

# Role and Importance of Revised National Education Policy (NEP) 2024 in Transforming Higher Education in India

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## ABSTRACT

The New Education Policy 2024 (NEP 2024) transforms India's education system to fulfil 21st-century needs. Based on NEP 2020, the amended policy emphasises diversity, flexibility, and skill-oriented learning. Using technology, multilingualism, critical thinking, and creativity, it redefines school and higher education. For a fast-changing global workforce, artificial intelligence, digital learning, and vocational training are crucial. Geographic, gender, and socioeconomic inequities are addressed in the policy to promote accessibility and equality. Teacher training, ongoing professional development, and creative pedagogy demonstrate its dedication to outstanding teaching. Competency-based evaluations replace rote learning with practical knowledge, according to NEP 2024. Multidisciplinary higher education, worldwide cooperation, and a strong research environment are its goals. However, budgetary restrictions and urban-rural differences make policy implementation difficult. Despite these challenges, NEP 2024 will transform Indian education and promote holistic growth. This chapter examines the policy's main characteristics, problems, and consequences to create a future-ready education system.

**Keywords:** development, education, global, knowledge, student, teacher training, system

## INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2024, building upon the 2020 policy, focuses on transforming India's education system with a strong emphasis on early childhood education, multilingualism, and competency-based learning. Key changes include restructuring the school system with a 5+3+3+4 model, promoting foundational literacy and numeracy, and shifting from rote learning to critical thinking and problem-solving.

Here's a more detailed look at the key aspects of NEP 2024:

### 1. Restructured Schooling System:

The traditional 10+2 structure is replaced by a 5+3+3+4 model, corresponding to ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18, respectively.

This model aligns with the cognitive development stages of children, aiming for a more seamless learning experience from preschool through higher secondary.

### 2. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):

The NEP emphasizes the importance of ECCE, incorporating three years of pre-school into the formal schooling system.

This focus on early childhood education aims to build foundational literacy and numeracy skills by grade 3.

### 3. Multilingualism and Mother Tongue Instruction:

NEP promotes multilingualism by encouraging the use of the mother tongue or local language as the medium of instruction at least until grade 5, according to the Federation of Industrial Education.

While not mandatory, the policy suggests using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction, aligning with the "three-language formula".

#### **4. Focus on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN):**

The NEP prioritizes the development of foundational literacy and numeracy skills, particularly for children in the early grades (up to grade 3).

According to Adda247, this focus aims to ensure that all students achieve basic literacy and numeracy before moving on to higher grades.

#### **5. Shift to Competency-Based Learning:**

The policy moves away from rote learning and emphasizes competency-based learning, focusing on students' understanding, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities.

This shift is reflected in changes to assessment patterns, with less emphasis on high-stakes exams and more focus on formative assessments that gauge real understanding, says Adda247.

#### **6. Holistic and Integrated Education:**

NEP 2024 aims to blur the lines between academic streams (arts, sciences, etc.), curricular and extra-curricular activities, and vocational and academic programs.

This approach encourages students to pursue subjects across disciplines and fosters a more well-rounded education.

#### **7. Increased Graduate Enrollment Ratio:**

The policy sets a goal to achieve a 50% graduate enrollment ratio by 2035, aiming to expand access to higher education.

#### **8. Flexible Undergraduate Programs:**

NEP 2024 introduces flexible undergraduate programs with multiple exit options and an Academic Bank of Credit, allowing students to pursue their education at their own pace and according to their needs.

#### **9. Vocational Education:**

The policy integrates vocational education from early grades, preparing students for various career paths.

#### **10. Technology Integration:**

NEP 2024 promotes the use of technology in education to enhance learning and teaching.

#### **11. Governance and Implementation:**

NEP 2024 emphasizes clear timelines, milestones, and a robust governance structure with interministerial committees and state-level task forces to ensure effective implementation.

It also focuses on training administrators and teachers to support the policy's goals.

The New Education Policy 2024, recently given the green light by the Union Cabinet, is the new horizon in the vast landscape of education in the country. As a follow-up to NEP 2020, the policy emphasizes several groundbreaking reforms that would make Indian education more wholesome, flexible, and attuned to the demands of the 21st century. Here's a detailed look at the key changes that can be expected and how they could impact the educational space.

