

# National Education Policy-2020 on Equitable and Inclusive Education

Miss Sasmita Panda  
*Lecturer in Education*  
Gonasika Science College, Keonjhar  
Psasmita375@gmail.com

---

## **Abstract:**

*An innovative and forward-thinking education policy is essential for every nation, as education plays a crucial role in advancing both economic growth and social development. India's commitment to the global education development agenda is evident in the Sustainable Development Goals established in 2015. As stated in SDG 4: "Provide inclusive and fair access to quality education and encourage lifelong learning opportunities for everyone" by the year 2030. The NEP 2020 aims to close social disparities in access, participation and learning outcomes within school education, and this initiative will be integrated into all education sector development programs. It will lead to a fundamental change in India's education system, transforming it into an enlightened, modern, progressive, and equitable framework.*

**Keyword:** NEP 2020, Paradigm shift Quality education, equitable and inclusive education

---

Date of Submission: 09-08-2024

Date of Acceptance: 21-08-2024

---

## **I. Introduction:**

In July 29, 2020, the Indian union cabinet approved NEP 2020, which replaced the 1986 policy. It is a through framework based on a draft written by renowned scientist and former head of the Indian Space Research Organization Dr. K. Kasturirangan. This innovative idea has the potential to completely change India's educational landscape and turn our country into a just and dynamic knowledge society by giving everyone access to top-notch education. In order to accomplish developmental goals, NEP 2020 plays a crucial role in the development of sustainable education system (UNESCO, 2017). By 2040, the initiative aims to change India's educational system. For both rural and urban areas of India, it offers educational and vocational training from basic to higher education. It was accepted by the Indian Union Cabinet.

Every child has the right to access education and they should be given equal opportunities providing quality education. No child at the age group of 6-14 years should be deprived to access education on the basis of age, language, ethnicity, poverty, religion, geographic etc. The 86th constitutional amendment in 2000, made education a fundamental right of a child which was inserted in Article-21 (A) of Indian Constitution. In other words, free and compulsory education is to be made reachable to every child in every society across the land without any discrimination (Mishra, 2019). The focus of NEP is on learning how to learn. Less content was taught in favor of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, creativity, multidisciplinary, innovative adaptation, and the ability to take in new information in rapidly evolving disciplines. Education ought to be flexible, fun learner centered, inquiry driven, holistically integrated, learner centered, and discussion based. For holistic development, the curriculum needs to cover fundamental humanities, arts, drafts, games, sports, language, literature, culture, values, science, and arithmetic (MHRD, 2006).

## **Objective of NEP 2020:**

The main goal of NEP 2020 is to give everyone access to inclusive and equitable education. The primary goal is to ensure that people grow into well-rounded, contributing members of society by promoting critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities through excellent education. The goal of the policy is to maintain and advance regional languages while acknowledging India's linguistic diversity. It seeks to increase the accessibility, interactivity, and engagement of education. The goal of technology integration in education is to give pupils the digital skills necessary to function in the current world (Bhat, 2017).

It gets them ready for the quickly changing workforce where digital literacy is becoming more and more necessary. Its goal is to establish a bridge across digital devices and guarantee that all students have access to digital opportunities and resources. If all parties involved are willing to collaborate.

**Thrust areas of NEP 2020:**

- Curriculum and pedagogical structure: This policy reorganized the 10+2 education system and created the 5+3+3+4 curriculum and pedagogical system, which serves students in grades 3 through 8.
- It is divided into four age groups: basic (ages 3-8), preparatory (ages 7-11), middle (ages 11-14) and secondary (years 14-18).
- Flexible Curriculum: Use a flexible curriculum and teaching approach, project based learning and competency based assessment that take into account each student's aptitude, interests and capacities.
- Offering comprehensive, interdisciplinary education: For a multidisciplinary world, it Spans the social sciences, humanities, arts, and sports to guarantee the integrity and coherence of all knowledge.
- Slightly restrictive but strict regulatory framework: it promotes innovation and outside-the-box thinking while ensuring the educational system's integrity, openness, and resource efficiency through audits and public disclosures.
- Equitable and inclusive education learning for all: This policy bridging the social category gaps in access, participation and learning outcomes in school education.
- Community engagement and awareness: NEP 2020 demands that community engagement be mainstream in all teaching learning, research and service activities of HEIs. Encourage community involvement in educational planning and decision making. Launch awareness programmed to promote NEP 2020's goals of access, equality and inclusion among communities, educators and students.
- Financial support for students: Financial assistance shall be available to incentivize merits of students belonging to SC, ST, OBC and SEDG.
- Infrastructure development: All HEIs will be equipped with the basic infrastructure and facilities with pleasant classroom spaces and campus. Every classroom shall have providing digital infrastructure and technology including internet connection in rural and unprivileged area for bridge the social gaps.
- Research and Innovation: Encourage research and innovative strategies for promoting access, equity and inclusion in education. NEP 2020 aims at creating a conducive ecosystem to catalyze and energize research and innovation in HEIs.
- Encouraging multilingualism and cultural diversity: multilingualism gives pupils a wider perspective and a greater awareness of many cultures, as well as improving their community skills. It fosters inclusivity and togetherness among pupils while assisting them in appreciating India's variety.
- Internationalization of education: One of the main points of emphasis for NEP 2020 is the globalization of higher education. The policy aims for "internationalization at home" while reiterating the need of forming academic and research partnerships with outside institutions.

