

# Role of Education Policy in Creating Knowledge Society: A Critical Analysis of India's National Education Policy 2020

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## Abstract—

National Education Policy 2020 introduced on 29 July, 2020, is third important policy before independent India. New education policy aimed restructuring of Indian education system. It is very significant outlined and innovative education policy at the all the level of higher education and secondary level. New education policy 2020 is the significant impact on the school and college education level. National Education Policy released by government of India under the chairmanship of Dr.K.Kasthurirangan. He was former chairman of Indian Space Research Organization. This committee submitted report on 31, May, 2019. This paper mainly focused on stages, features, principles of education policy and also suggestion, implication, challenges of NEP2020. This policy aim to promote the use of technology in education, but digital divide in the country may limit its effectiveness. Overall NEP -2020 is a step in the right direction of the Indian education system. This policy successfully implemented through address the constraints of the implementation including funding, infrastructure ,digital divide. This study is an attempt to explore how education policy nurture knowledge in society in the light of new education policy of India.

**Key Words:** (NEP-2020, knowledge society, equity, quality, Affordability)

## 1. Introduction

NEP2020 aimed at making 'India global knowledge super power'. It is the third education policy of independent India, first education policy of the 21st century and will replace the thirty four years old National policy on education 1986. It is aimed at complete revamping of educational system .education helps to develop creative thinking, critical thinking and problem solving skills. This policy ensures equitable access to quality and affordable education. NEP2020 emphasized child centered or learner centered education. Teacher is facilitator of learning. Teacher played an important role in the education system. The New education policy faces various challenges This thesis title" critical analysis of education policy 2020' evaluate challenges of its effective Implication. This thesis examines of policy key features at practical preventive measures in the translating policy into practice. The thesis will be creates depends upon various resources including academic literature, government report and policy documents. NEP strongly emphasized five pillars accessibility, equity, quality, accountability, affordability. The policy designed to the requirement of people. The NEP2020 is to ensure that every one access to quality education and opportunities of lifelong learning. This policy argues for significant changes to the secondary, elementary, and higher education that will equip the next generation to compete and prosper in the new digital economy. Overall, NEP 2020 represents a bold step towards transforming India's education system to meet the demands of the 21st century. While it introduces several progressive reforms such as flexibility in curriculum, emphasis on skills development, and integration of technology, its success will depend on effective implementation, adequate resource allocation, and addressing potential challenges such as language policy and assessment reforms. NEP2020 emphasis systematic and institutional improvement to regulate govern and promote multi-disciplinary academic and research in India higher education institution. systematic Continuous monitoring and adaptation based on feedback will be crucial to ensure that the policy achieves its intended goals of equity, quality, and relevance in education. The thesis mainly focused on challenges of national education policy and its implication. The main aim of the new education policy is to give the high quality opportunities to all students can get education down trodden sections of the society. NEP2020 gives importance of vocational education. The flow of the paper has been arranged with a brief introduction followed by objectives of the study. The second part of the study elucidate the relevance of new education policy and its applications with an comparison of previous education policies. In third section of the paper discuss the opprtunites and challenges of NEP 2020 in detail. In the last section, the author

highlight the way forward of NEP with implementation strategies. The study concluded by highlight NEP 2020 is the need of the hour but at implementation stage, a lot of hurdles have to face including infrastructural requirements, socio-economic conditions, regional disparities and financial availability. The study hope that the government would be able to address all challenges and hurdles through competitive authorities.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

- To elucidate the context of drafting of NEP-2020
- To discuss the opportunities and challenges of NEP-2020.
- To draw suggestion for the successful execution of NEP-2020

## 3. Research Methodology

The study has been used secondary data and qualitative approaches to explore the role of education policy in creating knowledge society. The qualitative approach includes review of policy document, expert opinion to gain in in-depth gain understanding of NEP2020. This study mainly focused on the key highlight and challenges of the NEP 2020, the context of drafting the NEP 2020 apart from earlier education policies.

