

## Current Scenario of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

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### ABSTRACT

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, launched in July 2020, aims to reform India's education system, making it more flexible, inclusive, and aligned with global standards. Three years into its implementation, significant progress has been made, particularly in school and higher education. The **5+3+3+4 school structure** is gradually being adopted, with an emphasis on multilingual education, experiential learning, and vocational training. In higher education, the introduction of **multidisciplinary institutions** and the **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)** has provided greater flexibility.

Teacher training initiatives and technology integration through online education platforms have gained momentum, but challenges persist. These include the **digital divide**, insufficient infrastructure, funding constraints, and variability in state-level implementation. The success of NEP 2020 hinges on overcoming these obstacles and fostering coordinated efforts between central and state governments.

While the policy has set the foundation for a transformative shift, sustained investment and robust implementation are necessary to realize its full potential in creating a future-ready, equitable education system in India.

**Keywords:** *School Education, Multilingual Education, Curriculum Overhaul, Vocational Education, ABC, Online and Digital Education.*

### ➤ Introduction:

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** was approved by the Government of India on July 29, 2020, to revamp India's education system. It aims to overhaul the Indian education system and make it more inclusive, flexible, and globally competitive, while also retaining its cultural roots. This is the third education policy in India, following the policies of 1968 and 1986. Three years into its implementation, various elements of the policy are in different stages of rollout, reflecting both achievements and challenges. This paper provides a comprehensive overview of the status of NEP 2020, analyzing the progress made across key areas of school education, higher education, teacher training, and the integration of technology, as well as the policy's impact and obstacles faced.

#### 1. Progress in School Education:

##### a. 5+3+3+4 Curriculum Structure:

The shift from the old **10+2 system** to the **5+3+3+4 structure** has started to take shape. Many state governments and educational boards have begun adopting the new framework, which emphasizes:

- **Foundational Stage (5 years):** Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from ages 3 to 8 is emphasized, with a focus on play-based learning. Institutions such as Anganwadi centres are being upgraded to meet this requirement.
- **Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary Stages:** School curricula are being revised to emphasize holistic development, critical thinking, and experiential learning.

#### **b. Multilingual Education:**

One of the key pillars of NEP 2020 is the emphasis on using the **mother tongue or regional language** as the medium of instruction up to Grade 5. The implementation has faced mixed reactions:

- **Positive developments:** Several states, including Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, have made strides in promoting multilingualism, translating textbooks into local languages, and training teachers.
- **Challenges:** In some regions, opposition has arisen due to the demand for English-medium education, which is seen as essential for global competitiveness.

#### **c. Curriculum Overhaul:**

The **National Curriculum Framework (NCF)** is being redesigned in line with NEP guidelines. The reduction of content in favor of core concepts and life skills is in progress, with a more competency-based approach replacing rote memorization. Subjects like art, music, and physical education are being integrated into the main curriculum.

#### **d. Vocational Education from Grade 6:**

Vocational education is now part of the school curriculum from Grade 6, with a push towards experiential learning. Several states have introduced vocational subjects, and students are being exposed to skills such as carpentry, electrical work, and basic coding.

### **2. Higher Education Reform:**

#### **a. Multidisciplinary Institutions and Flexibility:**

NEP 2020 envisages the establishment of **multidisciplinary institutions** and the phasing out of single-stream colleges. The aim is to allow students the flexibility to choose a combination of subjects across streams (arts, science, commerce), fostering a more holistic education:

- **Current Status:** Universities such as Delhi University and IITs have adopted elements of multidisciplinary education by offering diverse elective courses. However, the transition to this system remains slow in some regions due to resistance from traditional academic institutions.
- **Challenges:** While elite institutions have embraced the change, many smaller colleges and rural institutions face infrastructural and resource-related challenges in implementing this model.

#### **b. Academic Bank of Credits (ABC):**

The **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)**, which allows students to store academic credits and transfer them between institutions, has been operationalized. Institutions such as IITs and central universities are onboard, while state universities are gradually adopting the system:

- **Impact:** This initiative has made education more flexible for students, allowing them to switch courses and institutions without losing academic progress.
- **Challenges:** Awareness and technical infrastructure remain obstacles, particularly in remote and underfunded institutions.

