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# National Education Policy 2020: A Paradigm Shift in Nation's Approach to Education

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**ABSTRACT**

India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is regarded as a paradigm shift in the nation's approach to education. Approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2020, the policy seeks to modernize the current educational structure in order to align with the requirements of the twenty-first century. This is done with the admirable goal of making India a worldwide powerhouse in the field of knowledge. As it marks a comprehensive silver lining towards achieving lifelong learning skills, the National Education Policy (NEP) promotes quality education, thereby leveraging the call of the fourth industrial revolution to take education to new heights by building upon the pillars of equity, quality, accessibility, and accountability. The purpose of this study is to provide a basic summary of the overall features of the 2020 policy. It presents a chronology for the evolution of the educational system. It also aids in comprehending how the underlying policies might result in an educational revolution. It proposes several policy initiatives that have addressed the problems in present policy.

**Keywords:** Education, Framework, Quality, Accountability, Comprehensive, Knowledge

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India is widely regarded as a transformative restructuring of the nation's education system. The program, sanctioned by the Union Cabinet in July 2020, seeks to overhaul the current education system to align with the requirements of the 21st century. The National Education Policy 2020 was implemented 34 years after the Education Policy of 1986. NEP would provide a toddler a head start by laying the groundwork for lifelong learning. It suggests structural adjustments and serves as a comprehensive guide to our educational system. The fundamental goal of any educational system is to ensure that all students, regardless of birth or background, have the chance to study, succeed, and explore new things. As Mahatma Gandhi rightly points out that education means all-round drawing out of the best in child and man- body, mind and spirit. NEP is the Indian government's primary endeavor since 1986 (Suresh *et al.* 2021). NEP-2020 envisions inclusive, justified, and quality education to satisfy India's expanding development imperative with a rapidly developing job landscape and a universally diversified environment in the education sector. It is becoming evident that one must not only learn but also understand how to learn.

Movement of the Indian education system may witness a shift in centricity of multiple areas such as teacher to students, information to knowledge, marks to skill, exam to experiment, learning to research, choice to competency (Aithal and Aithal, 2020).

## Historical Upsurge

The educational process in our nation has been continuously evolving since ancient times. In 1948, after independence, a panel led by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the second president of Independent India and a renowned educator, endeavored to completely revamp the existing policies and adapt them to the current and future needs. Following a significant interval of around 18 years, the Kothari commission was established in 1966, followed by the National Education Policy in 1968, and subsequently updated in 1986 and 1992 (1986/92). In 1968, there were significant changes in our educational system. Indira Gandhi introduced the concept of mandatory schooling for everyone. Later In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi proposed the notion of eradicating inequality and achieving equal educational chances. In 1992, Narsimha Rao gained popularity by advocating for equal access to education. In 2020, the government introduced the NEP, a proposal aiming at boosting the enrollment ratio in higher education, including vocational education, from the current 26.3% (as of 2018) to 50% by 2035.

The Yashpal Committee of 1993, the National Knowledge Commission of 2006, the Tandon Committee of 2009, and the 3rd National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 are considered key milestones in the development of educational reforms in India. These initiatives have played a crucial role in shaping policies that address the changing issues in the education sector.

## Features and Dimensions

**Curriculum:** The focus is on streamlining the curriculum by prioritizing the key components and advocating for more emphasis on critical thinking, inquiry-based discovery, and analysis-based learning. The NEP allows for the presence of many entrance and departure points, each accompanied by certificates at every step. The program envisions a multidisciplinary education that offers a flexible curriculum and encourages innovative combinations of subjects. By 2020, all higher educational institutions will undergo a transformation into interdisciplinary institutions, with a minimum enrollment of 3000 students (Chopra, 2020). School planners are not clearly distinguishing between curricular, extra-curricular, and co-curricular activities in the arts, sciences, and humanities, or between vocational and academic streams. Schools are gradually moving away from the traditional focus on arts, commerce, and science, and instead, they are adopting a child-centric approach to learning that is joyful and engaging. As part of this shift, schools are aiming to promote vocational courses that include internships.

**Education to All:** Development of creative potential of each individual is the particular focus of consideration. It doesn't limit to cognitive development but emphasis on developing foundational capacity of literary, numeracy and high order cognitive capacity, complete liberation and realization of self, aiming at reaching every remote and distant location of the country. Multidisciplinary and holistic development. More emphasis on equity and inclusion. Sustainable investment in a strong vibrant public education system. The Policy proposes the creation of 'inclusion funds' to help socially and educationally disadvantaged children pursue education emphasizes setting up of Gender Inclusion Fund, Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups.

New Education Policy aims to facilitate an inclusive, participatory and holistic approach, which takes into consideration field experiences, empirical research, stakeholder feedback, as well as lessons learned from best practices.

**Human Values:** It proposes for the development of good human values capable of rational thought and action proposing compassion and respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality and justice, empathy, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, creative imagination with sound ethical prospects. The policy aims for building equitable inclusive and plural society. Multidisciplinary and holistic development are the other major principles the policy aims to achieve.

