

National Education Policy 2020: Transforming India's Education System for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to revolutionize India's education system by 2030, replacing the 1986 policy and introducing a flexible, student-centered approach. It follows a "5+3+3+4" structure, emphasizing entrepreneurship, digital skills, and vocational training at both school and university levels. NEP 2020 promotes multiple entry and exit points, fostering research, innovation, and employability through apprenticeships and skill-based education. Discussed the various literature's work in transforming India's educational system for sustainable development by employing NEP 2020 policy. It concluded that NIPUN Bharat scheme was launched to achieve foundational literacy and numeracy by 2026-27. The policy integrates technology-driven learning, including digital healthcare education, telemedicine training, and data analytics, ensuring better healthcare outcomes. With a non-binding linguistic framework, it supports multilingual education, enhancing inclusivity. Additionally, NEP 2020 focuses on improving school infrastructure, flexible curricula, and digital platforms to create a sustainable and globally competitive education system. By fostering quality education and innovation, NEP 2020 is a blueprint for India's educational and sustainable development goals.

Keywords: National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Digital skills, Vocational training, NIPUN Bharat scheme, Early childhood education, Digital healthcare education, Telemedicine training, etc.

1 Introduction

In order to equip the next generation to thrive and compete in the digital age, "the National Education

* ISBN No. - 978-93-49028-49-4

Policy (NEP) 2020" focusses on reforming higher education. India's educational system's future goals are outlined in "the National Education Policy (NEP 2020)", which was published on July 29, 2020. NEP 2020 is built on five pillars: quality, equality, accountability, affordability, and accessibility to ensure ongoing progress [1], [2]. It was created to satisfy the needs of the populace since the economy and society need knowledge, which meant that developing new abilities on an ongoing basis was necessary. Accordingly, NEP 2020 aims to fulfil "the Sustainable Development Goals 2030" of the UN by offering high-quality education and fostering possibilities for lifelong learning for everyone, which will lead to full and productive work and decent labour [3]. A comprehensive framework for reforming India's secondary and primary school institutions by 2040 is established under the new policy, which takes the place of the previous "National Policy on Education from 1986". The article places a lot of focus on digital literacy, written communication, problem-solving, professional exposure, multidisciplinary, and logical thinking (Digital Learning Network, 2021) [4].

There are four divisions and 27 chapters in the National Education Policy 2020. The Indian government included a number of obstacles and requirements in the policy that prevent children from receiving an education [5]. The plan starts with an introduction that covers topics such as the fundamental requirements of children, how to realise one's potential, the development of justice and equality in community, national development, high-quality education, scientific progress, cultural preservation, and national integration [6]. Additionally, it describes Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for India, which was implemented in 2030. In addition to promoting possibilities for lifelong learning, Goal 4 will ensure that all children get a high-quality, inclusive, and equitable education by 2030. The plan also takes into account how the global economy and job opportunities are changing quickly, which puts a premium on students' capacity for learning. By 2040, India aims to provide high-quality education as well [7].

A. National Education Policy 2020

The goal of NEP 2020 is to change the system to accommodate India's demands in the twenty-first century. The groundbreaking study *Learning: The Treasure Within* was released by UNESCO more than twenty years ago for the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century. It promoted an integrated global perspective for education and learning, which had a long-lasting impact on our educational policy [8]. It is necessary to review the report and the educational strategies implemented in light of free market economic reforms and the socioeconomic changes that have occurred in societies during the 1990s. Emphasising the idea of "learning to be," which highlights a person's freedom to develop in a particular area of innate interest, refer to it as a passion, and realise their life's ambition, was one of the major suggestions made to the education system [9]. Since this argument is also reinforced by the NEP2020 recommendations, our policymakers in the northeast area should reiterate it in the years to come. Flexibility is one of the core tenets of NEP 2020, allowing students to choose their own learning pathways and programs, and therefore, their own life paths based on their interests and skills. The NEP 2020 provides guidance in this area by recommending an interdisciplinary program structure [10], [11].

