



New Education Policy (2020) in India: An Overview

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Abstract:

Aims of the Study: An attempt has been made to highlight the general structure and focused areas of New Education Policy (2020) in India. The Indian government has launched the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, a comprehensive framework for transforming the education sector with a focus on inclusivity, quality, and innovation. **Purpose:** This research focused on the NEP (2020) framework in various levels of education based on learners' ages. NEP 2020 replaces the current 10+2 system with a new 5+3+3+4 school framework designed to better correspond to children's cognitive development phases. **Methods:** Descriptive survey methods and review of related literature have been used in this study. **Chief findings/thrust areas of the Study:** The areas covered under NEP (2020) are Foundation, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary phases of education. It emphasizes on reading and numeracy foundations, vocational education, teacher preparation, educational technology utilization, and multilingualism. NEP 2020 focuses on universal basic reading and numeracy by grade three. This is especially important in rural areas, where many kids struggle with basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills as a result of inadequate early childhood education and limited access to high-quality instructional materials. NEP (2020) proposes adding vocational education into the school curriculum at an early age, commencing in grade 6. NEP 2020 emphasizes the role of technology in boosting educational quality, especially in rural areas with limited resources. The policy highlights the importance of continuous professional development for teachers, especially those working in rural areas. **Comments:** NEP 2020 highlights the necessity of using one's mother tongue or local language as the medium of education until at least grade 5, ideally grade 8. It is particularly crucial for rural areas, where kids frequently experience obstacles when studying in a language.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, Structure, Focus, Vocational Education Rural Education

Introduction:

India's education system, particularly in rural areas, has long been plagued by problems such as inadequate facilities, a scarcity of trained teachers, and social disparities. With nearly 65% of India's population residing in rural areas, a strong and equitable educational system is essential. The Indian government's National schooling Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to address these concerns by restructuring the educational environment to achieve inclusivity and quality across all levels of schooling. NEP 2020 emphasizes a comprehensive, flexible, and multidisciplinary approach to education that is both student-centered and equity-oriented. One of its primary goals is to narrow the education gap between rural and urban areas by addressing the unique

challenges that rural communities face. These difficulties include inadequate infrastructure, limited access to digital resources, and a shortage of qualified teachers (Basu, 2022). The policy also recognizes the importance of local context in education, pushing for courses tailored to the cultural and economical realities of rural populations. However, adopting NEP 2020 in rural areas presents significant problems. The digital divide remains a significant barrier, particularly in remote areas with little access to technology (Kumar, 2021). Furthermore, socioeconomic factors such as poverty and illiteracy continue to restrict educational access and participation in rural areas (Singh & Sharma, 2021). Despite these restrictions, the NEP 2020 offers numerous opportunities for rural education reform. The method has the potential to transform rural education and close the educational gap between rural and urban areas by promoting community participation, localized curriculum development, and the use of technology (Verma & Gupta, 2023). This research explores the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing the NEP 2020 in rural India. The study aims to provide insights into how NEP 2020 might be used effectively to improve educational outcomes in rural areas by performing a comprehensive literature review and qualitative analysis.

Review of Literature:

Verma and Gupta (2023) underline the importance of personalized curriculum creation in the NEP 2020. They argue that courses adapted to the local socioeconomic and cultural environment can make education more relevant and appealing to rural students, resulting in higher retention rates. Patel (2022) looks into sustainable teaching approaches in rural areas, claiming that the NEP 2020 is an opportunity to develop environmentally friendly practices within the educational system. The study suggests that incorporating sustainability into the curriculum can have long-term benefits for rural communities. Basu (2022) underlines the acute shortage of skilled teachers in rural areas, noting low salary, limited professional development possibilities, and poor living conditions in rural communities. This shortage directly affects the quality of education available to rural pupils.

Significance of the Study:

This study is significant because it investigates the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing the NEP 2020 in rural India. By focusing on rural education, the study contributes to the greater topic of educational equity and development in India. The study's findings will be valuable for legislators, educators, and researchers who want to understand how NEP 2020 might be used to improve educational outcomes in rural areas.

