

SALIENT FEATURES OF NEP 2020

NEP 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and replaces the thirty-four year old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986. Built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability, this policy is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower by making both school and college education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, suited to 21st century needs and aimed at bringing out the unique capabilities of each student.

The policy has been formulated after a very detailed consultative process, unprecedented in depth and scale. Consultation involved over 2 lakh suggestions from 2.5 lakhs Gram Panchayats, 6600 Blocks, 6000 ULBs, 676 Districts. The MHRD had initiated a collaborative, inclusive, and highly participatory consultation process from January 2015. In May 2016, '*Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy*' under the Chairmanship of Late Shri T.S.R. Subramanian, Former Cabinet Secretary, submitted its report. Based on this, the Ministry prepared '*Some Inputs for the Draft National Education Policy, 2016*'. In June 2017 a '*Committee for the Draft National Education Policy*' was constituted under the Chairmanship of eminent scientist **Padma Vibhushan, Dr. K. Kasturirangan**, which submitted the Draft National Education Policy, 2019 to the Hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister on 31st May, 2019. The Draft National Education Policy 2019 was uploaded on MHRD's website and at 'MyGov Innovate' portal eliciting views/ suggestions/ comments of stakeholders, including public.

The salient features of the policy are as follows :

SCHOOL EDUCATION

Ensure Universal Access at All Levels of schooling from pre-primary school to Grade 12

NEP 2020 aims to achieve 100% Gross Enrollment Ratio in school education by 2030. The initiatives that will be undertaken for this include provision of effective and sufficient infrastructure, alternative and innovative education centres to ensure that children who are dropping out of school are brought back into mainstream education, universal participation in school by carefully tracking students, as well as their learning levels. Counsellors or well-trained social workers connected to schools/school complexes and teachers will continuously work with students and their parents to ensure that all school-age children are attending and learning in school.

Early Childhood Care Education:

NEP 2020 emphasises on the criticality of the early years to ensure quality early childhood care and education for all children between 3-6 years by 2025. A National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) for children up to the age of 8 will be developed by NCERT. The planning and implementation of early childhood education will be carried out jointly by the Ministries of HRD, Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW), and Tribal Affairs.

The extant 10+2 structure in school education will be modified with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18. This implies that there will be 3 years of curriculum framework for Anganwaadi/pre-school level and 12 years for school in a 5+3+3+4 model. Currently, children in the age group of

3-6 are not covered in the 10+2 structure as Class 1 begins at age 6. In the new 5+3+3+4 structure, a strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from age 3 is also included

ECCE shall be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of early-childhood education institutions consisting of stand-alone Anganwadis, Anganwadis co-located with primary schools; pre-primary schools/sections covering at least age 5 to 6 years co-located with existing primary schools; and stand-alone pre-schools. All of above would have workers/teachers specially trained in the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE. For universal access to ECCE, Anganwadi Centres will be strengthened. Prior to the age of 5 every child will move to a "Preparatory Class" or "Balavatika" (that is, before Class 1), which has an ECCE-qualified teacher.

Training of current Anganwadi workers/teachers: those with qualifications of 10+2 and above shall be given a 6-month certificate programme in ECCE; and those with lower educational qualifications shall be given a one-year diploma programme. These programmes may be run through digital/distance mode allowing teachers to acquire ECCE qualifications with minimal disruption to their current work.

New Curricular and Pedagogical Structure:

The curricular and pedagogical structure of school education: guided by a 5+3+3+4 design corresponding to the age ranges of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years, respectively. It will consist of **Foundational Stage** (in two parts, that is, 3 years of Anganwadi/pre-school + 2 years in primary school in Grades 1-2; both together covering ages 3-8): with flexible, multilevel, play/activity-based learning and the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE.

Preparatory Stage (Grades 3-5, covering ages 8-11): with the introduction Experiential learning across the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities.

Middle Stage (Grades 6-8, covering ages 11-14): with a subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style.

Secondary Stage (Grades 9-12 in two phases, i.e., 9 and 10 in the first and 11 and 12 in the second, covering ages 14-18) : with greater depth, greater critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations, and greater flexibility and student choice of subjects, and option to exit at grade 10 and re-enter at a later stage in grade 11.

The curricula will aim for **holistic development of learners**, equipping them with the key 21st century skills, reduction in curricular content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking and greater focus on **experiential learning**. Students will have increased flexibility and choice of subjects so that they choose their own paths according to their talents and interests. There will be **no rigid separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams**. The objective is to give equal emphasis on all subjects-science, social sciences, art, languages, sports, mathematics - with integration of vocational and academic streams in school.

A new and comprehensive **National Curricular Framework for School Education**, NCFSE 2020-21, will be developed by the NCERT.

