



## National Education Policy (NEP 2020): An Analytical View that Reforms will be Learned in School and Higher Education in India

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### ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 marks a significant milestone in the education sector of India, being the first policy of the 21st century. Its emergence during the COVID-19 pandemic brought a glimmer of positivity amidst the challenges faced by the education system. This policy holds the promise of transforming education in India, addressing a long-overdue need for change that had persisted for over three decades since the last major reform in 1986. In a rapidly evolving world, adaptation to changing circumstances becomes imperative for survival, and education is no exception. With advancements in information and communication technology (ICT) and evolving industrial requirements, the way we learn must also evolve. The global education landscape has witnessed a paradigm shift, necessitating India's alignment with these changes. The NEP 2020 is a concerted effort to reform the education system in India, recognizing the need for comprehensive transformation. This study primarily relies on qualitative analysis, drawing from secondary data sources such as books, journals, research articles, websites, newspapers, and government publications. It aims to examine the provisions of the policy and their potential contributions to enhancing education at both the school and higher education levels. Additionally, the study will explore the challenges associated with implementing these provisions within the existing education system in India.

**Keywords:** NEP 2020, School Education, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Higher Education, Reforms.

### INTRODUCTION:

India, being one of the most populous countries in the world, faces the significant challenge of providing quality education and fostering skill development. Recognizing the importance of human resource development, it is crucial to prioritize education as it serves as the foundation for various aspects of society. Education not only unlocks human potential but also promotes equality and contributes to national development. Over the years, India has made concerted efforts in this direction, establishing committees and commissions to incorporate their recommendations into the education system. Following independence, three national education policies were introduced in 1968, 1986 (revised in 1992), and the most recent one in 2020. With a large population, ensuring education for all and minimizing dropout rates pose considerable challenges. It is not only about enrolling children in schools but also about retaining them. Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the fourth goal, India aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. The new national education policy of 2020 is believed to play a crucial role in achieving these goals, possibly by 2040. The policy emphasizes the importance of providing equitable access to high-quality education, regardless of an individual's social or economic background. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 holds great expectations as it focuses on developing skills, fostering innovation, and promoting problem-solving abilities. It breaks down the barriers between disciplines and emphasizes the significance of interdisciplinary approaches and creativity. By embracing these principles, NEP 2020 aims to transform the education landscape in India and empower individuals to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) has set forth a new set of regulations aimed at transforming the education pedagogy in India. These regulations are designed to make the education system more experimental, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, analysis-based, flexible, enjoyable, and futuristic. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the educated output can contribute to the economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, cultural preservation, and national integration of the country (G.). Approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, the NEP 2020 serves as a visionary document outlining the future of India's education system. It replaces the previous National Policy on Education from 1986 and provides a comprehensive framework for elementary education, higher education, and vocational studies in India (B. Venkateshwarlu). The policy aims to bring about significant changes in the education landscape of the country. The introduction of this policy is driven by the need to bridge the gap in the existing education and learning system in India. This can only be achieved through the incorporation of new reforms. The NEP 2020 focuses on areas such as innovation, skill development, equity, and quality in learning. India aspires to have a leading education system by 2040, considering the impact of globalization and market trends that necessitate adaptive changes. It is no longer sufficient to focus solely on knowledge and education; equal emphasis must be placed on skills, innovation, and meeting market demands to prepare students for future roles. Therefore, there is a shift towards prioritizing active learning and the development of critical thinking abilities among students. The aim is

to move away from a content-heavy approach and instead foster a deeper understanding and application of knowledge. Education should not only impart knowledge but also build character, enabling learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring individuals. Simultaneously, it should equip them with the necessary skills for meaningful and fulfilling employment (National Education Policy 2020).

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## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- The study aims to analyze the impact of India's education policy on the current system, identify implementation challenges, and provide recommendations for improving the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

### **NEP about School Education:**

The new National Education Policy (NEP) is centered around four fundamental principles: Access, Equity, Quality, and Accountability. NEP 2020 primarily emphasizes the educational journey from early childhood to higher education, including vocational training. It proposes significant changes at all levels of education. In terms of school education, NEP suggests replacing the existing 10+2 structure with a new pedagogical and curricular framework known as 5+3+3+4, which covers the age range of 3-18. NEP also highlights the importance of early childhood care and education (ECCE) and aims to strengthen this foundational level of education. For ECCE, the policy supports a flexible, multi-faceted, and play-based learning approach that encompasses various aspects such as alphabets, languages, numbers, colors, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles, logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting, visual arts, crafts, drama, puppetry, music, and movement. To enhance ECCE, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) should develop a curriculum for children up to 8 years of age. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) also plays a crucial role in ensuring a strong foundation for students in their early stages of life. Another key aspect addressed by NEP is the achievement of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by all states and Union Territories (UTs) by 2025. MHRD should prioritize this goal and establish a National Mission to ensure its accomplishment. The policy also acknowledges the issue of high dropout rates, as evident from the decline in Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) from grades 6-8 to 11th and 12th. To mitigate this problem, NEP suggests that trained teachers and improved infrastructure can help minimize dropout rates. Furthermore, NEP advocates for a reduction in the syllabus content at different levels of education. The focus should shift towards promoting discovery, discussions, critical thinking, and analytical skills among students. By emphasizing these aspects, the National Education Policy 2020 aims to bring about comprehensive reforms in the field of school education.