**Inclusive education:**

Reducing and eliminating exclusion from and within education is the process of addressing and meeting the varied needs of all children, teenagers, and adults through increased involvement in learning, cultures, and communities (UNESCO, 2005). The constitution's 86th amendment added article 21(a), which states, "provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group 6-14." In order to enable children to reach their full potential in terms of social, cognitive, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and creative development, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) placed a strong emphasis on access to education and training, health care services, rehabilitation services, employment and recreational opportunities, and a conducive environment.

**Equality:**

The nation of India is democratic. The goals and ideologies of its people are reflected in the constitution. Its residents are assured of justice, freedom, equality, and fraternity. It is equality to treat all people equally. It encourages equity, but it can only function if all parties are starting from the same position and require the same assistance. "Education is the single greatest tool for achieving social justice and equality," according to NEP 2020.

**Equity:**

By creating a world-class educational system that is based by Indian culture and values, the NEP seeks to transform India into a knowledge powerhouse. Giving everyone everything they need to succeed is what is meant by equity. By taking into account socioeconomic background and individual needs, it offers educational possibilities to all citizens. Pre- and post-metric scholarships are offered, along with free and high-quality education, rural Navodaya schools, specialized coaching for SC and ST students in university courses, and competitive examinations (Hastings, 2003).

### **Need of equitable and inclusive education:**

The benefits of quality education outweigh those of quantity education. If there are equal educational possibilities, it might be feasible. To provide high- quality education, inclusive education is required. The requirements for inclusive education are as follows:-

- Students that get inclusive education are more likely to exhibit tolerance, adaptability, and cooperation.
- It offers an inclusive atmosphere that makes it simple for students with disabilities to engage in class activities and express their opinions to other students.
- It encourages parity and justice.
- It fosters appreciation for everyone's individuality and special contribution to society.
- It encourages social integration and the development of a feeling of identity.
- It aids in the learner's self-concept development.
- Aids in carrying out the obligation under the constitution.
- It facilitates the achievement of education universalization.
- It aids in children's development of positive citizenship traits.

### **Bottlenecks on Equal and Inclusive Education:**

- **Ineffective staff collaboration:** In an institution, inadequate cooperation between a regular teacher and a special educator may result in a lack of assistance for kids with special needs.
- **Linguistic and cultural barrier:** Students in a classroom may come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Schools often lack cultural sensitivity, which causes communication problems or linguistic challenges. If there are no resources available for instruction in their tongue. Such that it makes it challenging for pupils from diverse social backgrounds to participate in inclusive education.
- **Absence of specialized training:** Teachers often struggle because they have not had enough training to handle the range of needs in a classroom.
- **Insufficient resource allocation:** Schools may struggle to provide the right supplies to promote inclusive education. **Inadequate assessment technique:** Students with special needs may not have their abilities and progress fully shown by traditional evaluation techniques.
- **Inflexibility in the curriculum:** Not every child's requirements will always be met by the curriculum. In order for it to obstruct inclusive education.
- **Inaccessible school building:** Students with disabilities may face physical obstacles in schools that were not built with accessibility in mind.
- **Lack of accessible teaching resources:** Students with visual impairments may not be able to receive an education if there is a dearth of accessible teaching resources, such as textbooks in Braille.
- **Inaccessible technologies:** Students with disabilities benefit greatly from the use of technology in the classroom. Students with disabilities who have limited access to technology may not be able to use available educational resources and materials.

### **Way forward:**

The National Education Policy-2020 contains some major principles, vision, mission, objectives, and aims to guide the entire educational process across the nation and shape the future of both children and the nation. All plans and policies have objectives, aims, missions, and visions to achieve, respectively. In order for both society and the person to grow and adapt to the global environment, the following viewpoints are required:

- Assist parents and employees by providing workshops, support groups, and trustworthy information onsite.
- Offer qualified and experienced educators.
- Giving merit-based students access to various scholarships.
- Offer a flexible curriculum based on kids' aptitudes and mental capacities.
- Parent and community involvement in school activities.
- Adequate adaptation.
- Fostering cultural diversity.
- Special care for children with special needs.
- Mainstream education. and provision of necessary resources.

### **Expected role of NEP 2020 on Equal and Inclusive education :**

The goal of NEP 2020 is to guarantee that every student has access to a high- quality, egalitarian education that is responsive to their cultural and linguistic background, accepting of their differences, and values their learning and

talents. It focuses on problems, difficulties, and suggestions for closing the gaps and lessening the differences in each learner's access and involvement. By holding numerous FGDs, holding meetings, and offering grievance redressal mechanisms, it places focus on the role of stakeholders in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Kumar, 2014).

