

## **THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020: FEATURES, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

**SYED ABDUL RAOUF**

Research Scholar Public Administration, Department of Political Science AMU Aligarh UP.

Email: syedraouf12@gmail.com

**INAM UL HAQ**

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar University Agra

Email: Inamulhaq021933@gmail.com

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objective of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is to revamp the country's educational system so that it is more contemporary, forward-thinking, and equitable. The key goals of the new strategy are to increase students' levels of literacy and numeracy upon graduation from elementary schools, to decrease the number of students who drop out of middle and secondary schools, and to implement a multidisciplinary approach into the nation's system of higher education. Early childhood education is going to be incorporated into formal education as part of the NEP's plan to implement a change away from the current 10+2 framework and toward a 5+3+3+4 structure. The NEP regards Education, especially SDG4, (Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030) as a priority for India, and it draws on the country's rich cultural traditions and value systems. In addition, the NEP 2020 places an emphasis on paring down the amount of material covered in the curriculum in order to free up more time for critical thinking and, as a result, cultivate individuals who have 21st-century abilities ingrained in them. As a result, the entire educational programme as well as the teaching methodology need to be revised in order to achieve these objectives. Adapting the curriculum so that it fits within the parameters of the National Curriculum Framework is one of the obstacles that must be overcome in order to properly execute these changes. Additionally, educators are required to reevaluate the learning content rubric and make appropriate adjustments to the textbooks.

**Keywords:** New Education Policy, sustainable Development goals, Digital Infrastructure, STEM.

### **1. The New Education Policy 2020: An Introduction**

Education is essential to reaching one's full potential as a human being, creating a society that is just and just, and fostering national progress. In order for India to maintain its ascendancy and maintain its leadership position on the international stage in the areas of economic growth, social fairness and equality, advancements in science, national integration, & cultural preservation, it is essential that all citizens have access to education of a high standard. The best way to develop and make the most of our country's many skills and resources for the benefit of the individual, society, our nation, and the globe as a whole is to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality education on a global scale. Our capacity to give young people in India with access to educational opportunities of the best possible standard will have a significant impact on India's position as the nation with the youngest population in the world over the course of the next decade.

The Union Cabinet of India gave its approval to the National Education Policy (NEP) on July 28, 2020, after a gap of 34 years. The Indian government gathered feedback from 2.5 lakhs village-level beneficiaries to two national parliamentary level committees over the course of more than fifty months of discussions and workshops. This policy was endorsed by the Union Cabinet of India. On the other hand, it is unclear to what degree the recommendations have been implemented into the policy.

The old National Education Policy (NEP) from 1986 has been replaced with the new National Education Policy (NEP) for 2020. This policy is a complete framework for basic education all the way up to higher education along with vocational training in rural as well as urban India. The policy's goal is to revolutionize India's education system by the year 2040. After the strategy was made public, the government made it clear that no one would be compelled to study any one language, such as Hindi, Kannada, or Marathi, amongst others. And that the medium of teaching will not be changed from English to any other regional language at any time in the foreseeable future. It is up to the individual governments, educational institutions, and schools to make the decision how the language policy in [NEP] should be put into practice. The language policy in [NEP] provides a broad guideline with an advisory character. Based on the committee report that was presented on June 1st, 2017, a draft of the NEP was presented in 2019 by an expert group led by a former chief of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) named Krishnaswamy. The review process for the NEP was initiated in January 2015 by a committee that was chaired by the former Cabinet Secretary T.S.R. Subramanian. The Draft New Education Policy (DNEP) 2019 was eventually made available by the [Ministry of Human Resource Development], which was then followed by a series of discussions with the general public.

The Draft (NEP) Was a Total of 484 Pages. The ministry created the draft policy after a thorough consultation process. It received over 2 million proposals from 2.5 million gram panchayats, 6600 blocks, and 6000 ULBs (Urban Local Bodies) throughout 676 districts.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The information was obtained from secondary sources such as research papers, newspapers, websites, journals, and articles. These secondary sources were consulted in order to gather the details.

### **Highlights of NEP2020**

There are some good changes in India's new education policy compared to the old one. Some of its ideas are very excellent and worth supporting. The policy wants to see a model of learning that is all-encompassing, connected, and complete. Along with art and beauty, a scientific mindset and way of thinking based on facts will be taught.

#### **The main ideas behind this policy are:**

- Allowing students to choose how they want to learn;
- Promoting arts, sciences, physical education, and other activities outside of school so that students can choose what interests them;
  - Using a multidisciplinary approach that includes the social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports;
- Stressing conceptual learning over memorization;
- Promoting creativity and critical thinking;

### **Key Features of NEP 2020**

#### **The following are some of the key features of New Education Policy 2020:**

a). By redesigning the school curriculum shifting from the 10+2 model to a 5+3+3+4 framework to reflect a child's holistic development—this stage accounting for 80% of cognitive growth—the policy has improved the foundation of education.

b). Allowing students to enter and withdraw from any course multiple times is a flexible move that allows them to acquire a 'basic certificate' within a year, two 'diploma certificates' within two years, and a 'degree' upon completion of the course, all without losing any years. After they finish the course in their fourth year, they will receive an honors degree.

