce demands.

All items were structured on a **five-point Likert scale** ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. The questionnaire ensures content relevance and clarity to accurately capture teachers' perceptions.

Data Collection Procedure:

The questionnaire was administered to the selected teachers through both **online and offline modes** to ensure wider participation. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, and confidentiality of responses were assured. Participation was voluntary, and responses were collected within a stipulated time frame.

Statistical Techniques Used for Data Analysis

The collected data was coded, tabulated, and analysed using appropriate statistical techniques:

- **Mean and Standard Deviation** were used to determine the overall level of teachers' perceptions regarding educational equity, quality education, and future readiness.

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- **Pearson's Product Moment Correlation** was employed to examine the relationship between educational equity and quality education, and between technology integration and future readiness.
- **t-test** was used to analyse differences between teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education based on teaching experience.
- **Graphical Analysis** in the form of bar graphs and line graphs was used to visually represent the data and enhance interpretability.

These statistical techniques were selected to test the formulated hypotheses and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the data.

Ethical Considerations:

Ethical standards were maintained throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and anonymity and confidentiality of responses were ensured. The data collected was used solely for academic and research purposes.

Alignment with Policy Frameworks:

The research methodology was framed in alignment with the principles of **NEP 2020**, **SDG-4**, and **Viksit Bharat 2047**, emphasizing inclusivity, quality education, and future-oriented learning. This alignment ensures that the findings contribute meaningfully to policy discourse and educational reform initiatives.

Data Analysis, Graphical Representation and Interpretation:

1. Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Key Variables

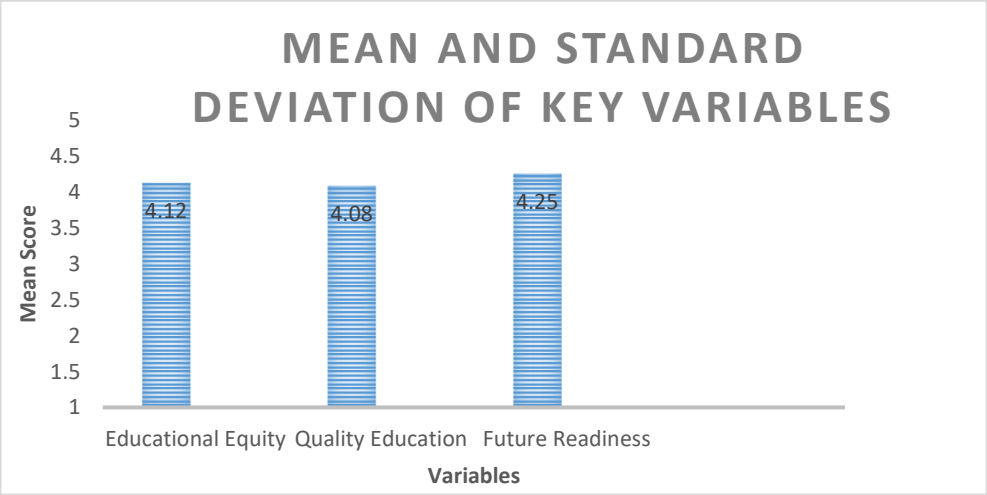
Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Educational Equity	4.12	0.54
Quality Education	4.08	0.51
Future Readiness	4.25	0.48

(Source: Primary**)**

Interpretation

After coding and tabulation, the collected data was subjected to statistical analysis to examine teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education and to test the formulated hypotheses. The analysis focused on three key dimensions: educational equity, quality education, and future readiness. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to derive meaningful interpretations from the data.

Figure 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Key Variables



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Interpretation:

The mean scores of all three variables are above 4.00, indicating a **high level of agreement** among teachers regarding the importance of educational equity, quality education, and future readiness. The relatively low standard deviation values suggest consistency in teachers' responses. Among the three variables, **future readiness recorded the highest mean score**, highlighting teachers' strong concern about preparing learners for future academic and professional challenges.

2. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis

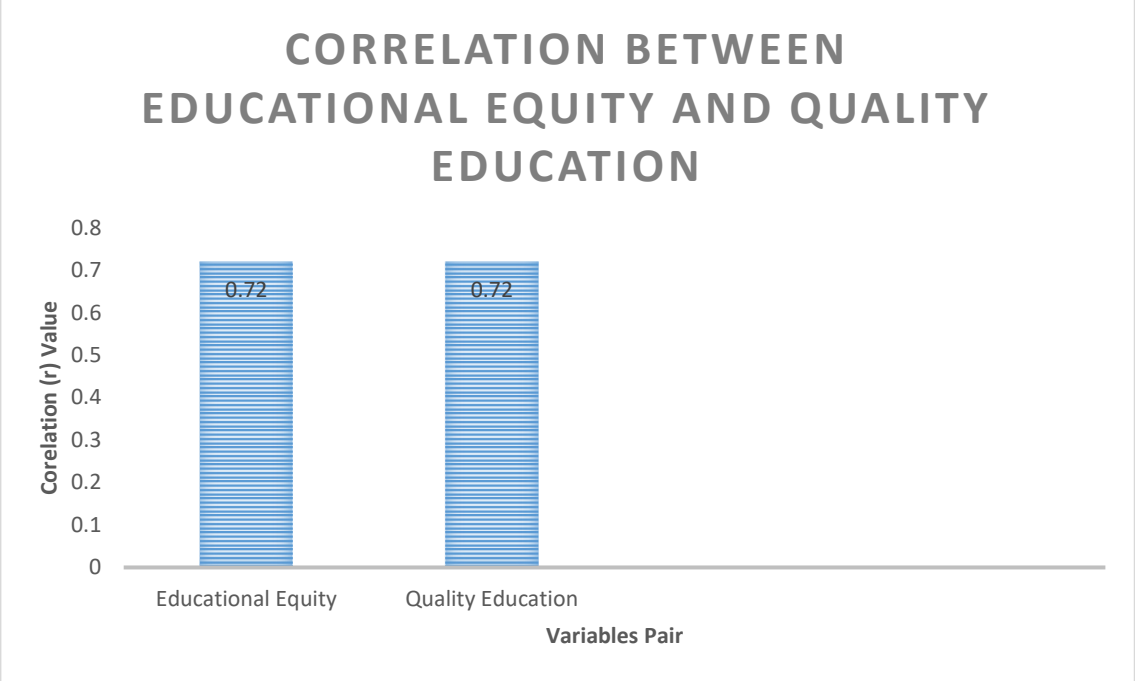
Table 2: Correlation between Educational Equity and Quality Education

Variables	r-value
Educational Equity & Quality Education	0.72*

*Significant at 0.05 level

(Source: Primary Data)

Figure 2: Correlation between Educational Equity and Quality Education



Interpretation:

The obtained correlation coefficient of **0.72** indicates a **strong positive relationship** between educational equity and quality education. The results are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, suggesting that improved equity and inclusive practices contribute to better quality education. Hence, **Hypothesis H_1 is accepted**.

Table 3: Correlation between Technology Integration and Future Readiness

Variables	r-value
Technology Integration & Future Readiness	0.76*

*Significant at 0.05 level

(Source: Primary Data)

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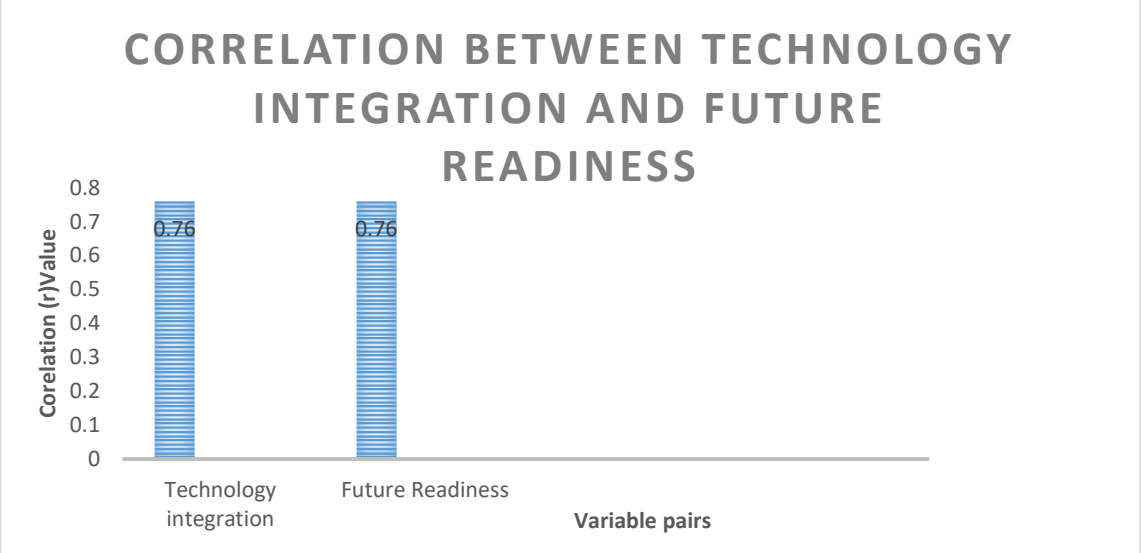
Table 3: Correlation between Technology Integration and Future Readiness



Interpretation: The correlation value of **0.76** reveals a strong and significant relationship between technology integration and future readiness. This indicate that effective use of technology enhances learners' preparedness for future challenges, including digital competence and adaptability. Therefore, **Hypothesis H_2 is accepted**.

