



STRATEGIC NEED FOR NATIONWIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEP 2020

Yamini Jyothsna Kambala

Head of the Department, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Adikavi Nannaya University, Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, India

Article History: Received: 11 Apr 2025, Revised: 25 Apr 2025, Accepted: 10 May 2025

***Corresponding author**

Dr. Yamini Jyothsna Kambala

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70604/learnint.v2i1.43>

Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, launched by the Government of India, represents a major transformation in the education system of the nation after over three decades. Aiming to foster holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary education, NEP 2020 focuses on foundational literacy, experiential learning, teaching in mother tongue, technology integration, and reforms in teacher training. Although the policy is visionary in nature, its execution has been patchy in different Indian states based on different political, financial, infrastructural, and administrative difficulties. This research article discusses the pressing necessity for uniform and integrated implementation of NEP 2020 in every state to facilitate equitable learning opportunities, minimize regional differences, and make the educational goals of the country compatible with international standards. Based on secondary data, official reports, and academic studies, the report sheds light on areas of implementation lapses, discerns systemic bottlenecks, and recommends a roadmap for inclusive policy adoption at all levels. It believes that in the absence of inclusive and pan-India implementation, the NEP's transformative nature stands to be vitiated. The report emphasizes cooperative federalism, strong governance architecture, targeted financing, and community capacity development for the success of the policy in its long-term goals. The research concludes that a coordinated national action is necessary to empower students all over the nation and realize India's demographic dividend.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, Indian states, educational reform, policy implementation, teacher training, digital education, cooperative federalism, inclusive education, foundational literacy, governance in education.

Introduction

Education is the bulwark upon which a country constructs its future. In as diverse and densely populated a country as India, the creation and implementation of a strong educational policy is not simply an administrative imperative-it is one of national interest. Following over three decades, the Government of India brought into being the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, a robust policy to reimagine the face of education across the nation. This policy focuses on comprehensive, student-focused, and multidisciplinary learning aimed at addressing the needs of the 21st century. From early childhood through higher education, and from vocational training to teacher education, NEP 2020 attempts to transform the entire Indian education system.

The policy makes a number of path-breaking changes, such as substituting the conventional 10+2 system with a new 5+3+3+4 curriculum pattern, stress on foundational literacy and numeracy, use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction up to Grade 5, inclusion of vocational

education at all levels, introduction of multidisciplinary learning at the undergraduate level, and stress on critical thinking and creativity rather than rote learning. In addition, NEP 2020 acknowledges the place of digital learning and suggests major steps towards enhancing digital infrastructure, teacher training, and education governance.

The policy also dreams of a multilingual, inclusive, and equitable education system that fosters critical thinking, creativity, and values-based development to empower students to be globally-oriented Indian citizens. In higher education, it looks to consolidate by creating multidisciplinary institutions, a system of credit transfer, and a flexible curriculum to facilitate multiple points of exit and entry. Besides, it also aims to restructure teacher education, make technology integration a certainty through digital infrastructure, and prioritize ongoing professional development. NEP 2020 is in perfect sync with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4) and is a bold endeavor to make Indian education globally

competitive yet socially and culturally relevant. Its significance is in its potential to democratize education, promote innovation, bridge regional gaps, and equip India's large youth demographic for the future of work and lifelong learning.

But since education is a part of the Concurrent List of the Constitution, both the Central Government and State Governments are jointly responsible for policy execution. This federal system of governance has resulted in differential progress at different states. While some states like Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh have initiated implementation measures, others have been slow, hesitant, or even resistant due to political, linguistic, or logistical concerns. This disparity not only undermines the core objective of NEP 2020—to provide equitable, inclusive, and quality education to all—but also risks widening the existing regional and socio-economic educational gaps.

Given India's vision of becoming a global knowledge superpower and leveraging its demographic dividend, a coordinated and nationwide implementation of NEP 2020 is no longer optional—it is a strategic necessity. Uneven adoption threatens the coherence of the national education system and hinders mobility, skill parity, and employment opportunities for students across different states.

This research article explores the rationale for uniform implementation of NEP 2020 across India. It investigates the current status of implementation in various states, highlights challenges that impede progress, and proposes policy recommendations for harmonizing execution efforts. The study is rooted in a strong belief that education should be a great equalizer, and only a united national approach to NEP 2020 can fulfill its transformative vision for India's future.

