

# Indian Education Policy - A Way Forward to the Vision- 2047

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## Abstract

Education is the most powerful weapon in any era or time period. In the 21st century, that world of education has been transforming rapidly every moment. In this context, the Indian government announced its optimistic vision for the country to become a developed nation (VIKSITH BHARATH) by the year 2047. On the occasion of India's 75th anniversary of independence, and the government formulated a roadmap to achieve this ambitious goal. In the due course, the Government of India (GOI) found several shortcomings in Indian education system, especially, in higher education. The graduate unemployment, lack of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills among youth population, insufficient coordination between Academia and Industry were some of the findings.

Amidst the gap between the lapses and big goals, to lay a roadmap for education system, the GOI formulated a committee under the chairmanship of Dr K. Kasthuri Rangan, former ISRO Chairman. This committee drafted a new policy for education in view of achieving India's HEI goals by 2047, called National Education Policy-2020. This draft proposes for redesigning the higher education institution's (HEI) architecture for a resilient and student-centric ecosystem. The new policy must bridge the gap between education and the average Indian, who no longer wants to be tied to traditional time-bound degrees with no updated skills. This policy is so designed that the Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) must make skill development an essential part of the core curriculum, allowing students to learn at their own pace and charting their learning curriculum. The obligation is on each stakeholder to keep the scholar at the doorway as they restore the higher education architecture. By focusing on the strengths of its higher education system and acknowledging areas that need to be reformed, India can meet its own students' needs and attract students from around the world. Today at the maximum level, A Vision of NEP 2020 - India's 2047 on Higher Education is being utilized by researchers, scholars, and students for their academic development.

This research paper discusses briefly the post independent Educational policies briefly, their achievements and shortcomings that paved way for the emergence of NEP-2020. This study also focuses the potential of the new educational policy and probes whether its provisions substantiate and supplement the vision 2047 of making India Global number one in all sectors.

**Keywords:** *Vision-2047; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); vocational education; Technical Training; Skill Development; Viksith Bharath; Holistic education; Early child care and education; Inclusive Education; Choice based credit system; Multiple entry-ext.*

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## 1. Introduction

Offering education, Research and Training in almost all disciplines, Indian higher education system is the third largest in the world. The quantity and quality of institutions is slowly improving to the global standards. According to the Ministry of Education's (MoE) press release of January 25, 2024, there were **1,168 Universities** and **45,473 Colleges** registered in India as per the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE). The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has been expanding among the women and rural population, which is a positive sign of inclusiveness. The higher education system serves a large student population, with a target to add 26 million enrollments by 2035 to achieve the 50% GER goal. The recent government policies are emphasizing skill development, vocational training and partnerships with industry. In the recent QS World University Rankings 2026, a record **54 Indian higher education institutions** were featured, making India the fourth most represented country globally. This number includes eight new institutions that entered the rankings this year, and represents a significant increase from previous years, including a five-fold rise from just 11 ranked institutions in 2015.

However, the reality is showing the other face too. The system is still facing several challenges such as relatively low GER compared to the G20 nations, discrepancies in access and quality, insufficient or outdated infrastructure and high rate of graduate unemployment and so on. In the midst of India's 4 trillion and 4<sup>th</sup> largest economy, the country needs to build meet its infrastructural needs from within the huge pool of youth population of the country. In fulfilling the dream of becoming world power, the youth must be more productive, innovative and entrepreneurial. The only solution for all these requirements is Skill education. Education with skills reduces unemployment, fosters entrepreneurship, aligns education with industry and so improves the living standards. Consequently prepares the country to leverage its demographic dividend for future development and prosperity.

## 2. Objectives:

- To analyse the Post Independence Educational policies implemented in India.
- To examine the factors lead to the emergence of a new Educational Policy for India.

## 3. Methodology:

This research paper is based on the secondary data collected through various published sources like documents of Ministry of Education, various books and other publications and news articles.

