

## EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH NEP 2020: A ROADMAP TO TOMORROW'S SUCCESS

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### **Abstract**

National Education Policy 2020 is a game-changing blueprint that will empower young people and set them up for future success. With its progressive outlook, this all-encompassing policy aims to transform the educational system by encouraging students' critical thinking, vocational skills, and holistic growth. By providing a flexible and diverse curriculum, NEP 2020 seeks to provide young people the skills they need to be adaptive in a world that is changing quickly. A student-centered educational system with a focus on creativity, research, and hands-on learning is what the policy aims to achieve. NEP 2020 aims to better connect education with the needs of the contemporary world by emphasizing digital literacy and technology integration. It promotes equity, inclusivity, and a profound understanding of cultural differences in order to address societal issues. The kids are positioned to emerge as academically accomplished persons who are also well-rounded, creative thinkers prepared to make significant contributions to society as they follow the path outlined by NEP 2020. This strategy, with its focus on skill development and empowerment, is undoubtedly a light of hope pointing today's kids in the direction of a resilient and successful future.

**Keywords:** National Education Policy, Youth, Holistic Development, Experiential Learning, Digital Literacy.

### **Introduction**

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a forward-looking agenda designed to transform India's education system by promoting holistic development and empowering the nation's youth. Rooted in Indian values while embracing a global outlook, NEP 2020 aims to nurture not only cognitive growth but also the physical and psychological well-being of students. It emphasizes flexibility in secondary education, offering students the freedom to choose from a wide range of subjects, including physical education, arts and crafts, and vocational skills, enabling them to shape their individual academic and career paths (1). A key feature of NEP 2020 is its inclusive assessment approach, which evaluates students' progress across affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains. By adopting logical learning principles, the policy enhances students' inductive and deductive reasoning skills through a systematic, progressive method. Its multidisciplinary strategy fosters experiential learning, equipping students with essential critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration skills. The policy also introduces flexible course options, credit transfer with foreign universities, and multiple entry and exit points in undergraduate programs, encouraging a global perspective while recognizing the importance of technology in education. Through these innovative reforms, NEP 2020 aspires to cultivate a creative, critically thinking, and well-rounded youth, preparing them to excel as global citizens and contribute to India's leadership in knowledge and innovation (2).

### **Previous Policy**

India's education system has undergone significant transformation over time through various policies and reforms. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) marked a crucial turning point by introducing the 10+2+3 educational framework, promoting multilingualism through the Three-Language Formula, and recommending scholarships and improved teacher remuneration to

support marginalized students (3). Building on these foundations, NEP of 1968 focused on democratizing education, ensuring free and compulsory education up to the age of 14, and standardizing educational systems in line with the Kothari Commission's recommendations (4). The NEP of 1986 further strengthened educational access by emphasizing universal enrollment and retention, particularly for underserved communities, while striving to improve the quality of education (5). Addressing the unfinished agenda of the 1986 policy, the NEP of 1992 introduced curriculum revisions, enhanced teacher training, and encouraged innovation in teaching methods to modernize India's educational landscape (6,7). Later, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 2005 brought a paradigm shift by prioritizing inclusive education and student-centered learning, moving away from rote memorization to cater to diverse learning needs (8). The most recent NEP 2020 aims for holistic and multidisciplinary education, digital learning, teacher empowerment, and equitable access, offering a transformative approach to address the challenges and opportunities of contemporary education in India (9).

### **Aims of New Education Policy 2020**

NEP 2020 aims to revolutionize India's education system by

- Promoting Holistic learning
- Multidisciplinary approach
- Teacher empowerment
- Digital education
- Equitable access

In the face of current difficulties, it aims to reinterpret educational methods in order to satisfy changing societal demands and offer a robust foundation for revolutionary changes (10).