**India Centric**: Policy envision India centric education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society. Inclusion of knowledge of Indian courses such as endo medical practices, forest management, traditional crop, cultivation, natural farming. **"*Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat"*** aims to actively enhance interaction between people of diverse cultures by identifying 100 tourist destinations in

the country and encouraging students to visit these places in the form of field trips (NIC 2021).

**Comprehensive Evaluation:** We have shifted the assessment gears to a diagnostic approach from content based exams easier in the sense that they test primarily core competencies rather than content memorization. To reach the top bracket of" *bloom's taxonomy*" multi model assessment is focused upon. It also focuses on regular, competency based learning, formative development. Assessment for teaching, testing of higher order skill. Reports cards are becoming 360 holistic progress cards that will give comprehensive feedback on skills, capabilities, substituting old system of marks. A program called STEAM replaced STEM to analyze the all round progress of the students, against the present limited and narrow based credit system. Policy doesn't revisit the concept of *"no detention policy"* which guarantees promotion through class 1st to 8th to all children irrespective of their skills and readiness to move to other classes (Joshi 2020).

**Enrollment:** Policy aims to provide infrastructural support, innovative Education center to bring back dropout into mainstream. It also envisages 100% gross enrollment ratio by 2030 in schools. It strives to bring a greater ambit of children attaining education across all age groups through the extension of RTE and emphasis on open school program and distant learning scheme.1.5 million students are out of the school *according to human rights watch*, school closure in over 188 countries have left aspiring learners stranded (Karan 2020). NEP plans to bring those 2 crore children back to school who are currently out of school in order to fulfill this plan over 15 years requires setting up of 50 schools every week.

**Teacher Education:** NEP calls for making the teacher recruitment process more vibrant and transparent. It regards the necessity of compulsory continuous training of faculties for 50 hours in a year for their professional development covering latest pedagogies regarding foundational literacy numeracy .The policy builds a learning regime demonstrating cultural, geographical diversity, keeping pupils learning pace and with the technological intervention teacher will monitor students and become the initiator of IT implementation. It proposes new language institutions like *Indian institute of translation and*

*interpretation and national institute of Pali, Persian, Prakrit*. It keeps teachers at the central stage by giving its epitome position, it can rightly reshape students to be a better member of society (Anupam, 2021). Ensuring quality of teacher education across all stages policy envision teacher career progression for equitable and inclusive education, policy reaffirms every citizen's right to dream, thrive, and contributes to nation bridging the social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes. *John Adams* said, "that teacher is the maker of man" so as a director of academy society, teacher helps the students to move forward desirably.

Teacher role under NEP should be passionate and motivated, having multidisciplinary knowledge, research oriented mindset, clear idea about teaching methods, full fledged I.T knowledge bearing progressive attitude shall acts as mentor and true facilitator. Role of teacher would be paramount for which they need to be empowered academically, mentally and financially enabling them to act as a real transformer reaching the students without bias and compulsion to orient and reorient future. Transforming the quality of teaching where teacher should be empowered to lead from the front , revamping of schools is an inescapable necessity.

**Scientific Intervention:** It is a progressive shift towards a more scientific approach to education, the prescribed structure will help to cater to the ability of the child stages of cognitive development as well as social and physical awareness. Promotion of the courses like SWAYAM, MOOC, ODL, and other online courses furthers the cause of the student centric model. (NETF) national educational technology forum will be set up to foster free exchange of ideas on the application of technology in education. It is a step towards achieving cognitive character, well rounded and holistic development of the skills of the 21st century emphasizing the needs for extensive application of technology.

**Vocational Education:** The policy proposes vocational courses from 6th standard one challenge for this is the lack of resources, infrastructure setup ,trained personnel, one of the solutions can be that schools can do a partnership with the local craftsmen who have proper infrastructure and vocational education to be smoothly Integrated into higher education such that at least 50% of learners are exposed to these kind of education by

2025, creation of skill labs, collaboration with IITs, polytechnics and local industry and conducting short term training courses in skill development. (Vlachopoulos *et al.* 2017) observed that simulation and games can bring critical thinking which is complementary to teaching. Every state/district will be encouraged to establish "*Bal Bhavans*" as a special daytime boarding school, to participate in activities of art-related, career-related, and play-related . Free school infrastructure can be used as *Samajik Chetna Kendras*.

**Funding:** Inclusivity and equity has to be achieved by providing sufficient funds to support and increase the gross enrollment ratio of socio economic disadvantaged learners, special zones and incentives to higher education institutions that offer education in local language or bilingually organize outreach program to sensitize on education opportunities and use of technology to relay education to deserved groups.