### **NEP about Higher Education:**

The National Education Policy (NEP) in India aims to bring about significant changes in the higher education sector. One of the key reforms is the establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as a single regulator for higher educational institutions (HEIs), replacing the multiple regulators that currently exist. This move will streamline the regulatory process and ensure better coordination among HEIs. Additionally, the certification bodies such as the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) will be replaced by a new National Certification Council (NAC). This council will be responsible for accrediting and certifying HEIs, ensuring quality standards are met. To promote research and innovation in higher education, the NEP proposes the establishment of the National Research Foundation. This foundation will provide funding and support for research activities in HEIs, fostering a culture of innovation and knowledge creation. The NEP also emphasizes the importance of multidisciplinary education in HEIs. Institutions are required to adopt a multidisciplinary education model and have a minimum student strength of 3000 on their campuses. By 2030, these institutions are expected to become multidisciplinary, and by 2040, they should have a student strength of 3000. Furthermore, the NEP allows colleges the option to become autonomous and award their own degrees or become a part of existing universities. This flexibility aims to promote institutional autonomy and encourage innovation in curriculum design and delivery. The policy also addresses the issue of low Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in India. It focuses on increasing student enrollment in all forms of educational institutions, ensuring access to quality education for all. The NEP emphasizes a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to education, with a focus on research from the undergraduate level. It aims to develop students' overall skills and knowledge through cross-disciplinary and outcome-based education. To provide flexibility in acquiring degrees and facilitate multiple entry-exit options at all levels of education, the NEP proposes the establishment of an Academic Bank of Credit at the national level. This bank will enable students to accumulate credits and transfer them across different institutions, promoting lifelong learning and skill development. Overall, the NEP seeks to transform the higher education landscape in India by promoting quality, multidisciplinary education, research, and innovation, while also addressing issues of access and flexibility in the education system. In order to promote online learning and the digitalization of libraries, several digital platforms will undergo either initiation or renovation. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes a student-focused teaching and learning approach, replacing the current teacher-focused model. The evaluation system will also undergo a transformation, shifting from a choice-based model to a competency-based one. Additionally, the assessment system will transition from an end-semester examination system to a continuous assessment system. All higher education institutions (HEIs) will be required to prioritize skill education and establish counselling centres with dedicated counselors to address the mental well-being of students. The conventional education system is undergoing a significant transformation to become market-driven. The Indian government aims to establish world-class educational institutions and attract a large number of international students. Furthermore, courses completed by students in foreign universities will be recognized and considered equivalent in India, allowing students the flexibility to begin a degree abroad and complete it in India (National Education Policy 2020).

### **Some goals in NEP:**

- Several targets have been outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP).

- One of these targets is the full implementation of all policy provisions by the year 2040. Additionally, the policy aims to achieve a 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio from Pre-School to Secondary level by 2030.
- Another target is to ensure that teachers are prepared for assessment reforms by the year 2030. Furthermore, the NEP emphasizes the need for a common standard for learning in both private and government schools.
- The policy also aims to achieve foundational numeracy and basic literacy skills by Grade 3. Universalizing early childhood care and education is another target set to be achieved by 2030.
- Lastly, the NEP aims to provide vocational training to at least 50% of learners by the year 2025.

#### **Challenges in implementation of NEP 2020:**

The National Education Policy (2020) represents a significant step towards transforming the education system in India for the better. The formulation of this policy involved extensive research, deliberations, and discussions, resulting in a comprehensive framework known as NEP. However, the successful implementation of these reforms faces certain challenges.

