



## Challenges and Issues in National Education Policy 2020

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### Abstract:

The National Education Policy of India 2020 (NEP 2020), which was started by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of new education system of India. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The policy aims to transform India's education system by 2030. The National Policy on Education, 1986 and the Programme of Action, 1992 envisaged free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children below 14 years. While the act has ensured education to all, the prevailing challenges of the education system remained thereby hindering the growth of Indian education system to the global level. The recent education policy by the Government of India is the first in 34 years replacing the National Policy of Education of 1986. The new policy introduced many reforms in the Indian education system beginning with reformation at central level and renaming the Ministry of Human Resource and Development to Ministry of Education. The NEP proposes revision and revamping of education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system aligning with the aspirational goals of 21st century education. The NEP proposes sweeping changes including opening up of Indian higher education to foreign universities, dismantling of the Universities Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education. The policy, while focusing on various facets of education, also tries to bridge the gap between education and technology.

**Keywords:** NEP 2020, Higher Education, National Education Policy 2020, Academic System.

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## **Introduction:**

Education is a continuous process which deals with over growing man in ever growing society. The education system needs to make students as learners, innovators, scholars, researchers and trainers. Despite a strong and constant economic growth during past couple of decades, India still faces socio - economic challenges and improving education is the only way forward to address the challenges and boost country's economic growth. However, decoding the education system in India to address the prevailing challenges is a herculean task as India is a nation of 28 States and 08 Union Territories. Since, the states have their own elected governments and school education being a state subject as per the constitution; the states have complete authority on deciding policies and implementing them. While educational policies are designed at central level by the Government of India, the state governments have freedom in implementing these policies. National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is the national organization that develops policies and programmes, designs curriculum framework and guidelines that are followed by the SCERTs of respective states. The National Policy on Education, 1986 and the Programme of Action, 1992 envisaged free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children below 14 years.

## **Objectives of the Study:**

The said research study was carried out with following objectives in view:-

1. To study the Historical Evolution of Education Policies of India.
2. To Study the Highlights of NEP 2020.
3. To study the Challenges and Issues in National Education Policy 2020.
4. To study the Discussions and Implications of NEP 2020.

## **Research Methodology:**

The present research study uses the most recent available published secondary data. To achieve the above stated objectives, the secondary data was used. The secondary data that are mainly used are published in annual reports of various organizations and survey reports of leading business magazines. For the said research study the secondary data is also collected from the various National and International Research Journals which are related to Commerce, Management, Marketing and Finance. The Secondary data is also collected from various websites



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## Historical Evolution of Education Policies of India:

After independence in 1947, the GOI faced many challenges like illiteracy. For solving the problems of illiteracy, the GOI floated and sponsored different types of programs, policies, and regulations. The first Education Minister of India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, envisaged the uniform education system through robust central government control over the education system and policies. The Union Government has founded the University Education Commission (1948–1949), the Secondary Education Commission (1952– 1953), Kothari Commission (1964–1966), and the University Grants Commission (November 1956); to prepare the proposals to modernize the education systems of India.

### 1. The First National Policy on Education, 1968

Based on the report and recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964–1966), the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's government declared the first NEP in 1968. The policy was considered with "radical reform" and recommending equal opportunities (for both rural and urban sectors) of education to achieve national integration and more excellent cultural and economic development. However, the decision to adopt Hindi as a national language proved controversial. The policy called for the use and learning of Hindi to promote a common language throughout India. This specific policy also encouraged the teaching of the ancient Sanskrit language, which was considered to be an integral part of India's culture and heritage. This policy was also aligned to promote physical education to promote sports and games culture. The NPE of 1968 called for expenditure on education to rise to 6% of the national income (Govt. of India, 1968)

### 2. Second National Policy on Education, 1986

In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister, launched a new National Policy for promoting education at all economic levels. The adopted policy is known for "Special Emphasis on the Elimination of Inequalities and to Sequalise the Educational Opportunity", irrespective of the cast (scheduled caste, scheduled tribes), gender (predominantly for females), and economic status. The policy called for the expansion of scholarships, subsidies, allowances, adult education, and various other methods to promote social integration. This NPE is known for the "child-centered approach" especially for primary education, and, thus, initiated a very popular educational reform "Operation Blackboard." The objective was to develop primary schools across the country. The policy extended the open and distance university system with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) founded in 1985 (IGNOU, 1985). This policy has followed the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi to



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promote development (both economic and social) at the bottom level in rural India (Govt. of India, 1986).

