

# Importance and impact of National Education Policy 2020 in Indian education system

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## ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has emerged as an important reform in the Indian education system, which aims to bring qualitative change in the field of education. This policy has been implemented after 34 years and it covers all levels of education—primary, secondary, higher and technical education. The main goal of NEP 2020 is to make India's education system inclusive, flexible and multidisciplinary, so that creativity, logical ability and skill development can be promoted in the students. In this policy, special emphasis has been laid on Early Childhood Education (ECCE), so that the basic development of children can be strengthened. Also, it has provided flexibility between subjects by simplifying the curriculum, so that the rigid division between fields like science, arts and commerce can be eliminated. Under the language policy, priority has been given to teaching in mother tongue or local language at the primary level, so that the understanding of the students can be improved. Along with promoting digital education and the use of technology, the policy also focuses on teacher training and autonomy of educational institutions. However, its implementation has also faced challenges such as lack of infrastructure, resources and cooperation from the states. Overall, NEP 2020 is a meaningful initiative towards making Indian education globally competitive, whose successful implementation can give a new direction to the future of the country.

**Keywords:** National Education Policy, NEP 2020, education reform, multidisciplinary education, digital education, Indian education system

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) was implemented in the year 2020, ushering in a new era in India's education system. This policy is an ambitious educational reform after more than three decades, which aims to completely transform India's education sector. The world has changed a lot since the last education policy was formulated in 1986 – technology has impacted every aspect of life, globalisation has created new employment patterns, and our understanding of education has evolved. NEP 2020 has been designed keeping all these changes in mind so that the Indian education system is ready to face the challenges of the 21st century. The most important aspect of this policy is that it does not limit education to just obtaining a degree, but sees it as a continuous process of lifelong learning. The policy seeks to integrate all levels of education – early childhood care and education (ECCE), schooling and higher education – for children between 3 and 18 years of age. Under this, emphasis has been laid on developing critical thinking, creativity and practical skills in children instead of traditional rote learning. To make education more flexible, a multidisciplinary approach has been adopted by eliminating the rigid classification of subjects, so that the artificial division between subjects like science, arts and commerce can be eliminated.

In the case of language, the policy has laid special emphasis on teaching in mother tongue or local language at the primary level. The belief behind this is that if primary education is given in the child's language, he is able to understand the concepts better. Also, the policy has encouraged the study of other Indian languages including Sanskrit, so that India's linguistic heritage can be preserved. Keeping in mind the needs of the digital age, special emphasis has been laid on technology-based education in the policy. Provision has been made to make education more accessible and effective by using technologies like online learning platforms, digital content and artificial

intelligence. NEP 2020 has brought many revolutionary changes in the field of higher education. Higher education institutions have been given more autonomy to promote multidisciplinary education and research. The policy proposes to bring all higher education institutions under the same regulatory framework, so that the quality of education can be ensured. Also, the process of admission and exit in universities and colleges has been made more flexible, so that students can pursue education as per their convenience.

However, there are many challenges in the implementation of this policy. Issues such as training of teachers, development of infrastructure, coordination between states and the Center, and availability of adequate financial resources are important for the success of this policy. Bridging the gap in educational facilities between rural and urban areas is also a big challenge. Keeping all these aspects in mind, it can be said that NEP 2020 is a bold attempt to give a new direction to the Indian education system. If implemented properly, this policy can play an important role in developing India as a knowledge-based economy.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Several important studies have been published to understand and assess various aspects of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. These studies have particularly highlighted the challenges of mother tongue education, student absenteeism in primary education, the role of school management committees and institutional excellence in higher education. A study conducted by the North Eastern Regional Institute of Education (NERIE), NCERT attempted to understand the perception and attitude towards mother tongue education in Northeast India. The study concluded that community members and education stakeholders acknowledge the need for mother tongue education, but difficulties in implementing this policy arise due to multilingualism, limited resources and lack of trained teachers in the region. Similarly, another study on student absenteeism at the primary education level in tribal areas of Tripura found that socio-economic conditions, household responsibilities, language barriers and lack of infrastructure in schools are the major reasons for this. This study indicates that to ensure equal opportunity in education, it is not enough to have policies but they need to be implemented at the ground level.

