**Research Article**

# National Education Policy (NEP 2020): An Academic Intuitive Into the Reforms It Will Incorporate in School and Higher Education of India

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## Abstract

NEP is the first education policy of the twenty-first century. The only positive thing that happened in the sphere of education in India during COVID-19 was this policy, which promised to overhaul the Indian school system. "Change in the law of nature," as they say, yet this change has been overdue for more than 35 years. The last time we experienced a similar shift in the realm of education was in 1986. It is critical for anything to adapt to the changing environment in order to live in this dynamic world. The same is true for education: as information and communication technology (ICT) and industrial requirements evolve, so does the way we learn. And, as the worldwide picture in education has been quickly altering, a paradigm shift in the total system has occurred. It was critical for India to catch up with that transformation, and an attempt has been made in this regard under NEP 2020 to modernise India's education system. The study is entirely qualitative because it is based primarily on secondary data sources. Books, journals, research articles, websites, newspapers, and various government documents are used as secondary data sources. An attempt is being made to investigate the policy provisions and how they will contribute to strengthening education at the secondary and higher education levels. The study will also examine the problems of implementing those laws in place of India's current educational system.

## Introduction

In terms of population, India is one of the world's largest countries. With this in mind, it is critical that the emphasis be on improving education and skill development in relation to human resource development. Education is a fundamental requirement that serves as the foundation for so many other things. It is required for the development of human potential, the creation of equity in society, and the promotion of national development. Many attempts were made in this regard on a regular basis, including the formation of several committees and commissions and the

adoption of their suggestions into the educational system. Following independence, India established three national policies. The first was India's national education policy in 1968, and the second was in 1986, which was amended in 1992. The third was the most recent, which occurred in the year 2020. (Pankaj Thakur). With such a vast population, it is a challenge for India to assure education for all and a low dropout rate, as it is not only about sending a child to school but also about maintaining that child. According to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the fourth target is to "provide inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone" by 2030.There is hope that by implementing the new national education policy in 2020, India will be able to meet the program's objectives by at least 2040. The policy goals emphasise the need to provide equitable access to high-quality education to all individuals, regardless of their social or economic background. As a result, a lot is expected from NEP 2020, which emphasises skill, creativity, and problem solving. NEP has broken down barriers between disciplines and promoted the value of interdisciplinary and innovation. The policy anticipates a new set of regulations to make education pedagogy more experimental, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, analysis-based, flexible, enjoyable, and futuristic so that educated output can support countries' economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, cultural preservation, and environmental preservation. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), agreed by India's Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020, defines the goal for the country's new education system. The new policy supersedes the preceding 1986 National Policy on Education. The policy is a comprehensive framework for primary, secondary, and postsecondary education in India. The policy seeks to alter the educational landscape in India. (B.Venkateshwarlu). The objective behind the implementation of such policies is to bridge the gap in India's present system of education and learning. And only by incorporating fresh changes into India's educational system will this gap be closed. This has been accomplished through the NEP 2020,

with the main areas being innovation, skill, equity, and learning quality. India as a country hopes to have a world-class education system by the year 2040. Globalization and market developments have already indicated the need for adaptive modifications. When it comes to moulding students for future careers, it is no longer only about information and education; it is also about skill, innovation, and market need. As a result, there is a need to shift away from the paradigm of less material and more learning. Students should be trained to be active learners, and their ability to think critically should be developed. Education must develop character, preparing students to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring while also preparing them for gainful, meaningful jobs.(National Education Policy 2020).

## Objectives of the study

⟩ To assess the policy provisions for school and higher education in India in terms of their contribution to the existing educational system.
⟩ To examine the issues that will arise during the implementation of this policy.
⟩ To make recommendations that will assist in enhancing the execution of NEP 2020.

### NEP about School Education

The new NEP is built on four pillars: accessibility, equity, quality, and accountability. (Negi). The NEP 2020 focuses on the transition from early childhood to higher education, including vocational education. It has proposed modifications at all levels of education. The main school education reforms proposed in the NEP include replacing the existing 10+2 structure with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 spanning ages 3–18. The NEP also discussed early childhood care and education, as well as ways to increase this core level of education. The NEP supports flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity-based, and inquiry-based learning in ECCE, which includes alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colours, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles

and logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting, and other visual arts, craft, drama and puppetry, music, and movement. The NEP also discussed early childhood care and education, as well as ways to increase this core level of education. The NEP supports flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity-based, and inquiry-based learning in ECCE, which includes alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colours, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles and logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting, and other visual arts; craft; drama and puppetry; music; and movement. To help with this, NCERT should provide a curriculum for children as young as eight years old. The MHRD also plays an important role in laying a solid foundation for pupils at a young age. By 2025, all states and UTs should have attained foundational literacy and numeracy. The MHRD should make it a priority to ensure this, and the MHRD should establish a national mission on the subject. There is also a mention of the dropout rate. It is clear from the fact that the GER (gross enrollment ratio) from grades 6–8 is around 90.9% but drops to 56.5 in 11th and 12th, indicating a significant drop out. It is suggested that qualified teachers and better infrastructure can help keep this NEP to a minimum. NEP pushes for a decrease in the content of the syllabus at all levels. Furthermore, the emphasis should be on discovery, dialogue, and critical and analytical thinking (National Education Policy 2020). Other provisions concerning school education include schooling in one's native language, experimental learning, curricular flexibility, and summative and formative assessment styles that enhance skill, competency, critical thinking, and clarity.

## NEP about Higher Education

Higher education's numerous regulators in India will be merged into the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as a single regulator for HEIs. Certification bodies such as the NAAC and NBA will be replaced, and a new National Certification Council (NAC) will be formed. The National Research Foundation would promote higher education research and innovation funding.

The National Education Policy has established a multidisciplinary education paradigm for higher education institutions. And these institutions must have a campus with at least 3,000 students. The date set for becoming multidisciplinary is 2030, and they plan to have 3000 students by 2040.Furthermore, these multidisciplinary universities should focus on either research or education and can become specialised institutions in one of them. The colleges have the option of becoming autonomous and awarding their own degrees, or they can join an existing university. The NEP also discusses strategies to enhance student enrollment in all types of educational institutions. Because GER has been a source of worry in India, current education policy has placed a special emphasis on it. NEP stresses a holistic and multidisciplinary education approach, and research is now encouraged only at the undergraduate level. The current policy emphasises overall student development through cross-disciplinary and outcome-based education. There is a proposal at the national level for an Academic Bank of Credit to enable flexibility in obtaining degrees and different entry-exit options at all levels of education. Several digital platforms will be launched or modified to encourage online learning and the digitization of libraries. NEP 2020 will emphasise student-centered teaching and learning methods over the current teacher-centered teaching approach. The evaluation approach will be changed from a choice-based to a competency-based model. The evaluation and assessment approach will also shift from an end-of-semester examination system to a continuous assessment system. All HEIs will have to prioritise skill development. They must also provide counselling centres staffed by counsellors to ensure students' mental health. Traditional education is undergoing enormous transformation as it transitions to a market-driven model. The Indian government intends to create world-class educational institutions and recruit a large number of overseas students. Furthermore, courses taken by a student at an overseas university would be given weight and regarded equally in India. This will allow students to begin a degree overseas and then finish it in India (National Education Policy 2020).

## Some targets in NEP

- By 2040, all policy stipulations will be executed.
- By 2030, the gross enrollment ratio will be 100% from pre-school through secondary.
- By 2030, teachers will be ready for assessment reforms.
- There will be a common learning standard in both private and public schools.
- By Grade 3, students should have mastered fundamental numeracy and literacy.
- By 2025, at least 50% of learners will have received vocational training.

## Challenges in Implementation of NEP 2020

The National Education Policy (2020) is a reformatory step towards improving India's education system. A great deal of effort has gone into developing the policy; we have arrived at something as comprehensive as NEP as a result of extensive research, deliberation, and discussion. However, a few changes have occurred with the successful implementation of these reforms, which are as follows:

- There is insufficient infrastructure and funding to implement such drastic changes in the system. The national education policy 2020 aims to make India a global education destination by emphasising quality and dynamism. The policy focuses on increasing education spending to 6% of GDP as soon as possible. However, the figures paint a bleak picture. It is not the first time that there has been discussion about increasing educational investment. According to the Economic Survey 2019–20, India spends only 3.1% of its GDP on education, despite ongoing discussions about spending patterns. So the first step is to prioritise education as a top priority and direct investment towards this goal (Soni).

- According to the policy documents, there will be a greater emphasis on education

privatization. In a country like India, where education affordability remains a major issue, privatisation appears to be a major impediment to policy implementation. Although the NEP mentions the need for transparency in fee structures, there is no mention of how they will cover the rising fees of private institutions and force them to function in a utilitarian rather than profit-maximizing manner.

- The NEP 2020 makes no mention of how the benefits of education will be ensured for the most vulnerable members of society. The policy document lacks explicitness regarding the inclusion of all segments of society. There is no plan in place for such an action.

- It is a monumental task to ensure each stakeholder's accountability. The policy's comprehensiveness necessitates a close-knit and well-coordinated relationship among many stakeholders. In terms of impact and reach, the implementation of this policy will have a massive impact on the system. As a result, expecting cooperation and acceptance from each stakeholder is a difficult task in such a large setup.

