



## **Review of National Education Policy (NEP 2020): Issue, Challenges and Opportunities**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The Government of India's recent education policy is the first in 34 years to replace the National Education Policy of 1986, which proposes a number of reforms in the Indian education system, including reforms at the central level. The NEP 2020 proposes reforms in its regulation, administration and educational structure to create a new system that is in line with the ambitious goals of education in the 21st century. The NEP proposed sweeping changes, including opening up Indian higher education to foreign universities, abolishing the University Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education. One of the key features of NEP 2020 will be a single regulation for higher education institutions with the establishment of Higher Education Commission of India which will eventually replace the existing regulatory bodies like UGC or AICTE. The policy is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aims to make India a vibrant knowledge society and a global knowledge superpower by making school and college education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, adapted to the needs of the 21st century. The long-term plan of the policy is to abolish the current system of colleges affiliated to universities and merge the numerous small colleges, which are academically unviable and financially expensive, into larger HEIs.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The education system is expected to make students learners, innovators, practitioners, researchers and trainers. Reform of education is the only way to meet the challenges and boost the economic development of the country. States in India have been given full powers to formulate and implement policies. While education policies are formulated by the central government, state governments have the freedom to implement these policies. The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in India is a national body that develops policies and programmes, formulates curriculum frameworks and guidelines. The National Education Policy, 1986 and Program of Action, 1992 provide free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children below the age of 14 years.

With an aim to create an educational environment that matches global standards, the Government of India in 2019 appointed former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (KPMG, 2020) Dr. K. A committee was formed to draft the National Education Policy under the chairmanship of By Kasturirangan. The Union Cabinet approved the policy paper prepared by the committee and the National Education Policy 2020 came into effect on 29 July 2020. This policy aims to restructure the education system in the country. The new education system covers education from pre-school/anganwadi to higher education. The NEP proposes reforms in the educational structure, including its regulation and administration, to create a new system that is in line with the ambitious goals of 21st century education. The NEP aims to achieve 100% gross enrollment ratio in schooling by 2030, closing social gaps in school access, participation and educational outcomes.

The policy is a comprehensive framework for primary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The strategy aims to transform India's education system by 2021. Soon after the policy was announced, the government clarified that no one would be forced to study any particular language and the medium of education would not be shifted from English to any regional language. Education in India is a concurrent list subject. Himachal Pradesh has become the first state to implement the new Education Policy 2020.

### **FEATURES OF NEP-2020:**

The National Education Policy 2020 has suggested various reforms in school education as well as higher education including technical education. The National Education Policy 2020 has mentioned several action points/activities for implementation in school education as well as higher



education. The new education policy seeks to positively improve the current education system. It is combined with some very innovative and contemporary proposals. The policy envisages a model of inclusive education that is immersive, consistent and engaging. NEP-2020 seeks to implement both informal and formal education models. The new policy seeks to extend learning beyond the classroom and motivate students to learn through practical experience. From the primary stage of education, students will be exposed to multilingualism which will have a huge cognitive advantage. A student-centred approach will be developed to replace the current teacher-centred approach, in which students will have the option to choose the subjects they want to learn. Some of the salient features of NEP 2020 are as follows-

- NEP, 2020 aims to increase GER from preschool to secondary level to 100% by 2030 while GER in higher education including vocational education to 50% by 2035 from 26.3% (2018).
- Vocational education will be an integral part of the higher education system. Stand-alone technical universities, health science universities, law and agricultural universities or institutions in these or other fields will aim to become multi-disciplinary institutions.
- A new curriculum and pedagogic structure (5+3+3+4) have been implemented.
- Creation of an autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), to provide a platform for open exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance education, evaluation, planning, administration. Appropriate integration of technology in all levels of education
- Achieving 100% youth and adult literacy.
- Expansion of open and distance education to increase Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER).
- Center and states will work together to increase public investment in education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest.

**ISSUES OF NEP 2020:**

- Initial distribution of students in various subjects.
- Lack of access to HE, especially in the most economically disadvantaged areas has resulted in a current gross enrollment ratio (GER) of only 25%.
- Lack of teachers and institutional independence to do new things in HE attracts more students.
- Inadequate job management practices and the advancement of intelligence with institutional leaders.
- Lack of research and innovation at many universities and colleges.
- Low levels of governance and leadership in institutions of higher learning.
- A corrupt control system that allows fake colleges to thrive while pressing for better, innovative institutions.

**CHALLENGES OF NEP 2020:**

NEP 2020 advocates three major thematic developments: one, a step towards content-driven pedagogy that inspires rote learning to conceptual testing; two, 360-degree assessment that includes students' academic, mental and physical well-being, and; Three, an experiential approach through business skills, mathematical and computational thinking, and new age skills such as coding and data science. The aim is noble and the strategy timely. However, the success and pace of implementation will depend on how successfully the government meets the challenges ahead of this policy.

