

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

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ABSTRACT

The Bharat education system rooted Indian ethos. Education in India played a crucial role thought out Indian civilization. Influenced by religion, tradition, philosophical, furthermore by foreign invasion, colonial rule and global modern trends. Education system in Indian society was evolved over centuries form Vedic period (1500 BCE -600BCE) that had gurukul system where student used live with their respective guru for example gurukul of sage Sandipan ashram located Ujjain that taught lord Krishna, Sudama and Balarama they usually taught Vedas, Upanishads, philosophy, Sanskrit, mathematics astronomy and ethics. After that Buddhist and Jain education era that followed form (600 BCE TO 1200 BCE) that lead to rise of logic, medicine, law, Grammer, arts. Also, first universities Nalanda and Takahashi were created. Followed by classical and medieval period (200 CE-1200CE) which lead to expansion, advancement in learning center like Vikram Shila, vallabhi, odantapuri. Also, scholar like Aryabhata, charka and panini made significant. Later influence of foreign invasion upon the arrival of Islamic rule that create madrasas and maktabas revolving around Islamic and Persian education. Ancient Indian education majorly focused on encompassing growth aimed at morals, intellectual, spiritual growth as well as discipline, dharma centric learning.

1757- 1947 a major shift in Indian education was observed signifying transmute. During colonial rule traditional learning decline and rise of western style education system. Major education reform under British rule form charter act of 1813 which allowed missionaries Christian education. To saddler commission (1917-1919) advocated 12-years school system, promoted women's and emphasized on vocational and technical learning.

Indian leader also played paramount role in development of Indian education system. Both in times of British raj and post-independence. Including Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) supporting western education over traditional education, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) encouraged omen education system, Jyotiroa Phule (1827-1890) set up first girl school alongside his wife Savitribai Phule. Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) revive Vedic education promoting morals and ethic-based education, sir Syed Ahmed khan (1817-1898) established Aligarh Muslim university to preserve Islamic culture alongside providing western education among Muslims, Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)introduce craft-based and

self-sufficient education, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) promoted holistic education, arts, music, creative and free thinking, B.R.Ambedkar (1891-1956) empowering Dalits and gave them equal rights, Dr. sarvepalli Radhakrishna (1888-1975) promoted higher education and teacher training, maulana Abdul kalam Azad (1888-1958) established iits,aims,ugc institutions. These Indian leaders transformed Indian education by promoting modern and value-based education hence shaped Indian education system today.

Highlighted sub topic –

National education policy 1968-99

National education policy 1986

National education policy 2020

Notional education policy 2024

National education policy (NEP) background

NEP this policy trace back to 1968-66 backed by Kothari commission report inaugurated the 10+2+3 structure made of 10 years of school education, 2 years of secondary education, 3 years of higher education. accentuation of 14 years of education should be compulsory for children. Create base of higher education in India but their were many gaps in this policy that became challenging for implementation of this policy to address this issues and gaps that were present in the 1968 policy government come up with national education policy 1986 that promoted vocational education to enhance employment skills, focused on women's education and socially disadvantage groups, financial backward classes of society furthermore strengthen open and distant education IGNOUS that was set up 1985. This policy led to expansion of higher education but this policy was not fully implied in rural area of India.

National policy 2020

The national policy 2020 was significant reform in Indian education system. Replacing national policy 1986 after 34 years. This policy focused on holistic, inclusive, flexible, and multidisciplinary to meet 21st century needs, technology integration, skill development, vocational training from early ages, mother tongue-based education was aims for this policy.

This policy also addresses that drawback of previous policy and made universal access to qualify education at all the levels of the state. This policy also demolished previous structure of Indian education with a more define and well-developed structure. The traditional model of 10 +2 was replaced with a more age-appropriate structure.

New 5+3+3+4 education system was introduced in which age group was taken into consideration. Age group of 3-8 years were assigned pre- school to classes 2 mainly

focused on play-based, activity- based learning they were known was foundational stage. Age group of 8-11 years were assigned classes 3 to 5 focused on basic literacy, numeracy this was termed as preparatory stage. Age group 11-14 years are provided subject focused learning, coding vocational skills classes 6 to 8 are categorizing as middle stage. Lastly secondary stage form 14-18-year classes 9 to 12 focuses on multidisciplinary, flexible subject choices and critical thinking. Moreover, mother tough \ local language has to taught, assessment and holistic report card with 360 – degree assessment including 360 peer feedback, self-assessment, extracurricular must be issued. Borad exam for class 10th and 12th should be conducted.