## 4. New Environment and New Approach of Education

This section attempt to elucidate the relevance of NEP-2020 in the context of rapid changing environment by comparing previous education policies. The new education policy of India is aimed to provide global outlook for the national education policy. The vision of NEP 2020 is to provide high-quality, equitable, inclusive, and holistic education for all, aiming to transform India into a global knowledge superpower while preserving its rich heritage and values. The Government of India constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). The committee tasked with drafting the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). The committee was in continuous of previous education polices. The first NPE was promulgated in 1968 by the Government of India by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The second NPE was introduced in 1986 by the Prime Minister Rajive Gandhi. Third NPE in 1992 by Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao. The latest and fourth educational policy introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020. The current NEP is give global outlook of India's education system and meet the current market requirements of industries, science and technology and other sectors. NEP 2020 replace the 10 + 2 structure into New curricular structure: 5+3+3+4 system, where *Foundational Stage*: 5 years (pre-school + Grades 1–2), *Preparatory Stage*: 3 years (Grades 3–5), *Middle Stage*: 3 years (Grades 6–8) and *Secondary Stage*: 4 years (Grades 9–12). Reordering of structure aims to achieves to ensure all children achieve reading and math skills by Grade 3, Focus on critical thinking, creativity, and conceptual understanding. inclusion of arts, sports, and vocational skills. Medium of instruction until at least Grade 5 (preferably Grade 8) and Shift from summative exams to formative, competency-based assessments.

Looking to higher education, government aims to achieve gross enrollment ratio (GER) by 50% by 2035 with the operation of multidisciplinary universities and colleges. Undergraduate education system reforms by implementing 4-year flexible UG degree with multiple exit options and academic credits. The government aims to constitute Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), Umbrella body for the entire higher education of humanitarian, scence and commerce streams except legal and medical studies. Under HECI, the four bodies constituted with specific task implication, such as *NHERC for Regulation*, *NAC for Accreditation*, *HEGC for Funding* and *GEC for Standards*. In addition, to promote reserach temper and ensure active research works National Research Foundation (NRF) is formulated. The NEP 2020 also shed light the teaching requirements by fostering 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree mandatory by 2030, Continuous professional development and training for teachers and National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST). To booster vocational education, Integration of vocational education from Grade 6 onwards with the aim of 50% of learners exposed to vocational education by 2025. To ensure effective utilization of technology in education National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) is proposed. The NEP 2020 focuses on disadvantaged groups (gender, caste, geography) by Establishment of Gender-Inclusion Fund and support for divyang (disabled) learners.

**Table I**  
**NEP 2020: An Overview**

Elements	Key Features
School Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5+3+3+4 curricular structure</li> <li>• Focus on foundational literacy &amp; numeracy</li> <li>• Mother tongue till Grade 5 (preferably 8)</li> <li>• Vocational education from Grade 6</li> <li>• Holistic, flexible curriculum</li> <li>• Shift to formative, competency-based assessments</li> </ul>
Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% GER target by 2035</li> <li>• 4-year flexible UG degrees with exit options</li> <li>• Multidisciplinary institutions</li> <li>• HECI as regulatory body with 4 verticals</li> <li>• National Research Foundation (NRF)</li> </ul>
Teacher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-year integrated B.Ed. mandatory by 2030</li> <li>• NPST to define professional standards</li> <li>• Ongoing teacher training &amp; development</li> </ul>
Equity & Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Inclusion Fund</li> <li>• Focus on disadvantaged groups (SC/ST, rural etc.)</li> <li>• Inclusive curriculum and support systems</li> </ul>
Technology in Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)</li> <li>• Online learning platforms</li> <li>• Use of AI and digital tools</li> </ul>
Language & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of Indian languages</li> <li>• Sanskrit &amp; classical languages included</li> <li>• National Institute for Translation</li> </ul>
Adult Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifelong learning opportunities</li> <li>• Focus on literacy, numeracy, and life skills</li> </ul>
Governance & Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear separation of regulation, funding, delivery</li> <li>• Institutional autonomy</li> <li>• Collaborative implementation (Centre + States)</li> </ul>

*Source: Assimilation of draft of NEP 2020*

Come to the context of formulating NEP 2020, The previous policy (NEP 1986, modified in 1992) had been in place for over three decades. Previous NEPs not able to accommodate the massive changes in the economy, society, technology, and global education trends. In this contexts the previous policies are outdated. Further, the country is in need of an education system aligned with 21st-century needs, including critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, and global competitiveness. India's demographic advantage is also demand a positive and forward looking educational policies. India has one of the youngest populations in the world (over 50% under age 25). To benefit from this "demographic dividend," a strong foundational and higher education system was essential. Skill development, employability, and entrepreneurship were emerging as priorities in NEP 2020. To improve the performance of the students according to the requirements of the modern society, an inclusive education policies is required. Despite increased school enrollment, studies like ASER (Annual Status of Education Report) showed poor learning outcomes, especially in literacy and numeracy. There was a recognized need to focus on foundational learning, especially in early childhood and primary education. The new education policy, NEP 2020 is expected to fill the gap. At the global level, India committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4), which emphasize "inclusive and equitable quality education" and "lifelong learning for all" by 2030. The policy needed to align with international standards and best practices, while retaining Indian values. Moreover, the country needed a competing curriculum framework with international standards. The national education policies is capable address the problems of various stakeholders. The NEP 2020 was developed after extensive consultations. Over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats and stakeholders participated. The TSR Subramanian Committee (2016) and Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee (2017) provided foundational reports. Thus the proposed policies is a bottom-up, participatory policy reform of education. The ultimate aim of NEP 2020 is to transform India into a knowledge economy. The policy envisions education as a fundamental right and a key enabler for social and economic mobility, cultural preservation, and national