## 4. Discussion:

An Educational policy is a structure of ideas, laws and principles that guides the educational institutions of a nation, indicating them what, how, and to who the education to be taught and how these principles are managed and executes. It envelops fixing educational objectives, preparation of curriculum, indication of teaching techniques and methods to ensure quality education.

An educational policy is necessary to a country to give direction to the nation for ensuring equitable access to quality education which leads to economic growth, social justice and national development. Hence, India, after independence, formed its first educational policy in 1968.

### 4.1. *The National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1968*

This Policy on Education (NPE) of 1968 was India's first comprehensive policy, based on the Kothari Commission's recommendations, aiming for national development, integration, and a more relevant education system. Its major objectives included providing free and compulsory education for children up to age 14, improving teacher qualifications, standardization of curricula, promotion of regional languages via the three-language formula, and

expanding access to higher education and technical training. The policy wanted to build up scientific and vocational education, increase educational investment, and promote moral and social ideals among students.

It focused on expanding access, promoting science and technology, improving teacher training, standardizing the **10+2+3 education structure**, and fostering research through **Centres of Advanced Studies**. The policy emphasized cultivating moral values and linking education more closely to people's lives and national service, while also ensuring the quality of books and promoting research facilities.

This policy was successful in standardizing the curriculum, promoting universal elementary education and introducing a three language formula for national unity. However, there were several shortcomings faced like lack of detailed implementation strategies, low funding, insufficient coordination between Centre and state governments and deep political corruption. Some of the targets like introduction of vocational education, failure to eradicate illiteracy, promoting adult education, were not reached. Hence, to meet the growing and contemporary needs, the then government introduced a new policy of education in 1986.

#### **4.2. The National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986**

This Policy aimed to overcome the shortcomings of the previous policy by addressing social inequities in education, promote adult education and vocational training. During this period the scheme of 'Operation Blackboard' was initiated to increase the number of primary schools. This policy encouraged the child centric methods of teaching in primary education and rural universities were established. During this period, the investment in education was increased to 6% of GDP. This policy aimed to democratize higher education by increasing access, fostering research, promoting technical education and so on. Open university system was introduced to give access to higher education drop outs and for those who cannot afford education physically or financially. A National Council for Higher Education was established for ensuring quality and coordination.

However, NEP, 1986 was also largely criticized because of the allocation of insufficient funds, continuous emphasis on rote learning instead of conceptual learning and failure to attend the rapidly changing global economic and technological developments of the post globalization period. This policy was also treated as a failure in focusing on the diverse needs of the society.

In spite of several attempts made by both central and state governments and formulating various policies, modern Indian Education could not cope up with the growing global needs of post LPG reforms. During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world educational environment has shown a revolution due to the emergence of information technology, use of internet of things, artificial intelligence and related trends. Though India was able to catch some of these technologies, it lagged behind in core technologies like infrastructure building, manufacturing and mechanization of agriculture. The Government of India (GOI) understood that the root cause for all these is the unskilled young people, lack of coordination between Academia and Industry and the age old curriculum. Hence, the GOI formulated a committee under Dr K. Kasthurirangan, former chairman of ISRO to draft a new policy for educational reforms that inculcates 21<sup>st</sup> century skills among the students and facilitates for holistic and flexible learning.

#### **4.3. National Education Policy (NEP)-2020**

NEP 2020 stands for the National Education Policy 2020, a significant reform introduced by the Indian government on July 29, 2020, to revamp the nation's education system for the 21st century. The major goals include creating a more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, and student-centric system focused on foundational learning, skill development, and lifelong learning. This policy highlights the **5+3+3+4 school structure**, promoting Foundational

Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), integrating vocational education, reforming higher education with multiple entry/exit options, and implementing technology.