#### c. Online and Digital Education:

The NEP 2020 promotes **online and open distance learning (ODL)** to increase the reach of higher education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning gained momentum, and digital platforms such as SWAYAM, DIKSHA, and NPTEL saw significant growth.

- **Current Scenario:** Online courses have been widely adopted, and institutions are increasingly offering hybrid learning models. However, digital divide issues, such as lack of access to high-speed internet in rural areas, continue to hinder equitable participation.

#### d. Research and Innovation:

The creation of the **National Research Foundation (NRF)** is underway, with the goal of funding and promoting high-quality research in all fields of knowledge:

- **Current Status:** Initial budgetary allocations have been made, and some universities have benefited from increased research funding. However, the NRF is still in its nascent stages of formation.
- **Challenges:** India's research output remains relatively low in comparison to global standards, and structural issues such as bureaucratic delays in research approvals still exist.

### 3. Teacher Training and Development:

The NEP 2020 emphasizes **continuous professional development (CPD)** for teachers and the introduction of a **4-year integrated B.Ed. degree** by 2030 as the minimum qualification for school teachers:

- **Progress:** Several teacher training institutes have restructured their courses to offer the 4-year B.Ed. program. National initiatives such as the **NISHTHA** program are offering in-service training for teachers to upgrade their skills.
- **Challenges:** Teacher recruitment and training remain inconsistent across states, with rural and underprivileged areas experiencing a shortage of well-trained educators.

#### a. National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST):

The **NPST** is still under development, with pilot programs in place to standardize teacher assessments and qualifications across the country. Once implemented, it will help maintain consistency in teaching quality.

### 4. Equity and Inclusion:

#### a. Access for Marginalized Groups:

The NEP 2020 aims to address the needs of underrepresented groups, including SC/ST communities, women, and people with disabilities:

- **Current Initiatives:** Special Education Zones have been identified, and the **Gender Inclusion Fund** is being rolled out. Schemes such as scholarships, free meals, and transportation are being enhanced to support marginalized students.
- **Challenges:** While some progress has been made, significant gaps remain in providing quality education to marginalized communities, particularly in remote and conflict-affected regions.

### 5. Technology Integration in Education:

The establishment of the **National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)** is a key step towards promoting the use of technology in education. NEP 2020 highlights the importance of **blended learning** and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and other emerging technologies:

- **Current Scenario:** Digital initiatives such as ePathshala, PM eVidya, and DIKSHA have been successful in disseminating educational content online. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of technology in both school and higher education.
- **Challenges:** The **digital divide** remains a major challenge. Students from economically weaker sections face difficulties in accessing online resources due to the lack of devices and internet connectivity.

### 6. Challenges in Implementation:

Despite its progressive vision, NEP 2020 faces several challenges:

- **State-Level Variability:** Education being a concurrent subject means that states have varying degrees of implementation. Some states have rapidly adopted the NEP framework, while others are slower to align their systems.
- **Infrastructural Deficits:** Many schools and universities, especially in rural areas, lack the infrastructure required to fully implement NEP's guidelines. This includes digital infrastructure, laboratory facilities, and adequate classrooms.
- **Funding Issues:** The NEP calls for increasing public investment in education to 6% of GDP. However, this goal has not yet been met, and financial constraints continue to limit the reach of educational reforms.
- **Resistance to Change:** Some educators and institutions have been slow to adapt to the new models of education, often due to a lack of understanding or resistance to departing from traditional teaching methods.

### ➤ Conclusion:

The **National Education Policy 2020** marks a historic shift in India's approach to education, aiming for flexibility, inclusivity, and a future-ready system. While progress has been made in restructuring school and higher education, the policy's success is contingent on overcoming challenges such as infrastructure gaps, teacher training, and equitable access to technology.

The coming years will be crucial for ensuring that the policy's transformative potential is fully realized, particularly through sustained government investment, enhanced public awareness,

and state-level cooperation. With robust implementation, NEP 2020 could be the key to making India a global knowledge hub and empowering its youth for the future.

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