Uniformly implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 across all Indian states is crucial for equitable educational reform, ensuring a consistent quality of education and promoting inclusivity. This policy aims to transform India into a knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all, fostering innovation, and developing critical thinking skills [1-5].

Statement of the Problem

The British colonial education policy, primarily introduced through Macaulay's Minute (1835) and subsequent acts like the Indian Education Act (1854), was aimed more at creating a class of English-educated intermediaries than genuinely uplifting the Indian masses. This led to the establishment of an education system that was heavily elitist, examination-oriented, and detached from Indian languages, culture, and rural realities. Indigenous systems of learning such as Gurukuls and Madrasas were systematically marginalized, and vernacular languages were undermined in favor of English. As a result, mass illiteracy and a wide educational divide persisted well into the 20th century.

After independence, the Congress-led governments did not fundamentally transform the colonial structure. Although efforts were made to increase access, successive Congress governments kept much of the colonial, centralized, bureaucratic structure of education and persisted in emphasizing rote learning and degree-oriented outcomes over skill-based or holistic learning. The Kothari Commission (1964–66) had visionary suggestions like a common school system and vocational training, but most of these were weakly implemented or neglected. In addition, the absence of political will and underinvestment in public education over key decades permitted disparities to widen between urban and rural regions, and between private and government schools. Rather than serving equity, education policy became a vehicle for populist or appeasement politics, rather than national development over the long term. Consequently, India approached the 21st century with an outmoded system incapable of addressing the needs of a globalized knowledge economy.

Though the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides a visionary roadmap for Indian education transformation, its implementation has been extremely uneven across states, which is a serious challenge to its success. As education is a Concurrent List subject of the Constitution, states have the freedom to adopt and implement central policies, leading to different levels of commitment, preparedness, and availability of resources. Forward-looking states like Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh have assiduously implemented fundamental reforms such as the 5+3+3+4 system, vocational training, and teacher training schemes. Conversely, states such as Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have either lagged behind or resisted various aspects, specifically with regard to issues of language policy and central interference. Moreover, economic inequalities, digital divides, political opposition, and a lack of administrative capability have also delayed or dispersed the implementation. Consequently, while a few students are availing cutting-edge, NEP-compliant education, others continue to get caught in old-fashioned patterns, increasing regional disparities. Such disparity defeats the very purpose of NEP 2020—providing equitable, inclusive, high-quality education to all Indians. Addressing this hurdle needs improved center-state cooperation, focused financing, and an integrated national monitoring framework.

Review of Literature

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has been the focus of extensive academic and policy-level debate since its release. Scholars like Jandhyala B. G. Tilak (2020) identify NEP 2020's revolutionary potential in aligning India's education system with international standards while maintaining cultural identity. The Ministry of Education (2021) suggests that the policy facilitates flexibility, multilingualism, digitalization, and skill

acquisition, striving for comprehensive education from early childhood to higher education.

Nonetheless, research has also highlighted issues of implementation. A report by NITI Aayog (2022) reports that implementation of NEP recommendations has been taken on by limited states because of differences in political ideologies, infrastructure, and priorities at the local level. Likewise, a study by Azim Premji University (2021) points out that in the absence of regular teacher training, curriculum redesign, and investment, the objectives of NEP might go unrealized.

Furthermore, criticisms from the Centre for Policy Research and other think tanks imply that decentralized implementation without a single accountability mechanism can further increase regional disparities in educational quality. These results cumulatively highlight the need for an integrated, nationwide effort to make the policy's inclusive success imperative.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the primary principles and objectives of NEP 2020 and evaluate their applicability in the current Indian educational landscape.
- To assess the implementation status of NEP 2020 within various Indian states, determining vital areas of stagnation and advancements.
- To analyze the determinants of uneven implementation, both political, economic, administrative, and cultural in nature.
- To suggest strategic suggestions for successful and consistent nationwide implementation of NEP 2020.
- In order to determine the possible effects of uniform implementation on minimizing educational disparities and maximizing national development.

