



# Breaking Down The New Education Policy: What It Means For Students

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## Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative shift in India's educational landscape, replacing the 1986 policy after over three decades. Emphasizing accessibility, equity, quality, and accountability, the NEP introduces a new 5+3+3+4 structure, promotes early childhood education, mother tongue instruction, vocational training from Grade 6, and holistic learning through flexible subject choices. Higher education reforms aim to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio to 50% by 2035, foster institutional autonomy, and encourage research via a National Research Foundation. While the policy envisions a more inclusive, skill-based, and globally competitive education system, it faces challenges related to implementation, funding, and potential centralization. Overall, NEP 2020 aspires to position India as a global knowledge hub and nurture future-ready citizens.

## Introduction

To bring a significant change in order to reform and shift India's system of education, the Indian government introduced the NEP in 2020. It is a major change after 34 years, a replacement for the nation's first policy. The change brings a "top-down" reform to the principles of availability, fairness, excellence, cost-effectiveness, and responsibility. It has a vision of a more comprehensive improvement across all education "strata", from early childhood through higher education.

This reform brings a new educational structure of 5+3+3+4, tailored to specific age groups. It covers the Fundamental Stage (ages 3-8), the Introductory Stage (ages 8-11), the Intermediate Stage (ages 11-14), and the Senior Stage (ages 14-18), emphasising the significance of early childhood education and care. This structure also supports a more adaptable, exhaustive education approach, breaking down the "traditional" divisions and empowering each student to select subjects from various fields rather than confining them to

streams.

“Learning the language” is a main element, with the policy’s support for the Primary language or vernacular language as the primary way of language until the 5<sup>th</sup> standard in order to promote “Language Diversity”. Practical or Real-Life learning is integrated with vocational training starting from Grade 6, including internships to enhance real-life skills. In the higher education area, The policy’s primary objective is to bring up the Gross Enrolment Ratio to 50% by 2035. It also seeks to establish a single regulatory authority (excluding legal and medical education) and strengthen institutional independence.

Teacher development is a central aspect of the NEP, which plans to create a centralized body - National Mission for Mentoring to encourage Continuous skill enhancement. It also supports the use of educational and disruptive technologies via the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to boost education, assessment, and preparation. Additionally, it aims to integrate Indian knowledge systems, values, and cultural studies to foster national pride while embracing a global reach and perspective.

To make improvements in the field of research, NEP proposes a National Research Foundation (NRF) which aims to support high-quality research across various fields. It introduces assessment reforms with a comprehensive 360-degree report card to evaluate each pupil’s unique strengths in both learning and co-curricular fields, moving away from rote learning. The policy highlights inclusivity and diversity, ensuring that children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds have provision of premium education, with respect to the *UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 4* (SDG4). Through these transformative changes, NEP 2020 seeks to position India as a leading global knowledge hub for the coming era.

### Highlights of the NEP at different stages of education

Sl. No	Educational Stage	Features
1	Fundamental Stage	The 5-year Fundamental Stage reforms basic education to a more adaptive, multilevel, incorporating and engaging in learning that is centred around play, activities, and discovery, this stage incorporates age-old Indian traditions and cultural practices. It is continuously enhanced through ongoing research and innovation, aiming to support the observable and emotional growth of students.
2	Introductory Stage	The next stage i.e introductory stage plans to build on the Fundamental Stage. The 3 year stage in addition to it, gradually integrates traditional school classroom education with the use of textbooks. The objective is to introduce students to a new and diverse range of subjects, preparing them for deeper and more intellectual study.

3	Intermediate education stage	This stage focuses on higher conceptual topics in every subject like science, math, arts, social studies, and human studies. For specialized subjects, NEP 2020 recommends adopting experiential learning methods, where students learn through hands-on activities and real-world experiences, guided by subject-specific teachers
4	Senior education stage	This stage is crafted to offer Multifaceted concepts, including Liberal Arts education. Emphasis will be placed to a subject-centered approach to teaching methods and course design approach, emphasizing higher depth, resilience, analytical thinking and pursuit of personal ambitions. Students will experience a semester system, studying 5-6 subjects each 6 months. Board exams would be conducted at the end of the X and XII Grades.
5	Bachelor's educational stage	Bachelor degrees in various subjects spans to 4 years with an option to stop at every year there by offering annual exit points: After the first year, students receive a certificate; after the second year, a diploma; and after the third year, a BA degree. The ideal four-year course includes majors, minors, and investigative projects.
6	Research stage	In the Research stage, students can undertake superior research to earn a PhD in any major, multifaceted, or interdisciplinary subject typically spans 3 to 4 years for full-time study and slightly longer for part-time. While undergoing their PhD studies, candidates must complete an 8-credit course focused on teaching skills. The earlier applicable M-Phil program has been suspended.
7	Continuous Skill Enhancement	The policy promotes the concept of continuous learning and continuous research to ensure that individuals do not become outdated in terms of knowledge, skills, and experience. This ongoing educational process aims to help people lead comfortable and fulfilling lives. The policy emphasizes that engaging in education and research at any point in life can lead to greater personal

		growth and satisfaction.
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## Advantages of the New Education Policy 2020

The reformed Education policy in India displays a significant shift aimed at reforming the educational system to be more comprehensive, dynamic, and equipped to meet the needs of the current century. NEP acts as a substitute for the previous 1986 Education policy and brings a new vision from lower-level schooling to college level and up, grounded in the principles of availability, fairness, excellence, cost-effectiveness, and responsibility.