## 5. School Education:

### 5.1. New Structure:

The provisions of NEP 2020 include replacing the 10+2 system with a new 5+3+3+4 structure for school education, focusing on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), and ensuring foundational literacy and numeracy. The main aspects of ECCE under NEP 2020 are:

- The policy emphasizes the critical brain development occurring before age six, integrating ECCE into the first five years of the 5+3+3+4 structure (ages 3-8).
- The curriculum aims for optimal outcomes in various developmental domains, including physical and motor skills, cognitive development, socio-emotional growth, and communication skills, including early literacy and numeracy.
- Shifts towards a more holistic, student-centric approach with emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, and experiential learning. Learning is to be flexible, multi-level, and play/activity-based, with an emphasis on problem-solving, art, and creative thinking, including the use of local games and puzzles.
- Encourages the use of mother tongue, local language, or regional language as the medium of instruction, especially in primary grades. Wherever possible, the medium of instruction will be the home language/mother tongue/local language until at least Grade 5, and preferably until Grade 8 and beyond.
- Preschool classes (Balvatika) are to be established in government schools for children aged 3–6.
- Establishes a National Mission for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) as a prerequisite for learning.
- This integration aims to bridge the equity gap by providing formal education to a group previously excluded from government schooling, who were mostly catered to by Anganwadis.
- The policy aims for the universalization of ECCE by 2030.

### 5.2. Assessment Reforms:

This policy introduces reforms in the examination system, including the possibility of holding board exams twice a year and setting up a new national assessment center, **PARAKH**.

### 5.3. Inclusive education:

The policy creates a Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones to support SEDGs and children with disabilities.

### This policy also proposed implications for policy implementation:

- **Teacher training:**  
A significant expansion of early childhood educators is needed, requiring large-scale planning for recruitment and training.
- **Monitoring:**  
Effective implementation requires strong monitoring to ensure states are adopting the new measures and to track progress and address implementation gaps.

- **Financial support:**

Funding is being provided under the Samagra Shiksha Scheme to support these changes, though some states have underutilized this provision. This policy proposes to Create a Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones to support SEDGs and children with disabilities.

## 6. Higher education

### 6.1. Flexible and multidisciplinary curriculum:

The policy encourages a holistic and flexible curriculum with no rigid separation between arts, sciences, and vocational streams. The flexible and multidisciplinary curriculum allows students to combine subjects from different fields like science, humanities, and vocational training, breaking down traditional subject silos facilitated by a Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS).

### 6.2. Multiple entry and exit options:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's multiple entry and exit options allow students to enter and exit academic programs at various stages, receiving a certificate after one year, a diploma after two years, and a degree after three or four years. This system promotes academic flexibility, reduces dropout rates, and facilitates lifelong learning by allowing students to pause their education and re-enter later to complete their qualifications. Credits are earned and can be transferred through the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) system, ensuring no academic loss.

### 6.3. Academic Bank of Credits:

NEP -2020 establishes an Academic Bank of Credits to enable the transfer of credits between different higher educational institutions. The Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) is a digital platform under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, that allows students to store, transfer, and redeem academic credits earned at different institutions. Its key functions are to support flexible learning, multiple entry-exit options, and academic mobility by allowing students to accumulate credits from various courses and institutions and use them towards a degree or certificate. This is a major reform to make higher education more flexible, student-centric, and seamless.

### 6.4. Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)

NEP-2020 proposes a new umbrella regulator for higher education, with the exception of medical and legal education. The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) is the proposed unified regulatory body that will replace existing organizations like the University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). Its establishment aims to streamline higher education regulation by focusing on quality, autonomy, and innovation, rather than just access. The HECI will operate with a more "light but tight" regulatory framework and is intended to address quality concerns, faculty shortages, and outdated curricula. The salient features of this commission are:

- The commission will prioritize the quality of teaching, research, and learning outcomes, aiming to elevate Indian universities to world-class standards.
- It is intended to grant higher educational institutions more autonomy for innovation and research, while also ensuring accountability.
- The new framework will be more transparent and efficient, with a vision for tech-driven oversight and a focus on good governance.
- The HECI is planned to consist of four main parts: the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), the National Accreditation Council (NAC), the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), and the General Education Council (GEC).

