



Comparative Study of the Karnataka State Education Policy (KSEP) and the New Education Policy (NEP), 2020

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a comparative analysis between the Karnataka State Education Policy (KSEP) and India's National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). The study explores their objectives, structural reforms, curricular changes, implementation strategies, statistical changes and challenges. While NEP 2020 aims to transform India's education system through holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary approaches, Karnataka's policy contextualizes these aims to regional needs. This paper evaluates the alignments and divergences between the two policies, shedding light on how Karnataka is adapting national directives to local aspirations.

Keywords: NEP, KSEP, Education, GER

Introduction

The Indian education system has long required transformation to meet the dynamic demands of the 21st century. The New Education Policy 2020, introduced by the Ministry of Education, represents a landmark reform. Karnataka, being proactive in educational reform, became the first state to draft its own State Education Policy (KSEP) aligned with NEP 2020, while customizing it for regional relevance. This paper compares the frameworks, highlights common goals, and assesses the unique elements of both policies. Education is a cornerstone for national development and individual empowerment. Recognizing the need for a forward-looking and inclusive education system, the Government of India introduced the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, a comprehensive framework aimed at transforming the educational landscape across the country. Replacing the 1986 policy, NEP 2020 envisions an education system that is holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, and aligned with the needs of the 21st century, while rooted in India's cultural heritage and values.

NEP 2020 proposes a paradigm shift from traditional rote learning to a competency-based and learner-centered approach. Key features include a new 5+3+3+4 curricular structure, focus on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), promotion of regional languages, integration of vocational education, and reforms in teacher training and higher education governance. In line with the national vision, the state of Karnataka has taken a pioneering role by formulating its own State Education Policy (KSEP). Designed to operationalize the goals of NEP 2020 within a regional context, the KSEP seeks to address the specific educational, cultural, and linguistic needs of Karnataka's diverse population. It emphasizes the promotion of Kannada language, community involvement in education, locally relevant curricula, and inclusive educational development. This paper explores the convergences and divergences between NEP 2020 and KSEP, examining how Karnataka is adapting national reforms to meet its local educational priorities. By analyzing policy goals, implementation strategies, structural reforms, and outcomes, the study aims to provide insights into effective policy localization and its implications for other Indian states.

Objectives of the Policies

NEP 2020 Objectives	KSEP Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal access to education from preschool to Grade 12. • 100% Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) by 2030. • Emphasis on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). • Promotion of multilingualism and Indian languages. • Reimagining teacher education and development. • Equitable and inclusive education for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement NEP 2020 goals with regional adaptations. • Enhance learning outcomes in government schools. • Promote Kannada and regional languages in education. • Integrate local culture and socio-economic context into pedagogy. • Strengthen vocational training and local employability.

Structural Reforms of the Policies

Feature	NEP 2020	KSEP
School Structure	5+3+3+4 (Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, Secondary)	Adopted NEP 2020 structure
Medium of Instruction	Mother tongue/local language till Grade 5	Kannada as primary medium in early years, with flexibility
Board Exams	Reduced stakes, more frequent, modular exams	Emphasized modularity and continuous evaluation
Vocational Training	Introduced from Grade 6	Integrated with local industries and job sectors

Curriculum and Pedagogy of the Policies

NEP 2020 Highlights	KSEP Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on critical thinking, experiential learning, and creativity. • Reduced curriculum content to allow flexibility and holistic development. • Emphasis on digital literacy and 21st-century skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualized curriculum with local examples and cultural relevance. • Prioritization of Kannada language and Karnataka-specific history/geography. • Encouragement for experiential learning through community-based projects.

Higher Education Reforms of the Policies

Feature	NEP 2020	KSEP
Multidisciplinary Institutions	By 2040, all institutions to become multidisciplinary	Mandated in the state; emphasis on tier-II and tier-III cities
Academic Bank of Credits	National implementation	Pilot implementation in select universities
Autonomy and Governance	Institutional autonomy and light but tight regulation	Empowering universities with academic and administrative autonomy

Teacher Training and Recruitment of the Policies

- **NEP 2020:** Establishes National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST); 4-year integrated B.Ed program mandatory by 2030.
- **KSEP:** Emphasizes continuous professional development (CPD) for in-service teachers; sets up state-specific teacher training institutes with NEP-aligned modules. One major problem is reduced workload for the teachers.

Implementation Strategy of the Policies

NEP 2020	KSEP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phased rollout over 10+ years. Centralized guidelines, decentralized execution. National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) for digital infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District-level task forces for policy localization. Pilot programs in government schools before full-scale implementation. Collaboration with NGOs and local panchayats.