Significance of the Study

This research offers a holistic insight into the opportunities and challenges of NEP 2020 implementation in India's heterogeneous socio-political terrain. The results will be useful to policymakers, educators, and stakeholders interested in closing the gap between policy-making and implementation. By identifying state-wise inequalities and providing actionable suggestions, the research seeks to create a more homogeneous and equitable education system aligned with national developmental objectives. The study adds to the existing academic literature and provides a pragmatic guide for collaborative governance in education, reiterating the ethos of cooperative federalism. Finally, the study hopes to facilitate the fulfillment of NEP 2020's vision to empower all learners and make India a knowledge leader in the world.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach using secondary data to analyze the uneven implementation of NEP 2020 across Indian states. The research is descriptive

and analytical, focusing on the progress, challenges, and factors influencing the adoption of NEP 2020 at the state level. Data is primarily collected from government reports, including NEP 2020 documents, publications from the Ministry of Education, and NITI Aayog's progress tracking reports. In addition, scholarly articles and policy analyses from reputed think tanks and education research organizations are examined to assess the policy's feasibility and impact across various states. Thematic analysis is applied to categorize the data into political, economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors that influence NEP implementation. This approach allows the identification of key patterns and barriers to uniform policy execution. The study is limited by its reliance on secondary sources, which may not fully capture on-the-ground realities, and the lack of primary fieldwork or surveys from local stakeholders like teachers and students.

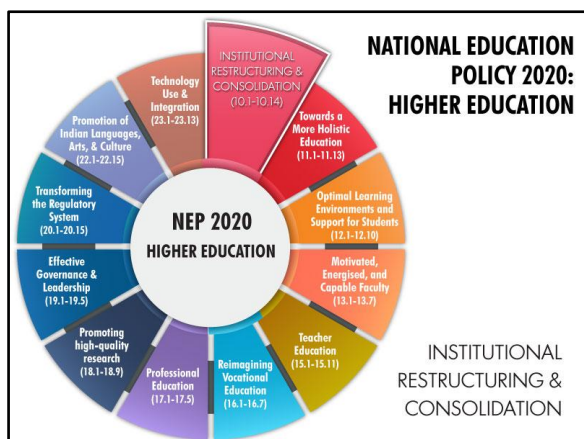
The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, is India's first education of the 21st century. This replaced the National Policy on Education which was released in 1986. The NEP 2020 was released on 29 July 2020. This scheme aims to bring a transformation in the Indian education system into an inclusive, flexible, multidisciplinary, and holistic system. It envisions to create a "vibrant knowledge society" and establish India as a global knowledge superpower.

This policy originated due to the existing issues in the Indian education system. This included low learning outcomes, rote-based teaching, overload of curriculum, fragmentation of higher education institutions, inequality of access, and insufficient teacher training. NEP 2020 tries to address these challenges by focusing on many factors. These include factors such as:

- Universal access to education at all levels.
- 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) from preschool to secondary level by 2030.
- Foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) by Grade 3.
- Vocational education for at least 50% of learners by 2025.
- Increased public investment in education to 6% of GDP.
- Development of critical thinking, creativity, multilingualism, and a shift toward competency-based learning.

The policy introduces a new curricular and pedagogical structure. Children will spend five years in the Foundational stage, 3 years in the Preparatory stage, 3 years in the Middle stage, and 4 years in the Secondary stage((5+3+3+4)). This is aligned with a child's cognitive development stages. The policy also emphasizes multilingual education, digital learning, and holistic report cards. The policy also has direct mentions of Right to Education Act, 2009, though not repealed.



Source: Institute of Technology, Nirma University

Salient Features of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 | SSRVM Borivali East

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a landmark shift in India's educational framework, aiming to transform the country's education system by making it more inclusive, flexible and holistic. This policy, brought in after 34 years, deals with the necessity of a stronger and more comprehensive education approach, focusing on the overall development of students. It is important to understand the salient features of NEP 2020 in order to comprehend the future direction of education in India.

