

# Charting the Future: India's National Education Policy 2020 and its Impact on Holistic Development

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**Abstract:** *This article delves into the transformative vision of India's National Education Policy NEP 2020, highlighting its potential to reshape the educational landscape from pre - primary to university levels through the 5 - 3 - 3 - 4 curricular framework. By advocating for multidisciplinary approaches, integration with the Indian knowledge system, and emphasis on skill development, the NEP2020 aims to foster globally competitive human resources. The new horizon of India's growth story will be achieved by the combination of her value based knowledge and enhancement of skilled human resources. The implementation of this policy, initiated in a phased manner since 2020, presents both significant challenges and solutions, such as the need for extensive infrastructure development, teacher training, and the incorporation of digital and environmental literacy. The article also discusses the policy's impact on Assam's education system, addressing local challenges and opportunities. With a holistic perspective, it underscores the NEP2020's potential to drive India towards educational excellence and societal transformation by 2047, urging stakeholders across the nation to contribute to its successful implementation.*

**Keywords:** National Education Policy 2020, Indian knowledge system multidisciplinary education, skill development, digital - literacy, infrastructure – development

The last comprehensive Education Policy in India was introduced in the year 1986. As the present world order and our country's educational as well as social scenario have been changed significantly over last three decades and more, it is quite obvious that our country should adopt a new National Education Policy; Which will cater the need of changing time to build adequate and appropriate human resources to take up the challenges and capable of globally competitive persona. Accordingly, after much discussions and deliberations about its pros and cons with different stake holders comprising of Educationists, Scientists, Industrialists, Professors, Teachers, Students, Parents, Subject experts, with all the state CM's, the union government of India gave its green signal to implement the recommendations of NEP2020 in the entire country from the year 2020 in a phased manner.

The basic and structural changes which NEP2020 emphasised from pre - primary level to the university level in the following pattern. The pattern is 5+3+3+4. Accordingly, in this policy the pre - primary education also comes under the ambit of formal school education which is a major change from previous education policy of 1986. Hence a student (kid) will start her school from 3 years of age, and after 5 years, she will complete her standard 2, i. e., basic primary education. Subsequently after 3 more years she will be in standard 5, it is basic education. Hereafter one block of 3 years it will lead her to standard 8 and finally from standard 9 to 12 of 4 years duration. This NEP2020 has lessened the burden of students of their first major maiden external examination of class 10, popularly known as Metric examination. Instead of single school leaving exam a student will give semester exam from standard 9 to 10, four exams and their cumulative score will be the class 10 pass results. In our state this has a significant impact as most of the schools is up to standard 10, hence it also previously called high school leaving certificate. Most of the colleges in Assam has plus 2 curriculum with their regular degree syllabus. But NEP2020 says without any ambiguity that up to 12 standard the education should be under school

education, after passing the most crucial exam of standard 12 a student will go for higher studies in Higher Education Institutes. This transitory phase will not be as smooth in our state as for other states of the country as they delinked Higher Secondary Education from colleges beforehand. As our state has already implemented NEP2020 in school education from academic session 2022 - 2023, so lot of high schools must be upgraded to Higher secondary level to accommodate the students of the state who will otherwise take admission in nearby colleges. It will require lot of resources for the government to build up infrastructure and to employ qualified teachers throughout the state.

In general degree course the duration of degree has been changed from existing 3 years to 4 years with a option to exit after 3 years. Those who will pursue 4years degree course will have the option of 1 year further to complete their Masters but for 3 years degree holders the Masters course will be of 2 years duration.

In the following section I want to point out the salient features of NEP2020 and what will be the best possible way to implement those in the right spirit overcoming the probable obstacles.

- 1) Multidisciplinary approach
- 2) Indian Knowledge System
- 3) Linkage of higher education to the society
- 4) Creation of knowledge hub
- 5) Promoting open and distance learning and online courses
- 6) Skill based education
- 7) Environment friendly education
- 8) Value based education system
- 9) Entrepreneurship development skill
- 10) Bridging the gap of local inequality
- 11) Stress on mother tongue
- 12) Special emphasis on Girl's education
- 13) Optimum use of ICT tools for visualization and comprehension for holistic learning
- 14) Introduction of flexibility for academic mobility

Volume 13 Issue 3, March 2024

Fully Refereed | Open Access | Double Blind Peer Reviewed Journal

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- 15) Adequate emphasis on practical learning.
- 16) The major challenges and their possible remedies

#### i) Lack of infrastructure

As our country's population has crossed the 140 billion marks in the population indicator, in fact we are the most populous country in the world right now surpassing China, and we are a young nation in terms of age as compared to advanced countries. Therefore, our governments both at the centre and state need a huge amount of fund to create the adequate infrastructure to achieve the goal of NEP2020 for quality basic education to all. In this regard the public - private partnership with sufficient fund generation and expenditure will bridge the gap of infrastructure deficit sooner than later.

The next challenge which comes to my mind is training of the most crucial stake holders the teachers in a rightful way to make them competent and sharp enough to implement the ideas and goals benchmarked by the NEP2020. To fulfil this goal Education department shall go for massive training programme both in online mode and offline mode whichever is feasible or via blended mode to reach to the maximum numbers in least possible times. This training must focus from primary teachers afterwards for other teachers as the fruit of NEP2020 will be sweet only when there will be radical changes starting from pre - primary level gradually to subsequent levels. The state government may think of performance-based incentives to motivate the teachers. Any kind of rewards and letter of appreciation after actual evaluation actually enhances the performance of the person concerned. Assam has a great challenge of implementing mother tongue for every child because of her diverse population pattern, in basic level of education. But I am optimistic of the fact that the state government will come up with some specific solutions fit for locality to address this issue.