B. Role of nep 2020 in transforming the educational field

In addition to teaching students traditional knowledge and moral principles, the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to promote students' computational skills, design thinking, coding, digital literacy, and ethical reasoning, among other things [12]. In order to solve shortcomings in the current educational system, early childhood education is given priority in the NEP 2020. Additionally, the incidence of school dropouts in higher grade levels has increased by 11%, which is noteworthy given that children aged 6 to 16 attend school at a 75% attendance rate [13]. Concerns about money, family status, caste, and location differences, as well as the absence of an engaging learning environment offered by schools, all contribute to kids' waning interest in learning. The following areas are addressed under NEP 2020 [14]:

1. **Curriculum flexibility:** The NEP 2020 places a strong focus on curricular flexibility, which is important for a successful educational system. As a result, students will have the freedom to choose an academic track that suits their passions and interests thanks to this flexible curriculum. As intended by the NEP 2020, IITs have also introduced new fields that cut beyond conventional divides.

Furthermore, starting with the academic year 2022–2023, all Kendriya Vidyalayas must have students who are six years of age or older to be admitted to Class I under the NEP 2020. The importance of pupils' holistic development in fostering their cognitive, socioemotional, and physical skills is recognised by NEP 2020. The curriculum encourages an interdisciplinary approach that encourages students to research several fields and develop all-encompassing skills.

2. **Pedagogical innovations:** Accessible, inclusive, and equitable education is promoted under NEP 2020. Students who get instruction in an inclusive classroom are better able to comprehend the material.
 - **Flipped classroom pedagogy:** In a flexible learning environment, this methodology encourages students to work hard on activity-based assignments that help them acquire transferable skills.
 - **Art-integrated learning pedagogy:** By evaluating pupils' needs and potential, this method encourages their holistic development. Students use a variety of creative genres and create connections across subjects under this method. Additionally, they actively explore, develop, and share their creativity and expertise.
 - **Project-based learning pedagogy:** Through collaborative efforts, online engagement, and reflective practice, this approach promotes 21st-century skills and lifelong learning. Students apply concepts to situations in real life.
 - **Cutting-edge pedagogy:** Using technology to provide students with engaging learning experiences is encouraged by this method.
 - **Critical pedagogical approach:** By presenting pupils with challenges to solve, this technique encourages critical thinking in them. Students gain knowledge by doing research.

2 Literature Review

(Khan & Khan, 2024) [15] looks at NEP 2020 with four main goals in mind: comprehending the changes it proposes to make to the current educational system, determining the policy's main priorities and areas of focus, investigating the novel ideas it offers, and assessing implementation challenges. The research clarifies NEP 2020's dedication to diversity, critical thinking, and adaptability via a thorough examination of policy papers, emphasising its noteworthy changes in curriculum development, teacher preparation, and technological integration. The research also offers important insights into the administrative, budgetary, and infrastructure issues that are likely to impede the policy's effective implementation. This evaluation adds to current debates about the effects of the policy and provides creative, internationally recognised solutions to improve educational quality and deal with upcoming issues in the Indian educational system.

(HAMID & SHARMA, 2024) [16] Flexible learning trajectories and programs allow students to pick their life pathways based on their interests and skills, which is one of the core tenets of NEP 2020. In this regard, the NEP 2020 provides guidance, as It suggests a program structure that is transdisciplinary. Our education officials may begin this path by embracing the urgent need for integrative thinking. Re-examining our regional education policy is urgently needed in order to create an atmosphere in which people may use their education and skills to get jobs, raise their quality of living, and support the social advancement of the community. The study recommended a few steps to maintain high-quality education while encouraging teachers to adapt to the changing nature of the workforce.

(Verma, 2024) [17] India's health professional education might undergo a transformation thanks to the innovative National Education Policy 2020. NEP 2020 equips health workers for the future by promoting a multidisciplinary approach, supporting research and innovation, incorporating technology, and placing a strong emphasis on ethical practice. It gives them the values, information, and abilities they need to spearhead the country's healthcare reform movement.

