



Sector Specific Report (Education) June 2021 Edition



Policies Covered In The Edition

1. New Education Policy, 2020

2. Early Childhood Care & Initiatives

3. E-Content for Children with Disabilities

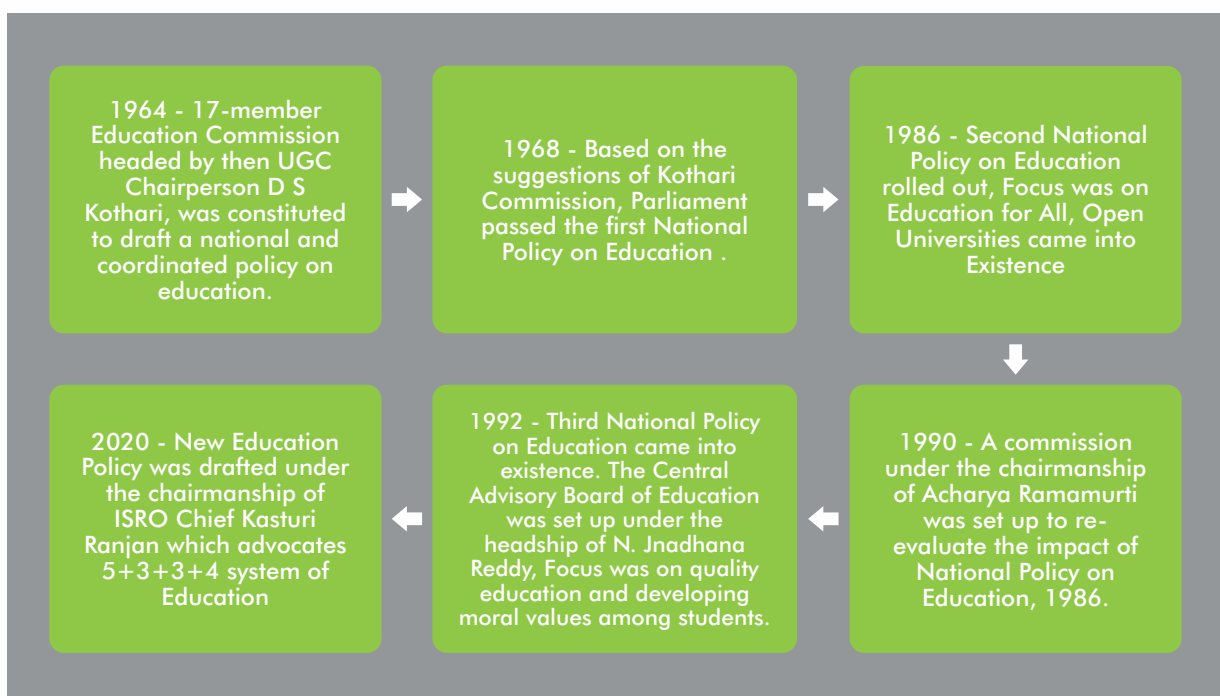
National Education Policy, 2020

A Roadmap to become global knowledge Superpower

The Central Government has started the nationwide implementation of the National Education Policy from June 2021. The policy is expected to be completely rolled out by 2035. In the first phase, the government is committed to implementing policy initiatives related to universities and colleges. To monitor the progress of these tasks, the Ministry of Education is setting up a live dashboard. The ministry will review the performance and progress of each task through this dashboard on a monthly and quarterly basis. The task involved in this first phase is generally related to the listing of ready-to-choose subject options in all undergraduate and post-graduate programs, credit bank system, and flexibility to choose multiple entry and exit options at the university level, etc. In the first year of implementation, Central Universities will work on the ministry's guidelines to complete the identified tasks followed by state universities.

Through NEP - 2020 the government is strengthening the provisions of articles 39 and 45 enshrined in the Indian Constitution as Directive Principles of State Policies. The provisions direct the government to provide equitable and accessible education for all. After 2002, since the 86th Amendment of the Indian Constitution, this also becomes a right of Indian citizens under article 21- A. The act is binding on the state to provide free and compulsory education to children aged between 6 to 14 years and is placed as a fundamental right of Indian citizens.