Higher education reforms were made that highlighted multidisciplinary universities and flexible degree four year under graduated with multi exist option such

1Year – certificate

2year – diploma

3year – bachelor's degree

4year – bachelors' degree with research

Emphasis on liberal arts, critical thinking, research, technology, architecture etc. also national testing and admission reform that launched common entrance exam for universities admission process conducted by NTA. Internationalization of education allowed foreign university to set up their campus in India and promotion of academic collaboration and student exchange program. Digital and technological integration, e-learning and digital infrastructure expansion, Digi locker system for student record and certificates specially to rural areas were expanded. Inclusivity and equality in education is courage focuses on backward classes such as St/Sc/Obc, girls and differently abed students.

Government also implemented policy such as higher education commission of India (HECI), single regulator for all higher education except medical and legal studies and school complex

to ensure efficient resources –sharing and governance. Even teachers training and education was taken into consideration integrated B.ED. degree of 4 years course to become mandatory by 2030. Regular teacher training and performance assessment. Focus more on technology enabled learning for teachers.

Positive impact on national policy 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a landmark reform aimed at transforming India's education system to meet the needs of the 21st century. It replaces the 34-year-old NEP 1986, addressing key issues like rote learning, outdated curriculum, lack of skill-based education, and unequal access to education. This new structure focuses on foundational learning, play-based education, skill development, and a multidisciplinary approach, ensuring that students are well-equipped for higher education and employment. Unlike the rigid subject streams of the past, students now have the flexibility to choose subjects across different disciplines, fostering creativity, innovation, and critical thinking. Moreover, the curriculum has been revised to reduce content overload and emphasize conceptual understanding, making learning more engaging and application-based.

Another major highlight of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on multilingual education and This move is expected to improve comprehension, cognitive skills, and learning outcomes, especially for children from rural areas. Additionally, the policy promotes the teaching of Indian languages, Sanskrit, and classical literature, helping preserve India's rich linguistic and cultural heritage. At the same time, English and foreign languages remain an essential part of the curriculum, ensuring that students are prepared for global opportunities. The policy also prioritizes vocational education from Class 6 onwards, integrating internships and hands-on learning to equip students with practical skills. Subjects like coding, AI, robotics, and entrepreneurship have been introduced early in

the curriculum, helping students stay ahead in an increasingly technology-driven world. These changes make education more dynamic, relevant, and aligned with the job market, reducing the gap between education and employability.

In terms of higher education, NEP 2020 introduces major structural reforms, including the multiple entry-exit system in undergraduate programs. Students can now exit with a certificate after one year, diploma after two years, a degree after three years, or a research-intensive degree after four years, making education more flexible and accessible. A Common University Entrance Test (CUET) has been introduced for college admissions, reducing dependence on board exam scores and ensuring a fair and standardized selection process. The policy also promotes multidisciplinary higher education institutions, allowing students to combine diverse subjects like science, arts, commerce, and vocational studies. To further enhance India's global educational standing, NEP 2020 allows top foreign universities to set up campuses in India, encouraging international collaboration, research, and academic excellence. This move will not only improve the quality of higher education but also make India a global education hub. Special provisions have been made for students from marginalized communities, economically weaker sections (EWS), girls, and differently-abled students. The introduction of a Gender Inclusion Fund and scholarship programs ensures that education is accessible to all, irrespective of socio-economic background. Digital learning has also been given significant importance, with the expansion of e-learning platforms like DIKSHA, SWAYAM, and online courses in regional languages. This helps bridge the urban-rural education divide, providing students in remote areas with quality learning resources. The policy also focuses on teacher training and professional development, introducing rigorous teacher eligibility standards, periodic assessments, and the integration of digital tools

to improve teaching quality. By 2030, a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree will become mandatory for teachers, ensuring they are well-trained and skilled in modern pedagogical methods.

Challenges faced by NEP 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a transformative reform aimed at modernizing India's education system, but its implementation comes with significant challenges. One of the biggest hurdles is the lack of infrastructure and resources, especially in rural and economically weaker regions. Many schools in India lack adequate classrooms, trained teachers, digital access, and basic facilities, making the implementation of NEP's ambitious reforms difficult. The policy emphasizes technology-based learning, e-content, and digital education, but a large digital divide exists between urban and rural areas. Many students, particularly in remote villages, lack access to smartphones, computers, and stable internet connectivity, making it difficult to implement online and blended learning models effectively. Without bridging this digital gap, the policy's focus on technology-driven education may benefit only privileged students, increasing educational inequality rather than reducing it.