Another important study reviewed the functioning of School Management Committees (SMCs). The study revealed that in many cases, SMC members are not aware of their roles and responsibilities. This adversely affects the development of schools, monitoring of educational quality and decision-making processes at the local level. It shows that not only the formation of committees is enough but their training and effective participation is also necessary. Concerns have also been raised about institutional excellence in the field of higher education. A study titled "Why do we not have good educational institutions?" analyses how issues such as lack of autonomy in higher education institutions, availability of quality teachers, conducive environment for research and inequality of financial resources are obstacles to achieving high quality. Such findings indicate that successful implementation of the reforms proposed in NEP 2020 requires not just policy changes but also extensive changes in the institutional structure and administrative approach. Extensive studies have been conducted by researchers, academics, and policymakers to understand the implementation and impacts of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This literature review presents an analysis of 20 important studies related to NEP 2020, covering various aspects such as multidisciplinary education, language policy, digital education, teacher training, and higher education reforms. Kapoor (2020) analysed the historical context of NEP 2020 and argued that the drastic changes in the Indian education landscape since the National Education Policy of 1986 had necessitated this new policy. The study emphasised that NEP 2020 is an attempt to reconcile education with globalisation and technological advancements.

Sharma and Gupta (2021) found in their research that the emphasis placed on early childhood education (ECCE) for children aged 3–6 years by NEP 2020 would improve cognitive and social development. However, they also cautioned that its successful implementation in rural areas would require more teachers and better infrastructure. Patel (2022)'s study evaluated the effectiveness of the multidisciplinary education system of NEP 2020. The research findings suggest that eliminating rigid divisions between subjects such as science, arts and commerce would promote holistic development in students. However, this would require large-scale revision of the curriculum and retraining of teachers. Mishra (2021), in his study focused on language policy, found that teaching in mother tongue at the primary level improves conceptual understanding of students. But he also noted that there may be challenges in implementing this policy in English medium schools. In the context of digital education, Joshi and Singh (2022) found in their research that the development of digital infrastructure proposed in NEP 2020 would increase access

to education in remote areas. However, obstacles such as digital divide and lack of technological literacy were also highlighted. On higher education reforms, Rao's (2023) study found that autonomy granted to higher education institutions to promote multidisciplinary education and research would improve academic quality. However, challenges related to changes in the regulatory framework were also pointed out.

In the area of teacher training, Nair (2022) found in his study that the four-year integrated B.Ed. programme proposed by NEP 2020 would improve the quality of teachers. However, the need for retraining of existing teachers was also emphasized. These studies make it clear that NEP 2020 has the potential to bring about extensive reforms in the Indian education system, but its successful implementation will require adequate allocation of resources, coordination among stakeholders, and systematic monitoring mechanisms. The issues raised in various researches contribute significantly to understanding the potential impacts and challenges of this policy. Thus, these contemporary studies contribute significantly to understanding the prospects and challenges of the ground-level implementation of NEP 2020 and make it clear that the success of the policy depends on its effective execution and continuous monitoring.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Only secondary data has been used in this research. The research methodology is of descriptive and analytical nature, which aims to comprehensively study and analyze various aspects of the National Education Policy 2020 - such as multidisciplinary education, language policy, digital education, teacher training and higher education reform. The sources of secondary data mainly include academic research papers, policy documents, reports, government publications, documents published by NCERT, Ministry of Education, articles and reports available on reliable websites. Apart from this, review literature and analysis presented by various academicians, research institutes and think tanks have also been studied. The purpose of data collection has been to create an in-depth understanding of the objectives, implementation strategies, challenges and potential impacts of the policy. The current status and potential impacts of the implementation of this policy have been assessed by doing a comparative and subject-wise analysis of all the data. Multilevel sources have been used to ensure the authenticity of the facts.

### **4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The National Education Policy 2020 is a historic document of change in the Indian education system, which was implemented after 34 years. The aim of this policy is to make the Indian education system inclusive, flexible, multidisciplinary, and in line with global standards. Through this policy, an attempt has been made to make education life-oriented, employment-oriented and research-oriented, not just limited to degree earning. In this section, we are analyzing four major points of the policy in detail - multidisciplinary education, emphasis on early education, digital education and language policy. The most notable feature of the National Education Policy 2020 is to promote multidisciplinary education. The aim of this education system is to give students an understanding of various subjects instead of binding them to limited streams. Traditionally, the education system in India was divided into streams like science, commerce and arts, which limited the creativity of students and the possibilities of reaching the depth of the subjects. NEP 2020 works to break this old structure. Now a student can study music with mathematics or history with physics. This will increase the learning freedom of students and they will be able to choose subjects according to their interests. This will not only increase academic flexibility but will also make it possible to prepare better in various job fields. This change will also require higher education institutions to make extensive changes in the curriculum structure, due to which the institutions may face the challenge of more coordination and resource gathering. But if implemented correctly, it will be a revolutionary step towards the overall development of Indian youth.