- The policy document discusses top foreign colleges establishing campuses in India. However, the extent to which it will solve the problem for India is debatable, as setting up institutions in India will cost them a significant amount of money, which they will recover through fees and related charges, increasing the burden on the student and making it difficult for them to enrol in such institutions.

- NEP advocated for the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction until class 5, preferably until class 8, and beyond whenever possible. However, it has a negative side effect in that it will exacerbate the gap between students who know English and those who do not. Second, in the absence of a script, it will be difficult to standardise the reading

material, making it a time-consuming task. It will necessitate significant investments, and the likelihood of positive outcomes is low, with the possibility of widening the educational gap.

⟩ Because the foundational years of study resulted in a paradigm shift in the way of learning, NEP 2020 emphasises pedagogical experimentation, which is a welcome change. However, well-trained teachers will be required to ensure that this experimentation, while flexible, goes well with the students; only then will strategic advancements in the curriculum be achieved for the benefit of students. So, training teachers to adapt to such flexible ways is a must, which is currently lacking (Soni).

⟩ Interdisciplinarity in higher education necessitates a paradigm shift. Many people have praised the shift towards segmenting inter-disciplinary learning. Because it will provide learners with a diverse range of experiences and perspectives on the various things that exist around them. However, putting such a plan into action will necessitate significant changes. For decades, the Indian educational system has been compartmentalised, and cultural and behavioural changes will be required to adapt to the concept of multidisciplinarity. Both professors and students should develop respect and curiosity to learn new things from a variety of disciplines rather than remaining in a bubble. It will take 20–30 good years to create a favourable environment for such change (Viswanathan).

## Findings

Looking at the prospects and challenges of education in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, it appears that it will change the overall scope of education in the country. However, some of the NEP recommendations appear to be less practical and more ambitious. Taking nothing

away from the policy makers, it is a distinct dream that can change the learning system in India and make India an educational hub. However, we must recognise that we must first address some of the fundamental issues before moving on to more ambitious goals. For example, more emphasis should be placed on teacher training, the use of technology in education, teaching students to be learners, increasing our investment in education, and ensuring that our dropout rates remain within safe limits. Once all of these things are taken care of, we can set higher goals. However, it is also true that if we as a country do not manifest for these changes and continue to focus on basic issues, We will fall behind many of the countries that are already working on new educational advancements and constantly striving to achieve greater heights in the educational field. Some of the suggestions that can help with the effective implementation of NEP include:

⟩ Adequate awareness should be raised among all stakeholders involved in the Policy's successful implementation.
⟩ To ensure the success of this policy, coordination between the central government, states, and local governments should be worked on.
⟩ Obtaining timely feedback from parents, students, and industry will also aid in the successful implementation of the policy.
⟩ More emphasis should be placed on teacher training and instilling the necessary skills in them. The same is true for the students.
⟩ More investment in education is needed to make this policy a clear winner in terms of improving India's overall educational situation.

## Conclusion

NEP 2020 is a document that has been viewed with a lot of hope and optimism in terms of bringing about paradigm shifts in the country's overall education system. Change is a natural law, and it is critical to adapt to the changing environment. The old education system and
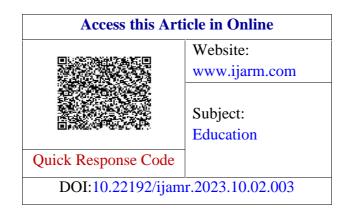
practises are no longer relevant in today's world. For example, we saw at COVID-19 how important it is to make ICT an active part of the teaching and learning process and how we as a country need to train our students and teachers to learn this skill in order to make the overall learning process more enriching and satisfying. It is pointless to continue with an outdated educational system. The Indian government would need to make significant changes to the curriculum of higher education in order to meet the global demand for skilled labour. As a result, implementing NEP 2020 would be a significant challenge. Overall, NEP 2020 is a very forward-thinking document that has a firm grasp on the current socioeconomic landscape and the potential to meet future challenges. Well, no policy will bear fruit if it is not properly implemented. The policy appears to be a well-thought-out and sincere attempt to reshape the Indian educational system. This policy emphasises the integration of professional education in HEI for skill development and job creation. It would be incorrect to conclude that NEP 2020 has laid a concrete roadmap for India 2.0, and if properly implemented, it has everything in place to make India a global hub in education by 2030 (Kumar).The type of education provided in that state has a significant impact on the nation's future. NEP 2020 represents a ray of hope in this direction. However, India as a country must ensure that the promises made under this act become a reality, which will only be possible with effective implementation of its provisions and proper coordination from all stakeholders.

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