### 3. Third National Policy on Education, 2020

In 2019, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) released a Draft on NEP, 2019, which was trailed by several ideas and consultations offered by the stakeholders and public. The Draft NEP discusses reducing curriculum content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking. The objective is to promote holistic experiential, discussion-based, and analysis-based learning. It also talks about a revision of the curriculum for the first time. The significant change is in pedagogical structure from a 10 + 2 + 3 system to a 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 system. There is an effort to optimize learning based on the cognitive development of children. On July 29, 2020, the cabinet (senate) approved a NEP intending to introduce numerous changes to the prevailing education system of India. Appropriate and liberal, the NEP 2020 scripts a significant advance in our education system.

### Highlights of NEP 2020:

#### A. Primary School

1. The new policy targets to achieve 100% gross enrollment ratio in school education by 2030 along with universalization of education from pre-Primary School to grade 12. The 5+3+3+4 curricular structure concerning ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively will replace the 10+2 structure of the school curriculum.
2. In consultation with NCERT, a new National Curriculum Framework for teacher education (NCFTE) 2021 will be established. By 2030, a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree will be the minimum degree qualification for teaching Higher Education.
3. For children up to the age of 8, National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) will be established by NCERT for attaining universal foundational literacy and numeracy in all primary schools by 2025, National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be set up by Education Ministry.
4. Extra-curricular, vocational, and academic streams in schools will be given equal importance without any rigid separation. Local language/mother-tongue be used as a medium of instruction for classes till 5 preferably till 8. This holistic 360-degree multidimensional report card will track the progress of students within all areas.
5. PARAKH(Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), a new assessment center that will be set up for improving the system of evaluation in schools.



## B. Higher Education

1. 26.3 % in 2018 to 50 % by 2035 and aims to add new seats to 3.5 crores in higher education institutions.
2. Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational Education to be raised from
3. To facilitate digital storage and transfer of credits earned from different HEIs academic Bank of credit will be established.
4. Increase in public spending on education from around 4% to 6% of gross domestic product with the collective efforts of the centre and the state government.
5. The new policy provides multiple entry and exit points with certificates at every stage and envisages multidisciplinary education with a flexible curriculum and creative combination of subjects.
6. Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), to be established to provide the best multidisciplinary education of global standards in the country, at par with IITs, IIMs.
7. The entire higher education excluding legal and medical education will come under the purview of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) which will be set up as single Apex body.
8. The same set of norms for regulation, accreditation, and academic standards will be applicable to both public and private higher education institutions.
9. The National Research Foundation an umbrella body will be established to foster quality research across the country and strengthen the overall research ecosystem.
10. In the upcoming 15 years, the affiliation of colleges is to be phased out and the graded autonomy concept will be introduced to encourage healthy competition between universities.
11. The National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), will be set up to foster a free exchange of ideas on the use of technology.

## Challenges and Issues:

### 1. Teacher Availability and Training

The policy envisages the redesign of the school curriculum. However, in order to deliver the curriculum effectively, schools and concerned authorities need to train teachers and understand the pedagogical needs to make a smooth transition to the new education system. Furthermore, they need to shift the focus from teacher-centred learning to student-

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centred learning to foster collaborative skills, critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making abilities in the youth.

## **2. Curriculum and Content**

The NEP seeks to introduce a shift from 10+2 structure to 5+3+3+4 structure, where early childhood education will be a part of formal education. In addition, the NEP 2020 focuses on reducing the curriculum content to make space for critical thinking and in turn, develop individuals with 21st-century skills instilled in them. Hence, all aspects of the curriculum and pedagogy need to be restructured to attain these goals. The challenges in successfully implementing these changes include modifying the curriculum in accordance with the National Curriculum Framework. Also, educators need to rethink the learning content rubric and modify the textbooks accordingly.

## **3. Technology**

The NEP 2020 lays emphasis on leveraging the advantage of technology in making the youth future-ready. But, developing digital infrastructure such as digital classrooms, remote expertise-driven teaching models, AR/VR tools to bridge gaps in physical teaching and laboratory infrastructure is a great challenge because the majority of the schools don't have a proper set-up to support these tools. Also, the cost associated with building digital infrastructure might not be affordable for all schools across the country.

## **4. Lack of infrastructure and funding**

The national education policy 2020 aims at making our home country a global choice for education by providing high quality, different variety and dynamic education hub to all the people in abroad. The policy focuses on raising expenditure in the education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest. The education policy is not a newly structured policy, rather it is a compilation of different phases. Time by time it has been reshaped, restated and recapitulated several times.

## **5. Examination Structure**

The NEP focuses on formative assessment for learning rather than summative assessment. The primary purpose of changing the assessment system is to promote continuous tracking of learning outcomes. However, continuous assessment requires schools and teachers to use innovative evaluation approaches and assignments. These approaches demand technological intervention and active involvement of teachers and students. Thus, the

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government needs to have a systematic phased approach to successfully implement the NEP 2020 and provide quality education to all students, irrespective of their place of residence.

