



NEP 2020: An Innovative Approach to Education System & English Language

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Abstract: The National Education Policy has drastically transformed the education system prevalent in India. Keeping learners at the center, the education structure has been changed from 10+2 pattern to 5+4+4+3 pattern. The skill based and value education is inculcated at every stage of learning in the curriculum. Being more learner-centric, it focuses on holistic development and learning outputs rather than rote learning. It has invested in the Early Childhood Care and Education of the Anganvadi and preschool education.

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Introduction

The usage of technology would not only increase access to more quality education, but also reduce the dropouts of students. The provisions for strong infrastructure and trained teachers would definitely enhance the quality of education and enrollment of students. Incorporating skill-based education in curriculum would prepare students to survive in the contemporary world. The authority to choose or change a particular stream of education is to students itself. Students can now follow their interests, desires and passion for education without constraints of curriculum. Besides being multi-disciplinary, it has also given importance to multilingualism. In addition, it encourages collaboration with private companies as well as foreign colleges and universities.

The New National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 was initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020. It was released on 29th July 2020 after approval of the Union Cabinet. It has drastically transformed the education system which was prevalent before. The earlier educational policies were mainly focused on the issues of equity and access. But this new educational policy is rather more learner-centric and proposes their holistic development in both academic and non-academic areas. It made teaching life and employment skills compulsory in the syllabus. Enhancing skills like communication, team work, coordination, resilience, etc has gained importance. It stated that quality education is the fundamental right of every learner. This policy has widened the scope and reach of higher education with the usage of advanced technology. Teachers need to use ICT tools and online mediums like Google classroom, Google forms, mobile applications, educational platforms, etc to teach students effectively. In addition, it encourages collaboration with private companies as well as foreign colleges and universities through Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements.

It strives for recognition and development of the unique qualities and skills in the individuals. It empowers students to choose and change the path of education according to their interests and talents. It has given significance to the interdisciplinary mode of education. In such mode, there are no hard separations into curricular or extra-curricular, arts or science, vocational or academic streams of education. The student has been given authority to change or continue his or her education in the particular stream. It has given emphasis to conceptual learning rather than rote learning or learning-for-exam. This encourages creative and critical thinking for logical decision making and innovation. It proposes regular formative assessment for learning than the summative assessment. Through continuous assessment, it reinforces development of the skills.

The usage of ICT tools is not limited to teaching but also to management and educational planning. The technology would increase access to education and remove language barriers. It has taken into consideration diversity and local context in curriculum, pedagogy and policy, making education concurrent. It provides equity and full inclusion of all the students in the educational system. It has synergized curriculum across all levels of education, from early childhood, school and higher education. As teachers are pivotal in the learning process, the policy supports their recruitment, continuous professional development, positive work environment, and service conditions. Its regulatory framework ensures integrity, transparency

and efficiency through audit and public disclosure from time to time. Similarly the regulatory framework also promotes innovation and novelty through autonomy, governance and empowerment.

It has also given importance to a multilingual approach for education. Even textbooks are going to be available in the mother tongue or home language. Teachers are encouraged to use a bilingual approach including teaching-learning materials. Language of transaction in the classroom should include regional or home language. It would be preferable to include home or regional language as the medium of instructions. The three language formula will continue to be implemented as per the constitutional provisions. With multilingualism, it is also promoting the notion of national unity. The students have power to choose their preferences for the three languages, of which at least two must be native to India. Students can even change their preferences of languages at Grade 6 or 7 levels. But they would have to prove their proficiency with the language chosen along with the other languages, by the end of the secondary education. It gives prominent status to 'Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)' by including the age 3 group of students in the primary structure of education. The children of this age group are very sensitive. They need appropriate care and stimulation of their brain for proper cumulative development and growth. Keeping this in mind, NEP has ensured quality education at the early stage itself. Irrespective of the social and economical background of the students, it has made great investment in ECCE. It provides flexible, multi-faceted, and activity-based learning. It comprises learning of various languages, numbers, colors, music, and drama, indoor and outdoor games. It focuses on developing problem-solving, logical thinking, aesthetic skills, social capabilities, cultural awareness, ethics, and cleanliness. This would prepare them for a more accessible and effective education ahead. The ability to read and write as well as conducting operations with numbers is given priority for schooling to 3rd Grade. Even Anganvadi teachers or workers with qualifications of 10+2 would be given a 6-months certificate program in ECCE. Those with lower qualifications would be given a one-year diploma program. These programs would be available online with distance mode using DTH channels like smart phones, so that they can complete their programs without disturbing their current work. State Government shall provide qualified teachers proper professional training, mentoring mechanism and career mapping through Continuous Professional Development. NEP is making literacy and numeracy its priority. A national platform of high quality educational resources called Digital

Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) is made available to all for the same purpose. These technological tools would support teachers, remove language barriers between teachers and students, and current learning crises. Not only teachers, but also any literate volunteer can participate in this endeavor. It has also included motivational and inspirational books with their high quality translations in the regional languages, for students of all levels. These books would be available at the school and public libraries. The learning process is also hindered by the health issues of the students. So the policy has made arrangements for proper healthy nutritious meals as well as social workers and counselors to address any physical or mental health issues. All school students would undergo regular health checkups and immunization.

