

## CHALLENGES AND ISSUES IN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

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### ABSTRACT

Education is the foundation stone of the nation as it plays a powerful role in the growth and development of the country and its citizens. One cannot deny the fact that education is a powerful tool and based on the recommendations by a panel headed by Dr Kasturirangan former chairman of Indian space research former Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), the New Education Policy has been drafted that focuses on equity, quality, affordability, and accountability of education in our country. In this paper, the author is going to explore about issues and the challenges in the implementation of various policies mentioned in national education policy 2020, the key areas that remain missing, and the complexities involved. Last but not the least, the paper also discusses the divide between the policy and practices together with the recent data statistics. All the details related to the possible challenges due to the changes in the new education policy have been analyzed in the forthcoming sections of this paper.

**Keywords:** National Education Policy, Higher Education, Challenges

### I. INTRODUCTION

India has always been a destination for learners all around the world. From ancient sciences to arts, philosophy, and literature, the country has offered a variety of choices for centuries. That is why it is also known as the land of learning. With the advent of time, not a lot of changes in the education system in India have been made to cope up with the outside world. To boost the growth of the Indian education sector, recently the ministry of education has proposed the new education policy 2020 which will replace the 34-year-old national policy of education, 1986. As per Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the new education policy of 2020 focuses on learning instead of studying, goes beyond the curriculum to focus on critical thinking. NEP 2020 has bought a Paradigm shift starting from changes in the pedagogical structure to vocational training to higher education. It focuses on the quality rather than the quantity, more emphasis is given on creativity and understanding rather than Rote learning. The national education policy of 2020 covers a wide ambit of areas, therefore the implementation of all of it, all at once is a big challenge.

### II. HIGHLIGHTS OF NEP 2020

#### A. Primary School

1. The new policy targets to achieve 100% gross enrollment ratio in school education by 2030 along with universalization of education from pre-Primary School to grade 12. The 5+3+3+4 curricular structure concerning ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively will replace the 10+2 structure of the school curriculum.
2. For children up to the age of 8, National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) will be established by NCERT for attaining universal foundational literacy and numeracy in all primary schools by 2025, National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be set up by Education Ministry.
3. Extra-curricular, vocational, and academic streams in schools will be given equal importance without any rigid separation. Local language/mother-tongue be used as a medium of instruction for classes till 5 preferably till 8. This holistic 360-degree multidimensional report card will track the progress of students within all areas.
4. PARAKH(Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), a new assessment center that will be set up for improving the system of evaluation in schools.
5. In consultation with NCERT, a new National Curriculum Framework for teacher education (NCFTE) 2021 will be established. By 2030, a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree will be the minimum degree qualification for teaching Higher Education.

#### B. Higher education

1. Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational Education to be raised from

2. 26.3 % in 2018 to 50 % by 2035 and aims to add new seats to 3.5 crores in higher education institutions.
3. To facilitate digital storage and transfer of credits earned from different HEIs academic Bank of credit will be established.
4. The new policy provides multiple entry and exit points with certificates at every stage and envisages multi-disciplinary education with a flexible curriculum and creative combination of subjects.
5. Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), to be established to provide the best multidisciplinary education of global standards in the country, at par with IITs, IIMs.
6. The National Research Foundation an umbrella body will be established to foster quality research across the country and strengthen the overall research ecosystem.
7. The entire higher education excluding legal and medical education will come under the purview of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) which will be set up as single Apex body.
8. The same set of norms for regulation, accreditation, and academic standards will be applicable to both public and private higher education institutions.
9. In the upcoming 15 years, the affiliation of colleges is to be phased out and the graded autonomy concept will be introduced to encourage healthy competition between universities.
10. the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), will be set up to foster a free exchange of ideas on the use of technology.
11. Increase in public spending on education from around 4% to 6% of gross domestic product with the collective efforts of the centre and the state government.