### 6.5. Research and vocational education

This policy boosts the research culture with the creation of a National Research Foundation and increases the focus on vocational education, internships, and skill-based courses.

#### The major elements of 'vocational and research education' in NEP 2020 are:

- **Early integration:** Vocational education will be introduced from Grade 6 onwards, with a "10-day bagless period" for students in Grades 6-8 to intern with local vocational experts.
- **Integrated learning:** NEP 2020 promotes an integrated approach where vocational education complements academic subjects, eliminating the rigid separation between academic and vocational streams.
- **Industry collaboration:** Partnerships between educational institutions and industries will be essential for delivering authentic learning experiences through internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training.
- **Skill development:** The policy emphasizes skills for the 21st century, such as digital literacy, alongside traditional trades, with the goal of creating a job-ready and self-reliant workforce.
- **Entrepreneurship focus:** Vocational education will also foster a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, providing pathways for self-employment and economic contribution.
- **Targeted exposure:** By 2025, at least 50% of learners in both school and higher education will be exposed to vocational education, with a clear action plan to achieve this target.
- **Teacher training:** A crucial step is the capacity development of teachers to train students in these vocational and employability skills, using modern methods like MOOCs and flipped learning.
- **Curriculum development:** The NCERT framework will be used to develop detailed guidelines for vocational education, ensuring a standardized and effective curriculum.

### 6.6. Internationalization

The policy includes provisions for setting up Indian campuses abroad and foreign university campuses in India. Internationalization under India's NEP 2020 aims to make the Indian education system globally competitive by promoting mutual collaboration, attracting foreign students, and establishing campuses in other countries. The key initiatives include encouraging research and faculty/student exchanges, facilitating top-ranked foreign universities to set up campuses in India, and allowing selected Indian universities to open campuses abroad. The policy also includes mechanisms for credit transfer from foreign universities and establishing International Student Offices to support foreign students.

#### The key aspects of internationalization under NEP 2020

- **Attracting foreign students:** India seeks to become a global study destination by making its education system more self-reliant and globally compliant, which includes making it more attractive to international students.
- **Facilitating foreign university presence:** Top-ranked foreign universities will be encouraged and facilitated to set up campuses in India, promoting competition and providing Indian students with global exposure at home.
- **Enabling Indian university presence abroad:** High-performing Indian universities will be supported in establishing their campuses in other countries to increase their global footprint.

- **Promoting collaboration:** The policy fosters research and teaching collaborations, faculty and student exchanges, and the signing of mutually beneficial MOUs with foreign institutions and countries.
- **Enabling academic mobility:** Credits earned at foreign universities will be permitted to be counted towards a degree in India, as per the specific requirements of each institution.
- **Strengthening institutional support:** International offices will be established at higher education institutions to support foreign students and coordinate internationalization efforts.
- **Focusing on specific areas:** The policy includes offering courses on subjects like Indology, Indian Languages, AYUSH systems, yoga, and arts to showcase India's unique knowledge to the world.

## 7. Teacher Education and Training:

### 7.1. Teacher qualifications

NEP-2020 sets a four-year Bachelor of Education as the minimum requirement for teaching by 2030. The NEP-2020 aims to improve teacher qualifications by making the **4-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP)** the minimum degree qualification for teachers by 2030. Other options include a 2-year B.Ed. for those with a bachelor's degree and a 1-year B.Ed. for those with a 4-year bachelor's or a postgraduate degree. Teacher education will shift to multidisciplinary universities and include training in pedagogy, values, and foundational literacy and numeracy. The proposed programme is as hereunder:

#### Pre-service teacher education (from 2030)

- **Four-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP):** This will become the minimum qualification for school teachers.
- It is a dual-major holistic bachelor's degree in Education and a specialized subject, such as a language, history, or science.
- It will be offered in multidisciplinary colleges and universities.
- **2-Year B.Ed. Programme:** Available for those who already have a bachelor's degree in a specialized subject.
- **1-Year B.Ed. Programme:** For candidates who have a 4-year undergraduate degree in a specialized subject or a postgraduate degree.
- **Teacher standards:** Aims to develop a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education and National Professional Standards for Teachers.
- **Recruitment:** Focuses on making teacher recruitment more transparent and merit-based.