High-quality textbook materials will be developed by NCERT and SCERTs. States will prepare their own curricula and prepare textbooks incorporating state flavour and material. The availability of textbooks in all regional languages will be a top priority. Reducing the weight of school bags and textbooks will also be ensured by suitable changes in curriculum load.

Attaining Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:

A National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be set-up on priority to focus on early language and mathematical skills from Grades 1 to 3 by 2025. Strategies include: developing school readiness through interim 3-month play-based school preparation module for all Grade 1 students; increased focus on reading, writing, speaking, counting, arithmetic, and mathematical thinking; continuous assessment and adaptive testing; national repository of high-quality resources on foundational literacy and numeracy; filling teacher vacancies; peer-tutoring and volunteer activities; setting up school libraries in every village; A National Book Promotion Policy will be formulated, and initiatives to ensure the availability, accessibility, quality, and readership of books across geographies, languages, levels, and genres will be undertaken.

Multilingualism and the power of language:

NEP 2020 lays great emphasis on promoting multilingualism so that children know and learn about the rich and vast array of languages of their country. The medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/ mother tongue /local language/regional language. Every student in the country will participate in a fun project/activity on 'The Languages of India', sometime in Grades 6-8, such as, under the '*Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat*' initiative. Sanskrit will be offered at all levels of school and higher education as an important, enriching option for students, including as an option in the three-language formula. Other classical languages and literatures of India, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit, will also be widely available in schools as options for students. Foreign languages, such as Korean, Japanese, Thai, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian, will also be offered at the secondary level. Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized across the country, and National and State curriculum materials developed, for use by students with hearing impairment.

Assessment Reforms

There will be a shift from summative assessment to regular and formative assessment, which is more competency-based, promotes learning and development, and tests higher-order skills, such as analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity. Board exams for Grades 10 and 12 will be continued, but be reformed to eliminate the need for taking coaching classes. Board exams will be redesigned to encourage holistic development; and will also be made 'easier', by testing core capacities/competencies. All students will be allowed to take Board Exams on up to two occasions during any given school year, one main examination and one for improvement, if desired. All students will take school examinations in Grades 3, 5, and 8 which will be conducted by the appropriate authority.

A new **National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)**, will be set up as a standard-setting body for setting norms, standards, and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognized school boards of India, guiding the State Achievement Survey (SAS) and undertaking the National Achievement Survey (NAS), monitoring achievement of learning outcomes and encouraging and helping

school boards to shift their assessment patterns towards meeting the skill requirements of the 21st century.

Equitable and inclusive education

NEP 2020 aims to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background. Special emphasis will be given on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) which include: gender identities (particularly female and transgender individuals), socio-cultural identities (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities), geographical identities (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts), disabilities (including learning disabilities), and socio-economic conditions (such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor).

A **separate Gender Inclusion fund** will be created as also **Special Education Zones** for disadvantaged regions and groups.

Children with disabilities will be enabled to fully participate in the regular schooling process from the foundational stage to higher education. Recruitment of special educators with cross-disability training, and establishment of resource centres, wherever needed, especially for children with severe or multiple disabilities will be supported. Schools and school complexes will be supported for providing all children with disabilities accommodations and support mechanisms tailored to suit their needs and to ensure their full participation in the classroom. Assistive devices and appropriate technology-based tools, will be made available to help children with disabilities integrate more easily into classrooms and engage with teachers and their peers.

Every State/District will be encouraged to establish “**Bal Bhavans**” as a special daytime boarding school, to participate in art-related, career-related, and play-related activities. The unutilized capacity of school infrastructure will be used to promote social, intellectual, and volunteer activities for the community and to promote social cohesion during non-teaching / schooling hours and may be used as a “**Samajik Chetna Kendra**”.

Teacher recruitment and career path

Teachers will be recruited through robust, transparent processes. Promotions will be merit-based, and a mechanism for multi-source periodic performance appraisals will be put in place. Progression paths to become educational administrators or teacher educators will be available for the teachers. A common **National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)** will be developed by 2022, by the National Council for Teacher Education, in consultation with NCERT, SCERTs, teachers from across levels and regions, expert bodies in vocational education, and higher education institutions etc. The standards would cover expected roles of the teacher at different levels of expertise/stage, and the competencies required for that stage. This could be adopted by states to determine all aspects of teacher career management, including tenure, professional development efforts, salary increases, promotions, and other recognitions. The professional standards will be reviewed and revised in 2030, and thereafter every ten years.

School Governance: Schools can be organized into school complexes or clusters which will be the basic unit of governance and administration that will ensure availability of all resources including infrastructure, like academic libraries and

human resources e.g. art and music teachers along with a strong professional teacher community.

