

National Education Policy

[UPSC Notes]

What is the National Education Policy 2020?

In 1964, the need for a national education policy was felt when Congress MP Siddheshwar Prasad criticized the government for lacking a country's vision and philosophy for education. In the same year, the government had appointed a 17-member Education Commission, headed by the then UGC Chairperson D S Kothari, to draft a national education policy for uniform and coordinated nationwide education policy in India.

- Based on recommendations by the commission, Parliament passed the first education policy in 1968.
- The second National Education Policy passed in 1986, under the Prime Ministership of Rajiv Gandhi; it was revised in 1992 when P V Narasimha Rao was Prime Minister. Since then, it has undergone many changes and has been revised from time to time to introduce new objectives.

The NEP 2020 has replaced the 34-year-old National Education Policy. The policy focuses on the 5+3+3+4 pattern, according to which the student's education must be completed in 4 different stages.

National Education Policy 2020 Overview,

The overview of the National Education Policy 2020 is under-

Highlights	Details
NEP full form	National Education Policy
New National Education Policy was launched on	July 2020
First National Education Policy was launched in	1986.
National Education Policy official website	https://www.education.gov.in

Key features of the National Education Policy 2020

The National Education policy 2020 addresses the challenges being faced by the persisting Education system, and these are-

- Affordability
- Quality
- Access

- Equity
- Accountability

Other intentions of the National Education Policy include-

- Setting up NEC.
- Increasing public investment in education.
- Strengthening the use of technology.
- Increasing focus on vocational and adult education.

The National Education Policy provides the necessary reforms to help students in school and higher education. The NEP 2020 also aims to focus on the necessary segments like early childhood care, strengthening teacher training, reforming the existing exam system, and reforming education's reforming framework.

Key Recommendations of National Education Policy

The National Education Policy 2020 has a keen eye on the major sections of the education system and recommends reforming the Curriculum Framework, Vocational Courses, The Right to Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act), and much more. The key recommendations of the NEP, 2020 are-

Right to Education Act, 2009

The Right to Education Act was introduced in 2009. The National Education Policy 2020 recommends extending the radius of the Right to Education Act by involving two education levels. It includes early childhood and secondary education school. NEP suggests eradicating the children's detention till the 8th class by allowing compulsory education (by RTE) for a child to gain education between 3 to 18 years of age.

Early Childhood Care and Education

Since the NEP has introduced early childhood and secondary education school. The policy also recommends that education and early childhood care be developed into a curriculum in two parts. It consists of-

- An educational framework for students between the ages of 3-8 years.
- Guidelines for Parents & Teachers of students up to 3 years of age.

It put forward the idea of improving and expanding the quality of Anganwadi. It also recommends the co-location of the Anganwadi system with the primary schools.

Curriculum Framework

The National Education Policy 2020 adopts the 5-3-3-4 pattern for education. As per this pattern, there must be a division of education as per

- Foundational Stage for 5 years- It includes pre-primary education for 3 years and the rest for classes 1 and 2.
- Preparatory Stage for 3 years- It is for classes 3 to 5.
- Middle Stage for 3 years- It is for classes 6 to 8.
- Secondary Stage for 4 years- It is for classes 9 to 12.

Education Governance

NEP says that there must be an apex body for education, National Education Commission or Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog, that needs to be governed by the Prime Minister himself. The

National Education Policy 2020 also suggests that the name of the Ministry of Human Resources & Development should be changed to the Ministry of Education.

School Exam Reforms

Like the other initiatives, the National Education Policy suggests that school exam reforms must be implemented to track students' progress in school. According to this policy, there must be State Census Exams in classes 3, 5, and 8. It focuses on changing the secondary board exam to test students' skills, capabilities, higher-order thinking, and core concepts.

Regulatory Structure and Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions

For Regulatory Structure and Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions, the National Education Policy has suggested the following changes-

- Separation of NAAC from UGC into a separate and independent body.
- Setting up National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA).

National Research Foundation

Indian researchers are very dedicated. Still, there are difficulties in researching because of the lack of a strong foundation and poor infrastructure. To improve Indian research quality, it recommends establishing the National Research Foundation. The National Research Foundation is an independent organ to check on funding, monitoring, and capacity building for quality research.

Financing Education

One of the major recommendations of NEP 2020 was to increase the public investment in education (almost double). It aims to have an expenditure of 6% of GDP on education.

Vocational Courses

It emphasizes the introduction of vocational education for the students from classes 9 to 12. All the schools must develop an expert curriculum aligned with the NSQF (National Skills Qualifications Framework) competency levels. It's not only the duty of schools but the vocational courses must be integrated into the curriculum of undergraduate education programs and Higher education institutions and universities.

National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology

It demands the establishment of an independent organ NETF (National Education Technology Forum) that accounts for the induction, deployment, and use of technology. The autonomous body must include virtual laboratories for remote learning.