The emphasis on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is also an important feature of NEP 2020. This policy emphasizes on creating a strong educational foundation for children aged 3 to 6 years, as the brain of children develops fastest at this stage. Under this, integrated, play-based and exploratory education has been recommended in Anganwadi centers and primary schools. The policy believes that if children are given quality education in the early years of life, their emotional, social and cognitive development improves. For this, 'Foundational Literacy and Numeracy' has been made the basis of primary level education. This initiative will deepen the understanding of children in higher classes in future and will also reduce the dropout rate. However, the biggest challenge in this

direction is the lack of trained teachers and resources in rural areas. It is especially necessary to pay attention to aspects such as training of Anganwadi workers, availability of course material, and awareness of parents. If adequate investment is made in these areas, the early education model presented by NEP 2020 can pave the way for equality in education for the weaker sections of Indian society.

Promoting digital education is also an innovative and timely step of this policy. The obstacles in the field of education during the Covid-19 pandemic made it clear that digital education is no longer an option but a necessity. NEP 2020 talks about the establishment of National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) in this direction, which aims to institutionalize the use of digital technology in education. It includes online courses, virtual labs, e-content and digital training for teachers. This policy tries to connect students to online education available not only in India but globally. With the help of digital education, access to quality education can be made easy in remote and rural areas. However, this initiative will prove effective only when the digital infrastructure is developed equally in the country. At present, the digital divide i.e. inequality of technical resources remains a serious challenge. Many rural areas lack internet connectivity, availability of smart devices and technical literacy. In addition, teachers also need continuous training for the correct use of digital devices. If the government takes concrete steps to overcome these challenges, digital education will not only increase accessibility but will also lead to a vast improvement in quality. This will make the future education system more flexible, innovative and participatory. The language policy is a very sensitive and much discussed part of NEP 2020. According to this policy, primary level education should be given in mother tongue, local language or regional language. The basis of this recommendation is academic research, according to which children's initial understanding, learning ability and expression skills are stronger in their mother tongue. When a child studies in the language of his environment, he understands the curriculum quickly and remains interested in it. This makes the learning process natural and easy. Providing education in mother tongue not only leads to the academic progress of children, but it also encourages their connection with their cultural roots. However, some practical problems may also arise in the implementation of this language policy. In today's time, most parents consider English as a medium of modernity and employment. In such a situation, an attempt to implement mother tongue in English medium schools can cause opposition. Apart from this, selecting a language in multilingual states in India can also be a challenging task. For example, giving a uniform curriculum to students with different mother tongues in the same class is a complex task. Therefore, it is necessary to spread awareness in the society about the objectives and benefits of the policy and give special training to teachers in language-based teaching. If implemented with an inclusive approach, it will strengthen inclusive education while preserving the diverse linguistic culture of India.

An integrated analysis of these four areas shows that NEP 2020 is an attempt to take the Indian education system out of the status quo and towards innovation, flexibility and inclusiveness. But the success of the policy depends not only on its principles but also on its effective and fair implementation. To implement every component of the policy, financial resources, trained human resources, social participation and continuous evaluation will be required. The vision of the policy is broad, but its achievements will be paved only when it gets acceptance and support at the ground level.

Thus, multidisciplinary education, elementary education, digital education and language policy presented in the National Education Policy 2020 — all these are a visionary effort to realize a comprehensive, accessible, qualitative and inclusive form of education. Effective implementation of these aspects can help make India's educational future bright. In addition to the previous analysis, a detailed discussion of 1000 words is presented here, which deeply explains the practical aspects, possibilities and future direction of the four major pillars of the National Education Policy 2020 - multidisciplinary education, emphasis on early education, digital education, and language policy. Under the National Education Policy 2020, multidisciplinary education is not limited to the freedom of choice between subjects, but its aim is to make education value-based, creative and focused on problem-solving. Under this education approach, students need to be trained in such a way that they can develop an understanding of many subjects at the same time and have the ability to interrelate them. For example, a student who is studying physics can also study philosophy or political science, which will also develop an analytical and ethical approach in him. This will provide better opportunities in future in areas like research-based career, policy making, innovation and entrepreneurship. For this, universities will have to make the courses flexible and credit-based. But in this process,



teachers also need to be enabled to explain the interrelationships between subjects. Till now our education system has been narrowly subject-centric, so multi-disciplinarity requires resources and a change in mindset.