### III. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

#### [1] Lack of infrastructure and funding

The national education policy 2020 aims at making our home country a global choice for education by providing high quality, different variety and dynamic education hub to all the people in abroad. The policy focuses on raising expenditure in the education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest. The education policy is not a newly structured policy, rather it is a compilation of different phases. Time by time it has been reshaped, restated and recapitulated several times. It was first introduced in 1968, restated in 1986, recapitulated in 1992 review of policy and now reshaped in 2020. Economic survey gives us clear instances about spending of India on education. As per the 2019-20 economic survey, India spends only 3.1 % of its GDP on education sector even after 52 years since the recommendation. If we dig deeper, we will able to uncover that although since 2014-15, spending on education has expanded in total term from 2.8% to meagre 3.1% in 2019-20 yet it has been stagnant at around 10.5 of the total government budget.

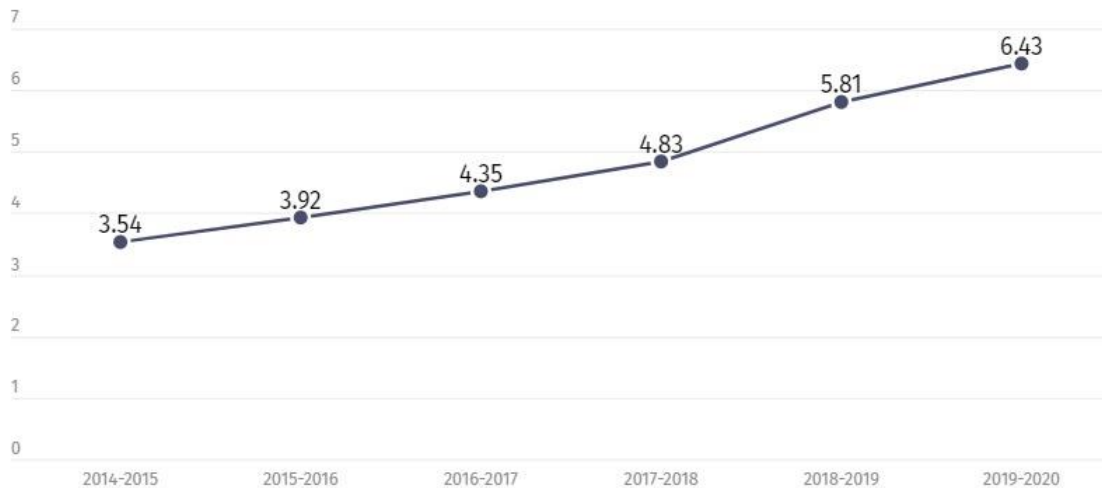
**Education spending as a % of GDP and % of total government spending**



Source: Economic Survey, 2019-20 • Data visual by Gulal Salil, Shivani Pathak

# Government Spending on Education

## Central and State Spending (in ₹ trillion)



The Centre Government has deduced the expenditure on education as a percentage of budget from 4.14 % in 2014-15 to 3.2% in 2020-21. Even this budgeted amount will see a further downfall due to the ongoing Corona pandemic. There is a lot of speculations on how the government will be financing the increase in 6% GDP when the present condition of the economy is not as good as it should be. There is no such funding available for such an increase in India's current education budget.

According to Protiva Kundu, a researcher at the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), "All the areas are underfunded in Indian education... our entire education budget pie is very small and stagnant for years,". For instance, there are so many permanent posts that are unfilled because states do not have funds to hire permanent teachers though salary make up the largest proportion of education spending across states.

As per the analysis by accountability initiative, the education budgets fell in 16 large States in 2020-21. In nutshell, it sheds light that there is a consistent lack of political will for public investment in education. Presently, economy is slow along with the ongoing covid-19 crisis, The biggest query arise here is that how will the government implement the new economic policy 2020 ? how will it make huge investment with such decrease in allocated amount in budget 2020-2021. It requires a heavy investment for upcoming years which includes targets like achieving 6% GDP in education, digital literacy, trained teachers, infrastructure, and increasing the gross enrollment ratio to 50% by 2035. Funding would have been a great challenge for the government, even if COVID like contingent situation occurs or not. This is because of the difficult to achieve targets under NEP 2020. Even in the past it has been seen the govt was not able to fully fund the education system.