## **6. Change Management**

NEP 2020 endeavours not only to improve the cognitive skills in students wherein developing high order thinking skill and critical thinking along with building the foundation of literacy but also life skills which will prepare the students for the varied challenges in their adult life. Hence the change in the curriculum and teaching methods is the need of the hour so that maximum benefit can be incurred from the new policy. NEP demands a value-based education system along with pedagogical and curriculum changes. Hence, new methods need to be improvised and innovated for the successful application of the policy.

## **7. Skill Development**

One of the major highlights of the policy is skill development, especially life skills and vocational training. The life skill training prepares children to be skilful in social behaviour, making children socially adaptable and is comparatively easier to implement. The major challenge, however, lies in imparting vocational training as there is a danger of attributing certain vocations to certain specific communities who have been traditionally dependent on certain occupations for many generations. The proposed vocational training should be based on the identified aptitude of the students. The people need to change their perception towards vocational education while the policymakers and administrators have to introspect the reasons why India is still far from achieving the target set by Kothari Commission in 1964-66.

## **8. Requirement of Trained Teachers**

Implementing this policy will need trained teachers, facilitators and support staff supplemented a pool of inspiring mentors, Learning need to be made an engaging and enjoyable activity rather than monotonous routine mental working which eventually produces unemployable youth. Hence, the policy will have to develop a learning regime that takes into account the cultural and geographical diversity of our great nation as well as the different learning pace of each pupil. The upcoming breed of technology savvy teachers will act as mentors to students in guiding their students about new technologies and will be the main motivators and initiators of the IT implementation at schools.



## **Discussions and Implications of NEP 2020:**

The National Education Policy 2020 is meant to rebuild school curricula and teaching method in another 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 plan so that school can be made applicable to the necessities and interests of students at various formative stages, i.e. a “Foundational Stage” (5 years), a “Preparatory Stage” (3 years), a “Middle Stage” (3 years) and the “High Stage” (4 years, covering grades IX, X, XI, and XII). The focus of NEP is to achieve “universal foundational literacy and numeracy” among students in primary schools by 2025. To ensure this government will be assessing and accrediting the schools on different criteria. The primary aim of the policy is to increase the gross enrolment ratio. From the study, it is clear that the objective of NEP 2020 is to create a conducive environment and institutions which support research in the higher education institutes and strengthen the foundation of education in India by reinforcing holistic development by offering vocational training to students at the elementary and primary education level too. The result also indicated that the central concern of the government is to evolve the current education system.

Along with developing institutions that are focused on research, it was thus enabling logical thinking and research aptitude among the students. The primary focus of the Indian government by introducing NEP 2020 is to develop the systems to ensure that quality education is imparted at both schools as well as university level. It also focuses on improving the quality of education and imparting integrity among the students as well as the academicians all across the country.

One of the great additions made in the NEP 2020 is to accredit the school education to ensure imparting quality learning to the student. The policy document focuses on various sub-themes. It addresses the concerns arising among the higher education institutes, which primarily are the development of courses, curriculum, and students. It also focuses on embedding languages for the students so that students from the most remote corners of the country can also be part of the mainstream. As far as the development of course and curriculum is concerned, it has been categorized into three major parts.

Furthermore, the NEP 2020 makes ready ahead for some youthful, hopeful understudies to be furnished with the privilege skill set. It's appropriate execution will be the way into its prosperity. It will be carried out till grade V. With NEP 2020, it is expected to revolutionize the education scenario in the coming future and this will certainly push India's claim towards becoming a superpower in the future.

## **Conclusions:**

The NEP 2020 aims to address various gaps existing in the education system of India and through this policy, India is expected to achieve sustainable development goal of 2030 by

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ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education. However, the policy needs immediate collaboration between state and central authorities to establish newly proposed bodies, define rules and regulations for schools and establish convergence of various schemes and acts with NEP 2020. In order to develop skills among teachers to address manpower shortfalls, training programmes should be designed to train master faculty members. As the policy aims to invest 6% of the GDP through public and private investment, it is suggested that there should be an ongoing collaboration with the industry partners in block chain, AI and predictive analytics industry with industry participation in research, delivering short – term skill certificates and co – partnering in creation of online universities. There is an opportunity of expansion in HEIs through increased academic and administrative autonomy for quality enhancement. Further, there is scope to develop tailored vocational programmes with HEIs which can be employment oriented and at affordable prices. More importantly, the government would require to earmark funds for develop textbooks, learning materials, etc. in different languages. However, it is imperative to define the list of languages instead of creating chaos in the system as it will require complete infrastructure overhaul, hiring of language teacher in each school and adjusting the curriculum as per the mother tongue or regional language. While, NEP 2020 provides opportunities in revamping the educational system to match the international standards, it requires lot of infrastructure and institutional restructuring apart from support from states to implement the policy successfully.

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