Advantages and Disadvantages of Nep 2020: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is a significant step in the process of reorganizing the educational system in India, with the goal of emphasizing holistic development and transdisciplinary learning, skill-based education, inclusivity, and increased flexibility in the learning process. In addition to promoting basic literacy, vocational courses, technological integration, and multilingualism, it seeks to change the education system away from rote learning and exam-oriented systems and toward competency and hands-on systems where students are able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The reforms that are being implemented to enhance the quality and relevance of education have the potential to create a talent pool that is better able to adapt to the shifting requirements of the social and economic environment. However, the true test of the National Education Policy 2020 would be how well it interacts with the educational system in India. Inadequate infrastructure, teachers who have not received enough training, disparities in access to digital resources, financial limits and geographical differences, and the practical challenges of language in a bilingual education system are all potential factors that could impede the achievement of the goals.

INTRODUCTION:

Education is an important part of development in society and economy and culture. In India, the changing requirements of education, technology shifts, growing need for employability, and desire to bridge access to quality education have rendered it imperative for reform of the existing educational system. National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is India's testimony to decades of educational policy reform approved by the Union Government on July 29, 2020. It aims to reach all levels of education from basic to higher education and research, focusing upon transformation in quality, access, multidisciplinary flexibility, and skill development.[1]

NEP 2020 aims to transition from a conventional paradigm primarily linked to rote learning and exam-oriented approaches, which are often associated with imaginary pragmatic people, to a more advanced ecosystem that places the person at the center of learning and also involves incremental education. Among its suggested reforms are the 5+3+3+4 curricular framework, competency-based education, foundational literacy, and these include numeracy, vocational exposure even at the school level, multidisciplinary higher education, technology-enabled learning, and flexibility through multiple entry-exit points. The study of multilingual education is being encouraged, and plans for the entire country are envisaged to strengthen inclusion via non-formal education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups.[2] It aims to adjust education for today's social and economic needs while promoting innovation, critical thinking, and oral and practical skills.

But much also hinges on the width of NEP 2020 in terms of problems. The merit of an education policy lies not in the lofty goals it espouses, but in the ability of educational institutions, teachers, governments, and other stakeholders to realize these aspirations. Existing studies highlight that implementation is hindered by a lack of infrastructure, funding

[1] Sharma, N. (2025). A Comprehensive Analysis of India's National Education Policy 2020: Objectives, Implementation, and Future Prospects. Journal of Integrative Education Studies, 1(1), 1-7.
[2] Sarna, K. K., Puri, S., & Kochar, K. S. (2021). National Education Policy-2020: A Critical Review. Hans Shodh Sudha, 1(3), 8-14.

issues, the number of teachers available, inadequate training, and the digital divide, as well as discrepancies between rural and urban institutions.[3]

The SAGE study of students, teachers, and experts also proves that while NEP 2020 holds immense potential as a framework, stakeholders on the ground continue to worry about institutional preparedness and the capacity required to carry out its wide-ranging reforms. NEP 2020 thus represents an extreme difference between well-meaning design and a difficult path to implementation.[4] This paper focuses on the key pros and cons of NEP 2020, focusing mainly on accessibility, quality, flexibility, inclusivity, statutory skill development, and educational equality, respectively. The inquiry also explores if the transformative aims of the policy can realistically be accomplished within diverse social, economic, and institutional contexts in India.[5]

BACKGROUND AND EVOLUTION OF NEP 2020:

Understanding NEP 2020 can be framed only in the context of the evolution of education policy in post-independence India over a longer time horizon. The Kothari Commission recommended the first National Policy on Education, which came into effect in 1968. It aimed to improve national integration, have greater quality in education, promote science and technology, and create a more unified national system of education. It acknowledged education as a significant tool for national development and social transformation. But eventually, changing demographic, economic, and technological circumstances made a broader policy framework necessary.[6] Though the National Policy on Education, 1986, which was revamped in 1992, became the central national education policy for over three decades, it was not without its limitations. It was particularly focused on access, equity, adult education, teacher education, and eliminating disparities in educational opportunity. Its inadequacies became more apparent in the twenty-first century, as India entered the new millennium.[7]