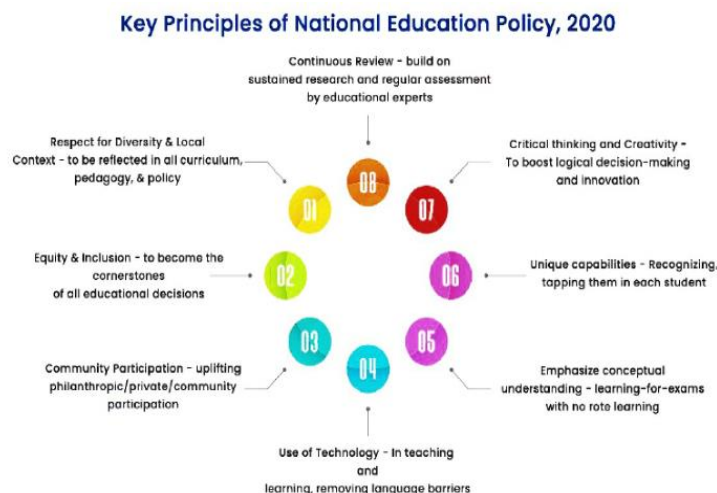
### **Vision of NEP 2020**

- Establish an educational system with an Indian cultural foundation.
- Make India a thriving, egalitarian knowledge society.
- Enable everyone to receive top-notch education, transforming India into a worldwide knowledge giant.
- Encourage students to have a strong regard for the Constitution's principles and fundamental duties.
- Encourage a deep connection to one's nation and a sense of duty and responsibility.
- Instill a deep sense of pride in being Indian in one's brain, spirit, thoughts, and actions.
- Develop the values, attitudes, abilities, and knowledge necessary for a responsible commitment to sustainable development, human rights, and the welfare of the world.
- Nurture students into truly global citizens reflecting a sense of responsible global citizenship (11).

### **Principles of NEP 2020**

The goal of NEP 2020 is to significantly alter education at all levels, fundamentally reshaping the way education is perceived and implemented throughout the country (11). The fundamental principles of this policy contain promoting equity, ensuring access, upholding quality, ensuring affordability, and maintaining accountability (12) (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Key Principle of NEP 2020 adapted from (11)



### Empowering Youth through NEP 2020

Youth empowerment is crucial for shaping confident, resilient, and self-reliant individuals who can thrive in a rapidly evolving world. According to the World Youth Report (2020), about 1.2 billion people aged 15 to 24 years makes around 16% of the global population, highlighting the importance of equipping this group with the right skills and mindset (13). Empowered youth believe in their abilities, stay true to their values despite external pressures, and view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than setbacks. They demonstrate courage, take risks, and pursue their goals without seeking external validation (12). NEP 2020 plays a significant role in fostering this empowerment by offering a comprehensive and elastic educational framework. It emphasizes holistic development, equipping young individuals with the skills, values, and knowledge needed for success in the 21st century. By encouraging critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and adaptability, NEP 2020 prepares India's youth to navigate an ever-changing global landscape and become self-assured, innovative, and responsible global citizens (14).

#### 1. Reforms in School Education under NEP 2020

NEP 2020 introduces transformative reforms in school education, acknowledging that as more than 85% of a child's brain development takes place before the age of six, early childhood care and education are crucial. To ensure universal ECCE access by 2030, the policy aims to prepare all children, especially those from low-income families, for formal schooling (15). One of the most important changes proposed by NEP 2020 is the rearrangement of the existing 10+2 structure into a 5+3+3+4 framework, covering the 3 to 18-year age group (Figure 2). This structure includes four distinct stages: the Foundational Stage (ages 3-8), focusing on early childhood education and foundational literacy; the Preparatory Stage (ages 8-11), emphasizing holistic learning and fundamental numeracy skills; the Middle Stage (ages 11-14), promoting conceptual knowledge and critical thinking; and the Secondary Stage (ages 14-18), offering comprehensive education with vocational training, skill development, and experiential learning. Through this well-structured approach, NEP 2020 aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for both higher education and the workforce.

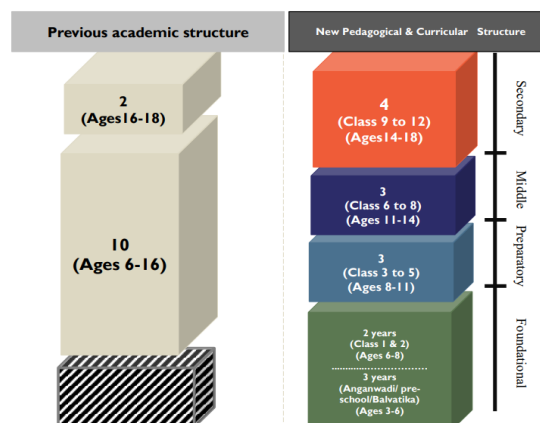


Figure 2 Previous and New academic structure of school education.  
(NEP\_Final\_English.Pdf, n.d.2020)

## 2. Higher Education

Via revolutionary reforms that support transdisciplinary learning, skill development, and holistic development, NEP 2020 aims to empower youth via higher education. The key goals of NEP 2020 in higher education mentioned below-