### [2] Mother tongue as a medium of instruction

The new education policy 2020 has advised that mother tongue / local language/home language/regional language should be used as a medium of instruction till class 5 preferably till class 8 and beyond it wherever possible but this new policy comes with a lot of challenges. Although the government has not made it mandatory but it has lead to a huge controversy and left us with a lot of questions.

The most common criticism is that it will widen the gap between those who can communicate in English and those who cannot. Another challenge is that developing new learning material for languages that have not been standardized or those that do not have a script will be a tedious task that will require a heavy initial investment. This poses a serious question on who will bear this additional cost, will it be the government or the schools or an indirect burden will be laid on parents, or will it be shared by all of them equally.

Another point that needs to be taken care of is which mother tongue/ local language should be used as a medium of instruction in school and which should not. For instance, students who speak local languages such as Rabha, Santhali, and Nepali attend Assamese-medium schools in the Kokrajhar and Chirang areas, then these children who should have benefited from being taught in their home language will lose out, said Parismita Singh, who works with a Pratham after-school programme that provides support to children in their mother tongue in tribal and non-tribal rural areas in Assam's Kokrajhar and Chirang and the same will be the case with children whose parents have Transferable jobs. I would again like to quote an example here suppose the child is studying in a primary school in North India where the medium of instruction is Hindi and then his or her father got transferred to Kerala now there the medium of instruction in schools is Kannada then it becomes very difficult for the child to catch up or understand anything.

If the policy is implemented the way it is proposed then it will also pose a challenge for higher education institutes where the medium of instruction is not mother tongue but usually a common language like English or Hindi, the language barrier will be created among the students and it may happen they find it difficult to communicate with each other. Eventually, it becomes a tug of war for students as well as the teachers.

In nutshell issues ranging from lack of proficient language teachers, inadequate instructional materials and lack of proper road map still exist. Language is used as a vehicle to protect the culture of a particular place but at the same time one should not forget that English is a Global Language of communication and empowerment and the government needs to seek a midway out to create a balance between the two thereby ensuring that people stay connected with the roots as well be able to communicate with the outside world confidently.

### **[3] Vocational education and skilling**

National education policy 2020 has mandated vocational courses starting from 6th grade and states that every child will be taught skills like local crafts, carpentry, cooking, gardening, etc. One of the major challenges with regard to vocational training is the lack of proper resources. For introducing vocational courses in school, majorly 3 things will be required i.e infrastructure, set up and trained personnel and the same question arises who will bear these additional costs because this requires high investment. One of the solutions can be that schools can do a partnership with local craftsmen who have proper infrastructure and setup. Though this option is a better one in terms of money saving it also have its pros and cons. Again the challenge here is that there are risk factors when you take students to these kinds of places. It is an overhead to school with respect to transportation and that is an overhead on the parents to pay fees. Also, a lot of time is wasted in travelling if the place is far away given that school has to cover a lot of syllabus within a limited time.

Another solution can be that schools can bring local craftsmen to their campus and ask children to observe their demonstration. It will not only save time but also the cost of travelling. For instance vocational courses like gardening, pottery does not have special infrastructure requirements so these can be done at school premises as well but courses like carpentry require a good setup so for practical purposes later on students can be taken to more sophisticated places. The amalgamation of both the solutions will be more effective although challenges still exist.

Another concern is that there is a majority of students who belong to unprivileged sections. It is feared that this policy might have an adverse effect when in practice, firstly it can lead to distractions especially for the poor students who would opt for low skilled jobs at a young age which will lead to more dropout rates.

### **[4] Lack of trained teachers**

NEP 2020 has brought about a Paradigm shift in the way of learning which is a welcome change. For the foundational years- preschool nursery kindergarten class 1 and class 2, the school curriculum and pedagogy have been restructured. Experimental learning will be transacted across the discipline for the preparatory stages of classes 3,4 and, 5. More Emphasis will be given on subject-oriented pedagogy for classes 6 to 8. Greater flexibility of subjects selection for classes 9 to 12. For the first time skills will be woven across teaching strategies, crafts, and practices and will run like a thread through the curriculum.