The evolution of technology, changing nature of employment, globalization, and increasing emphasis on research and innovation resulted in a need for educational requirements that could not be met by the education policy created in the 1980s. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, also provided a significant legal underpinning for universal elementary education, thereby disturbing the milieu on which a new national policy had to function. As a result, NEP 2020 aims at not just changing individual components of education but re-evaluating the structure, content, pedagogy, and regulatory as well as governance mechanisms of the entire education system. NEP 2020 represents the formal trajectory of a journey that began with the creation of the T.S.R. Subramanian Committee in 2015, which gave its report on policy for education.[8]

In 2016, the Committee submitted its report to the Government for consideration, and the Government constituted a Committee under Dr. K. Kasturirangan to draft an overarching national policy on Education. It was in 2019 that the Kasturirangan Committee gave its draft report.[9] The Draft National Education Policy 2019 was then put through a process of wide-ranging consultations with state governments, union territories, educational ministers, parliamentarians, institutions of higher learning, and other stakeholders. The Ministry of Education says that this consultation process

[3] Aithal, P. S., & Aithal, S. (2020). Analysis of the Indian National Education Policy 2020 towards achieving its objectives. International Journal of Management, Technology, and Social Sciences (IJMTS), 5(2), 19-41.
[4] Gupta, U. R., & Jaiswal, S. (2025). National Education Policy 2020: Promise and Practice. Issues and Ideas in Education, 13(2), 26-36.
[5] Pal, B. K., Kumar, A., Kumar, A., Acharya, R., Bhargava, S., & Sharma, S. (2024). Holistic and multidisciplinary education: Evaluating NEP 2020's vision for higher education. Cuestiones de Fisioterapia, 53(03), 2202-2215.
[6] Mandal, B. A Study of Challenges and Prospects on the Implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 in School Education in India.
[7] Beerannavar, C. R., & Pancrasius, S. (2024). National Education Policy 2020: Equity and Inclusion in India's Education System. In Exploring educational equity at the intersection of policy and practice (pp. 138-158). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
[8] Narain, R., & Singh, C. K. (2026). A Study on NEP 2020 Strategies Transforming School Education Quality and Learning Outcomes. International Journal of Research & Technology, 14(1), 114-125.
[9] Kulal, A., N, A., Dinesh, S., Bhat, D. C., & Girish, A. (2024). Evaluating the promise and pitfalls of India's National Education Policy 2020: Insights from the perspectives of students, teachers, and experts. Sage Open, 14(4), 21582440241279367.

received around two lakh suggestions. NEP 2020 was worked out through these consultations and approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020. It was the first education policy of the 21st century, and it's a successor to the National Policy on Education, 1986, changed in 1992.[10] Based on principles of access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability, it singularly commits to approaching higher education in the context of lifelong learning by integrating school & higher education.

Thus, its evolution embodies a shift from an education system focused on expansion and addressing illiteracy to a more comprehensive paradigm that emphasizes development, flexibility, skills formation, multidisciplinary learning, technology inclusion, and perspectives for research and global competitiveness. This historical overview will serve as a reference point for both the transformative capabilities and the practicability of NEP 2020.[11]

MAJOR ADVANTAGES OF NEP 2020:

Phase I of NEP-2020 encompasses a whole host of reforms aimed at mitigating Pakistan's long-standing education boycotts. Instead of education being limited to something confined within academic subjects, the policy takes a more holistic view and aims to build intellectual, practical, social, and emotional skills.[12] It deviates significantly from the traditional education system by focusing on flexibility, competency, inclusion, exposure to trades and technology, and multidisciplinary learning. The best way to look at the benefits of the policy is through the following dimensions.

- From Rote Learning to Competency-Based Education

This is one of the most significant changes that NEP 2020 offers by trying to move Indian education from rote learning and exam-oriented education. Traditional classroom practices have tended to emphasize remembering at the expense of understanding and applying. Instead of that, NEP 2020 promotes experiential, inquiry-driven, and learner-centric education through multi-domain skills to foster critical thinking, creativity, communication, and problem-solving skills in a student.[13] This aspect of the policy is crucial, as it aims at assessing students on what they know and can do in practice, rather than what they can replicate in written tests. In this regard, the A 2025 study by Bala, Kaur, and Dhiman highlights such a shift towards competency-based and holistic learning as a key component of NEP 2020.