- NEP 2020 envisions a transformative approach to higher education, focusing on multidisciplinary learning, skill development, and holistic growth. It encourages a multidisciplinary education system, allowing students to explore diverse subjects, follow their passions, and develop adaptable skills aligned with evolving job markets.
- The policy emphasizes skill development and experiential learning by promoting partnerships with industries, start-ups, and research centers, providing students with hands-on training, internships, and real-world exposure to enhance employability.
- Through flexible learning pathways, NEP 2020 offers multiple entry and exit points, credit-based learning, and diverse course selections, enabling students to personalize their educational journey and switch between academic and vocational tracks.
- NEP 2020 prioritizes inclusive education, ensuring equal access to higher education for marginalized groups, including women, rural students, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The policy fosters a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, supporting startup incubators, innovation hubs, and research parks on campuses to encourage creativity, problem-solving, and an entrepreneurial mindset.
- It also promotes international exposure by enhancing global competitiveness through international collaborations, exchanges, and joint research, offering students cross-cultural education and networking opportunities.
- Lastly, NEP 2020 underscores the importance of research and innovation, establishing the National Research Foundation to promote interdisciplinary research and advance national and global knowledge economies.

These revolutionary reforms aim to empower youth, making them globally competitive, innovative, and well-equipped for the challenges of the 21st century (16).

## 3. Internationalization

NEP 2020 promotes internationalization in education by offering global exposure through partnerships with international universities, student and faculty exchanges, and study abroad opportunities. It enhances quality education by providing access to advanced technology, global best practices, and top-notch resources. The policy encourages multidisciplinary

learning, fostering collaboration across disciplines and countries to address real-world challenges. It supports entrepreneurship and innovation by connecting students with global startups and incubators. NEP 2020 emphasizes linguistic skills to improve employability and global communication, expands career opportunities through international networks, and boosts research collaboration, contributing to the global body of knowledge (17).

#### **4. Professional Education**

NEP 2020 provides young people with professional education to equip them for success in a range of areas. Exposure to the industry, hands-on training, and the necessary abilities are some of these resources.

- **Vocational Education Integration:** By incorporating vocational education into regular education, NEP 2020 provides students with both academic knowledge and real-world skills.
- **Flexibility and Choice:** Students are allowed to choose career-focused courses that align with their interests and career goals.
- **Practical Training:** NEP 2020 places a high priority on internships, industrial partnerships, and hands-on training to give students real-world experience and industry-relevant skills.
- **Industry Partnerships:** It promotes partnerships between businesses and academic institutions to develop courses, offer curriculum, and expose students to the corporate world, all of which increase students' employability.
- **Entrepreneurship Education:** NEP 2020 includes entrepreneurship education, encouraging students to develop entrepreneurial skills and fostering an inventive culture.
- **Continuous Learning:** It emphasizes lifetime learning and upskilling, provides opportunities for career progression, and recognizes prior learning (18).

#### **5. Inclusion and Equity:**

NEP 2020 promotes inclusive practices and assistance for a range of needs by placing a high priority on inclusion and working to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity regardless of background, gender, or disability. (14).

#### **6. Sports and Physical Education**

Sports and physical education play a crucial role in empowering youth by offering numerous social, emotional, and physical benefits. Regular participation in sports improves cardiovascular health, strength, flexibility, and coordination, while also boosting mental health by releasing endorphins that enhance mood, self-esteem, and reduce stress and anxiety. Through sports, young people develop essential life skills like discipline, perseverance, teamwork, and leadership, which are vital for personal and professional success. It also promotes social integration, community involvement, and healthy lifestyle choices by addressing issues like substance use, sleep, and nutrition. Moreover, sports positively impact academic performance by improving focus and cognitive function, making them a key contributor to overall well-being and success (19).

#### **7. Flexibility in Course Choices:**

NEP 2020's focus on flexibility in course choices empowers students to explore their interests beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries, allowing them to choose courses from multiple streams. This multidisciplinary approach helps students discover their passions, explore diverse career options, and build a well-rounded skill set essential for today's interconnected world. By offering opportunities for vocational courses and internships, the policy enhances employability and fosters entrepreneurial skills. NEP 2020 also promotes the use of open educational resources and technology-enabled learning, expanding access to a wide range of

courses and educational materials. This flexibility particularly benefits students in underserved and rural areas, enabling them to pursue their educational aspirations with ease (20).

### **8. Adult Education and Lifelong Learning**

NEP 2020 emphasizes adult education and lifelong learning, addressing the needs of learners beyond the traditional school age. It provides opportunities for individuals who may have missed formal education or wish to expand their skills, ensuring education remains a continuous process in a rapidly evolving world. By offering flexible learning options tailored to adult learners, the policy promotes social justice, inclusivity, and economic growth through enhanced job preparedness. NEP 2020's vision for lifelong learning encourages personal development, creativity, and curiosity through programs like online courses, skill development, and career training. This approach not only improves employability but also contributes to individual growth and the overall well-being of society (21).