### 7.2. Criticism of India's NEP 2020:

Criticism of India's NEP 2020 includes concerns about potential **privatization and corporate control**, worries about the **centralization of power**, potential **language imposition** through the three-language formula, and a perceived lack of **sufficient consultation** and **funding** for implementation. Other criticisms point to the policy's disregard for existing educational challenges, such as the **digital divide** and a shortage of trained teachers, which could hinder its success.

#### Privatization and corporate control

- Critics argue the policy promotes privatization through public-private partnerships and a reliance on digital and corporate models, which could make education less accessible for marginalized communities.

- There are concerns that the policy could lead to a corporate-dominated education system, with suggestions that plans for university closures and performance-based teacher promotions could be exploited.

#### **Centralization of power**

- The policy is criticized for centralizing educational control in the hands of the central government, particularly with the establishment of bodies like the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the National Educational Technology Forum.
- This centralization is seen by some as an attempt to infiltrate the education system with political ideology, potentially overriding existing state-level educational lists and frameworks.

#### **Language and cultural concerns**

- The three-language formula has faced strong opposition, particularly in non-Hindi speaking states, with fears it could lead to the imposition of Hindi.
- Some argue the policy's focus on the "Indian knowledge system" is narrow, and that its push for mother-tongue instruction might not support economic and social mobility if English is not sufficiently integrated, particularly in higher education.

#### **Implementation and infrastructure challenges**

- A lack of clarity on the specific roadmap for implementation is a significant point of criticism, making it unclear how many of the ambitious reforms will be put into practice.
- Significant challenges exist, such as the digital divide, teacher shortages, and a lack of infrastructure, which could prevent effective implementation of the policy's technological and pedagogical changes.
- The policy is criticized for not adequately consulting all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and students, in its development.

#### **Financial concerns**

- While the policy aims for transformation, critics point to the immense funding, infrastructure, and teacher training required for its successful implementation, questioning if adequate resources are allocated.

### **7.3. Will it be a future hope for VISION 2047?**

Every policy has its positive and negative facets and this policy too. There are hurdles in implementation, financial issues and also ground level realities. But NEP-2020 would definitely create its optimistic impact on Indian Education system due to the following features.

- The policy shifts focus from rote learning and exam-oriented achievement to critical thinking, creativity, and conceptual understanding.
- Integrating vocational training and internships from Grade 6 aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and employability, preparing students with practical, job-ready skills.
- Bringing the age group of 3-6 years under a formal schooling framework (the 5+3+3+4 structure) is globally recognized as crucial for mental development and provides a strong foundation for lifelong learning.
- The introduction of multiple entry and exit points in higher education, with appropriate certification provides flexibility and ensures no year of study is wasted, which is highly beneficial for students from economically weaker sections.

- The policy emphasizes inclusive education with provisions for disadvantaged groups and aims to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030 and 50% in higher education by 2035.
- Promoting digital resources, online learning platforms (like DIKSHA), and virtual classrooms aims to improve access and personalize learning, especially in remote areas.

## 8. Conclusion

Though the implementation is slow and there is resistance from a few states, NEP 2020 has slowly been getting acceptance. This policy has the **potential to be a future hope** for India's education system due to its comprehensive and forward-thinking reforms aimed at holistic development, flexibility, and skill-building. However, its ultimate success is contingent on effective implementation, adequate funding, and overcoming significant infrastructural and political challenges.

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