These recommended changes to assessment may help mitigate the overuse of summative evaluations in high-vivo environments. The rationale behind formative assessment, project-based learning, and other assessment metrics is that they should provide a more accurate picture of each student’s development. This will make students involved in the study process not to study for tests. That could then translate into an education system that views learning as gaining skills, not grades.[14]

- Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education

NEP 2020 seeks to bring about systemic change to facilitate holistic development by merging academic education with co-curricular activities, vocational exposure and ethical reasoning, and health, environmental awareness, and life skills. It acknowledges that other qualities besides academic performance are equally important facets of a student’s holistic development. It is also multidisciplinary, giving students much greater freedom to take their subjects beyond traditional boundaries. This is especially helpful in higher education, where a strict division of disciplines can limit students’ chances to learn new fields and gain interdisciplinary knowledge.[15]

[10] Banerjee, P. (2025). National Education Policy 2020: A transformative vision for Indian education. BEYOND THE BLACKBOARD: EMERGING ISSUES IN 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION, 29.
[11] Jain, P. K. (2021). A Critical Analysis of New Education Policy 2020 And It’s Future Implications. Journal of Commerce and Trade, 16(2), 1-8.
[12] Paul, P. K. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: Policies, Practices and Challenges.
[13] Rao, A. A., Rao, L. M., & Rao, P. R. (2024). National Education Policy 2020: Opportunities & Challenges. AG Volumes, 103-109.
[14] Beerannavar, C. R., & Pancrasius, S. (2024). National Education Policy 2020: Equity and Inclusion in India's Education System. In Exploring educational equity at the intersection of policy and practice (pp. 138-158). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
[15] Suman, S. (2026). National Education Policy 2020: Goals, Challenges and Opportunities.

The fourth also outlines several major competencies for twenty-first-century learning, namely creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, which further supports this policy. “The aim is not just to prepare students for exams but for changing workplaces and society. This flexibility may also encourage independent thinking and allow the learners to build combinations of theoretical and practical skills that match their personal wishes.

- Vocational and Skill-Based Education

A key benefit of NEP 2020 is its wide reach in improving vocational education and practical skills. As a compromise to minimize the historic division between academic and vocational tracks, it aims to provide students with earlier exposure to vocational education. The research provided is identified here as 'an effort to bridge the gap between education and employment through vocational education being introduced from grade 6 along with coding and skill development.[16]

This method can increase the employability of candidates by helping them gain knowledge as well as practical education. Help to change the stigma that vocational education is a second-best option to standard academic education. NEP 2020 tries to make education responsive to the needs of the labor market and gives strength to practical skills and the dignity of labor. Particularly since we live in a country where education does not necessarily guarantee a job.

- More flexibility in post-secondary education

Higher education in NEP 2020 is now more flexible through mechanisms like multidisciplinary education, multiple entry and exit options, and the Academic Bank of Credits. These reforms are meant to give students more autonomy in shaping their paths through higher education. Those students who cannot complete a traditional degree program could obtain a suitable qualification for the time already studied, while those who want to return to education have potentially better access to continue their route in schooling.[17]

Potential for the new framework to help students who may need flexibility due to circumstances such as financial hardship or personal or professional commitments. It can also provide pathways for mobility across institutions and migration from one program to another by recognizing attained academic credits. Flexibilities in the credit system and multiple entry and exit options were also some of the good things that students see NEP 2020 as offering, as reported by the SAGE study. But their practical utility is again contingent on the proper coordination between institutions and effective credit-transfer systems.[18]

- Promotion of inclusive and equitable quality education

The NEP 2020 stresses a lot on accessibility even at the national level, as many socio-economically backward groups find it difficult to rise. It recognizes that those barriers are not just about the mere existence of schools or other institutions but can also be about poverty, gender, disability (to which there is a much-prized promise), place, and social disenfranchisement. The policy therefore seeks to increase participation and retention rates for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.[19]

The given study notes that NEP 2020 identifies socio-economically weaker sections of society, such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, girls, persons with disabilities, and rural populations, for targeted intervention. Schools can respond to different needs through policies and measures that ensure the availability of infrastructure and learning aids and through sensitizing teachers to the way in which these children learn. When well designed, these measures can do a great deal to close gaps in educational opportunity.[20]