#### **Board Examinations: Reduced Pressure, Increased Flexibility**

High-pressure board examination is mitigated in the NEP 2024 by way of allowing board exams to be taken twice a year. It is oft-said that these assessments have been instrumental in bringing down the pressure of exams. Students will, hence, have more than one opportunity to put up the best performance shown during any examination. The students will also be allowed to retain their best scores, so that one bad day does not affect their future prospects.

It also envisages a time when examinations will be taken "on demand", thereby according less importance to rote learning, assessing the student on comprehension and competence.

#### **Multidisciplinary Learning: Breaking Down Silos**

The rigid segregation of academic streams into Arts, Science, and Commerce is proposed to be demolished. Students will be free to choose subjects that cut across disciplines. This promotes an interdisciplinary approach, encouraging a more rounded education with an enhancement of skills like critical thinking and problem-solving. For instance, a student interested in physics and music can take up both the subjects. This will make his educational experience all the more enriching and personalized.

### **Language Learning: Embracing Diversity**

According to NEP 2024, two languages with at least one being an Indian language shall be compulsorily taught in Classes XI and XII. This aims to enhance linguistic diversity, and shall act as a means toward preserving the rich cultural heritage of India. It is also keyed to the broader vision of education being made more inclusive and reflective of India's multilingual reality.

### **Early Childhood Education: Starting Young**

While extending the age bracket of free and compulsory education from 3 to 18 years, NEP 2024 gives emphasis on the requirement of pre-school education. Recognizing the fact that 85 percent of the accumulated brain development of a child occurs before the child attains the age of six, three years of pre primary education is provided under the new policy. This idea is placed in a bid to set up a strong base for lifelong learning and development.

### **Vocational Education: Bridging the Skill Gap**

The NEP 2024 emphasizes vocational training starting from an early age. The policy therefore provides a wide scope for vocational learning to be integrated with the mainstream school system to ensure that skills are followed simultaneously with a general education. This approach not only makes education relevant to the job market but empowers students with a set of skills required for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

### **Teacher Training and Resources: Continuous Development**

Intending to recognize the importance of the role of a teacher in a school system, NEP 2024 has given considerable emphasis on Continuous Professional Development. Teachers will have to undergo certified courses and professional training programmes that will arm them with superior teaching skills and update them on new concepts in education that are constantly being evolved. This policy also takes upon itself the task of rationalizing the cost of textbooks so that quality education shall still be within easy reach of all students.

### **Technology in Education: Enhancing Learning**

Technology in education is revolutionizing how learning is delivered and accessed, making it more inclusive and outcome-oriented. From digital classrooms to online resources, the integration of technology is key to bridging the urban-rural divide, ensuring that even students in remote areas receive quality education. This shift aligns perfectly with the goals of the new education policy, which emphasizes the importance of using technology to create an engaging and equitable learning environment.

### **Cyber School Manager**

Cyber School Manager is committed to supporting this educational transformation. Our school management software is designed to help schools implement the new education policy effectively. Teachers can use our app to facilitate activity-oriented learning, assigning tasks and projects that align with the policy's focus on practical, real-world applications. Additionally, our admission management module, integrated with curriculum management, allows schools to streamline operations while ensuring that their teaching methods meet the objectives outlined in the policy. Cyber School Manager is here to empower educators and enhance the learning experience for students in this new era of education.

## **CRITICAL FEATURES OF NEP 2024**

### **1. New Academic Structure**

The Indian education system has been following the 10+2 system for the longest time, with a strict emphasis on the board exam. An exam-centric system, textbook-oriented teaching, and passive learning are notable aspects of the traditional education system.

Hence, revamping the academic structure is one of the first steps, which will help establish the 5+3+3+4 Education System as follows:

**Foundational Stage:** This is the first stage, which consists of five years, wherein schools will facilitate effective ECCE (early childhood care and education). Children will learn foundational numeracy and literacy skills through playful and engaging learning activities in the last two years of the stage.

**Preparatory Stage:** Teachers will employ unique instructional strategies in this stage, which includes the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. They will discover new subjects and learn actively through a hands-on approach.

**Middle Stage:** It includes the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, wherein students will gather mastery of concepts in several subjects. Furthermore, teachers will conduct various activities, allowing students to foster their thinking abilities.

**Secondary Stage:** This is the final stage of school education, wherein students will get the freedom to choose their subjects. The integration of vocational education will allow them to learn diverse skills and subjects simultaneously.

## **2. Curricular Reform**

A revamped curricular structure will align with the new academic system and serve to enhance the learning experience throughout all stages. For instance, in the preparatory stage, children will read light textbooks and learn through play-based activities.