- One of the major obstacles is the lack of infrastructure and funding required to incorporate such extensive changes into the education system. The National Education Policy 2020 aims to position India as a global hub for education by emphasizing quality and dynamism. To achieve this, the policy emphasizes the need to increase expenditure in the education sector to at least 6% of the GDP at the earliest. Unfortunately, the current figures present a contrasting picture. Despite ongoing discussions on spending patterns, India only allocates 3.1% of its GDP to the education sector, as highlighted in the economic survey of 2019-20. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize education as a top priority and redirect investments towards this goal. By recognizing the significance of education and channelling adequate resources, India can effectively implement the National Education Policy (2020) and bring about the desired improvements in its education system.
- It is evident from the policy documents that there will be a greater emphasis on the privatization of education. However, in a country like India where the affordability of education remains a significant challenge, privatization appears to pose a significant obstacle to the implementation of the policy. While the National Education Policy (NEP) does acknowledge the importance of transparency in fee structures, it fails to address how it will control the escalating fees charged by private institutions and ensure their functioning aligns with a utilitarian approach rather than profit maximization.
- The NEP 2020 does not address the measures to ensure that the marginalized section of society receives the advantages of education. The policy document lacks clarity regarding the inclusion of all segments of society, and there is a notable absence of a detailed plan for implementing such actions.
- Ensuring stakeholder responsibility is a huge task. The policy requires collaboration and coordination among many stakeholders. The transformations resulting from this policy will have a significant impact. Therefore, gaining cooperation and acceptance from each stakeholder is a challenging endeavor.
- The policy document discusses the establishment of foreign colleges in India, but the extent to which this will address India's issues is a matter of debate. The process of setting up institutions in India requires a significant financial investment, which will be recouped through fees and other charges. Consequently, this will ultimately place a greater burden on students, potentially making it challenging for them to enroll in these institutions.
- The NEP has advocated for the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction until class 5, and preferably until class 8 and beyond, wherever possible. However, this approach also has its drawbacks. One negative aspect is that it may widen the gap between students who are proficient in English or Hindi and those who are not. Additionally, standardizing reading materials without a common script could prove to be a challenging and laborious task. Furthermore, implementing this policy would require substantial investments, with uncertain prospects for positive outcomes. In fact, there is a possibility that it could exacerbate existing disparities within the education system.
- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the importance of incorporating experimentation in pedagogy from the early years of education. This shift in the approach to learning has brought about a significant change, which is highly welcomed. However, in order to ensure the success of this experimental approach, it is crucial to have well-trained teachers who can effectively adapt to the needs of the students. Only then can strategic advancements in the curriculum be achieved, ultimately benefiting the students. Therefore, it is imperative to address the current lack of teacher training in order to facilitate the adoption of flexible teaching methods.
- The implementation of inter-disciplinarily in higher education necessitates a fundamental transformation. Many individuals have acknowledged the significance of incorporating inter-disciplinary learning as it enables learners to gain a diverse range of experiences and perspectives on various subjects. However, actualizing this concept requires substantial modifications. The Indian education system has long been compartmentalized, and embracing the idea of multi-disciplinarily necessitates a cultural and behavioural shift. Both professors and learners must cultivate a sense of respect and curiosity towards acquiring knowledge from multiple disciplines, rather than confining themselves to a narrow perspective. Creating a conducive environment for such a change will likely take around 20-30 years to establish a positive atmosphere.

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## Findings:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 presents both prospects and challenges for education in India. It is evident that the policy has the potential to revolutionize the entire education system in the country. However, it is important to acknowledge that some of the recommendations put forth in the NEP may seem impractical and overly ambitious. While recognizing the efforts of the policy makers, it is crucial to understand that achieving the vision of transforming India into an educational hub requires addressing fundamental issues first. For instance, there should be a greater emphasis on teacher training, integration of technology in education, fostering a culture of lifelong learning among students, increasing investment in education, and ensuring that dropout rates are minimized. Only after addressing these foundational aspects can we aspire to reach higher goals in education. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that if we, as a nation, fail to embrace these changes and remain fixated on basic issues, we risk falling behind other countries that are already making advancements in the field of education and striving for excellence. To effectively implement the NEP, certain suggestions can be considered.

- It is imperative to raise sufficient awareness among all stakeholders involved in the effective implementation of the Policy.
- The collaboration between the Central government, States, and Local bodies should be emphasized in order to ensure the success of this policy.
- Additionally, timely feedback from parents, students, and industry stakeholders will greatly contribute to the successful execution of the policy.
- Furthermore, there should be a greater emphasis on teacher training and the development of necessary skills in both teachers and students.
- Lastly, increased investment in education is crucial to make this policy a resounding success and to enhance the overall educational landscape in India.

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## CONCLUSION:

The NEP 2020 has been received with great hope and optimism as it aims to bring about significant changes in the education system of the country. It recognizes the need to adapt to the changing environment, as change is an inherent part of nature. The traditional education system and practices have lost their relevance in the modern era. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of integrating ICT into the teaching and learning process. It is crucial for both students and teachers to acquire this skill in order to enhance the overall learning experience. Continuing with an outdated education system has become meaningless. To meet the global demand for skilled manpower, the Indian government needs to make substantial changes to the higher education curriculum. Implementing the NEP 2020 poses a significant challenge in this regard. However, the document itself is highly progressive, demonstrating a deep understanding of the current socio-economic landscape and the ability to address future challenges. It is important to note that a policy can only be effective if it is implemented appropriately. The NEP 2020 appears to be a well-thought-out and genuine attempt to reshape the Indian educational system. It emphasizes the integration of professional education in higher education institutions to promote skill development and employment generation. In conclusion, the NEP 2020 provides a concrete roadmap for the future of education in India. Its successful implementation has the potential to transform India into a global hub of education by 2030. The nation's future heavily relies on the quality of education provided, and the NEP 2020 offers a ray of hope in that direction. However, it is imperative for India as a nation to guarantee that the commitment made in this regard does not merely exist on paper but materializes into a tangible reality. This can only be achieved through the efficient execution of its provisions, accompanied by seamless coordination among all relevant stakeholders.

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