[16] Dutta, P. IMPACT OF NEP 2020 ON CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEARNING.
[17] Dixit, S. The National Educational Policy 2020: Transforming today’s Educational Landscape.
[18] Yenugu, S. (2022). The new National Education Policy (NEP) of India: will it be a paradigm shift in Indian higher education?. Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education, 26(4), 121-129.
[19] Kulal, A., N, A., Dinesh, S., Bhat, D. C., & Girish, A. (2024). Evaluating the promise and pitfalls of India’s National Education Policy 2020: Insights from the perspectives of students, teachers, and experts. Sage Open, 14(4), 21582440241279367.
[20] Paul, P. K. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: Policies, Practices and Challenges.

➢ Promotion of Multilingual Education

Another important facet of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on multilingual education. The policy intends to use the mother tongue or local and regional languages as a medium of instruction, especially at the primary level. The reasoning is that children can grasp concepts better if they are introduced to a language that they know. Research identifies multilingual education as an essential element of policy and points to a number of positive contributions to enhance understanding, critical thinking, and our pupils' connection to their cultural heritage.[21]

The approach of the policy can also help in preserving the linguistic diversity in India and mitigating the disadvantages faced by children when formal education dominates through an unfamiliar language. But at the same time, its success relies on having qualified teachers and suitable educational material in several languages.[22]

➢ The Empowerment of Teachers and Development

The NEP 2020 acknowledges that the teacher is at the heart of the success of any education reform. Instead of viewing teachers as mere conduits of some standardized knowledge, it sees the teacher as the guide leading students to question, to creativity, and to self-learning. It also calls for reforms in the pre-service education of teachers and for more attention to their continuing professional development. Integrated B for 4 years. Ed. Your program and strength in pedagogical and technological capabilities suggest this goal.[23]

With the right institutional support and meaningful training, professional development can improve the quality of teaching. Empowered and well-prepared teachers tend to adapt innovative pedagogical techniques to the demands of their students. Thus, strengthening the agent of reform (i.e., the teacher) has the potential to improve the entire system, as teachers will ultimately be the ones to implement changes at the classroom level.[24]

➢ Integration of Technology and Digital Learning

NEP 2020 has also acknowledged technology as a crucial means to broaden access in education and enhance the process of learning. The provided learning resource can be from a digital platform or educational technologies, which make the student learn beyond the physical classroom. This research mentions that initiatives like DIKSHA and the National Digital Education Architecture are tools aimed at complementing traditional educational approaches and enabling access to digital learning resources.[25]

It can also assist in facilitating individualized learning, enhancing online literacy among users, building teacher capabilities, and expanding access to educational content across geographical barriers. Additionally, effective use of technology can result in enhanced collaboration, research, and access to academic resources in higher education. So, NEP 2020 has the potential to integrate technology with education so that it becomes more flexible and can adapt itself according to changing educational and professional landscapes.

➢ Strengthening Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy, since in its absence most beneficiaries cannot take advantage of higher-order education reform: if students do not master basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, they will struggle with more advanced academic challenges. The policy recognizes foundational literacy and numeracy as essential These skills are the foundation of all future learning, and it is important that they are acquired in the early years of schooling.[26]

This is important, because early gaps can multiply as students progress through their education experience. By fixing these deficiencies early on, we can improve learning outcomes and reduce inequalities in education later on. In addition,

[21] Batra, P. (2020). NEP 2020: Undermining the constitutional education agenda?.
[22] Dutta, P. IMPACT OF NEP 2020 ON CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEARNING.
[23] Rizvi, Z. (2025). Impact of National Education Policy 2020 on India's Educational Landscape: A Comprehensive Review. AG Volumes, 1-6.
[24] Bhushan, S. New Education Policy 2020: A Holistic Vision of the Future of Education in India.
[25] GOYAL, D. A. IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS.
[26] Humtsoe, A., & Sarkar, R. (2026). HOLISTIC EDUCATION FRAMEWORK OF NEP 2020: A LANE TO TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN INDIAN SCHOOLS. Interdisciplinary Perspectives of Education, 3(1), 40-50.

focusing on foundational learning also shows that NEP 2020 is not only looking at reforms in higher education or advanced technology but is also trying to look into the roots of educational development.