- **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):** One of the key aspects of NEP 2020 is the universalization of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The policy places great importance on early childhood education in providing a strong foundation for lifelong learning and development. ECCE seeks to provide quality preschool education to all children between the ages of 3-6 years. The plan involves opening Anganwadi centres and pre-primary schools, which will concentrate on developing children through the process of activity-based and play-based learning.
- **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:** Foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3 is one of the highest priorities of NEP 2020. The policy acknowledges that literacy, ability to write and perform simple arithmetic is a prerequisite for further learning. To achieve this, NEP 2020 suggests a mission-mode implementation, with an emphasis on early interventions, teacher training and creating effective learning material. The focus is on building an interesting and encouraging learning environment to assist children in developing these essential skills.
- **NEP 2020 is a Reforms in School Education:** NEP 2020 proposes a new curricular framework called the 5+3+3+4 structure, which supplants the conventional 10+2 structure. This new framework is aligned with the levels of a child's intellectual development:
 - Foundation Stage (5 years): 3 years of pre-school + 2 years of primary school

- Preparatory Stage (3 years): Classes 3 to 5
- Middle Stage (3 years): Classes 6 to 8
- Second Stage (4 years): Classes 9 to 12

This reform will make a more integrated and flexible education system that provides for the various stages of a child's development.

- **Changes in Curriculum and Pedagogy:** NEP 2020 focuses on the change from rote learning to understanding concepts. The curriculum will incorporate arts, sports and vocational education, providing a holistic education. The policy encourages experiential learning, critical thinking and creativity and away from the conventional exam-centric teaching patterns.
- **Multilingualism and Language Learning:** The policy emphasizes multilingualism and the implementation of the mother tongue or local language as the medium of instruction, at least up to Grade and ideally till Grade 8 and further. The three-language formula will still be adopted, encouraging fluency in three languages to boost intellectual capacity and cultural knowledge.
- **Equitable and Inclusive Education:** NEP 2020 seeks to equate education and make it inclusive so that no child is left behind. The policy provides for special measures for the benefit of marginalised and disadvantaged groups such as socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs), children with disabilities and girls. Some of the strategies are offering scholarships, establishing special education zones and creating inclusive curricula.
- **Reforms in Assessment:** The policy brings revolutionary changes in the assessment, away from summative towards formative assessments that allow continuous and all-around evaluation. Emphasis will be placed on evaluating higher-order skills like analysis, critical thinking and conceptual clarity over rote memorization. The new system of assessment would ease the pressure of exams and reflect students' capabilities more appropriately.
- **Teacher Education and Professional Development:** Given the importance of teachers, NEP 2020 suggests a revamp of teacher training programs. The policy demands rigorous professional development and training for teachers to prepare them with the competencies required for contemporary pedagogical approaches. Ongoing professional development will be compulsory, keeping teachers abreast of the current educational trends and innovations.
- **Technology in Education:** The inclusion of technology is a foundational pillar of NEP 2020. The policy promotes the application of digital resources and tools to improve learning. Initiatives range from fostering digital literacy to establishing virtual libraries and labs and leveraging AI and machine learning to personalize education. The aim is to close

the digital divide and facilitate equal access to technology for everyone.

- **Reforms in Higher Education:** NEP 2020 introduces substantial reforms in higher education, fostering multidisciplinary and holistic learning. A high point is the creation of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), which will regulate the entire higher education sector (excluding medical and legal). The policy invites setting up of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) and integrates vocational education in higher education.
- **Vocational Education and Skill Development:** Vocational education will be incorporated from early grades in NEP 2020. The policy will equip students with practical skills and knowledge that are directly applicable to the job market. Industry and business collaborations will enable hands-on training and internships, enabling students to prepare for different career opportunities.
- **Research and Innovation:** NEP 2020 places emphasis on developing a research culture within institutions of learning. The setting up of the National Research Foundation (NRF) is an important move to advance high-quality research across all disciplines. The NRF will give grants, mentorship and assistance for innovative ideas, promoting a culture of discovery and inquiry.
- **Governance and Regulation:** The policy implements a "light but tight" regulatory mechanism, giving more autonomy to education institutions while ensuring accountability and transparency. This would help minimize bureaucratic hurdles and facilitate innovation and excellence in education. Institutions will be motivated to nurture their individual strengths and address the varied needs of students.
- **Financing Education:** NEP 2020 also identifies a necessity for greater investment in education. The policy suggests augmenting public expenditure in education to 6% of GDP. It also advocates greater use of public-private partnerships for increasing education infrastructure and facilities and making education sustainable and of high quality for all.
- **Global Citizenship Education:** The policy highlights the significance of global citizenship education in order to prepare students with competencies and knowledge to navigate and engage in an increasingly globalised world. This is in an effort to encourage cultural exchange programmes, building global competencies and a global sense of responsibility and awareness.