To make this extremely creative curriculum successful it has to be transacted by the teachers very effectively and efficiently. The most common challenge we will be facing is lack of trained teachers. The current uninspiring job profile, exploitation, and disincentivized service conditions leave the teachers unmotivated and dispirited which in turn affects their way of teaching. Justice JS Verma Committee Report, 2012 said, 'a broken

teacher education sector is putting over 370 million children at risk ..... upon inspection scores of private Teacher Education Institutes (TEI) were found to have only a foundation stone in the name of infrastructure and 99% passing rate.' The report also revealed that on an average 85% of teachers failed to qualify for the post-qualification competency test – Central Teacher Eligibility Test (C-TET).

Providing training to the teachers in contrast with the new curriculum also comes with a lot of challenges. At The Grass root level, a large number of teachers are stuck in administrative work and other responsibilities leaving little or no time for such kinds of training programs.

Although any NEP2020 talks about the teachers' education and training where a (National Curriculum Framework for Teachers Education) NCFTE 2021 will be implemented but it's a far-sighted dream. The present reality is that it will be a tough fight for everyone in the upcoming years. Since the whole curriculum has changed, teachers need to inculcate new skills starting from pre Nursery to class 12 to HEIs to make this a success, but imparting training to such a large number of teachers is a tedious task. The major question arises here is who will be imparting training to these teachers? Do we have competitive skillful trainers available and if we have are they sufficient to provide training to such a large number of teachers. Who will ensure that the new curriculum is implemented and to which extent?

**[5] Digital divide**

The new policy emphasizes the use of technology, digital literacy, and coding from an early age. While there is a ton of spotlight on utilizing technology in each part of the education sector - teaching, learning, and appraisal, setting up virtual labs, preparing schools, coaching, and setting up discussions - the strategy ignores the digital partition between the urban and rural, the absence of advanced foundation and admittance to gadgets/web.

All this can be seen through the lenses of covid 2019, so many students who belong to the rural areas were not able to attend classes online because they did not had access to mobile phones and internet. Some students had to travel far away places from home to attend classes because of low connectivity issues. A rise in the use of virtual platforms not only affects the children physically but also can expose them to harmful virtual content.

The digital divide is considerably more unpredictable when seen from the focal point of sex, class, rank, and metropolitan country provincial contrasts. According to NSSO's 75th round national survey (2017-2018), there exists a significant male- female digital literacy gap in rural and urban areas with respect to the ability to operate a computer and use the internet. As you can see in table 1 only 7 % of females in rural India are able to operate a computer as compared to their male counterparts (17.1%). For urban areas, the gender gap remains although the level of users is higher.

Ability	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Able to operate a computer	12.6%	7%	37.5%	26.9%
Able to use internet	17.1%	8.5%	43.5%	30.1%

**Source:** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation 2019

With respect to introduction of coding from class 6, it requires a lot of practice and enough computers so that each child can practice individually. There are a lot of challenges here first a proper lab is needed and Data from UDISE+ shows that in 2016-17 only 35.1% of government schools had access to functional computers. Even many private schools do not have proper Labs and most of the time students share the computers in class labs. Secondly, since coding requires a proper laptop or a computer setup set up, students from marginalized sections have to suffer because they can't afford such expensive gadgets. One solution can be that computer Labs be available for use during school time accompanied by a lab assistant so that interested students can practice.

An increased role of Technology and artificial intelligence in the education sector with no proper infrastructure will be a complete disaster that can further deepen the urban rural digital divide.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The New Education Policy 2020 that has been proposed last year is yet to be implemented. It is an ambitious move to revive the Indian education system with a modern approach. No matter how good this may look, the implementation of any policy has its own importance. An efficient implementation can make a policy a huge success and on the other hand, if the implementation is not good, it can be a huge disaster. The review paper discusses the challenges and issues in the implementation of NEP 2020. The on-ground reality is that the most important 3 pillars- infrastructure, funding, and a well-detailed plan strategy are still missing. Many other factors have been discussed in this review paper and each factor is genuine in its own term. The analysis of the goods and bads is very important to point out. The NEP 2020 may look good on the paper but it is much more complicated in a Real-world environment.

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