Importantly, NEP 2020 reduces the rigidity in the Indian education system, enhances flexibility and inclusiveness, focuses on skill development, and adopts a multidisciplinary approach with reform frameworks for higher education institutions (HEIs) and innovative pedagogies in the teaching-learning process, thereby making it more outcome-based and learner-centric. The reforms proposed address some of the longstanding disadvantages of the traditional system and offer a broad definition of educational development. But these benefits are mostly indicative of the policy potential. Their real significance depends on the availability of adequate financial resources, infrastructure, trained teachers, and institutional mechanisms to translate policy goals into tangible educational outcomes. The difference shows the potential of a policy and its practical realization, where the disadvantages and challenges are what really count.[27]

MAJOR DISADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES OF NEP 2020

However, the National Education Policy 2020 now faces a number of pragmatic and conceptual challenges in its implementation that could limit the extent to which it can realistically be achieved. But the key issue is not whether the individual reforms are desirable or not, but the very significant disconnect between policy objectives and execution across India's hyper-diverse education system. Whatever it is, be it infrastructure, financial resources, teachers, access to technology, or regional conditions, a policy cannot just produce the same outcomes in all institutions. In fact, prior research consistently identifies implementation capacity as one of the two or three determinants of the effectiveness of NEP 2020.

- Implementation Gap Between Policy and Practice

Policy-Practice Gap The most critical issue of concern for NEP 2020 is the gap between what looks like a formidable policy Goliath on paper and the realities of implementational challenges at the universities and classroom level. The policy intends to bring massive changes in curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, teacher education, technology, and higher education. Putting in place those kinds of reforms all at once will require a tremendous amount of administrative capacity and coordination. But the capacity of different educational establishments to take up these changes is very uneven. [28]

The provided research notes that the implementation of NEP 2020 has been patchy, and with its learning scarcities, digital disparity, and bureaucratic bottlenecks, effectively translating the intent of policy into classroom action can be thwarted. This gives rise to a primary dilemma: a policy may be progressive on paper but only yield marginal dividends if the institutions charged with implementing it do not have the means to mobilize it. For this reason, the mere listing of aims should not serve as a yardstick in assessing the success (or failure) of NEP 2020.

- Lacking Infrastructure and Budget

NEP 2020 would require significant investment in building educational infrastructure. Schools and higher education institutions need adequate classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and digital facilities, along with quality teaching materials and accessible infrastructure. However, these facilities are not uniformly available across India. Rural and economically deprived regions often have fewer resources than established urban counterparts.

The provided study particularly reports marked discrepancies in infrastructural availability of smart classrooms, teaching aids, and learning resources between urban and rural institutions. In such institutions, large class sizes, shortages of teachers, and administrative work hamper the implementation of new methods of teaching. Thus, without significant

[27] Rani, V., & Oli, H. (2025). Reforming education at scale: A critical review of NEP 2020 and its global significance. Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies, 51(10), 342-358.
[28] Pal, B. K., Kumar, A., Kumar, A., Acharya, R., Bhargava, S., & Sharma, S. (2024). Holistic and multidisciplinary education: Evaluating NEP 2020's vision for higher education. Cuestiones de Fisioterapia, 53(03), 2202-2215.

financial backing, the policy risks entrenching two-tiered systems in which institutions with existing wealth benefit more from reform while poorly resourced institutions struggle to survive. [29]

➢ Digital Divide and Unequal Access to Technology.

NEP 2020 proposes technology as an important tool, but over-reliance on online education creates new types of disparities in our system. Digital education requires stable sources of internet, proper gadgets, electricity, and basic digital literacy skills. The requirements are not spread evenly among students or institutions. This problem was only underlined with an opportunity to experience the risks in the COVID-19 pandemic.[30]

The research underscores the persistent challenges in underserved communities, such as connectivity, access to digital devices, and digital literacy in general. Thus, technology can be an instrument of inclusion but also an enabler of exclusion. Digital education would be a godsend to many students and would aid those who had access to reliable devices and the internet. But above all, economically disadvantaged students could find themselves even more adrift.