Impact of NEP - 2020

NEP 2020 has changed the discourse on education in India. It has significantly influenced the world of education. The policy has made changes by requiring curriculum overhaul under which NCERT is updating textbooks and syllabi in accordance with NEP

suggestions. This enables scrutinizing of unwanted information and adding up more relevant knowledge. NEP also focuses on teacher education under which teachers are trained to integrate pedagogy and subject knowledge. Further, the scheme majorly puts focus on language and inclusivity. This emphasis on mother tongue bolstered cultural integration. More classes were to be multilingual and students were to understand their mother tongue better under this reformation. But this in the due course also raised a concern regarding feasibility in multilingual classrooms.

NEP also Recognizes SEDGs (Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups) and aims to enhance equity. More provisions were made to include people from the socially and economically weaker sections too.

Vocational education is also provided mainstream attention under NEP through experiential learning and internships embedded in curricula. But there exists low enrolment rates due to lack of infrastructure and trainers. Despite its transformative vision, the ground-level impact of NEP remains uneven due to financial, infrastructural, and logistical barriers.

NEP 2020 only works as advisory in nature. This allows states to determine their pace of implementation. Himachal Pradesh was the first state to formally implement NEP. As of 2023, multiple states, including Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra, have launched implementation strategies.

1. Enrollment

As per Unified District Information System for Education plus (2021-22), the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher secondary education has gone up from 53.7% (2019-2020) to 57.6% (2021-2022). In primary education, the GER has surpassed 100% in many states, reflecting high levels of enrolment.

2. Digital Learning

The policy is highly digitally focused. NEP has been at the forefront of driving the development of key projects such as PM e-Vidya, Diksha, and SwayamPrabha television channels that aided in the pandemic era, particularly K-12 students. Nevertheless, digital technology access is still low in rural regions, which raises the issue of the urban-rural divide.

3. Budget Allocation

The expenditure on education rose moderately following the introduction of NEP. However, this is still short of the 6% GDP mark. In the Union Budget of 2023-24, the education sector was given ₹1.12 lakh crore, the highest ever given.

4. Foundational Learning

The NIPUN Bharat Mission through NEP began training more than 25 lakh teachers in order to enhance foundational literacy. However, ASER 2022 reports reveal stagnation or regression in elementary reading and arithmetic abilities on account of pandemic-driven learning losses.

Uneven Implementation of NEP –2020 is a Major challenge in India

The National Education Policy - 2020 was launched with the vision and objective of transforming Indian education system, its implementation has been markedly uneven across states, creating disparities in educational access, quality, and innovation. This unevenness is influenced by a combination of political, administrative, financial, and cultural factors that vary widely among Indian states and union territories.

1. Federal Structure and Autonomy of States

India's federal governance model places education under the Concurrent List of the Constitution, allowing both the Centre and states to legislate and execute educational policies. While the NEP 2020 serves as a central guideline, its actual implementation depends heavily on state-level policy decisions and administrative readiness. Consequently, states have exercised discretion in adopting, modifying, delaying, or rejecting specific aspects of the policy. For instance, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh have embraced NEP 2020 measures in school and higher education, while Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have been hesitant, raising issues of language policy and central intervention (NITI Aayog, 2022).

2. Political and Ideological Differences

Political considerations are also at play. Some state governments see NEP 2020 as being pro-Centre ruling party, and thus there is political opposition. Opposition party governments at the state level have occasionally opposed the policy for trying to centralize educational power or push specific cultural and linguistic narratives. Politicization has resulted in delay and selective implementation of NEP suggestions.

3. Economic and Infrastructure Disparities

Implementation is also uneven in terms of financial and infrastructure strengths. The wealthier, digitally better-placed states, having trained resources and strong schooling systems, are capable of implementing pilot reforms in digital learning interfaces, vocational schooling, and faculty development. Conversely, economically backward states are saddled with financial limitations, nonavailability of teachers' capacity, and poor ICT infrastructure, inhibiting the thorough implementation of NEP directives.