- c). More subject choice flexibility, the elimination of barriers between the arts and sciences, extracurricular, co-curricular, sports, and vocational crafts, and curricular activities would all help kids learn and develop at their own pace.
- d). It is an excellent move that the GDP is now planned to the education sector at 6% instead of 4.43 percent. The goal of the policy is to attain 100% literacy in primary schools by 2025 and to increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio in higher education to 50% (currently 26.3%) by 2035.
- e). The curriculum includes gender sensitivity, which will increase students' awareness of gender issues.
- f). The evaluation method will shift to a formative approach that emphasizes critical thinking, higher-order thinking abilities, and conceptual clarity. This is a significant departure from the current classroom practice of rote learning.
- g). A focus on building appropriate infrastructure in schools to facilitate easier access for children with impairments, as well as inclusive classes, is a suitable step to establish a generally welcoming atmosphere.
- h). Teaching elementary school students, possibly up to class 8, in their mother tongue has been a positive step, as educators worldwide concur that instructing in early exposure to one's mother tongue promotes learning, comprehension, and improved capacity for learning.
- i). Offering "Classical Language" as a choice will assist pupils in developing their language skills. Instruction of modern subjects at the intermediate and high school levels, such as Design thinking, organic living, holistic health, and artificial intelligence , Education of the environment and Global citizenship Education (GCED).

### **3. Education System**

As suggested by the NEP 2020, the new education system will follow a 5+3+3+4 education system where the students will spend 5 years in strengthening their foundation, 3 years in the Preparatory stage, 3 years in the Middle stage and rest 4 years in the secondary stage. Based on early childhood care and education all the way up to higher education, fundamental reforms that bring the highest possible quality, equity, with integrity into the system are required in order to close the gap between the actual learning results and what is intended.

It is imperative that by the year 2040, India will have established a system of education that is on par with the best in the world. This system will ensure that all students, irrespective of their socioeconomic standing, will have access to an education of the highest possible caliber.

This National Education Policy 2020 being the first education policy the government has implemented in the twenty-first century, and its primary objective is to address the numerous growing developmental imperatives facing the country. This Policy recommends that all aspects of the educational framework, such as regulation and funding, be changed and modernized in some way. The goal of this project is to establish a new system that is consistent with the aspirational goals of the twenty-first century.

Education, especially SDG4, is a priority for India, and it draws on the country's rich cultural traditions and value systems. It is widely believed that, for the sake of the nation's security, it is essential to instill understanding of India and the various social, cultural, and technological needs that it has, as well as in addition to its unparalleled aesthetic, linguistic, and intellectual traditions, as well as its robust morality in India's younger generation.

#### **4. Opportunities of New Education Policy**

1. The National Education Policy Act of 2020 (NEP 2020) proposes a holistic report card whereby a student's performance is evaluated by taking into consideration each of the three categories of learning: intellectual, psychomotor, and affective. This will assist students in perceiving the world from all different points of view.
2. Permitting international institutions to create campuses in the country is a step in the right direction for both students and the authorities of the country. This will not only increase the number of research-based options available to students, but it will also raise capacity and, in the longer term, prevent brain drain.
3. Academic credit that is stored in a digital locker will operate in a manner analogous to that of bank credit, enabling a student to get back to school after an absence, as will be defined by the higher education commission at a later date.
4. The National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), which will be an independent entity, will be established in order to provide a venue for the unrestricted exchange of ideas regarding the use of technology to enhance learning, evaluation, planning, and administration in both elementary and higher levels of education.

5. The concept of "Pairing Schools," also known as "twinning," in which one public school is paired with one private school, is the best idea that can come out of this strategy. This gives kids the opportunity to examine many aspects such as learning by doing, infrastructure, teaching approach, and the overall educational set up from diverse points of view.

6. Instead of using chalk and talk, lecture, and audio-visual aids, a strategy that keeps the instructor's interest, adaptability, and personality in mind is one that has given educators optimism. This approach gives educators more leeway in picking components of pedagogy to implement in the classroom, which gives them more opportunity for creativity. It is important to encourage teachers to engage in self-study, including self-reflection, self-analysis, and self-evaluation of their own practices.

7. The timing of the announcement of this program couldn't have been better, given the large demographic dividend it offers. This regulation will have a significant bearing on the future of the young people if it is carried out exactly as prescribed.