➢ Teacher Preparedness and Shortages

Teachers are expected to bring about a lot of the major changes introduced by NEP 2020. Moving from pedagogical practices to competency-based, experiential, and technology-enabled learning requires significant professional development. Teachers must be trained in new assessment approaches; they also have to learn how to use digital tools to identify how to manage classrooms with such diversity and to implement student-centered pedagogies. [31]

The troublemaker is the gap between policy expectations and what is realistic for teachers in terms of the training provided, as well as support within their school and beyond. According to the provided research, teachers may feel ill-equipped to carry out competency-based assessments, implement technology, and manage a multilingual or inclusive classroom. Teacher shortages and oversized classes can then compound the pressure on already stretched staff. The change in school or classroom practice may therefore be largely theoretical without extended and substantive professional development.

➢ Challenges to Developing and Implementing Multilingual Education

The use of the mother tongue and regional-language education is favored in NEP 2020 (even if it has broader pedagogical and cultural benefits, there are challenges with its implementation). The language diversity in India's regional context makes it difficult to ensure the long-term availability of qualified teachers, textbooks, and learning resources in every linguistic context. The research provided shows that across the board of education, a lack of qualified multilingual teachers and location-specific educational materials are major barriers. [32]

It also observes that there is incomplete agreement among governments and stakeholders on the protocols for implementing language policies. So, while it is true that multilingual education could provide better understanding to many students, insufficient preparation may lead to inconsistent implementation, as well as limited access to educational resources, despite the importance of using both English and their language in the classroom. [33]

➢ Also Making Multiple Entry and Exit Possible

The multiple-entry-and-exit system in higher education is designed to provide flexibility for students who are unable to complete a traditional program. It does raise issues of whether students from less-well-off backgrounds might drop out sooner than this system is producing, however. A student who struggles financially or socially may exit a program after

[29] Sharma, N. (2025). A Comprehensive Analysis of India's National Education Policy 2020: Objectives, Implementation, and Future Prospects. Journal of Integrative Education Studies, 1(1), 1-7.
[30] Govinda, R. (2020). NEP 2020: A critical examination.
[31] Rao, A. A., Rao, L. M., & Rao, P. R. (2024). National Education Policy 2020: Opportunities & Challenges. AG Volumes, 103-109.
[32] Kawale, P. R. (2024). Current scenario of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Gurukul International Multidisciplinary Research Journal.
[33] Batra, P. (2020). NEP 2020: Undermining the constitutional education agenda?.

achieving an intermediate qualification instead of returning at some point to complete a higher credential. Hence, the benefit of flexibility comes with a tradeoff.[34]

Without institutions that can provide quality academic advising, financial aid opportunities for students to return to higher education, or mechanisms that can reconnect students with the system, there are multiple exit routes that could inadvertently suffocate socio-economic inequalities. SAGE students tend to appreciate the multiple entry and exit points, as it allows them to acclimatize more easily, the study found, pointing to a possible benefit of this. But whether this flexibility will work out as well for students of different means is an important question. [35]

- Privatization and commercialization concerns

Another area of concern regarding NEP 2020 is improving the participation of the non-public sector in training. In the absence of public resources, private institutions may take care of infrastructure and innovation. But this greater reliance on private institutions may raise dilemmas of affordability and equity in access. But unless reforms are specifically designed to protect them from the realities of a higher education system increasingly driven by fees, students from poorer backgrounds are likely to remain effectively excluded from the benefits of these reforms, as better opportunities for education have become progressively concentrated in institutions that can charge higher fees. So the real challenge is to ensure that increased institutional autonomy and private participation do not erode the idea of education as an accessible public good.[36]

- Coordination and uneven implementation between Centre–State

Since education is a subject in the Concurrent List of the Constitution, cooperation between the Union and State Governments is necessary. NEP 2020 needs extensive implementation at the level of state governments and individual higher educational institutions (HEIs), each of which functions in a different administrative, financial, and social environment. [37]

The research provided details of wide differences across the regions in implementation and urged cooperation between central policymakers, state authorities, educators, and community stakeholders. The absence of a proper coordination mechanism can do two things: first, NEP is implemented effectively in one state at a different pace compared with other states; second, it may lead to a relative lack of potential outcomes from NEP at the state level. Such disparities could hopefully lead to large regional differences with a unified national policy still in effect. [38]

- Widening the existing inequalities in education

The last and probably the most serious worry is that EXECUTIVE 2020 may sometimes worsen the existing inequalities if implementation is unequal. Their ability to adapt is the product of their prior investments in trained teachers, available technology, and sufficient funding. On the other hand, institutions with basic infrastructure problems may not be able to implement the same reforms.