4. Administrative Readiness and Human Resources

Efficient enforcement of NEP 2020 is associated with vast capacity development at grass-roots levels such as the reorientation of teachers, revising educational curricula, and refurbishment of school infrastructures. There are limited numbers of states which possess required bureaucratic mechanisms or managements skills in undertaking extensive reform at lightning speeds. Thus, programmes such as foundation literacy classes, assessments overhaul, and instruction through a child's mother language linger on the shelf in most parts.

5. Curriculum and Language Policy Problems

Focus on regional languages as the medium of instruction up to Grade 5² has raised alarm in states that do not speak Hindi. Tamil Nadu, for example, has a historical two-language policy and has resisted the intended three-language formula. This has generated opposition towards implementing some aspects of pedagogy in NEP 2020, even though there is general consensus on the necessity for change.

6. Inadequate Monitoring and Accountability

There is also a lack of standardized benchmarks or timelines to monitor state-level progress in implementing NEP. Without centralized management or performance measures, states are free to interpret and implement the policy according to their own priorities, resulting in a patchy and inconsistent deployment.

Implications of Uneven Implementation

Lack of uniformity in implementing NEP 2020 risks ingraining current disparities within India's education system. Students in forward-looking states can enjoy improved learning outcomes, creative pedagogy, and comprehensive evaluations, while their counterparts in backsliding states can get stuck in archaic systems. This goes against the very essence of the NEP—to establish one unified, inclusive, and equitable education system capable of empowering all Indian students, irrespective of geography or background.

Thus, it is essential to address the problem of differential implementation. Central support, inter-state coordination, and region-level adaptation-without diluting the policy's very essence—are imperative to achieve the vision of NEP 2020.

Requirement of Uniform Implementation in All States

Effective nationwide implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is key to realizing its overall vision of making India a knowledge-based society, equitable, and competitive in the global context. The NEP brings about foundational changes like the 5+3+3+4 school system, multilingual education, experiential learning, vocational training, and flexible curriculum that are meant to redress problems of rote learning, skill shortages, and school dropouts that have bedeviled education for a long time. But if only a handful of states implement these reforms while others put them off or turn them down, it will lead to a fractured education landscape with large regional differences in quality, access, and outcomes. Such inconsistency undermines the policy's fundamental goal of inclusive and equitable education for all. Consistent implementation would make sure that all children, irrespective of their state or background, gain equally from modernized pedagogy, technology incorporation, and life skill acquisition. Additionally, national objectives like Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) growth, Sustainable Development Goal on Education (SDG-

4) adherence, and the creation of a skilled workforce for India's economic development are contingent upon collective execution. Rolling it out nationally is not only a policy command but a strategic imperative to develop a uniform, future-proofed education system capable of elevating all segments of society and addressing prevailing disparities.

- **Bridging the Educational Divide:** Disparities between rural and urban, rich and poor, and government and private education systems are stark. NEP 2020 proposes inclusive reforms such as foundational literacy and digital equity (MOE, 2020). Uniform implementation ensures no child is left behind.
- **Enhancing National Integration:** A common educational vision fosters national unity. Fragmented education policies can lead to disparities in skill development and knowledge base across regions.
- **Addressing Global Competitiveness:** To position India as a global knowledge superpower, every student, irrespective of location, must have access to 21st-century skills and holistic education.
- **Strengthening Teacher Training:** NEP 2020 includes a major emphasis on teacher development through the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST). A uniform rollout ensures quality teaching across India.
- **Equitable Access:** NEP 2020 emphasizes universal access to education, aiming to eliminate disparities in access to quality education across different regions and social groups.
- **Quality Education:** The policy focuses on improving the quality of education by enhancing teacher training, updating curricula, and incorporating new technologies.
- **Inclusive Education:** NEP 2020 aims to create an inclusive educational environment that caters to the diverse needs of all students, including those with disabilities and from marginalized communities.
- **Holistic Development:** The policy promotes a holistic approach to education, focusing on developing students' cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills.
- **National Unity:** Implementing NEP 2020 uniformly can foster a sense of national unity by promoting shared educational goals and values.

Challenges to Uniform Implementation

- **Implementation Gaps:** NEP leaves it to the states to implement the schemes. States vary in adoption, lack of coordination weakens the unified vision to achieve the initial objectives of the policy. Additionally, challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of infrastructure, and a shortage of trained educators further hinder the policy's effective execution. Socio-economic and cultural diversity across states adds

complexity, making it difficult to ensure uniform implementation.