Standard-setting and Accreditation for School Education

Regulation and operations of schools will be carried out by separate bodies to eliminate conflicts of interest. It is envisaged to have clear, separate systems for policy making, regulation, operations and academic matters. To ensure that all schools follow certain minimal professional and quality standards, States/UTs will set up independent, State-wide body, **State School Standards Authority (SSSA)**. Transparent public self-disclosure of all the basic regulatory information, as laid down by the SSSA, will be used extensively for public oversight and accountability. The SCERT will develop a **School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (SQAAF)** through consultations with all stakeholders.

Public and private schools will be assessed and accredited on the same criteria, benchmarks, and processes, emphasizing online and offline public disclosure and transparency, so as to ensure that public-spirited private schools are encouraged.

Vocational Education: By 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education. Beginning with vocational exposure at early ages in middle and secondary school, quality vocational education will be integrated smoothly into higher education. Vocational education will be integrated in the educational offerings of all secondary schools in a phased manner over the next decade. Towards this, secondary schools will also collaborate with ITIs, polytechnics, local industry, etc. Every child to learn at least one vocation and exposed to several more. A 10-day bagless period sometime during Grades 6-8 to intern with local vocational experts such as carpenters, gardeners, potters, artists, etc. Similar internship opportunities to learn vocational subjects to students throughout Grades 6-12, including holiday periods. Vocational courses through online mode will also be made available.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Increase GER in higher education to reach at least 50% by 2035.

The aim will be to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.

Holistic Multidisciplinary Education

The policy envisages a broad-based multi-disciplinary holistic education at the undergraduate level for integrated, rigorous exposure to science, arts, humanities, mathematics and professional fields having imaginative and flexible curricular structures, creative combinations of study, integration of vocational education and multiple entry/exit points. A holistic and multidisciplinary education will help develop well-rounded individuals who possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication, discussion and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. Such a holistic education shall be, in the long term, the approach of all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines.

The **undergraduate degree will be of either 3 or 4-year duration**, with multiple exit options within this period, with appropriate certifications- a certificate after completing 1 year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas, or a

diploma after 2 years of study, or a Bachelor's degree after a 3-year programme. The 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme shall be the preferred option since it allows the opportunity to experience the full range of holistic and multidisciplinary education in addition to a focus on the chosen major and minors as per the choices of the student. An **Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)** shall be established which would digitally store the academic credits earned from various recognized HEIs so that the degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into account credits earned.

Model public universities for holistic and multidisciplinary education, **Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities(MERUs)** will be set up and will aim to attain the highest standards for multidisciplinary education across India.

A number of initiatives will be taken to ensure **optimal learning environments** are created that are engaging and supportive, and enable all students to succeed. All institutions and faculty will have the autonomy to innovate on matters of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment within a broad framework of higher education qualifications that ensures consistency across institutions and programmes and across the ODL, online, and the traditional 'in-class' modes. HEIs shall move to a criterion-based grading system that assesses student achievement based on the learning goals for each programme, and also move away from high-stakes examinations towards more continuous and comprehensive evaluation.

Universities and colleges will set up **high-quality support centres** and will be given adequate funds and academic resources to encourage and support students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. **Professional academic and career counselling** will be available to all students, as well as counsellors to ensure physical, psychological and emotional well-being.

Rationalised Institutional Architecture

A new vision and architecture for higher education has been envisaged with large, well-resourced, vibrant multidisciplinary institutions. Higher Education Institutions will be transformed into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and HEI clusters/Knowledge Hubs, each of which will aim to have 3,000 or more students. A university will mean a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate programmes, with high quality teaching, research, and community engagement. The definition of university will allow a spectrum of institutions that range from Research-intensive Universities, Teaching-intensive Universities and Autonomous degree-granting Colleges (ACs).

The system of affiliation will be phased out over 15 years and a stage-wise mechanism for granting graded autonomy to colleges, through a transparent system of graded accreditation, will be established. Over a period of time, it is envisaged that every college would develop into either an Autonomous degree-granting College, or a constituent college of a university.

National Research Foundation (NRF)

A new entity will be set up to catalyze and expand research and innovation across the country. The overarching goal of the NRF will be to enable a culture of research to permeate through our universities, helping to develop a culture of research in the country through suitable incentives for and recognition of outstanding research, and by undertaking major initiatives to seed and grow research at State Universities and other public institutions where research capability is currently limited. The NRF will competitively fund research in all disciplines. Successful research will be recognized,

and where relevant, implemented through close linkages with governmental agencies as well as with industry and private/philanthropic organizations

Financial support for students: Efforts will be made to incentivize the merit of students belonging to SC, ST, OBC, and other SEDGs. The National Scholarship Portal will be expanded to support, foster, and track the progress of students receiving scholarships. Private HEIs will be encouraged to offer larger numbers of free ships and scholarships to their students.