Timeline of Education Reforms in India

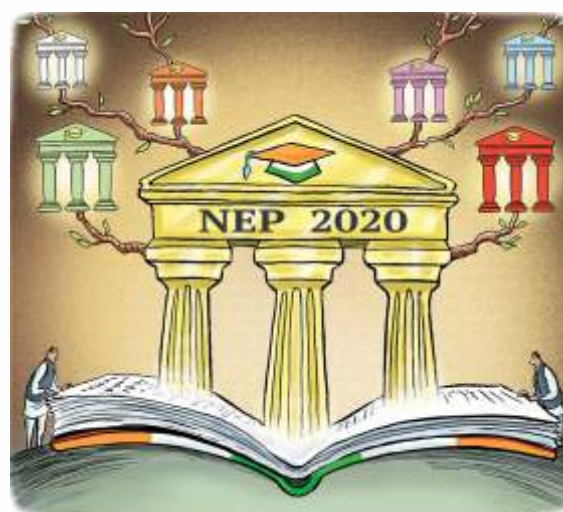


The basic 5+3+3+4 structure of the new education system defined under this policy framework is:

S. No.	Design Structure	Name of the Stage	Age Group (In Years)	Activities Involved
1.	5 Years	Foundational Stage	3 - 8	Play & activity-based learning in Anganwadi or Play School
2.	3 Years	Preparatory stage	8 - 11	Discovery Play and activity-based interactive classroom learning
3.	3 Years	Middle Stage	11 - 14	Experiential learning in basic subjects like Mathematics, Science, Arts, Humanities and Social Study
4.	4 Years	Secondary Stage	14 - 18	Critical thinking, Multidisciplinary Study, Flexibility, and Choice of Subjects

The present 10+ 2 education system needs an overall revamp to address the need of present education and competition requirements at the global level. Thus the NEP, 2020 is designed to overcome the challenges related to quality, affordability, equity, access, and accountability. The policy is going to review the overall structure of the Indian education system right from Anganwadi to higher education and incorporated early childhood care in the formal education system. This integrated approach will demand higher public investment in the education sector as earliest. The NEP also advocates formally introduce vocational and adult education with a greater focus on the use of technology. A National Education Commission and a new National Assessment Centre, “PARAKH” are also proposed in the policy framework for effective implementation and assessment.

The government is planning to achieve 100% youth and adult literacy through this first education reform of the 21st Century. This will furnish a new impetus to the adoption of regional languages at school and higher education level. The National Institute for Pali, Persian, and Prakrit will also be set up to realize the same. Thus NEP, 2020 is aligned with India's Sustainable development Agenda, 2030, and pave the way forward to transform India into a knowledge society and a global knowledge superpower in upcoming years.



Early Childhood Care & Initiatives

Wise Investment to Knowledgeable Future

The National Education Policy, 2020 puts a strong base for Early Childhood Care & Education for children below the age of 6 years. Till present 10+ 2 education system, the children below the age of 6 years are not covered under any National Policy on Education and thus do not cover under the ambit of any education reform. This is an absolute welcome step in addressing the development concerns and requirements of this vulnerable age group. The Indian Constitution also advocates this early intervention and directs the state to set up a system for **early childhood care and education for all children below 6 years of age under article 45**. But this provision was not binding on the state till date. After the implementation of NEP, 2020 this will be an integral part of the formal education system in India and thus the state is bound to provide **early education to all children of 3-6 years of age through multilevel play and learning activities**. To visualize this reform the infrastructure support will be given by Anganwadi and playschools. The mid-day meal program by the Government of India will also be going to cover the Anganwadi/preschool enrolled children.



On the basis of evidence-based scientific research, it is very evident that the human brain is developed exponentially in early childhood years, and thus to tap this advantage the investment in education at the right age is required.

The policy reform is an appreciable step as **85% of the brain development takes place in these early years** and the vulnerable and socio-economic backward section of society cannot afford early education for their children. Thus the reform is rewarding for these vulnerable children to include them in the mainstream of timely development and care. Under NEP, 2020 the objective of **quality early childhood care and education for all children is targeted to achieve by 2030**. It is expected to drastically impact the future retention and attendance rates of students at primary and secondary school levels. This will also help children to enhance their learning capabilities, cognitive skills, gross motor skills, communication, early language development, literacy, and numeracy through play and activity-based learning methods.

The responsibility to create a national curriculum and framework will be assigned to NCERT which will help to guide parents as well as educationist both in this early intervention. The concept of preparatory class or “**Balavatika**” is a welcome concept to make a child school-ready. **Basic numeracy and literacy are targeted to achieve universally by 2025 at the primary level**. The government is planning to achieve the 30:1 student-teacher ratio at the earliest and is committed to maintaining the ratio of 25:1 in the socio-economic disadvantaged areas. In this way, the continuous support and development of these vulnerable children will come into reality. “**DIKSHA**” portal will also work as an aid in the realization of this effort. The provision of health card to monitor the immunization status of each child and their health conditions at regular intervals will help India to achieve sustainable development goals by 2030.