Additionally, it offers several suggestions for curriculum and other TLM materials, such as: NIOS produces top-notch modules for teaching other fundamental subjects and Indian sign language. Teachers are crucial to the successful implementation of inclusive education.

## **II. Conclusion:**

An important turning point in the development of Indian higher education is the NEP 2020. It prioritizes quality, equity, and accessibility. It guarantees that postsecondary education turns into a ray of hope for everyone. The success of inclusive education can be attributed to its ability to remove barriers from learning environments, make information easily accessible, improve administrative skills, develop curriculum and evaluation methods, and employ highly qualified teachers. Schools must change their current policies, teaching methods, beliefs, values, and attitudes in order to execute this policy. There will be the establishment of multidisciplinary education and research universities all over the country, similar to the IITs and IIMs. Academic organizations that are both public and private will be subject to the same set of accreditation and control regulations. More will be done to promote online learning so that pupils are better prepared.

## **References:**

- [1]. Bhat, & Geelani, Z.A., (2017), Inclusive education in India, issues, challenges and prospects, The communications vol. 25(1).
- [2]. Cook, B. G. (2001). A comparison of teachers' attitudes toward their included students with mild and severe disabilities. *Journal of Special Education*, 34(4),203-213.
- [3]. Cameron, D. L., & Tankersley, M. (2007). Inclusive teachers attitudinal ratings of their students with disabilities. *Journal of Special Education*, 40(4), 230-238.
- [4]. Coskun, Y. D., Tosun, U. & Macaroglu, E. (2009). Classroom teachers styles of using and development materials of inclusive education. *World Conference on Educational Sciences 2009. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 1, 2758-2762. Das. A. K., Kuyini A. B., & Desai L. P. (2013). Inclusive education in India: are the teachers prepared? *International Journal of Special Education*, 28(1).
- [5]. Chopra, Ritika (2 August 2020). "Explained: Reading the new National Education Policy 2020". *The Indian Express*.
- [6]. Rohatgi, Anubha, ed. (7 August 2020). "Highlights | NEP will play role in reducing gap between research and education in India: PM Modi". *Hindustan Times*.
- [7]. Krishna, Atul (29 July 2020). "NEP 2020 Highlights: School And Higher Education". *NDTV*.
- [8]. Naidu, M. Venkaiah (8 August 2020). "The New Education Policy 2020 is set to be a landmark in India's history of education". *Times of India Blog*.
- [9]. Dash, N. (2018) Problems and challenges of inclusive education for students with special needs, *International Interdisciplinary research journal*, 08(01)pp.155-162.
- [10]. Department of Education (2000). *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: A Programmed for Universal Elementary Education*. New Delhi: MHRD, GOL.
- [11]. Hastings, R. P., & Oakford, S. (2003). Student teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special needs. *Educational Psychology*, 23(1), 87-94. Kumar, G. (2014), Attitude of teachers towards inclusive education in India. *Edutrack vol. 13. No.7*.
- [12]. Jebaraj, Priscilla (2 August 2020). "The Hindu Explains What has the National Education Policy 2020 proposed?". *The Hindu*. ISSN 0971-751X.
- [13]. Kumar, G. (2014), Attitude of teachers towards inclusive education in India. *Edutrack vol. 13.No.7*.
- [14]. Jebaraj, Priscilla (2 August 2020). "The Hindu Explains | What has the National Education Policy 2020 proposed?". *The Hindu*. ISSN 0971-751X.
- [15]. MacFarlane, K. & Woolfson, L. M. (2013). Teacher attitudes and behavior toward the inclusion of children with social, emotional and behavioral difficulties in mainstream schools: An application of the theory of planned behavior. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 29,46-52.
- [16]. Mastropieri, M.A. & Scruggs, T. E. (2004). *The inclusive classroom: strategies for effective instructions*. NY: Pearson.
- [17]. MHRD (2006). *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: Discovering New Paths in Inclusion, A Documentation of Home-based Education Practices for CWSN in SSA Elementary Education & Literacy Bureau-MHRD*. New Delhi: Government of India.
- [18]. Mishra, P. A., Hota. S., & Khamari, P. R., (2019), Curriculum adaptation in inclusive education. *International journal of applied research*, 5(8),70-74.
- [19]. Nandini, ed. (29 July 2020). "New Education Policy 2020 Highlights: School and higher education To see major changes".
- [20]. Aithal, P. S.; Aithal, Shubhrajyotsna (2019). "Analysis of Higher Education in Indian National Education Policy Proposal 2019 and Its Implementation Challenges". *International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters*. 3 (2): 1–35. SSRN 3417517.
- [21]. Nandini, ed. (29 July 2020). "New Education Policy 2020 Highlights: School and higher education to see major changes". *Hindustan Times*.