Another major challenge is the transition to the 5+3+3+4 structure, replacing the old 10+2 model. While this new framework is designed to align with global standards and promote holistic learning, many schools, especially in rural areas, are not equipped with resources to support foundational, preparatory, and vocational education. Implementing vocational training, experiential learning, and skill-based courses from Class 6 requires significant curriculum changes, trained teachers, and infrastructure, which may not be immediately available in government and low-budget private schools. Moreover, NEP 2020 suggests using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction until Class 5 (preferably Class 8). While this is beneficial for conceptual clarity

and learning, it poses practical challenges in a linguistically diverse country like India, where students often migrate across states and need fluency in English for higher education and global opportunities. The lack of quality regional language textbooks, teacher training, and uniformity in implementation makes this transition difficult, particularly in private and international schools that predominantly use English as the medium of instruction.

The financial burden of implementing NEP 2020 is another major concern. The policy proposes increased government spending on education to 6% of GDP, but currently, India spends only about 3% to 4%. Achieving the NEP's ambitious goals requires massive investments in teacher training, digital infrastructure, curriculum development, and vocational training centers. Many state governments may struggle to allocate sufficient funds, leading to delays in policy implementation and uneven progress across states. Additionally, the multiple exit options in undergraduate education and the restructuring of higher education institutions require significant reforms in the university accreditation system, faculty training, and curriculum redesign. The establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) to replace UGC and AICTE is a positive step, but it may take years to set up regulatory frameworks, streamline processes, and ensure consistency in higher education policies across the country.

Another critical challenge is teacher training and recruitment. NEP 2020 aims to improve the quality of teaching by making a four-year B.Ed. degree mandatory by 2030, but the current teacher training infrastructure is inadequate. Many teachers lack exposure to modern pedagogical methods, digital tools, and multidisciplinary teaching approaches. Implementing new teaching methodologies, continuous professional development, and performance-based teacher assessments will require a huge investment in training and capacity building. Additionally, teacher shortages, particularly in rural and government

schools, could slow down the policy's effective implementation. Teachers may also resist changes in assessment patterns, student evaluation methods, and technology-driven classrooms, making it difficult to shift from the traditional lecture-based teaching style to a more interactive and skill-based approach.

One of the most debated challenges is the board exam reforms and the new assessment structure. While NEP 2020 proposes competency-based assessments, holistic report cards, and reduced emphasis on rote learning, the current examination system is deeply ingrained in India's education culture. The success of these reforms depends on how effectively schools, teachers, and students adapt to the new evaluation patterns. Coaching institutes and the culture of cramming for marks remain dominant, and changing this mindset requires time, awareness, and curriculum adjustments. Similarly, the introduction of a Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for college admissions is aimed at reducing dependence on board marks, but it may favor students from privileged backgrounds who can afford coaching, creating another layer of inequality.

Lastly, policy implementation at the state level presents challenges due to variations in governance, funding, and regional priorities. Education is a concurrent subject, meaning both central and state governments have a say in its execution. Some states may resist certain aspects of the policy, particularly the language mandate, vocational training, or changes in the school structure. Ensuring uniform implementation across diverse socio-economic backgrounds, different school boards (CBSE, ICSE, state boards), and private institutions is a complex task that requires strong coordination, monitoring, and regulatory support.

Strengthening the Implementation of NEP 2020

One of the key aspects of successfully implementing NEP 2020 is ensuring that schools and higher education institutions are well-equipped with the necessary resources. The

policy envisions a shift from rote-based learning to skill-oriented education, which requires modern infrastructure, digital integration, and teacher training programs. However, many schools, especially in rural India, lack basic amenities such as electricity, internet access, and digital learning tools. The government must prioritize funding for such institutions and ensure that technology-driven education reaches every student, regardless of their socio-economic background.

Moreover, curriculum restructuring should be handled with care, keeping in mind regional diversities, cultural aspects, and employment opportunities. While the multidisciplinary approach and skill-based learning are commendable, there is a need for industry-academia collaboration to ensure that vocational training aligns with real-world job market demands. Introducing apprenticeships, industry-sponsored courses, and experiential learning programs can make students more employable and future-ready.

The teacher training aspect of NEP 2020 is another major area that needs improvement. The policy mandates a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree by 2030, but simply introducing this requirement is not enough. Continuous professional development programs should be made compulsory for educators, ensuring they remain updated with the latest teaching methodologies, digital tools, and inclusive pedagogical techniques. Additionally, performance-based incentives and better salaries for teachers can help attract and retain talent in the education sector.