The available research in this regard, particularly quotes, states that urban institutions with better infrastructure, trained faculty, and digital tools will lag more behind in implementing NEP reforms than rural and deficient institutions. For instance, the situation creates a paradox: A policy designed to foster inclusion and equality may inadvertently lead to unequal outcomes if resources for implementing it are distributed unevenly. [39]

Hence, the principal drawback of NEP 2020 is not so much the goals it sets as the infrastructure to achieve them. With its ambitious reforms demanding continued financial outlays, incessant preparatory work at the institutional level, trained teachers, access to technology, and air-tight Centre-State co-ordination. Without such conditions, the policy may be more

[34] Suman, S. (2026). National Education Policy 2020: Goals, Challenges and Opportunities.
[35] Sharma, R. K., & Kaur, G. (2023). National Education Policy 2020. Goodwill Publications.
[36] Dixit, S. The National Educational Policy 2020: Transforming today's Educational Landscape.
[37] J Jain, P. K., Sharma, P., & Khanam, S. J. P. (2021). Status of National Education Policy 2020: A view of Indian Experience. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Education Research, 10(9), 7.
[38] Khatoon, S. (2025). Skill Based Education in the Context of NEP-2020: A Research Perspective. Educational Quest-An International Journal of Education and Applied Social Sciences, 16(1), 83-90.
[39] Batra, P. (2020). NEP 2020: Undermining the constitutional education agenda?.

aspirational than transformational. So far, the research has concluded that the success of NEP 2020 will not be judged by its policy goals but by the successful implementation of the same in an equitable way built on existing knowledge.[40]

CRITICAL ANALYSIS: TRANSFORMATIVE REFORM OR ASPIRATIONAL POLICY?

The ambitious 2020 National Education Policy promises a transformation of Indian education, but we should evaluate the viability of the policy not just based on its aspirational goals. This form of critical assessment compares the proposed reforms with the conditions that will govern their implementation. Hence, the question at the heart of this debate is how well policy design maps to implementation capacity. The NEP 2020 proposes major changes in curriculum, assessment, vocational education, technology, teacher development, and higher education perspective. But the task is more difficult than it seems.[41]

The ability of institutions to reform is hugely variable due to infrastructure, financial resources, (shortage/access to) teachers, and technology. Research also documents the policy-practice gap as a major concern.

The policy's emphasis on competency-based and experiential learning is inherently pertinent in that it acknowledges the shortcomings of an education system that is oriented toward memorization and examination results. But pedagogical change is more than changing curriculum guidelines. Teachers need to be trained, classrooms need to be made conducive to an interactive approach, and systems of assessment need to be redesigned again and again. If these conditions are not met, new terminology may be developed without any change in classroom practice. As seen in the literature presented here, teacher readiness remains a factor in successful implementation of reforms in competency-based assessment, technology-enabled learning, and inclusive education.[42]

The same inconsistency is also evident in the technology policy. Digital education provides access to educational resources and increases flexibility, but it does not automatically create equality. Students who are unable to access broadband/WiFi or suitable devices/digital literacy cannot gain from technology reforms relative to students who do. As a result, the failure to simultaneously build basic infrastructure as technology expands may worsen existing educational inequalities rather than ameliorating them. Hence, it is not enough to critique the policy merely according to the level of technological uptake but also with regard to whether access to this technology will be equitable enough.[43]

This same tension also relates to multilingual education and multiple pathways. While it can improve understanding and cultural ties, this approach may be difficult to implement due to a lack of trained bilingual teachers and appropriate learning materials in this strategy. Similarly, multiple entry and exit can provide valuable flexibility for students needing to drop out due to short-term fiscal or personal issues, but this same flexibility may induce at-risk economically disadvantaged college students to leave higher education even sooner without sufficient financial and academic support. Data through October 2023 indicate that a policy intended to create educational choice may lead to inequitable ends without the appropriate safeguards.[44]

The federal nature of Indian education adds to its complexity. Education is a subject that requires coordination between the Union and the State Governments; the institutions themselves vary in their policy, administrative, and financial capabilities. Contemporary evidence suggests that implementation differs between better-resourced urban institutions and those in rural or low-resource settings [8]. This approach would mean that the recommendations could be used as

[40] Kumar, A. (2024). National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Its Impact on Education in India. SELP Journal of Social Science, 15 (55), 90, 94.
[41] Mandal, B. A Study of Challenges and Prospects on the Implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 in School Education in India.
[42] Paul, P. K. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: Policies, Practices and Challenges.
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guidelines with scope for placement in their respective contexts, rather than as a uniform national policy mandating everyone to fulfill the same expectation for each institution.