Objectives:

- i) To know about the school education structures based on NEP 2020;
- ii) To analyse the vocational education and technology to be used in school education as per NEP (2020);
- iii) To understand the technical support to the teachers and local context of multilingualism through NEP 2020.

Methodology:

The research was carried out utilizing the document review method and a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2019). This study was carried out utilizing the documentary analysis method. Documentary research is conducted with government or personal documents as sources of information.

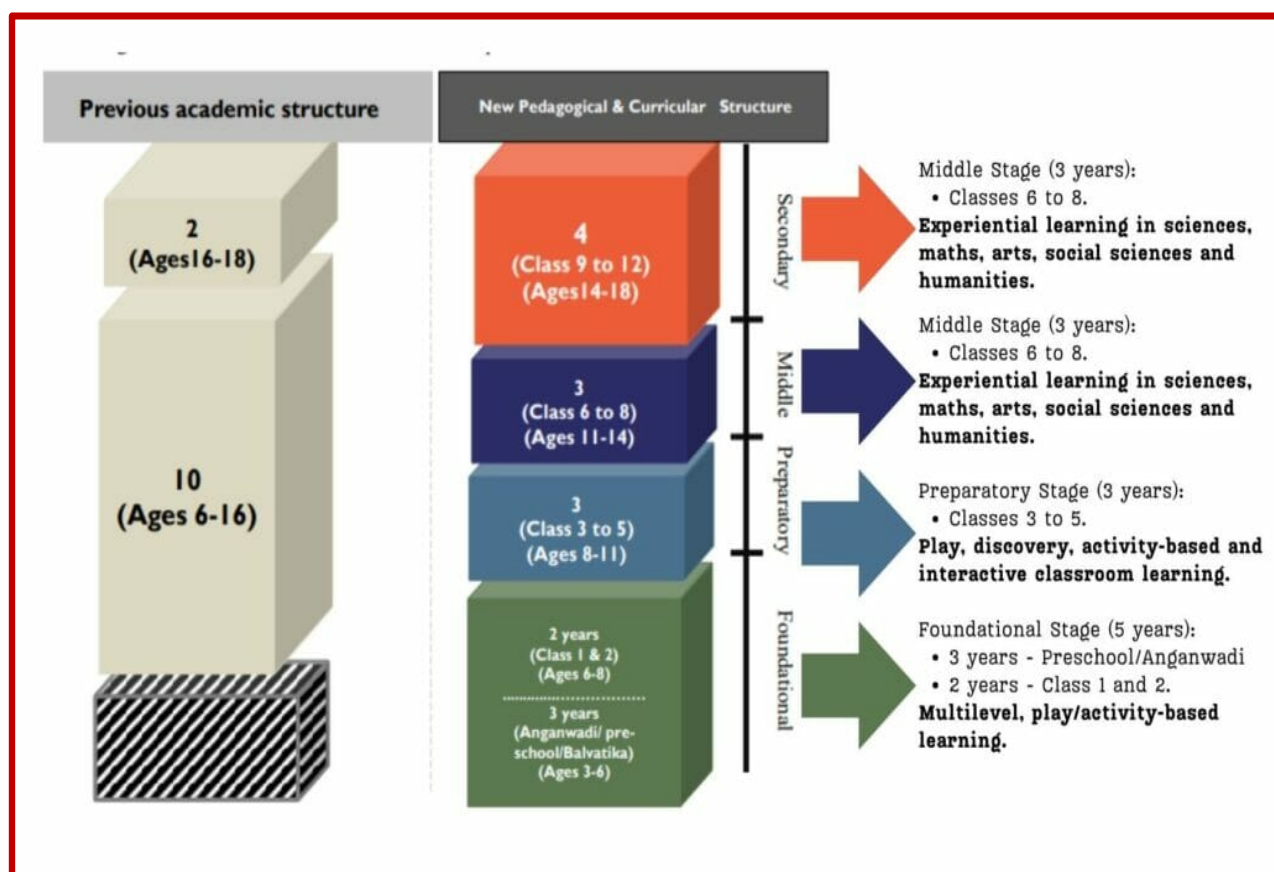
Discussion:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 proposes a comprehensive and revolutionary vision for the structure of school education in India, with a focus on addressing the unique challenges and needs of rural