(Kumar et al., 2025) [18] It presents a slew of new changes, such as kid-centered curriculum creation, career progression, and educational technology. With the creation of the "National Research Foundation (NRF)" and increased focus on vocational training, research and employment prospects are meant to be enhanced. By 2035, NEP 2020 hopes to raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in universities and colleges to 50% while encouraging the use of technology. It highlights how crucial it is to collaborate and communicate with communities and other pertinent bodies in order to improve their capabilities. The ultimate goal is to develop people who are capable of meeting the demands of the modern economy while maintaining high moral standards and tolerance for other cultures. The NEP 2020 is assessed in this research along with the implementation problems and obstacles that might prevent it from being accomplished.

(Dhillon, 2021)[4] Each learning level must include a set of skills and values, from pre-school to college. NEP has made many changes and improvements to have a practical and long-term impact on higher education. NEP, 2020's main recommendation is to turn HEIs into large multidisciplinary universities

and groupings. This will unfragment higher education. Takshashila, Nalanda, Vallabhi, and Vikramshila, ancient Indian institutions that drew hundreds of international students to study in a vibrant multidisciplinary atmosphere, inspired this project. To restore India's rich tradition of skilled and imaginative people, this transition is essential. Through financing, incentives, and processes, HEIs will assist other HEIs improve, contribute to diverse areas of practice, participate in community service, produce professors for the higher education system, and more. NEP 2020 and its impact on Indian higher education will be the topic of this article.

(Betsurmath & Chidambaram, 2024)[19] To implement revolutionary changes in the school and higher education sectors, the Indian government unveiled "the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) in July 2020". The key components of the NEP 2020 and the readiness measures for its successful implementation in Indian educational institutions have been outlined in this article. Despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, NEP 2020 was implemented successfully because to proactive planning, cooperation between public and private organisations, and industry. Notably, the change management strategy, which has persisted throughout India's educational history, was essential to keeping up with technological developments and promoting expansion in the country's higher education sector.

(Jain & Uppal, 2023)[14] In order to drastically alter the educational environment in both rural and urban India by 2030, the Union Cabinet of India announced the New Education Policy 2020 to replace the preceding New Education Policy 1986. The non-binding nature of NEP's language policy allows governments and educational institutions a great deal of discretion. The current NEP 2020 emphasises student-centered learning and entrepreneurship using the "5+3+3+4" formula. The importance of NEP 2020 in providing children with a comprehensive education will be covered in this essay. By emphasising this New Educational Policy, the study will clarify topics such as NEP 2020: its inception, execution, curriculum adaptability, implementation issues, and innovative teaching methods. By looking at these topics, we can better understand how the NEP 2020 will change the educational landscape.

(Sonawane, 2022)[20] A crucial part of SDG-2030 is education for sustainable development. Educational Sustainable Development provides understanding, skills, values, and attitudes to solve development problems. After setting learning goals and criteria for the 'Education Sustainable Goal', UNESCO created complementary information and tools for stakeholders, educators, planners, etc. Educational institutions should adopt ESD aims to build early childhood and secondary education skills. Through educational reforms, changes, and new concepts, the National Education Policy-2020 has incorporated practically all SDG-2030 targets. In this study, NEP-2020 and future educational sustainable development challenges are discussed. Implementation techniques and an action plan for education's socio-economic issues may lead to sustainable development.

3 Conclusion

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions a comprehensive transformation of India's education system to meet 21st-century challenges. By emphasizing foundational literacy and numeracy, the policy ensures a strong educational base, supported by initiatives like NIPUN Bharat, aiming for

literacy and numeracy proficiency by 2026-27. NEP 2020 also integrates digital skills, vocational training, and entrepreneurship education at both school and university levels to enhance employability and innovation. Teacher training is a key focus, with structured programs like Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed). and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), though early childhood educators remain underserved. The policy acknowledges the critical role of early childhood education and stresses the need for improved teacher preparation in this sector. Additionally, NEP 2020 promotes digital healthcare education, telemedicine training, and data analytics in medical curricula to improve healthcare outcomes. With its flexible curricula, research-driven approach, and emphasis on digital education, NEP 2020 seeks to create an inclusive, skill-oriented, and sustainable educational ecosystem. By improving school infrastructure, introducing vocational courses, and fostering innovation, the policy paves the way for a high-quality, future-ready education system that contributes to national progress and sustainable development.

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National Education Policy 2020: The Key To Development In India (Volume-2)

Available:

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