3. t-test Analysis Based on Teaching Experience

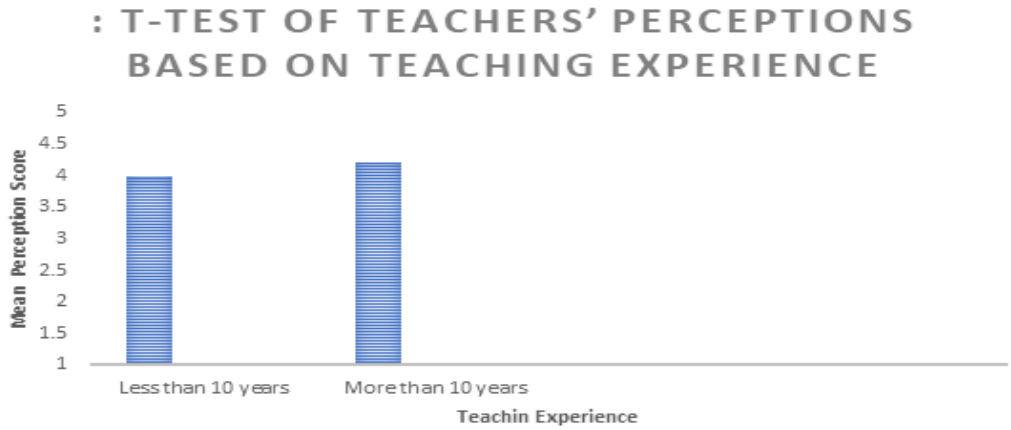
Table 4: t-test of Teachers' Perceptions Based on Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Mean	t-value
Less than 10 years	3.98	
More than 10 years	4.20	2.45*

*Significant at 0.05 level

(Source: Primary Data)

Figure 4: t-test of Teachers' Perceptions Based on Teaching Experience



Interpretation: The calculated t-value of **2.45** is significant at the 0.05 level, indicating a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education based on teaching experience. Teachers with more than 10 years of experience demonstrated higher awareness and understanding of global educational challenges compared to less experienced teachers. Hence, **Hypothesis H_3 is accepted**.

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Findings of the Study:

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the collected data, the following key findings emerged from the study:

1. Teachers demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding global challenges in education, particularly in relation to educational equity, quality education, and future readiness.
2. Educational equity was found to have a strong and significant positive relationship with quality education, indicating that equitable access to educational resources and inclusive practices enhance learning outcomes.
3. Technology integration has a significant and positive influence on future readiness, highlighting the importance of digital tools, innovative pedagogies, and technology-enabled learning environments.
4. Teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience exhibited significantly higher awareness and understanding of global educational challenges compared to less experienced teachers.
5. The findings reveal that while policy frameworks such as NEP 2020 and SDG-4 provide a strong foundation for addressing global challenges, effective implementation at the institutional level remains crucial.
6. The study reinforces the relevance of teacher empowerment and continuous professional development in achieving inclusive, quality, and future-ready education systems.

Conclusion:

The present study examined teachers' perceptions of global challenges in education with a focus on educational equity, quality education, and future readiness. The findings clearly indicate that global educational challenges are multidimensional and interconnected, requiring integrated approaches that address access, quality, and technological preparedness.

Empirical evidence from the study confirms that educational equity significantly enhances quality education and that technology integration plays a vital role in preparing learners for future societal and workforce demands. Additionally, teaching experience was found to influence teachers' perceptions, underscoring the value of professional expertise in understanding and addressing educational challenges.

The study aligns closely with the objectives of **NEP 2020**, **SDG-4**, and the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**, emphasizing inclusive education, digital transformation, and lifelong learning. Addressing these challenges through evidence-based policies and practices is essential for building resilient, equitable, and future-ready education systems capable of responding to global demands.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Educational institutions should strengthen inclusive education policies to ensure equitable access to quality learning opportunities for all learners.
2. Continuous professional development programs should be enhanced to equip teachers with skills related to technology integration, inclusive pedagogy, and future-ready competencies.
3. Governments and educational authorities should invest in digital infrastructure to reduce the digital divide and promote equitable access to technology-enabled learning.
4. Curriculum design should emphasize competency-based, experiential, and project-based learning approaches aligned with NEP 2020.
5. Policymakers should adopt evidence-based decision-making practices to effectively achieve the targets of SDG-4 and support the long-term vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

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