But, this ambitious policy reform will need to be implemented effectively at each step to reap the benefits in the future. Thus the budgetary allocation is a viable concern by both central as well as state governments to mitigate the challenges as education comes under the concurrent subject list of the Indian Constitution. The implementation of the policy is dependent on multiple ministries such as the Ministry of Education, Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, and Tribal Affairs. So the effective communication and coordination among the concerned ministries is the key to a successful portrait of this applauding endeavour in early childhood care.



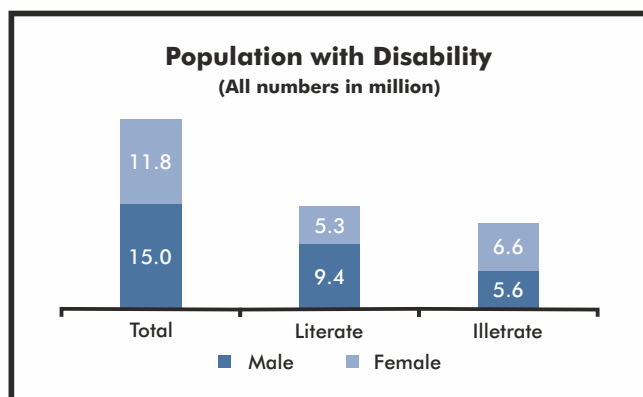
E- Content for Children with Disabilities

Universal Access to Educational Content

This month marked the approval of guidelines for developing e-content for children with disabilities by the Government of India to promote its vision of “Education for All”. It is going to visualize the insights of the “e- VIDYA” initiative launched by the government last year. Through this, a comprehensive guideline was prepared to address the special needs related to children with disabilities in the education sector. The unseen circumstances such as COVID 19 pandemic have realized the urgent need for technological intervention in the education sector to continue the schooling for all students. In this regard, a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Manoj Ahuja, chairman CBSE Board, was formed by the Ministry of Education. The committee recommended detailed provisions for creating special accessible e-content for children with disabilities.

The committee recommended the substantial use of radio and podcasts and uploading of QR-coded digital textbooks. The e-content will be available in different formats like text, video, audio, sign language to address different disabilities in a much effective way. The content will also have turn-on and turn-off features along with the different formats of ADTs. The e-learning platforms such as “Diksha” and “e-pathshala” will also comply with all the proposed technical standards in these guidelines. These contents will be enriched with access to additional information available on the internet. The guidelines approved the mandatory training of the content developers and curators to create accessible content for people with disabilities. The committee has put emphasis on the guidelines of UNICEF for creating high-quality digital content which will guide the content developers and make this process much easier.

As per the 2011 census data, the population of persons with disabilities is more than 2.2 % of the total population of India. The data shows that only 55% of divyang population is literate and trends show that the literacy rate in females is comparatively less than their male counterparts.



The rights of this vulnerable section are already guarded by the National Policy on Universal Electronic Accessibility 2013, and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016. The government has also come a long way to address the physical needs

of persons with disabilities through the Accessible India Campaign, 2015. Thus under the ambit of this policy framework, the government is going to address the technical shortcomings of the existing frameworks and requirements related to e-content creation. The policy is addressing the special needs of children with the following disabilities:

- Visual Impairment such as Blindness, Low Vision, etc.
- Hearing Impairment such as problem in hearing, deafness.
- Intellectual and mental disorders like Autism Spectrum Disorder, Chronic Neurological conditions, etc.
- Specific Learning Disabilities.
- Physical/Motor disabilities.

Some of the main features included in the guidelines have put the priority to make accessibility of this content more student-friendly. Thus the provision of marking the contents from where the student last time opened the book and the use of software to store



information such as preferences, answers to exercise questions, and layout is acknowledged. The guidelines have envisaged a fact that the maximum number of divyang children drop out of school because of the lack of accessible curriculum material. After adoption, the new textbooks in a more accessible format are expected to roll out from 2021. In this way, this policy will also help to improve the dropout rate and literacy rate of persons with disabilities in formal education system and make the vision of “Education for All” a real success.

Resources

1. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEPFinal_English_0.pdf
2. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1642049>
3. <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1706666>
4. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/CWSN_E-Content_guidelines.pdf

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Contact Details

+91-11- 45356553, 54 www.aggrp.in

+91-9810046249 info@aggrp.in

★ New Delhi ★ Mumbai ★ Hyderabad ★ Imphal