development. NEP 2020 envisions transforming India into a knowledge society to: Equip citizens with 21st-century skills, Promote economic growth, innovation, and sustainability, Ensure social justice and inclusion through education and Align with India's goal of becoming a global knowledge superpower.

**Table II.**  
**NEP 1986 vs NEP 2020 – Major Differences**

Key Difference	NEP 1986	NEP 2020
Curricular Structure	10+2 system	5+3+3+4 system (aligned with child development stages)
Early Childhood Education	Not emphasized	Formal integration of pre-school education (age 3–6)
Language Policy	3-language formula (loose enforcement)	Strong emphasis on mother tongue/regional language till Grade 5–8
Assessment System	Rote-based board exams	Competency-based, formative assessments
Regulation	Multiple regulatory bodies (UGC, AICTE, etc.)	Single regulator: Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)
Higher Education Structure	Fragmented colleges and rigid courses	Multidisciplinary institutions, flexible UG degrees

*Source: Compilation of NEP 1986 & NEP 2020*

## 5. Major Opportunities of National Education Policy 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant shift in India's approach to education. It envisions a transformative framework aimed at making education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, aligned to the needs of the 21st century, and rooted in Indian values. By addressing long-standing challenges such as rote learning, lack of skill development, inequality in access, and outdated curricula, NEP 2020 opens up vast opportunities for learners, educators, and the nation as a whole. From early childhood care to higher education and lifelong learning, the policy lays the groundwork for building a knowledge-based, inclusive, and innovation-driven society. This progressive vision of education not only strengthens the individual learner's potential but also supports India's goal of becoming a global leader in education, research, and human capital development. NEP2020 is comprehensive educational frame work, which creates several opportunities for educational institutions, teachers and students. There are some key opportunities of NEP2020 as follows.

- **Holistic multidisciplinary in education;**

NEP 2020 encourages multidisciplinary in nature, which means that will help to learn a wide range of subject and to develop set of skills .It helps all-round development of the individual and tackle complex challenges of 21st century. Integrates pre-primary education (ages 3–6) into the formal system. Promotes early literacy and numeracy, improving long-term learning outcomes. Flexible curriculum encourages creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Breaks rigid subject boundaries, allowing students to choose subjects across streams (e.g., physics with music).

- **Skill development for national development**

NEP 2020 helps to develop skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking and communication. This will help students become more employable and better equipped to succeed in rapidly changing word. Multiple entry and exit points in undergraduate programs. Promotes interdisciplinary education and research. Increases Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) goal to 50% by 2035. Vocational training from Grade 6 onward with internship opportunities. Bridges gap between education and employability.

- **Flexibility and Choice:**

NEP2020proposes flexibility in choosing subjects and multiple entry and exit points in education. Students can choose their subjects of interest and exit and re-enter education as per their convenience, which helps lifelong learning. Emphasis on conceptual understanding, not memorization. Experiential learning, project work, and real-life applications become central.

- **Technology Integration:**

The policy emphasis the integration of technology in education, encourages online learning, digital resources, and enhancing the reach of education to remote areas through digital means. This helps to provide quality education through out the country. Creation of the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF). Promotes digital tools, e-learning platforms, and blended learning models. Expands reach to remote and underserved areas.

- **Teacher Training and Professional Development:**

NEP 2020 focuses on continuous professional development for teachers, ensuring they are well-equipped with modern teaching methods and content knowledge. This enhances teaching quality and student learning outcomes. Introduction of 4-year integrated B.Ed. as a standard. Continuous professional development and accountability. Focus on quality teacher training and recruitment.

- **Promotion of Indian Languages:**

The policy encourages the promotion and preservation of Indian languages by offering education in the mother tongue or regional language up to Grade 5 and beyond, which helps in preserving cultural heritage and promoting inclusivity. Encourages learning in mother tongue/home language. Preserves and promotes classical and tribal languages, Indian knowledge systems, and heritage.