#### ii) Multidisciplinary approach:

The NEP2020 has given enough emphasis on multidisciplinary approach in curriculum. To implement this concept in general undergraduate programme, the first obstacle one will face in Assam is due to the lack of multidisciplinary Higher Education institutes in the state (HEI's). Most of the colleges of Assam is stand alone or at best of 2 streams, with some exceptions where 3 streams are running at present. To make my point clear for the reader I give one simple example; suppose a student of pure science background wants to take Business Administration as one minor subject in 4-year degree course but her college does not have the faculty of commerce stream, therefore that option she cannot choose but it is permissible under NEP2020. The academic flexibility option will not be available for her. This scenario may be altered by going for online courses available in online platform like SWAYAM, but there comes the issue of IT infrastructure of the concerned college and it's affiliating University's academic curriculum. I am apprehensive of the fact that whether the policy makers have given enough attention to build up capacity in IT infrastructures at the local level to attain the goal of multidisciplinary approach in blended mode as per NEP2020.

#### iii) Skill enhancement:

It is a very crucial part of NEP2020. As the present time demands more and more skill based human resources, with basic knowledge of the subject the employability skill is also of great importance, therefore implementation of component of skill in education is the need of the hour. The industry has very a vital role here, the industries should effectively collaborate with the academic institution and help in designing skill based practical courses for the students. Those skills will be helpful for the students to learn the things by doing practically the things. The summer vacation will be useful for industry visits and internship for the students. These kinds of efforts from small to big industries will generate skilled human resources who can be easily employable after passing out from Colleges. This will be connected to our country's success story in near future.

#### iv) Environment friendly education:

Our Indian tradition is always be like we value our environment and we know how to protect it. This knowledge of environment protection inherited by us from our ancestors as they treated the big banyan trees as god and worshiped them, the same legacy is also a part of our culture. But of late somehow we deviated a little from this path and that's why NEP2020 stressed the need for sustainable development through environment protection. The globe has seen some of the worst climatic changes in recent times, so it's a high time that students be adequately addressed the concept of environment protection and their further necessary action to reverse the damage of mother earth.

#### v) Value based education:

Our society is quite different from western society in many aspects. In our tradition the value has a special significance. From the very ancient times till today we show respect to our elders, we treat guests as God (Athithi deva bhavo). Our Indian philosophy is Vasudeva Kutumbakam means one earth one family. We believe in plurality. According to Rabindranath Tagore our country is a pilgrimage of all faiths, race and religions. The greatest strength of ours is our unity in all diverseness. In NEP2020, this very Indian concept has been revitalised, which was somewhat lacking in previous policies.

As young and budding minds always search for inspiration to uplift themselves. The value based education will give them the opportunity to go inside the Indian outlook, her achievement, history of modern India, contributions of Indians in the fields of science from ancient to modern times. It will also inculcate societal harmony, lasting peace among the communities, tolerance perspective under our own great legacy of five thousand years. For the successful implementation of value based education the concerned teachers must be trained and motivated properly.

#### vi) Academic bank of credit: (ABC)

The NEP2020 has introduced a new concept in Indian Education system as the option for students to multiple entry and exit in 4- year undergraduate programme. The students can opt out after 1 year, 2 year, 3year or 4 year undergraduate programme under multiple entry and exit option, a student will get 7 years time to complete his undergraduate programme. But it will be very difficult to

practically implement it. As all the universities in India have not adopted the same UGC model syllabus, so I am pointing out the probable practical problems. Supposing a student of Physics (Major) opted a course of optics in 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and after completing first year he opted out from that college and took admission in 3<sup>rd</sup> semester in another college affiliated to other university there he got the same optics paper in the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester, so it would be repetition for him. In Academic bank of credit (ABC) his credit earned will be stored and whenever necessary will be transferred. The data will be stored digitally so it will be secured. But another problem with multiple entry is whether the availability of seats for particular subject for a student in 3<sup>rd</sup> semester in another college or with a gap of one year in, his previous college. The next practical problem will arise with different credits inside the State for different universities in the same subject or topic. Though ABC is a good concept and it will act as a bank of credit for the students but for multiple exit and entry in different HEI's under no common syllabus nor with uniform credit system will always lead to problems for universities and affiliated colleges. At the same time the concept of academic flexibility is a well-conceived policy but a country like us to implement it needs more of refinement.

**vii) Online courses:**

India has revolutionised her IT infrastructure, nobody can deny this fact. Having said so, our country's geographic location and regional inequality is so vivid that it is beyond any doubt, rural areas have still distinct disadvantages regarding the usage of ICT and issues of Internet speed, uninterrupted supply of power. The NEP2020 has given special emphasis on the need of blended mode of education system to the optimum level. Hence it will be a daunting task for the implementation agency to provide equal opportunity for the all-potential human resources of the future. It is also quite impractical to think that government can replace this communication gap by employing adequate manpower within a short period of time. In my opinion, the NEP 2020 implementation agency should actively consider the ways to bridge the IT inadequacy for the rural Bharat. Till these facilities improve to their desired level, one solution may be to bring the students of those areas to the nearest town or city HEI's or universities in a cluster mode under student exchange programme, that will be quite effective as per as the learning is concerned.

**Conclusion**

NEP2020 will be a milestone for India's growth but its success lies in proper and effective implementation in a time bound manner. I do hope and strongly believe this policy will play a pivotal role to make our India a viswaguru (world leader) by the year 2047, when we shall be celebrating our 100 years of independence from colonial oppression. My appeal to all let us work in our own domain optimally for its true implementation.

**References**

- [1] New Education Policy, 2020.