8. For schools, one of the most important NEP 2020 possibilities is to switch from yearly tests to an approach of formative tests that will help the teaching and learning process. Students show what they know in a number of ways, including a low-stakes board examination in 10th grade and several assessments throughout the year that focus on showing what they have learned. This is done so that students don't have to be afraid of tests and can show what they have learned to the best of their abilities

## **5. Challenges of New Education Policy**

### **1) Changing Mentality.**

The modern educational system is a legacy from the time of the British and of the Industrial Age. This shift in mentality will involve at least two generations' worth of parents, teachers, grandparents, and school personnel. A generation with an emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education must make way for those educated in the NEP. The business world will also need to adjust its policies on recruitment and grooming in order to line with this reality. Changing this way of thinking will be fraught with a number of difficulties. Despite this, it is possible if the government engages in a significant amount of "soft power play."

**2) Raising Teacher Standards.**

It is necessary for us to recruit only the most qualified and intelligent candidates for teaching jobs at all levels. Furthermore, because they are the ones who are genuinely responsible for molding the next generation of citizens, educators ought to once again be seen as the most important and respected members of our society. In addition, there is work that needs to be done to remove personal and professional barriers associated with working in remote and inaccessible regions. This work is essential for both the preparation of this workforce and the effective completion of the NEP.

**3) Training Educators.**

In order to achieve such lofty goals, it will be necessary to provide suitable training for educators, teachers, and other official staff members, in addition to developing a pool of exceptional and inspirational guides. Instead of being a laborious activity that ultimately produces young people who are unable to find work, education needs to be something that students look forward to doing and finds interesting. The policy will need to develop a learning ecosystem that takes into consideration the geographical and cultural variety of our country along with the different learning paces of each individual student. This will be necessary in order to meet the requirements of the policy.

**4) Funding and Scaling the New Model.**

By the year 2030, it is anticipated that India would have more than 250 million students attending its various educational institutions. The ratio of students to instructors in India is 1:35, so the country needs an estimated 7 million more teachers than it already has in order to accommodate its massive student population. These educators are required to have completed and graduated from a reputable Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme, whether they have a bachelor's degree or a postgraduate degree, and whether they have one, two, or four years of experience teaching. In addition, teaching is one of the professions in India that pays the least, with an average teacher earning somewhere in the region of 200,000 Indian Rupees (Rs.) each year. When compared to the more common practice of teaching through printed text, conceptual and experiential education will be more challenging due to the limits described above. To make up for this significant gap in resources, the government needs to increase the amount of money it sets aside for this purpose. In addition, the current pool of educators needs to be trained in the methodologies of the newer generations of classrooms.

### 5) Education being a Concurrent Subject.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is an initiative aimed at ensuring uniformity and standardization along a single axis of control and power, taking into account India's size, population, diversity, and constitutional federalism. Due to the fact that education is on the concurrent list, several states may raise objections.

### 6) Language Controversy

A number of Indian states, like West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, as well as Tamil Nadu, have expressed their disapproval of the three-language model on the grounds that making Hindi a required language will give the impression that it is being imposed upon the people who live in southern India.

### 7) Acceptance by the People

The vast majority of experts are of the opinion that, despite the fact that college policies actively promote the use of reason and critical thinking in campus activities, this is not reflected in actual actions on campus, as is proven by recent attacks on the learners and critical thinkers.

### 8) Digital Infrastructure

The COVID-19 outbreak has made it clear that there needs to be a substantial investment in digital infrastructure in order to provide digital education.

### 9) Privatisation Trend

According to the findings of the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) in 2021, around 79% of colleges in the country are privately run; while 13% receive some form of assistance from the government. Therefore, the data indicating that India's educational system is headed in the direction of privatization and cost hikes is evident and cannot be misunderstood.

## Conclusion

This policy could be improved in a number of ways, despite the fact that it already has a lot going for it. If the policies it entails are kept up to date on a consistent basis, NEP 2020 has a good chance of becoming the most effective policy in the area of education and human resources. The National Education Policy 2020, often known as NEP 2020, is an all-encompassing and far-reaching program with the overarching goal of modernizing India's educational system so that it can compete successfully

on a global scale. However, its successful implementation in the academic sector in India is a tough undertaking that involves a coordinated and collaborative effort from a variety of stakeholders, including the government, educational institutions teachers, students, and communities. This effort is required to ensure the success of the mission. In order to successfully implement NEP 2020 in the public school system there is a critical requirement of sufficient money, the expansion of existing infrastructure, the improvement of educational programs, and the efficient application of technology. The government has a significant part to play in ensuring that education institutions and educators have access to the required resources and assistance; but, education institutions and teachers also have the ability to take the initiative to effectively adopt and put into practice the policy recommendations. It is possible that the implementation of NEP 2020 in educational institutions would bring about considerable beneficial improvements in education quality, the professionalism of teachers, the learning outcomes of students, and the overall growth of the country. In addition, the great amount of optimism that this policy gives to individuals who are in need is provided by it. The student-centered approach taken by NEP 2020 should, by the year 2030, have led to improvements in both the educational system and the job market.

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