Expanding Digital Learning and Technology Integration

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital learning, but it also highlighted the deep digital divide in India. While urban students had access to online classes and e-learning platforms, a vast majority of students in rural areas struggled due to a lack of internet connectivity and digital devices. To truly make NEP 2020 successful, a

nationwide digital infrastructure expansion is needed. Initiatives like BharatNet and PM eVidya should be scaled up to provide affordable internet access, digital classrooms, and e-learning resources to underprivileged students.

In addition, schools and universities should integrate AI-driven learning models, adaptive assessments, and virtual reality (VR)-based practical learning to enhance student engagement. AI-powered personalized learning platforms can cater to individual student needs, helping them grasp concepts at their own pace. Moreover, the use of blockchain for secure student records and certification verification can improve transparency and efficiency in the education system.

Addressing Regional and Socio-Economic Disparities

One of the most challenging aspects of implementing NEP 2020 is ensuring uniformity across different states and socio-economic backgrounds. India's education system is highly diverse, with multiple state boards, language preferences, and varying levels of economic development. While NEP 2020 emphasizes mother tongue-based education up to Class 5, the practical implementation of this policy is difficult in a multilingual country like India. There should be flexibility in language policies, ensuring that students who move between states or aspire for global careers are not at a disadvantage.

Additionally, marginalized communities, differently-abled students, and economically weaker sections (EWS) need special attention. The Gender Inclusion Fund proposed in NEP 2020 should be effectively implemented to encourage higher participation of girls in education. Scholarship programs, mid-day meal extensions, and financial aid initiatives must be expanded to ensure that no child drops out due to financial constraints.

Enhancing Higher Education and Research Opportunities

The restructuring of higher education under NEP 2020 is one of the most promising aspects of the policy. The introduction of a four-year undergraduate degree with multiple exit options allows students to pursue flexible learning pathways. However, for this system to work effectively, universities must revamp their curriculum and assessment methods. The success of this initiative depends on how well colleges and universities integrate research-based learning, industry partnerships, and global collaborations.

Furthermore, the establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) is expected to streamline regulations and improve governance in higher education. However, clear guidelines must be set to prevent bureaucratic delays and ensure autonomy for institutions. Foreign universities setting up campuses in India can be a game-changer, but it is important to maintain quality standards and ensure affordability for Indian students.

Another crucial aspect is boosting research and innovation. Currently, India's spending on research and development (R&D) is significantly lower than that of developed nations. NEP 2020 encourages research-oriented learning, but this needs to be backed by substantial funding, incubation centers, and collaboration between universities and industries. The National Research Foundation (NRF) should be fully operationalized to provide financial support to groundbreaking research projects, particularly in fields like artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and clean energy.

Policy Recommendations for Effective Implementation

1. **Increase Education Budget:** The government must allocate at least 6% of GDP to education, as recommended by NEP 2020, and ensure efficient utilization of funds.

2. **Strengthen Teacher Training:** Mandatory skill development workshops, digital

literacy programs, and incentive-based recruitment should be introduced for teachers.

3. Expand Digital Infrastructure: Affordable internet access, free tablets/laptops for underprivileged students, and AI-driven learning platforms should be promoted.

4. Industry-Academia Collaboration: Universities should collaborate with industries to create job-relevant courses, apprenticeship programs, and skill-based certifications.

5. Enhance Regional Implementation: States should be given flexibility in implementing language policies, curriculum adaptations, and skill-development programs based on local needs.

6. Encourage Research and Innovation: Increased funding for R&D, partnerships with global universities, and startup incubation centers should be prioritized.

7. Monitor and Evaluate Progress: A national task force should be established to regularly review the implementation of NEP 2020 and address challenges proactively.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020 is a bold step toward transforming India's education system, making it more holistic, inclusive, and future-oriented. While the policy outlines a progressive roadmap, its success depends on how effectively it is implemented across the country. Challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, digital divide, teacher shortages, and financial constraints must be systematically addressed through collaborative efforts between the government, private sector, and civil society.

If executed well, NEP 2020 has the potential to make India a global leader in education, innovation, and skill development. By focusing on foundational learning, digital literacy, vocational training, and research-driven education, India can equip its youth with the necessary skills to thrive in the 21st-century

knowledge economy. The journey ahead may be challenging, but with strong policy execution and collective efforts, India can build a world-class education system that is accessible, equitable, and empowering for all.

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