As the students progress through the stages, they will engage in activities that will foster critical thinking and flexibility in subject choice. Also, they will be able to discover the intrinsic connection between different subjects.

Moreover, the reduction of curriculum content and emphasizing the core essentials is a notable aspect, giving space for analysis-based learning. Consequently, the content will focus on critical concepts, ideas, applications, and problem-solving.

The classroom sessions will be interactive, enabling students to brainstorm, solve problems, explore, and draw conclusions. Also, collaborating with peers on projects and assignments will improve their socio-emotional skills.

## **3. Strategic Pedagogy**

Moving beyond the constraints of conventional teaching methods and employing innovative pedagogical strategies is imperative. Therefore, the policy suggests a student-centric and inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning.

Furthermore, institutes will employ an arts-integrated pedagogical approach that will follow experiential learning mechanisms. For example, teachers can conduct poetry, drawing or painting sessions, group plays, drama, etc.

In effect, it will inculcate Indian ethos in the teaching and learning process, helping to establish a link between education and culture. Simultaneously, sports-integrated pedagogy will be a part of teaching and learning by including various sports.

Consequently, it will help to develop essential skills such as self-discipline, self-direction, self-initiative, collaboration, etc. Also, it is a great way to teach teamwork, responsibility, and citizenship. Most importantly, it motivates students to adopt fitness as a lifelong attitude, helping to achieve the goals of the Fit India Movement.

## **4. Multilingualism**

When children hear something in their native or mother tongue, they understand and respond faster to it. Therefore, NEP emphasises the utilisation of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably until Grade 8 and beyond.

Public and private schools will implement the initiative and ensure bridging the gap existing between the student's mother tongue and the teaching language. Teachers will incorporate a bilingual approach, such as using bilingual teaching-learning materials.

## **Strategic Assessments**

Summative and high-stakes examinations have been central to the traditional examination structure and are responsible for the exam-centric system. Hence, the policy aims to establish a more strategic assessment system.

It emphasises creating formative and regular assessments, helping to assess students' understanding and knowledge levels. Moreover, the examination system will undergo the following transformation:

The education boards will redesign the board exams by making them easier and more purposeful and assessing core competencies and capabilities.

Students will get two chances in a particular school year to take the board exams, helping to eliminate the high-stakes aspect.

School assessments in Grades 3, 5, and 8 will assess students' achievement of basic learning outcomes. Furthermore, these will focus on assessing core concepts and knowledge from the national and local curricula and higher-order skills.

NEP proposes setting up the National Assessment Centre and PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development).

PARAKH will serve as an authorised body that establishes norms, standards, and guidelines for assessing students

## **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NEP 2020 AND NEP 2024**

### **NEP 2020:**

#### **5+3+3+4 Structure:**

Introduced a new school structure, replacing the traditional 10+2 system, with stages focused on developmental stages.

#### **Multidisciplinary Approach:**

Encouraged students to choose subjects across different streams, breaking down rigid science/humanities divisions.

#### **Emphasis on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:**

Stressed the importance of early childhood education and foundational skills.

#### **Focus on Holistic Development:**

Aims to move away from rote learning and promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

### **NEP 2024:**

#### **Refinement and Implementation:**

NEP 2024 aims to address the challenges and ensure the effective implementation of NEP 2020.

#### **Continued Focus on Accessibility and Inclusivity:**

Stresses the importance of bridging the gap between rural and urban education and ensuring access for all.

#### **Vocational Training:**

Introduces vocational training from grade 6 onwards, with internships included.

#### **Digital Education:**

Emphasizes the use of technology for improved learning outcomes and digital literacy.

#### **Multilingualism:**

Encourages the use of regional languages in education and the development of learning materials in various languages.

#### **Flexible Assessment:**

Focuses on regular, formative assessments rather than high-stakes exams.

#### **Community Involvement:**

Increased community and stakeholder participation in educational governance.

## **CONCLUSION**

One such bold and visionary step in changing India's education system is the New Education Policy 2024. That will be more holistic, flexible, and student-centered so that it prepares them to face the challenges and seize the opportunities of the 21st century. This policy emphasizes critical thinking, imagination, and problem-solving skills instead of rote learning, sugary high stress examinations. It is in this context that NEP 2024 stands at a time when the country embarks on the road to implementing these needed reforms to make this system of education more inclusive, more equitable, and more dynamic, with India moving on to establish its rightful position as a global knowledge powerhouse.

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