### **9. Skills for the Future:**

NEP 2020 takes a comprehensive approach to youth empowerment by prioritizing the development of diverse skills essential for success in today's fast-changing world. It goes beyond traditional academic knowledge, integrating practical, vocational, and transdisciplinary abilities into the education system. The policy emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, communication, teamwork, digital literacy, problem-solving, adaptability, resilience, empathy, cultural competency, financial literacy, environmental awareness, and entrepreneurial skills. Through experiential learning like internships, apprenticeships, and vocational training in fields such as IT, healthcare, manufacturing, and tourism, NEP 2020 ensures that students gain well-rounded, real-world competencies. This holistic skill development approach empowers youth to become adaptable professionals, responsible global citizens, and lifelong learners who contribute positively to society (22).

### **10. Assessment Reforms**

By supporting a move away from traditional exam-centric procedures and toward holistic and ongoing evaluation techniques, NEP 2020 empowers children through assessment changes. The strategy places a strong emphasis on competency-based assessment, which measures not only memorization but also critical thinking and practical skills to give a more complete picture of students' abilities. NEP 2020 enhances student engagement and learning outcomes by raising a culture of continuous learning and individualized feedback through the use of technology for digital assessments and the promotion of formative assessment. Additionally, by separating tests from important choices, the policy hopes to relieve students of unnecessary stress and foster an atmosphere that is more supportive of lifelong learning and holistic growth. In order to maximize learning and growth for every student, NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on changing assessment.

Key features include:

- Competency-based, formative, and routine evaluations.
- Pay attention to "assessment for learning."
- Assessing higher-order abilities, such as conceptual clarity, analysis, and critical thinking.
- Continuous tracking of learning outcomes.
- Making board examinations more flexible.
- AI-based software for tracking student progress.
- The National Assessment Center (PARAKH) was established.
- Self-evaluation and evaluation by peers.
- The National Testing Agency's (NTA) Common Aptitude Test. (23)

## 11. Multidisciplinary Approach

NEP 2020 empowers youth through its multidisciplinary approach by encouraging them to explore diverse fields and pursue their interests, thereby enabling personalized learning pathways tailored to their individual strengths and aspirations. By breaking down traditional disciplinary boundaries, the policy allows students to engage with a variety of subjects and perspectives, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and innovation. This approach not only broadens students' horizons but also equips them with a well-rounded skill set that is increasingly valued in today's interconnected world. Moreover, by emphasizing the interconnectedness of knowledge across disciplines, NEP 2020 prepares youth to tackle complex real-world challenges, encouraging collaboration and interdisciplinary problem-solving. The multidisciplinary approach of NEP 2020 empowers youth to become versatile, adaptable, and lifelong learners, ready to navigate and excel in diverse personal, academic, and professional pursuits.(24)

## 12. Digital Learning

NEP 2020 enhances youth empowerment through digital learning by expanding educational access, improving learning outcomes, and equipping students with essential digital-age skills. It ensures universal access to high-quality education regardless of location or socioeconomic status through digital platforms. Remote learning opportunities like digital textbooks, online courses, and educational apps enable students to continue their education even in times of crisis. The policy promotes individualized learning, allowing students to learn at their own pace through digital resources tailored to their needs and interests. By emphasizing digital literacy and 21st-century skills, NEP 2020 prepares students for both academic excellence and future employment. Teacher professional development in digital pedagogy ensures effective use of digital tools in education, while Open Educational Resources (OER) lower costs and increase access to quality materials like digital textbooks and interactive simulations. Finally, the policy fosters a culture of creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration, empowering students, educators, and researchers to innovate and share knowledge in the digital era (25).

## Conclusion

In India, NEP 2020 is a revolutionary approach to education that seeks to empower young people by providing them with a comprehensive, adaptable and inclusive education. In order to satisfy the demands of the 21st century, the strategy recognizes the importance of early childhood education, school reforms, and adjustments in higher education. NEP 2020 emphasizes empowering youth through universal education, experiential learning, vocational education, digital learning, sports, and research/innovation. Certain NEP 2020 initiatives concentrate on developing critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork, all of which are vital future competencies. The strategy emphasises fostering inclusiveness and equity, various course options, ongoing professional development for teachers, and evaluation improvements. Moreover, NEP 2020 highlights empowering girls through financial support, scholarships, and incentives, aiming to ensure equal opportunities regardless of background, gender, or abilities. By advocating multidisciplinary approaches, integrating technology, and emphasizing 360-degree assessment, the policy aims to revolutionize India's education system and equip students for 21st-century workforce success. The policy's success relies on collaborative efforts from government, schools, teachers, parents, and students to positively impact India's education landscape.

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