Comparative Statistical Overview: NEP 2020 vs. KSEP

1. Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)

Level of Education	NEP 2020 Targets	Karnataka Status
School Education (Grades 1–12)	Achieve 100% GER by 2030	As of 2023, Karnataka's GER is approximately 96%
Higher Education	Increase GER from 26.3% to 50% by 2035	Karnataka's GER in higher education stands at 32%

Note: Karnataka's higher education GER is above the national average, indicating proactive efforts towards NEP 2020 goals.

2. Out-of-School Children

- NEP 2020 Goal:** Reintegration of 2 crore (20 million) out-of-school children through open schooling systems.
- Karnataka's Initiative:** The state has launched targeted programs to identify and enroll out-of-school children, aiming to reduce their number significantly by 2025.

3. Curricular Structure Transition

Structure	NEP 2020 Directive	Karnataka Implementation
From 10+2 to 5+3+3+4	Nationwide adoption recommended	Karnataka adopted the 5+3+3+4 structure in 2021, becoming the first state to implement this change. But in 2024, banned again in Karnataka by encouraging for SEP.

4. Medium of Instruction

- NEP 2020 Recommendation:** Mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction at least until Grade 5, preferably until Grade 8.
- Karnataka's Approach:** Emphasis on Kannada as the medium of instruction in early grades, with flexibility for English and other languages in higher grades.

5. Vocational Education Integration

Aspect	NEP 2020 Plan	Karnataka's Progress
Introduction of Vocational Courses	Start from Grade 6 with internships	Karnataka has integrated vocational training in schools, collaborating with local industries for practical exposure.

6. Teacher Education and Training

- NEP 2020 Mandate:** Introduction of a 4-year integrated B.Ed. program as the minimum qualification by 2030.
- Karnataka's Implementation:** The state has initiated the rollout of the 4-year B.Ed. program in select institutions and is conducting continuous professional development programs for in-service teachers.

7. Digital Infrastructure and Edutech

- NEP 2020 Initiative:** Establishment of the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to facilitate the use of technology in education.
- Karnataka's Efforts:** Deployment of digital learning platforms and smart classrooms in over 10,000 schools, enhancing access to quality education through technology.

8. PM SHRI Schools Implementation

- NEP 2020 Vision:** Development of over 14,500 PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) schools as model institutions.
- Karnataka's Contribution:** The state has identified and upgraded numerous schools under the PM SHRI scheme, aligning with the national objective to showcase NEP 2020 implementation.

While Karnataka is on a progressive path, continuous efforts are required to achieve the ambitious targets set by NEP 2020, particularly in higher education GER and full integration of out-of-school children.

Challenges and Criticisms of the Policies

Area	NEP 2020	KSEP
Funding	Implementation requires a rise in public investment to 6% of GDP	Limited state budget and fiscal constraints
Infrastructure	Urban-rural digital divide	Infrastructural disparities across districts
Language Policy	Concerns about enforcing mother tongue education	Resistance from English-medium school advocates
Teacher Training	Shortage of qualified faculty for new B.Ed programs	Need for rapid upskilling of current teaching workforce

Conclusion

While NEP 2020 sets an ambitious and visionary framework for India's education system, Karnataka's State Education Policy demonstrates how national directives can be contextualized to suit local needs. KSEP retains the spirit of NEP 2020 but emphasizes local languages, culture, and governance. This comparative study underscores the importance of localized implementation in realizing national educational goals. The National Education Policy 2020 marks a transformative shift in India's educational philosophy, aiming to create a learner-centric, flexible, and inclusive system that nurtures critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning. It lays down a visionary roadmap to revamp school and higher education through structural changes, multidisciplinary approaches, and enhanced use of technology.

Karnataka, as a progressive state in the education sector, has taken significant steps to align with the NEP 2020 framework while customizing its implementation through the Karnataka State Education Policy (KSEP). The state policy demonstrates how national objectives can be successfully localized by addressing regional needs such as linguistic diversity, cultural heritage, and socioeconomic disparities. KSEP's emphasis on Kannada medium instruction, local history, vocational training, and decentralized governance exemplifies effective policy contextualization.

While both policies share core goals—universal access, equity, quality, and holistic development—KSEP stands out for its region-specific adaptations and grassroots-level initiatives. The integration of NEP 2020 principles into Karnataka's policy framework showcases a collaborative model for educational reform, where national vision and local realities converge.

However, the real success of both NEP and KSEP lies in sustained commitment, adequate funding, stakeholder training, and continuous monitoring. As implementation progresses, Karnataka's experience could serve as a model for other states seeking to align with NEP 2020 while addressing their unique educational challenges.

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