communities. The strategy aims to create a more inclusive, equitable, and adaptable education system that can satisfy the diverse educational requirements of kids across the country, particularly those living in rural areas. Here's an overview of the framework of rural school education under NEP 2020:

i) 5+3+3+4 School Structure

- ❖ NEP 2020 replaces the 10+2 system with a new 5+3+3+4 school framework that aligns with children's cognitive development phases. This framework is intended to provide a more complete and child-centered approach to education, making it particularly useful in rural areas where early childhood education, core literacy, and numeracy are usually lacking.
- ❖ **Foundational Stage (5 years):** This level includes three years of pre-primary education, followed by grades one and two. The emphasis is on play, action, and discovery-based learning, as well as the acquisition of fundamental literacy and numeracy skills. This stage is essential in rural areas for overcoming learning gaps caused by limited access to high-quality early childhood education.
- ❖ **Preparatory Stage (3 years):** This stage, which runs from grades 3 to 5, offers more structured classroom instruction in subjects such as language, mathematics, science, and social studies. The program is designed to be interactive and participatory, allowing students to build critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In rural schools, this stage must be supported by improved teacher training and the availability of contextually suitable learning resources for the local area.



- ❖ **Middle Stage (3 years):** This stage spans grades 6 through 8 and stresses a multimodal approach to education, which includes the introduction of subjects such as arts, physical education, and vocational training. The curriculum is designed to be more abstract, emphasizing critical thinking and experiential learning. This level enables rural students to

pursue vocational skills that are important to the local economy, such as agriculture, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurship.

- ❖ **Secondary Stage (4 years):** This stage, which runs from grades 9 to 12, offers a flexible and multidisciplinary approach to education, allowing students to select subjects based on their interests and professional ambitions. The curriculum aims to prepare students for higher education or vocational training. In rural locations, the secondary stage is critical for bridging the gap between school education and further education or employment, particularly through career counseling and guidance.

ii. Focus on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:

The NEP 2020 focuses on universal fundamental reading and numeracy by grade three. This is especially important in rural areas, where many kids struggle with basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills as a result of inadequate early childhood education and limited access to high-quality instructional materials. The policy calls for the establishment of a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, which will prioritize improving educational quality during the foundational years, particularly in rural institutions.

iii. Vocational Education:

The proposal envisions adding vocational education into the school curriculum at an early age, commencing in grade 6. This is especially significant for rural students since it provides them with practical skills relevant to local job opportunities. NEP 2020 encourages schools to provide vocational education in areas such as agriculture, artisanal crafts, and traditional skills, which are often the bedrock of the rural economy.

iv. Use of Technology:

NEP 2020 emphasizes the role of technology in boosting educational quality, especially in rural areas with limited resources. The policy encourages the use of technology to increase access to excellent education, such as digital and online learning platforms, distance education, and educational television and radio. However, the successful implementation of this policy in rural areas would be contingent on bridging the digital divide, which would entail increasing internet connectivity and providing affordable access to digital devices.

v. Teacher Training and Support:

The policy highlights the importance of continuous professional development for teachers, especially those working in rural areas. NEP 2020 advocates for the adoption of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) and the establishment of local teacher training institutes. These programs seek to equip rural teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively deliver the new curriculum, which includes the use of technology in the classroom.

vi. Local Context and Multilingualism:

The NEP 2020 highlights the necessity of using one's mother tongue or local language as the medium of education until at least grade 5, ideally grade 8. This is especially important in rural areas, where pupils frequently struggle to study in a language other than their native tongue. The policy fosters the creation of curriculum and teaching materials that are culturally and linguistically appropriate for the local setting, hence increasing student engagement and learning outcomes.

Concluding Remarks:

The rural school education framework under NEP 2020 is designed to be adaptive, inclusive, and culturally relevant, with a strong emphasis on core literacy, vocational skills, and technology use. However, the successful adoption of this structure in rural areas will require significant expenditures in infrastructure, teacher training, and community engagement, as well as attempts to overcome the digital divide. By tackling these challenges, NEP 2020 has the potential to improve rural education and ensure that all children, regardless of geography, receive a high-quality education that prepares them for success.

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