This new educational policy would curtail drop outs and ensure universal access to education for all level students. It has given prominence to holistic education which includes vocational education to the students from preschool to 12 grades. To overcome dropouts, the infrastructure of the school is made such that all students would be able to access engaging school education of all levels from preschool to 12th grade. The strong infrastructure along with well trained teachers would change the current scenario. Building more schools where required and providing hostel facilities would support the infrastructure. In addition, alternative educational centers would be opened for children of migrant laborers and unprivileged students to lessen drop outs. It would also enable tracking of students and their learning process carefully, to ensure enrollments, attendance, and suitable opportunities to cope up in case of dropout or absence. The qualified and trained social workers would help students with special needs for their educational needs along with schools. The socio-economically disadvantaged group students would be taught with various methods including formal and informal education mode. Open and Distance Learning programs, offered by National Institute of Open Schooling and State Open Schools, would help students who cannot attend the schools physically for various reasons. Community and alumni involvement for volunteering activities like one-on-one tutoring, career guidance, mentoring, teaching support, and help sessions are welcomed. In this light, the database of retired employees, alumni, literate volunteers, and educators, will be created.

Earlier there was only one division, i.e. secondary and higher secondary education, following a 10+2 pattern of education. Now it has made major divisions of primary, secondary and higher secondary education with a 5+3+3+4 pattern. This new structure of education is as follows:

- 5 years pattern: 3 years of Preschool and 2 years of Class I and II

- 3 years pattern: Class III to V
- 3 years pattern: Class VI to VIII
- 4 years pattern: Class IX to XII

Table: New Education Structure

Stage	Pattern	Class	Age
Foundational	5 years pattern	Preschool, Class I and II	Age 03-08 years
Preparatory	3 years pattern	Class III to V	Age 08-11 years
Middle	3 years pattern	Class VI to VIII	Age 11-14 years
Secondary	4 years pattern	Class IX to XII	Age 14-18 years

This new circular and pedagogical structure of school education focuses more on the development needs and interests of the learners at different levels of development respective of their age ranges like 03-08, 08-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years. With 5+3+3+4 structure, it has grouped them in Foundational, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary Stages of education. It is to be noted that the Secondary Stage consists of two phases of education, one with 9th and 10th grade students and second with 11th and 12th grade students.

The Foundational stage includes five years of multi-layered, activity-based pedagogical teaching and learning of ECCE. The Preparatory stage moves further from the education learnt in the Foundational Stage. It inculcates light text books with formal but interactive classroom learning. At this stage students would be introduced to various skills like reading, writing, speaking, physical education, arts, languages, science, and mathematics. This introduction would be the foundation for studying science, mathematics, social sciences, arts, and humanities in the Middle Stage. In this stage, students would learn more in depth and abstract aspects of these various subjects. Experiential learning while exploring relationships among the various subjects would be encouraged in this stage.

The Secondary Stage is the time to become more multidisciplinary and would concentrate on the development of critical thinking, life skills, with flexibility and based on the choices made by the students. They might continue the existing education after 10th Grade or change to the desired subjects like vocational education available in the 11th Grade.

These stages are purely circular and pedagogical, focusing on learning outputs and cognitive development of the students. The change in curriculum aims to move the education system to real understanding, away from current rote learning methods. It focuses not only on cognitive development but also individual character building and holistic all round education needed to survive in this 21st century. The skill based and value education is incorporated in every stage of learning for similar purposes.

Thus, the new education policy has given more prominence to the learners, their interest and holistic development. Interdisciplinary education has inspired experiential learning, giving authority to the students to follow their interests and talents. The skill based and value education would prepare students for life challenges and make them capable to survive in the contemporary world. To overcome the language barrier, it urges use of regional languages for instruction and education. Use of technology would also help in this aspect and track the learning outcomes of learners. It also emphasized on strong infrastructure and continuous training of teachers. Through the 5+4+4+3 pattern of education, it has given a prominent place to ECCE. Additionally, it promotes engagement with commercial businesses and overseas institutions and universities through MOU.

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