Three Language Formula

The National Education Policy supports the idea of three language formula. According to the three-language formula, the state government should adopt the modern Indian language apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi-speaking states. They need to prefer a southern language. Non-Hindi-speaking states can opt for Hindi, English, and regional language.

When did NEP guidelines get implemented?

The policy is meant to transform the education system by 2040. Here are the key details that point towards its implementation.

- Some proposals were implemented immediately; for example, the Ministry of Human Resource Development was transformed into the Ministry of Education.
- From the 2020-21 academic year onwards, the four-year undergraduate degrees with multiple entry-exit options were introduced in the 20 IIEs (Institute of Excellence), while other institutes continued with the existing three-year degree courses.
- The existing M.Phil students continued till the completion of their degree, although new admissions for the program were not accepted.
- The National Testing Agency introduced a pilot version of the common entrance test by December 2020, which will be used for admission to all IIEs and central universities in 2021.
- Some Indian Institutes of Technology are developing the technical structure of the Academic Credit Bank, which was also established in December, and this will become applicable to all new students joining central universities next year.
- The National Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission which is to be implemented by 2025, was launched by the end of 2020.
- The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has introduced the curricular framework for the new school structure, including early childhood care, by the 2021's academic year.

Expected Outcomes of National Education Policy 2020

National Education Policy 2020 aims for the following outcomes in the future-

- NEP wants to attain foundational learning and numeracy skills by 2025 via National Mission.
- It aims to universalize Secondary Education aligning with SDG 4 from ECCE within 10 years.
- To bring the Gross Enrolment Ratio to 100% in Pre-school to secondary level in the forthcoming years.
- To reintroduce 2 Cr Out of School Children.
- It aims to prepare teachers for the assessment reforms by 2023.
- By 2030, NEP aims to implement an equitable and inclusive Education System.
- The purpose of conducting the board exams should be to test the core concept of students and judge their application of knowledge.
- An individual student must be adapting atleast one skill during their school time.
- There should be common learning standards in private and public schools.

Merits of New National Education Policy 2020

The National Education Policy has been working to change the old education system by bringing modern and practical learning forms. The merits of the National Education Policy 2020 are as under-

- **Early Childhood Education-** The new National Education Policy was formed on the principle that a child's most important and formative years are from 3 to 8. It adopts the 5+3+3+4 model, where a child must start his education at 3 for a successful future.
- **Multi-Disciplinary Approach-** The NEP has created a strict division of Science, arts, and commerce in high school.

- **Comprehensive-** The New National Education Policy addresses the whole spectrum of education from preschool to doctoral studies and professional degrees to vocational training.
- **Easy on Regulations-** The National Education Policy believes in the prescription to free the educational institutions (schools, colleges, and universities) from inspections. Instead, the students must lead the path of voluntary declaration and self-assessment.
- **Promotes Inclusion-** This Education Policy promotes the idea of creating inclusion funds to help the children pursue education without worrying about social and educational disadvantages.
- **Holistic-** It has an aim to eradicate the problems of structural inequities, rampant commercialization, access asymmetries, and pedagogy.
- **Education and Skills Integration-** With the new NEP, vocational courses were introduced for practical education that provides internships that might compel the society's vulnerable sections to send their children to schools to gain an education.
- **Allowing Foreign Universities-** According to the National Education Policy 2020, almost 100 foreign universities can set up their campus in India.
- **Made Education More Inclusive-** It suggests that the children's RTE (Right to Education) must be extended upto 18 years of age.

National Education Policy 2020 Concerns

The National Education Policy 2020 has successfully created impactful educational system changes. However, there are a few concerns related to the newly introduced policy, and these are-

- **Lack of clarity-** There is a lack of clarity regarding the Public Sector like Kendra Vidyalaya, state-run institutions, and municipal schools in the government strategies.
- **Problems related to Anganwadis-** A lot of focus was pointed toward early schooling and childhood care, yet it faced a problem related to the changes that the Anganwadis.
- The National Education Policy 2020 report failed to incorporate the ideas on contemporary global thinking like critical thinking, emphasis on creativity, and the need for learning in the non-hierarchical and non-competitive ecosystem.
- **Persistent inequity & inequality-** It fails to address the problems of inequality and inequity.
- **Short-term solutions-** The concept of peer tutoring, sharing resources, volunteer teachers, and rationalizing the school system is not the long-term solution for a better education.
- **Scepticism-** NTA (National Testing Agency) has resulted in scepticism as the universities, and particular educational departments cannot conduct admissions autonomously because of the NTA. Knowledge-Jobs Mismatch- Since independence, the problem of the knowledge & skills imparted and the jobs have been a major concern, and NEP fails to explain this mismatch.