✓ India has the second largest education system in the world with over 15 lakh schools, 25 crore students and 89 lakh teachers. The size of the higher education system is also large. According to the AISHE 2019 report, India's higher education sector has 3.74 crore students in nearly 1,000 universities, 39,931 colleges and 10,725 independent institutions. Thus, the nationwide implementation of this mega education policy is going to be a massive exercise involving multiple stakeholders at the state, district, and block levels. Creating shared responsibility and ownership among key stakeholders, including the private sector, at the extraordinarily diverse state and district levels will be a major challenge for education leadership.

✓ Another challenge, as rightly pointed out by the NEP Drafting Committee led by K Kasturirangan, is linked to lack of funding, bureaucracy and schools' capacity for scaling and innovation. In order to effectively manage the proposed changes and overcome these obstacles, the existing organizational structure of the Ministry and its ecosystem will need to undergo a major overhaul.



✓ Replacement of the existing regulatory bodies, mainly the UGC, AICTE and the National Council for Teachers Education, will have to wait for the creation of new institutional structures through legislative initiatives.

✓ The success of implementation of NEP also depends on successful cooperation between Center and States. Although the NEP is drafted by the Centre, its success depends on the support and cooperation of the politically neutral government.

✓ The NEP is drafted by the Central Government and its implementation largely depends on the active cooperation of the States. Because most of the service-related education is done by the state governments. This is not easy to do given the intensity of political polarization and the lack of trust between the Center and the states in recent times. Many opposition-ruled states have strong objections to several key provisions of the NEP and the manner in which they are implemented.

✓ The challenge is to keep the private schools of the country on our side. If the government and other regulatory bodies recognize private schools as equal partners in the NEP process, they can rely on them for necessary financial resources and innovative technologies.

✓ 70 percent of higher education institutions (colleges and universities) are run by the private sector. Interestingly, about 65-70 percent of students are currently enrolled in private higher education institutions. Additionally, the private sector brings much-needed financial resources and innovation. Therefore, creating a workable institutional framework for government and regulatory bodies.

✓ The NEP said the country would have to increase public expenditure on education to 6 percent of GDP to achieve the new policy targets. It is a difficult task considering past promises and their actual fulfillment. For example, the National Education Policy of 1968 recommended an allocation of 6 percent of GDP for education. However, public expenditure on education has not exceeded 3 percent in all these decades. Ironically, the Union budgetary allocation for education has decreased during the NEP launching year. The education budget has been reduced from INR 99,311 crore in 2020-21 to INR 93,224 crore in 2021-22.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES OF NEP 2020:**

- A better outcome monitoring and resource sharing strategy will lead to integration of the highly fragmented higher education system into clusters.
- Improved budgetary efficiency, which can be directed towards increasing educational outcomes
- A clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities between different higher education institutions in regulation, accreditation, funding and academic standard setting makes it easier for HEIs to start and operate.
- Increased academic and administrative autonomy of all HEIs leads to increased quality, leading to both financial and non-financial benefits
- A better service environment for teachers in terms of infrastructure in basic needs as well as access to necessary educational technology in classrooms
- Minimal career gap and continuous learning opportunity for trainers
- through use of technology platforms such as SWAYAM and DIKSHA, system-wide mentoring missions with senior faculty to ensure continuous training opportunities while pursuing their careers
- Greater flexibility for students for curriculum
- Choices and speed of study
- Digitally stored credits to enable easy transfer, self-paced study and verification by third parties (such as employers) in the future
- Opportunity for industry participation in research, co-delivery of short-term skill certificates, partnership in creation of online universities
- Opportunity for private sector to participate as experts in setting up and operationalizing National Educational Technology Forum (NETF).

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The strategy aims to address educational issues, structural disparities, expanding access, while preparing learners for the future while meeting the demands of 21st century India. At the same time, NEP has the most challenging task of addressing many crises in the education system. Effective implementation is critical if India is to reap the demographic dividend and capitalize on the opportunities afforded by the rapidly growing knowledge economy. NEP has a long road ahead. Its



scale and the complexity involved in its implementation, especially achieving coordination and cooperation among various stakeholders in the state, district, private sector, make it a difficult exercise. NEP2020 is an advanced system that will facilitate value-based education and scientific education. NEP 2020 emphasizes on making the education system holistic, flexible and meeting the needs of 21st century education. However, to achieve all these goals, we must overcome all the challenges of sustainable implementation for years to come.

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