Open and distance learning will be expanded, thereby playing a significant role in increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio to 50%. Measures such as online courses and digital repositories, funding for research, improved student services, credit-based recognition of MOOCs, etc., will be taken to ensure it is at par with the highest quality in-class programmes.

Internationalization of education will be facilitated through both institutional collaborations, and student and faculty mobility and allowing entry of top world ranked Universities to open campuses in our country.

Motivated, Energized, and Capable Faculty

NEP 2020 recognises that the success of higher education institutions is the quality and engagement of its faculty. HEIs will have clearly defined, independent, and transparent processes and criteria for faculty recruitment. Faculty will be given the freedom to design their own curricular and pedagogical approaches within the approved framework. Excellence will be further incentivized through appropriate rewards, promotions, recognitions, and movement into institutional leadership. Faculty not delivering on basic norms will be held accountable.

Effective Governance and leadership in HEIs

Through a suitable system of graded accreditation and graded autonomy, and in a phased manner over a period of 15 years, all HEIs in India will aim to become independent self-governing institutions pursuing innovation and excellence. Measures will be taken at all HEIs to ensure leadership of the highest quality and promote an institutional culture of excellence. Institutional governance based on autonomy - academic, administrative and financial -is envisioned with each higher education institution having an Board of Governors. All leadership positions and Head of institutions will be offered to persons with high academic qualifications and demonstrated administrative and leadership capabilities along with abilities to manage complex situations

Regulation

There will be a single overarching umbrella body for promotion of higher education- the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)- with independent bodies for standard setting- the General Education Council; funding-Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC); accreditation- National Accreditation Council (NAC); and regulation- National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC). Regulation will be 'light but tight' to ensure financial probity and public-spiritedness to eliminate conflicts of interest with transparent self-disclosure as the norm not an inspectorial regime. The regulatory body will function through a faceless intervention through technology for regulation & will have powers to penalise HEIs not conforming to norms and standards. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards.

Teacher Education: The 4-year integrated stage-specific, subject- specific Bachelor of Education offered at multidisciplinary institutions would be the way forward. A new

and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021, will be formulated by the NCTE in consultation with NCERT. By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree that teaches a range of knowledge content and pedagogy and includes strong practicum training in the form of student-teaching at local schools. Stringent action will be taken against substandard stand-alone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

A **National Mission for Mentoring** shall be established, with a large pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty – including those with the ability to teach in Indian languages – who would be willing to provide short and long-term mentoring/professional support to university/college teachers.

Professional Education

All professional education will be an integral part of the higher education system. Stand-alone technical universities, health science universities, legal and agricultural universities, or institutions in these or other fields, will aim to become multi-disciplinary institutions.

Technology in Education

An autonomous body, the **National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)**, will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration. Appropriate integration of technology into all levels of education will be done to improve classroom processes, support teacher professional development, enhance educational access for disadvantaged groups and streamline educational planning, administration and management. Technology-based education platforms, such as DIKSHA/SWAYAM, will be better integrated across school and higher education. HEIs will play an active role in conducting research on disruptive technologies and in creating instructional materials and courses including online courses in cutting-edge domains.

Online Education and Digital Education: A comprehensive set of recommendations for promoting online education consequent in the recent rise in epidemics and pandemics in order to ensure preparedness with alternative modes of quality education whenever and wherever traditional and in-person modes of education are not possible, has been covered. A dedicated unit for the purpose of orchestrating the building of digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building will be created in the MHRD to look after the e-education needs of both school and higher education.

Adult Education

The policy aims to achieve 100% youth and adult literacy.

Promotion of Indian languages

To ensure the preservation, growth, and vibrancy of all Indian languages, several initiatives are envisaged. More HEIs, and more programmes in higher education, will use the mother tongue/local language as a medium of instruction, and/or offer programmes bilingually, in order to increase access and GER and also to promote the strength, usage, and vibrancy of all Indian languages. An Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) will be established. Sanskrit and all Indian language institutes and departments across the country will be significantly strengthened. National Institute (or Institutes) for Pali, Persian and Prakrit will be set up. Efforts to preserve and promote all Indian languages including classical, tribal and endangered languages will be undertaken.

Financing Education

Multiple mechanisms with checks and balances will combat and stop the commercialization of higher education. All education institutions will be held to similar standards of audit and disclosure as a 'not for profit' entity. The Centre and the States will work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest.

The **Central Advisory Board of Education will be strengthened** to ensure coordination to bring overall focus on quality education. The remodeled and rejuvenated CAGE shall also be responsible for developing, articulating, evaluating, and revising the vision of education in the country on a continuous basis, in close collaboration with MHRD and the corresponding apex bodies of States. It shall also create and continuously review the institutional frameworks that shall help attain this vision.

Ministry of Education: In order to bring the focus back on education and learning, it may be desirable to re-designate MHRD as the Ministry of Education (MoE).