- **Digital Divide:** There exists a major digital divide which alters the proper implementation of NEP. The rural areas lack infrastructure for e-learning tools. This further creates a division between the urban centres and rural areas of the country. The new reforms and schemes might not reach the rural areas in their intended form.
- **Funding Challenges:** Lack of proper funding also creates a boundary in the path to achieve NEP's goal. There is no detailed financial roadmap for the 6% GDP target which was allocated in the budget for the education sector. The NEP dream could only come true with adequate funding and appropriate allocation of the funds.
- **Inadequate Teacher Training:** The limited availability of skilled teachers to implement pedagogical changes leads to a gap in adequate teacher training.
- **Marginalization of the RTE Act:** The marginalization of the Right to Education (RTE) Act stems from its limited scope, as it guarantees free and compulsory education only for children aged 6 to 14 years. This leaves out the important early childhood education (ages 3 to 6) and secondary education (ages 15 to 18), which are significant for the complete development and preparing students for higher education or employment. The National Education Policy (NEP) proposed universal schooling from ages 3 to 18 but did not make it a legal right, thereby weakening its enforceability and leaving its implementation to the discretion of states.
- **Language Policy Concerns:** Language policy concerns in India often revolve around fears of language imposition and constitutional conflicts with existing language laws. The National Education Policy (NEP) supports the three-language formula, which is meant to encourage multilingualism and national integration. But this has brought about unrest, especially in non-Hindi-speaking states, regarding the imposition of Hindi as a compulsory language. States such as Tamil Nadu have traditionally opposed these policies, sticking to a two-language system instead.
- **State Variations:** Indian states have different educational systems, infrastructure, and resources, which can pose challenges in implementing a uniform policy [7].
- **Budget Allocation:** Increasing public spending on education, as recommended by NEP 2020, requires significant financial commitment from both the central and state governments [8].
- **Teacher Training:** Implementing NEP 2020 requires extensive training and capacity building for teachers to effectively implement the new curricula and pedagogical approaches.

- **Infrastructure:** Some regions may lack the necessary infrastructure, such as classrooms, libraries, and technology, to support the implementation of NEP 2020.
- **Federal Structure:** States have autonomy over education, which complicates a top-down approach.
- **Resource Constraints:** Financial and infrastructural limitations hinder rollout in poorer states.
- **Political Will:** Differing ideological alignments affect policy acceptance.
- **Capacity Building:** Lack of trained professionals and digital infrastructure poses a major challenge.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020 is a plan that looks to promote the education sector in India. It needs a properly outlined financial policy that sets aside contributions from both the central and state governments. This partnership framework must emphasize fair resource allocation to fill the gaps in poorly funded areas and provide adequate funds for new initiatives in education. Also, increasing digital infrastructure, particularly in aspirational districts, is important to boost access to quality education. This includes establishing a well-equipped internet connectivity, digital classrooms, and e-learning facilities, which can be instrumental in mitigating regional disparities and promoting inclusivity.

Now what is equally necessary is to meet human resource requirements by placing high priority on teacher recruitment and training programs. Offering incentives in the form of competitive pay, professional growth opportunities, and incentives for excellence can draw and keep exceptional teachers. Putting in place strong monitoring systems, such as those provided by the Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Development (PARAKH) program and state and local education boards, can ensure accountability and monitor progress. In addition, guaranteeing legal protections to uphold the right to education will help shield vulnerable populations from exclusion. Through the implementation of these measures, the education system can proceed towards a sustainable and equitable future.

Recommendations for Uniform Implementation of NEP 2020 in All States

Standard implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is needed in order to bring equitable access to quality education across India. It is not practicable given India's heterogenous political, linguistic, and socio-economic profile to have a single model. A mix of centrally guided guidelines and context-specific state-level implementation must then be had. The below are detailed plans for attaining this balance:

1. **Central-State Collaboration Framework:** The Union government must have a National NEP Implementation Council with representatives from

every state education department, the Ministry of Education, and major educational institutions. This council would be a coordinating body to dialogue, settle conflicts (particularly on language and curriculum), and ensure states implement the core goals of NEP with scope for local variations.