- **Quality improvement:**

NEP 2020 stresses establishing quality benchmarks through accreditation of institutions, ensuring that all educational institutions maintain high standards of education delivery. Gender Inclusion Fund, support for disadvantaged groups, and inclusive curriculum. Policy aims to close learning gaps caused by social, economic, or regional inequalities.

- **Global Collaboration:**

The policy promotes international collaboration and partnerships in education, facilitating knowledge exchange, research collaborations, and exposure to global best practices. it is most important objective differentiate from NEP1986

- **Promotion of Research and Innovation:**

NEP 2020 encourages a research oriented and result oriented approach in higher education and promotes innovation and entrepreneurship among students, which fosters creativity and contributes to economic growth. Establishment of the National Research Foundation (NRF). Strengthens India's research ecosystem across all disciplines.

## 6. Challenges of New Education Policy 2020

National education policy is the keystone of the Indian education system of the 21st century that aims to transform Indian education system. There are several positive aspect of NEP2020. There are many challenges necessary to addressed. Point out some

- **Implementation issues of NEP 2020**

One of the important challenges of the NEP 2020 is implementation. This policy implementation for needs wide range of areas and huge amount investment and infrastructure. Education is a Concurrent subject (shared by Centre and States). Effective coordination between central, state, and local governments is challenging and varies across regions. Uniform implementation across diverse linguistic, socio-economic, and geographic contexts is difficult.

- **Funding of NEP 2020**

It is another primary challenges Indian education policy because the implementation requires huge amount of investment and this document doesn't provide clear roadmaps on how the funding will be raised. NEP recommends public investment in education rise to 6% of GDP, but current spending is below 4.5%. Achieving the goals will require significant financial commitment, especially for infrastructure, teacher training, and digital tools.

- **Language policy of NEP 2020**

One of the most debated and complex aspects of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is its approach to language, especially the emphasis on mother tongue/regional language as the medium of instruction till at least Grade 5 (preferably up to Grade 8). NEP2020 stresses formula three language formula, which has sparked controversy some of the states. The implementation of this policy may leads to imposition of particular language. India is the linguistic diversified country. In linguistically diverse states (like Karnataka, Maharashtra, or the Northeast), one classroom may include children with different mother tongues. Deciding on a common language for instruction in such classrooms is complicated.

- **Teacher training**

One of the critical pillars of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is teacher quality. The policy emphasizes professional development and a new standard for teacher education. However, achieving this vision faces several practical and systemic challenges. Many teacher training institutions lack well-qualified faculty. There's an urgent need for upskilling trainers who can prepare teachers for the new curriculum and pedagogy. The policy emphasizes to provides teacher training and development, there are many difficulties implementing this. The teaching education system to be revamped to meet changing the needs of individual.

- **Assessment system in NEP 2020**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 brings a major shift in the way students are assessed. It moves away from rote-based, high-stakes exams toward formative, competency-based, and holistic assessment. While this is a positive step, implementing such a transformation comes with several practical and systemic challenges. The policy proposes a new assessment system that focuses all-round development of the students. Implementation of the new assessment system may challenging because rural areas resources are limited. India's education system has long been focused on exam scores and board results. Teachers, parents, and students may resist new methods that emphasize skills, understanding, and feedback over marks.

- **Inclusivity of NEP 2020**

NEP2020 provide education to all but there are several challenges achieving the goal. Existing education policy remained various form of inequality, gender disparity. Rural, remote, and tribal areas often lack basic infrastructure, trained teachers, and digital connectivity. Children in these areas face more barriers to access quality education. Children from economically weaker sections still face issues related to: Affordability of private schooling, Indirect costs like transport, uniforms, digital devices, etc. NEP's goals require subsidies, scholarships, and support schemes that are effectively delivered.

- **Private sector involvement in NEP 2020**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions a unified, equitable, and high-quality education system for all, regardless of income or social status. While the private sector plays a significant role in India's education system, its growing influence and diverse practices present several challenges to the equitable and effective implementation of NEP 2020. Many private institutions prioritize profit over quality and student welfare. High tuition fees and hidden costs make education inaccessible to economically weaker sections, contradicting NEP's goal of equity and inclusivity.

## 7. Strategies to Address Challenges of NEP 2020

The national education policy is a comprehensive document that aimed at transforming Indian education system. The NEP2020 aimed at more inclusive holistic approaches of learning. There are many strategies that can be implementing to challenges to address.

- **Increase access to education;**

India is one of the youth populated country in the world one of the major challenges to tackle the Indian education system provides education for all especially backward classes. Government addressed the problem through funding allocation of rural areas for education. The government encourages private participation for improvement infrastructural facilities educational institutions.