**Learning by Doing:** NEP favors advanced learning experience through learning and simulation to provide learning through augmented and virtual reality in multiple languages. Whelen (2009) regards the socio-economic needs of learners for improving effectiveness of education. Recognising and understanding the unique capabilities of each child. Policy identifies that over 85% of child brains develop by the age of 6 and stresses the importance of healthy brain development and growth in the early stage of learning (Chanda).

**Research and Development**: National research foundation acts as an umbrella body and will be set up as an apex body to foster and conduct quality research across the length of the country and to promote strong research culture, strengthening the overall research ecosystem.

**Global Leader in Knowledge:** To give international shape to education top global ranking universities will be allowed to open its branch in India. NEP also laid the road map for newer India and contributed to the global presence of this country in the education sector (Kumar, 2021; Shashi Dharan *et al.* 2021). Focus on conceptual understanding rather than rote learning. Policy aims to transform education by 2040 as a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education vocational training in both rural and urban India.

**Local Content:** As NEP-2020 suggested that 20 to 30% of local syllabus should be in text book. Using qualitative content analysis and twitter mining on NEP, it is opined that this policy will revolutionize Indian education scenario (Kausau *et al.* 2020). Recognising and understanding more intake of local content. thereby demonstrates the cause of local content maintaining the importance of ethical and constitutional values. Respect for the local context and respect for diversity in all curriculum, pedagogy and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject.

**Light Regulations:** Same set of norms for regulations, accreditation, academic standards will be applicable to both public and private higher education emphasis on providing maximum autonomy at the level of finance, exam, evaluation, curriculum, administration. There is a definition of light regulations wherein providing a way for opening foreign universities in India and Indian universities in foreign nations.

**Autonomy:** In upcoming 15 years, affiliation of colleges is to be phased out and graded autonomy concept be introduced. This will not only grant the institutions complete freedom to make decisions regarding governance, curriculum setup, fee structure, functioning etc but also pave the way for privatization (Agarwal). This is the principle being forwarded by national policy of education 1986-1992 that colleges should have freedom to determine and prescribe it's own courses and curriculum.

**Merit Based Appointment:** against appointment based on affiliation or patronage the regulation should reflect giving preference to the candidates most suited for the roles. It should be maintained that professors without at least $51^{st}$ author scholarly publications or patents, can't become director, vice chancellor therefore setting the principle of merit based appointment thereby cleaning the system of bureaucratic influence.

Procedural fairness, maintaining public confidence and impartiality, supports the principle of political neutrality, regardless of personal views or relationships, cultural and Language competency or community connections. Beyond traditional experience, non-traditional activities and career paths may also be valued as suitable qualifications.

## Implementation Challenges

Implementing this policy seems to be a mighty challenge as India is a nation of several languages with approximately 270 mother tongues as per census 2011 and classrooms might have children with more than one spoken language. It is a missing curriculum (Gowda, 2020).

It is nothing but exclusion policy (Matthew, 2020)

It is a rattling of communists and Islamists (Majumdar, 2020)

It is faulty in soe gender related aspects (Singh, 2020)

NEP is absolutely silent on RTE, while the act talks extensively about universalisation of education, it fails to make primary and secondary education a legal right. Hence, there is no mandatory mechanism prescribed for central and state governments to make this a reality (Agarwal *et al.* 2020).

It was a disastrous failure for those trapped in the vicious cycle of independence (Nawani, 2020).

**Way forward:** Realization of NEP depends on stakeholders proactively implementing new policy and there shall not be any nudge from government (Kumar, 2020). To achieve these goals, NEP is designed, reenergise and overhaul the higher education system by having at least one higher educational institutions in every district throughout the country. The new education strategy marks a shift from what to think to how to think in digital age according to government (Bhasin, 2020).

(Vippu *et al.* 2019) emphasis on the pedagogical training of Teachers for ensuring quality education. As critical and innovative thinking can't be achieved by using existing one way non participative teaching and "*eat and committed*" assessment methods.

(Minbayeye *et al.* 2017) observed that changes in the pedagogy of teaching is entirely associated with changes in the ideology and execution of educational reforms which largely gets influenced by the role of the teacher.

## CONCLUSION

The National Education Policy 2020 represents a complete overhaul of the education system, rather than just a series of changes. This symbolizes a fundamental change in thinking that accepts a wide range of differences, encourages the generation of new ideas, and brings education in line with the requirements of the 21st century. As the country begins to implement NEP-2020, its effects are expected to go well beyond educational settings, influencing the future of Indian people and contributing to the nation's advancement on the international level. This strategy demonstrates a dedication to cultivating a cohort of students that has not just information but also the ability to adjust, create, and possess the necessary skills to overcome the difficulties of a constantly evolving environment. It is a huge move in the direction of achieving sustainable development goals 4 that stands for universal quality education.sub optimal level of governance and leadership, corrupted regulatory systems, fragmentation in higher education, needs to be taken care of while having comprehensive dialogue involving stakeholders from various backgrounds. It further requires community participation and awareness schemes highlighting the cause of quality education and making education available to all.

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