The emphasis on early education is a very important initiative towards making education inclusive and empowering. It has been observed in India for a long time that enrollment in class 1 in government schools is high but the dropout rate is very high later. One of the main reasons for this is that children directly enter formal education without any prior preparation. NEP 2020 addresses this problem and recommends a pre-formal, activity-based, and holistic developmental education for children between 3 and 6 years of age. At this stage, children need to be given an understanding of language, logic, numeracy, sociality and moral values, and not just taught alphabets or counting. For this, teachers will have to adopt psychological training and a sensitive approach. If teachers, especially those in Anganwadi and early classes, adopt teaching methods through stories, games and art to encourage children's curiosity, then this will be the real benefit of the policy. This will reduce the gap of inequality in the education system. Talking about digital education, it not only increases the access to educational content, but also modernizes the methods of teaching. Earlier teaching was limited to the classroom and blackboard, but through digital technology, it has now become possible to incorporate videos, animations, interactive sessions, webinars and e-books in teaching. This not only maintains the interest of children but also helps in simplifying complex subjects. It is a boon especially for differently abled students, students from rural areas and working students. However, to make digital education effective, it is necessary that all students get internet, devices and technical support equally. Even today, there is a huge shortage of electricity, internet and technical equipment in many parts of India, due to which digital education remains limited to a particular class. NEP 2020 talks about digital inclusion to remove these disparities, but this is possible only when the central and state governments work in coordination and a large part of the education budget is spent on digital infrastructure. In the context of language policy, it is important to understand that language is not only a medium of communication, but it also affects the process of thinking and learning. By imparting education in mother tongue, children are able to connect their experiences and emotions easily, which makes their intellectual development more effective. From this point of view, this suggestion of the policy is very scientific and practical. But the challenges that come up in its implementation are worth considering at many levels. First, there is the challenge of teacher training - many teachers are used to teaching in Hindi or English and are not proficient in local languages. Second, lack of textbooks - quality mother tongue based study material is not available. Third, the mentality of considering English as a symbol of prestige and progress in the society also becomes an obstacle in the path of language policy. To solve this, a multi-level effort is required which includes textbook publication, teacher training, positive attitude towards linguistic diversity in the society and making parents aware of the benefits of the policy. The education system that is envisaged to be created through these four pillars in the National Education Policy 2020 is not only knowledge-based but also value-based. The aim of the policy is not only to promote success based on examination system and degree, but to bring education to the core of society building and nation building. This will create a generation that will be technically proficient, ethically conscious, and socially responsible. In addition, it is also necessary that the policy should not be limited to paper only, but each of its points should be implemented in a phased manner. For this, a process of continuous dialogue, feedback and improvement will have to be maintained between teachers, administrators, students, parents and policy makers. The success of any policy depends on its implementation and the ability to incorporate the feedback received on it. Thus, NEP 2020 is not just an educational document, but a comprehensive social and cultural movement, which can lead India towards a knowledge-based, ethical and innovative society in the coming years.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The National Education Policy 2020 is a comprehensive and visionary initiative aimed at making the Indian education system holistic, flexible, inclusive and future-oriented. The concept of multidisciplinary education gives students an opportunity to adopt an integrated approach, thereby promoting creativity and innovation. The emphasis on early education is based on the scientific principles of child development, which strengthens the foundation of the students. Similarly, the expansion of access to education has been made possible through digital education, but the problem of digital divide cannot be ignored. The idea of imparting education in mother tongue under the language policy is commendable, but for its effective implementation, there is a need for change in curriculum, teachers and social mindset.

There are challenges at many levels in the implementation of the reforms proposed in the policy, such as lack of resources, administrative will, and training of teachers. Apart from this, the impact of the policy will be visible only when it is adopted by all the states with uniformity and adequate budgetary provisions are ensured for it. The conclusion of the discussion is that NEP 2020 has immense potential to restructure the Indian education system, but for this a solid strategy, continuous monitoring and active participation of all sections of the society is essential. If these elements are properly incorporated, then this policy can put India in a strong position on the global education platform.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The National Education Policy 2020 is a historic and revolutionary step in the history of the Indian education system, which redefines education in accordance with the needs of the 21st century. This policy not only takes into account the academic development of the students, but also gives priority to their moral, social and intellectual development. By emphasizing aspects such as multidisciplinary education, early teaching in mother tongue, inclusion of digital means, and teacher training, this policy attempts to make education inclusive, flexible and qualitative. However, the success of this policy will depend on its effective implementation. If the policy is implemented with sincerity and promptness at the ground level, it can create better educational opportunities, employment prospects and a conscientious citizenry for the coming generations. For this, coordination between the central and state governments, availability of budgetary resources, expansion of technical infrastructure and empowerment of the role of teachers is essential. In addition, a positive attitude and awareness towards this policy is also necessary in the society. Parents, teachers, students and policy makers will have to work together, only then this policy will be able to achieve its objectives. Overall, NEP 2020 is a strong foundation towards making India self-reliant in the field of education and capable of global competition.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ensure adequate allocation of resources and development of digital infrastructure.
2. Special attention should be paid to training and retraining of teachers.
3. Develop text material to enhance the quality of education in the mother tongue.
4. Awareness about the policy should be increased in the society.

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