



## Inclusive & Equitable Framework in Teacher Education: A study of NEP 2020

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### Abstract:

*This paper explores the consequences of NEP 2020 for teacher-education, emphasizing the main features of the policy meant to improve the calibre and efficacy of educators. With a focus on changing teacher-education to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, NEP 2020 represents a significant turning point in the development of India's educational system. It acknowledges teachers as the backbone of the system and their critical role in determining the future of both the country and its students. Programs for teacher-education are made to guarantee that educators are capable of providing high quality instruction and are motivated and well prepared. It also highlights the necessity of mentorship programs, in which seasoned educators assist and mentor new instructors, promoting a cooperative and encouraging work environment. Additionally, there is a need for teacher-education to be more equitable and inclusive. In order to ensure that instructors are able to address different needs of students, especially those from marginalized populations and those with disabilities, it calls for the implementation of special programs to prepare them for inclusive classrooms.*

**Keywords:** NEP 2020, Education, Teacher-Education.

### Introduction:

The term 'education' is derived from the latin word educare which means lead-out. It means bringing out the best from the child. Education is science of instruction to lead the pupils. An educational institution performs a significant function of providing learning experiences to lead their students from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. The key personnel in the institutions who play an important role to bring about this transformation are teachers. It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation.

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has defined teacher-education as a programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level. Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein.

Inclusive education is a new approach towards educating the children with disability and learning difficulties with that of normal ones within the same roof. It recognizes, identifies and fosters the unique capabilities of each student by sensitizing teachers and parents.

Education can be divided into 3 main types:

### **Formal education**

It is structured, institutionalized system of education that runs from pre-school through school, higher and professional education with a predetermined curriculum, prescribed learning outcomes and standardized evaluation. NEP 2020 reforms the formal system by restructuring the school curriculum into 5+3+3+4 design.

### **Informal education**

It refers to learning that happens naturally through life experiences, social interaction, and everyday activities without formal instruction or a structured curriculum. It can occur at home, workplace, community and through social interactions.

### **Non – formal education**

It is planned, organized learning activities outside the formal education system that are goal-oriented and often flexible but do not necessarily lead to formal certification.

The NEP 2020 has specific provisions and guidelines aimed at addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities and marginalized communities.

## **NEP 2020 Provisions for Disabilities and Marginalized Communities**

### **1. Inclusive Education Framework**

- **Universal access:** NEP 2020 emphasizes universal access to education at all levels, particularly for children from marginalized communities, including those with disabilities. The policy advocates for the removal of barriers that hinder the participation of these groups in mainstream education
- **Curriculum Adaptation:** The policy calls for curriculum and pedagogy to be flexible and inclusive, ensuring that students with disabilities can fully participate in the learning process. This includes the provision of Braille books, sign language interpreters and other assistive technologies.
- **Teacher training 2020** stresses the importance of training teachers in Inclusive Education practices. Teachers are to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to effectively teach students with diverse needs, including those from marginalized communities.

### **2. Special Education Zones (SEZs)**

- **Targeted support:** The policy proposes the creation of Special Education Zones (SEZs) in areas with a high concentration of students from marginalized communities. These zones will receive additional resources and support to improve educational outcomes.
- **Community Participation** NEP 2020 encourages greater involvement of local communities, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, in the management and governance of schools. This is aimed at ensuring that the education system is responsive to the specific needs of marginalized groups.

### **3. Scholarships and Financial support**

- **Increased Scholarships:** The policy advocated for an increase in scholarships for students from marginalized communities and those with disabilities. This includes financial assistance for higher education to ensure that financial constraints do not prevent access to quality education.

- Fee Waivers and Subsidies: the NEP 2020 proposes fee waivers and other subsidies to make education more affordable for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and for those with disabilities.

#### **4. Gender Inclusion Fund**

- Focus on Girls and Transgender Students: A Gender Inclusion Fund is established under NEP 2020 to ensure that girls and transgender students, particularly those from marginalized communities, have access to education. The fund will support initiatives aimed at reducing dropout rates and ensuring that these students complete their education.
- Safe and Inclusive School Environments: The policy emphasizes creating safe and inclusive school environments where all students, regardless of gender or disability, feel welcomed and supported.

#### **5. Use of Technology in Education**

- Assistive Technologies 2020 encourages the use of technology to assist students with disabilities. This includes the development and dissemination of digital tools, apps and content that is accessible to students with various disabilities.
- Digital Access for Marginalized Communities: The policy also emphasizes bridging the digital divide by ensuring that students from marginalized communities have access to digital learning resources through community based initiatives and public private partnerships.

#### **6. Vocational Education and Skill Development**

- Inclusion in Vocational Program's 2020 promotes the inclusion of students with disabilities and those from marginalized communities in vocational education programs. The policy advocates for skill development initiatives that are accessible and tailored to the needs of these groups.
- Career Counselling: The policy underscores the importance of career counseling services to help students from marginalized backgrounds and those with disabilities make informed decisions about their education and career paths.

#### **7. Monitoring and Accountability**

- Data Collection and Analysis 2020 calls for robust data collection and analysis to monitor the educational progress of students with disabilities and those from marginalized communities. This includes tracking enrollment, retention and learning outcomes
- Accountability Mechanisms: The policy emphasizes the need for accountability mechanisms to ensure that the provisions for Inclusive Education are effectively implemented and that schools are held accountable for their performance in educating marginalized groups.

#### **Needs of learners regarding Inclusive Education**

NEP 2020 emphasizes equitable and inclusive education so that every learner irrespective of their differences can learn effectively & with dignity. To achieve this, learners have the following key needs:

- Equal access to education
- Individualized learning support
- Trained and sensitive teachers

- Support services
- Inclusive curriculum and assessment
- Safe and supportive learning environment
- Language and communication support

## Conclusion

NEP 2020 embodies a holistic approach to Inclusive Education, anchored in key principles and supported by comprehensive implementation strategies across different educational domains. The policy emphasizes equity and accessibility, celebrating diversity and fostering empowerment and participation among learners. It underscores the importance of creating accessible learning environments and promoting universal design principles to ensure inclusivity for learners with disabilities. By focusing on universal access, inclusive pedagogy, financial support, and the use of technology, the policy aims to create an equitable and Inclusive Education system that caters to the diverse needs of all learners. Global events like the forthcoming Global Disability Summit 2025 include dedicated teacher policy discussions and signaling international momentum for inclusion. Also university programs and funding grants are expanding the diversity of teacher candidates and supporting equitable pathways into the profession.

NEP 2020 represents a significant shift in India's educational paradigm, aiming to create a more inclusive, equitable and forward-looking education system. While the policy introduces several progressive reforms, its success will largely depend on effective implementation, resource-allocation, and ongoing adaptation to emerging educational needs. The emphasis on inclusivity, technology and holistic development positions NEP 2020 as a transformation step towards enhancing the quality and accessibility of education in India.

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