2. **Fund Allocation:** States differ considerably in terms of fiscal strength. The central government needs to provide special financial assistance to economically weaker states through a special NEP Implementation Fund, including infrastructure upgradation, digital resources, teacher training, and curriculum change. Money should be linked to milestones and performance parameters to ensure accountability and optimal utilization of funds.
3. **Teacher Training and Capacity Building:** Teachers form the backbone of educational reform. A National Digital Platform for Teacher Training must be created to provide free, certified, and multilingual training modules on NEP-aligned pedagogy. State training institutes must be empowered with technical and academic assistance from NCERT, SCERTs, and higher education institutions. Incentive-based training programs can speed up participation and prepare individuals for new teaching methods.
4. **Curriculum Alignment and Flexibility:** A Common Curriculum Framework (CCF) consistent with the core values of the NEP-experiential learning, critical thinking, and balance of local-global knowledge-must be framed by the NCERT, with well-defined scope for local adaptation. The states must be encouraged to translate this framework into practice without undermining key objectives such as foundational literacy, holistic growth, and competency-based evaluation.
5. **Strengthening Infrastructure and Digital Access:** In order to enhance equity, digital infrastructure needs to be extended, particularly in tribal and rural regions. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can be utilized for smart classrooms, digital learning devices, and internet. State-specific infrastructure audits should be undertaken to map requirements and plan investments accordingly.
6. **Multilingual and Inclusive Education Support:** States must be provided with technical and academic assistance to adopt the three-language formula in a flexible and inclusive way, particularly in tribal and non-Hindi-speaking areas. Inclusive education must be given priority by creating Braille, Indian Sign Language, and other local language materials and supported by specially trained special educators.
7. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability Mechanisms:** A central dashboard should be launched by the Ministry of Education to track NEP implementation progress across states. This should include indicators such as teacher training rates, curriculum updates, infrastructure improvement, and

learning outcomes. Regular third-party audits and annual progress reports must be mandated, with transparent data shared publicly to maintain accountability.

8. **Community and Stakeholder Engagement:** Public information campaigns must be initiated to inform parents, students, and teachers about the objectives and advantages of NEP 2020. Local governance institutions (Panchayats, School Management Committees) must be engaged in tracking school-level changes. Active stakeholder participation can create demand for reform and ensure ownership at the grassroots level.
9. **Pilot Programs and Scaling Best Practices:** States can be incentivized to implement pilot programs for NEP elements such as vocational training, mother tongue education, or reforms in assessment. Successful models can then be replicated and scaled up nationally with adaptations according to cultural and regional settings.
10. **Legislative and Policy Reforms:** The states must go through their education acts and policies and bring them into line with the NEP guidelines. Model legislation may be given by the Centre to help states revise old laws or incorporate more recent provisions on ECCE, school clustering, and higher education governance.

Uniform implementation of NEP 2020 can be provided through cooperative federalism, regular financing, institutional capacity development, and rigorous monitoring. The freedom to localize reform should rest with states, but central vision and goals have to be continued. A collaborative, comprehensive and well-financed effort will ensure all Indian students, wherever and whoever they are, receive equal dividends of this historic education reform.

Funding

Nil

Acknowledgement

Not Declared

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Informed Consent

Not Applicable.

Ethical Statement

Not Applicable.

References

1. Government of India. *National Education Policy 2020*. Ministry of Education, 2020. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
2. NITI Aayog. *Education Sector Report: Implementation Status of NEP 2020*. Government of India, 2022. <https://niti.gov.in>
3. Tilak, Jandhyala B. G. "National Education Policy 2020: A Critical Review." *Social Change*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2020, pp. 535–545.
4. Azim Premji University. *State of the Education System in India: Post-NEP Review*. Centre for Learning and Development, 2021. <https://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in>
5. Centre for Policy Research. *Language and Identity: Debates Around the Three-Language Formula in NEP 2020*. CPR Working Paper Series, 2021.
6. National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). *Position Papers on Curriculum and Pedagogy: Supporting NEP Implementation*. NCERT, 2021. <https://ncert.nic.in>
7. Ministry of Education. *Performance Grading Index for States and UTs: 2020–21*. Government of India, 2022. <https://www.education.gov.in>
8. UNESCO. *Education for Sustainable Development: A Roadmap*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021.