- **Stresses on early childhood education;**

NEP2020 gives importance of early childhood education. It plays a critical role in a child's overall development and is a major focus of NEP 2020, which aims to provide universal access to quality ECE by integrating it into the formal education system. Helps children learn to share, cooperate, and resolve conflicts. Develops empathy, self-control, and confidence. Encourages healthy peer relationships and teamwork.

- **Encourages multilingualism;**

India is the diversified country and multiple languages. Encourages multilingualism can be a challenge. The NEP2020 proposes introducing a three language formula and encouraging mother tongue as a medium of instruction up to grade 5. government encourages local languages as the medium of instruction.

- **Address the digital divide;**

The NEP2020 encourages use of technology in education and address digital divide, the government set aside fund and invest for providing digital infra-structure and resources to school especially rural areas.

- **Strengthen the teaching training;**

The quality of teaching is the important hurdles of the Indian education system. The government provide fund for improvement of teacher qualities. NEP2020 proposes four year B.Ed. program , which help to improve quality of teachers in the country.

## 8. NEP 2020 and its Way Forward

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform the education system in India by providing holistic, inclusive, and multidisciplinary education. The vision of NEP 2020 is ambitious, and its successful implementation will require collaborative efforts from the government, educational institutions, teachers, parents, and students. Here's a look at the way forward to realize the full potential of NEP 2020: The government should focus enhance teaching and learning environment by promoting teaching skill qualities, through teacher training and professional development. It must include; Continuous professional

development: Ongoing training programs for teachers to keep up with new teaching methods, digital tools, and inclusive practices, Specialized training in areas like special education, assessment methods, and pedagogy will be essential and Teacher empowerment: Recognizing and rewarding teachers as critical stakeholders in the transformation of education. Further, the government must ensure wholistic approach in making combination of multi-disciplinary choices. Thrust areas of holistic and multi-disciplinary approach is Implementation of a multidisciplinary approach that encourages flexibility, creativity, and skill development (like art, physical education, coding, and life skills), Shift focus from rote learning to critical thinking, problem-solving, and real-world applications. Ensure that the assessment system evolves from marks-based to skill-based evaluations with a focus on practical learning and continuous assessment. More implement in implementation of NEP is digital accessibility and digital divide. Government must ensure wide access to digital tools, internet connectivity, and online learning platforms in rural and remote areas. Upgrade schools with modern facilities, science labs, libraries, and inclusive spaces for children with disabilities. Smart classrooms: Incorporate technology in classrooms to facilitate blended learning, interactive experiences, and personalized education.

## 9. Conclusion and Discussion

The New Education Policy 2020 marks a transformative shift in India's educational landscape, emphasizing a holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary approach. Its objectives to promote critical thinking, creativity, and vocational training reflect a progressive vision aimed at preparing students for the challenges of the 21st century. The NEP2020 presents significant impact of Indian education system. The NEP2020 identified the several challenges of Indian education system, implementing these can help to address these challenges and provide more holistic inclusive approaches of learning. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a bold and transformative approach to revamping India's education system. With its forward-looking vision, NEP 2020 aims to address the long-standing challenges of quality, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility, ensuring that education becomes a tool for empowerment, social mobility, and nation-building. By focusing on holistic development, competency-based learning, and multidisciplinary approaches, NEP 2020 lays the groundwork for a system that nurtures not just academic excellence but also critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence.

However, while the policy provides a comprehensive framework for reform, its successful implementation hinges on overcoming significant challenges. These include addressing regional disparities, the commercialization of education, the digital divide, and the lack of teacher preparedness. The road ahead requires collaborative action from all stakeholders—government bodies, educational institutions, teachers, students, and parents—to ensure that the lofty goals of NEP 2020 are not only envisioned but also achieved at the grassroots level. the key to ensuring that NEP 2020's transformative vision becomes a reality lies in effective monitoring and feedback mechanisms. This would ensure that implementation is adaptive, iterative, and responsive to emerging needs, challenges, and feedback from the ground level. The role of data-driven insights and evidence-based decision-making will be critical in tracking progress and making necessary adjustments.

In conclusion, while NEP 2020 provides the blueprint for a world-class education system, the journey ahead requires a wholehearted commitment from every level of society. With the right investments, systemic changes, and active participation from all stakeholders, India's education system can truly transform into a dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready model that serves the needs of every child, nurtures talent, and prepares them for a rapidly changing world. The policy's success will ultimately depend on its pragmatic execution and the collective will to make education a true enabler of socio-economic development.

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