Key Features of NEP 2020:

1. Curricular Structure:
  - o Introduces a 5+3+3+4 design for school education, corresponding to key developmental stages:
    - Fundamental (ages 3-8)
    - Introductory (ages 8-11)
    - Intermediate (ages 11-14)
    - Senior (ages 14-18)
  - o This structure gives importance to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), providing a strong framework for long term and lifelong learning.
2. Exhaustive Approach:
  - o It allows the students to delve into new fields rather than being confined to the traditional approach. This is a big support for overall education making it more comprehensive and holistic.
3. Language and Language Diversity:
  - o Encourages inclusivity and diversity by incorporating Primary language or vernacular language as way of communication.
4. Vocational Education:
  - o Introduces practical training from Grade 6 with internships, incorporating real-life skills to cultivate and grow in diverse and challenging career fields.
5. Higher Education Reforms:
  - o Objective to bring up Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) to 50% by 2035.
  - o Establishes a single regulatory authority for upper education and grants autonomy to institutions to encourage innovation.
6. Teacher Education and Mentoring:
  - o Establishing a centralized board - National Mission for Mentoring to enhance teacher training and professional development.
7. Technology in Education:

- Encourages digital innovation through a National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), integrating disruptive technology for effective learning, assessment, and administration.

#### 8. Promotion of Research and Innovation:

- Aims to formulate a National Research Foundation (NRF) to provide and support high-quality research in all sections, fostering a research-driven environment.

#### 9. Assessment Reforms:

- Proposes a holistic 360-degree report card to capture each student's progress across scholastic and co-scholastic areas, aiming to move away from rote learning.

#### 10. Inclusive Education:

- Focuses on providing equitable educational opportunities to socially and economically disadvantaged groups, ensuring every child has access to quality education.

#### 11. Indian Knowledge Systems and Cultural Integration:

- The NEP also encourages the integration of Indian knowledge, ethics, and cultural heritage into the curriculum to foster a sense of national pride while keeping a global perspective.

#### 12. Alignment with SDG 4:

- By addressing various aspects of educational reform, NEP 2020 aligns with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which prioritizes on diverse and affordable premium education. The NEP plans to display India as a global knowledge leader, supporting economic and social progress, creating a learning system that is inclusive, flexible, and relevant for the 21st century. Through this exhaustive reform, the policy seeks to ensure India's growth as a global knowledge superpower, to shape a future-ready generation,

### **Demerits of the New Education Policy 2020**

The latest education policy of the government intent to modernize and revamp the nation's education system. Though its vision for educational reform has received considerable praise, various critiques and concerns have surfaced, sparking discussions among educators, policymakers, and the public.

#### 1. Challenges in Implementation

The ambitious reforms of NEP 2020, including the new 5+3+3+4 curricular model, early vocational training, and an emphasis on interdisciplinary learning, face challenges in implementation across India's varied educational landscape. Rural schools, often lacking adequate infrastructure and qualified teachers, may particularly struggle to effectively implement these changes.

#### 2. Language Policy Issues

The policy aims to use the Primary language or vernacular languages as the way of communication until 5<sup>th</sup> standard, aims to foster cognitive development and inclusivity. However, the global job market is more leaning on English as the means of communication, this can cause huge problems to adapt to the demands of the market.

#### 3. Concerns over Centralized Control

Certain critics are concerned that NEP 2020 might result in more centralized control by the central government, especially through the creation of regulatory entities such as the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).

While the policy aims to establish uniform standards across the country, it could potentially diminish the independence of state governments and educational institutions.

#### Privatization and Potential Commercialization

NEP 2020 advocates for private investment in education and the creation of private institutions. While this could increase educational opportunities, it also brings up worries about education becoming more commercialized. The growth of private, self-financed schools might increase the cost of education, potentially deepening socioeconomic divides..

#### 4. Funding Uncertainty

Implementing NEP 2020 demands significant financial resources. While the policy suggests putting in substantial investments to 6% of GDP—a target set long ago—it falls short on providing a comprehensive plan to secure these funds, particularly considering the existing budget constraints.

#### Possible Impact on Education Rights

Expanding Education Rights (RTE Act) to include ages 3 to 18 under NEP is commendable, but it raises concerns about diluting the attention given to the 6 to 14 age group initially covered by RTE. With resources spread across a broader age range, the quality of education for each group might be compromised.

In summary, NEP 2020 offers a comprehensive vision for revolutionizing Indian education, but these challenges emphasize the need for careful planning and adequate resources for successful implementation..

### Conclusion

The latest policy of education in the “growing” India outlines a significant and substantial vision to overhaul India's education system. It gives an accurate plan to address key sector challenges, striving to foster a knowledge-based society. By emphasizing availability, fairness, excellence, cost-effectiveness, and responsibility, the policy aims for an inclusive and comprehensive educational experience for all learners. Significant aspects of the policy include early childhood care and education, multilingualism promotion, vocational training, and higher education reforms, all designed to develop India's youth into creative, intellectually adept global citizens. However, the policy's success hinges on effective implementation, necessitating substantial investments in infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development, alongside continuous progress monitoring.

Despite potential obstacles, the policy paves way for a good and potential route for India's future, redefining learning and growth beyond mere qualifications to encompass personal growth, societal enhancement, and national development. While its full impact will unfold over time, it clearly marks a significant step towards improving the educational landscape in India.

In essence, NEP 2020 transcends being just a policy document; it symbolizes India's commitment to its youth and a vision to emerge as a global knowledge leader. Achieving this educational reform will demand collaboration among policymakers, educators, parents, and students, aiming state of the art, global-level learning platform that meets 21st-century demands.

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