So NEP 2020 is not a complete win or an outright failure due to its implementation challenges. Its policy framework is ambitious and transformative; the outcomes will depend on the capacity to implement. If not, the real test for this policy will be whether it can reach beyond well-resourced institutions to see how the reforms affect students from different sociological and geographic backgrounds. This is particularly so, as the claims made in NEP 2020 would have to be translated into funds, teacher training, infrastructure or digital access, and good institutional coordination if the improvements talked about in the plan are to actually materialize into measurable and equitable education achievements.

SUGGESTIONS AND WAY FORWARD

NEP 2020, when implemented effectively, will require a gradual and structured approach with a coordinated sellout and not just the implementation of reforms through policy directives.

The first step is massive and sustained increases in public investment to improve schools and higher education institutions, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas.

Resources should be channeled to classrooms, libraries, and laboratories: infrastructure and digital readiness so that institutions don't start at different benchmarks when implementing. Research has also pointed out the need for adequate funding and infrastructure to realize the vision of NEP 2020.

Secondly, teacher preparation needs to be viewed as an ongoing process and not a one-time requirement. Regular training for teachers in competency-based assessment, experiential learning, use of digital tools, inclusive education & multilingual teaching are the basic necessities. Such training requires adequate institutional infrastructure to ensure that teachers align with the changes in pedagogy envisaged under NEP 2020. [45]

Third, as technology becomes more widely available, we must address matters related to tackling the digital divide. Having digital platforms does not equal having equitable access. Strengthening access to reliable internet connectivity, affordable devices, and digital literacy is especially important for students from marginalized communities. The research identifies these factors as determinants of equitable digital education. [46]

Fourth, implementation must be dynamic and context-sensitive. The linguistic, social, economic, and infrastructural conditions are strongly heterogeneous between states and institutions. Thus, context-specific implementation strategies should support standardized targets. The Union Government, state governments, universities and colleges, teachers, and communities must work together more closely if steady and substantial advancement is to be attained. [47]

Finally, ongoing monitoring, defined results, and stakeholder engagement should facilitate implementation. Regular evaluation can help to identify gaps before they lead to structural failures. Teacher/Student/Institution feedback can make reforms more sensitive to real education situations. To summarize, NEP 2020 should be considered a process over the years where equity, access, and quality of education are equally important with structural reform.[48]

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CONCLUSION:

The latest National Education Policy 2020 is a major step toward restructuring Indian education in view of changing social, technological,, and socio-economic needs. A holistic and multidisciplinary education, the NEP 2020 offers a broad vision of education, bringing in approaches like competency-based learning, vocational education, foundational literacy and multilingualism, technological integration, and flexibility in higher education. It could help drive a transformation in learning that benefits outcomes more relevant to the skills and capabilities needed in any modern society. And yet, the transformative potential of NEP 2020 cannot be divorced from the complex nature of its implementation. Uneven facilities, scarcity of funds, teacher insufficiency, limited ongoing training programs, the digital divide, and other restrictions of multilingual education may result in non-uniform gains from the policy. There are few comprehensive studies, though existing research points to the gap between policy intention and impact in the classroom. More well-resourced institutions tend to be better placed to implement reforms proposed.

So, NEP 2020 cannot be judged just by the test of its ambition in its provisions or on the hurdles faced during its implementation. Whether the reforms translate into equitable and meaningful student learning outcomes across all social and physical contexts will determine the long-term success of the project. To achieve this goal, we need adequate financing, teacher training, technological access, and capacity at the Union and State Government levels and between the two. It is therefore transformative in vision but conditional in impact. The point about NEP 2020 is that it will be judged not by the aspirations it holds on paper but by its realization in practice.