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# National Education Policy

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**Why is in news?** What are the findings of the Parliament panel on NEP?

The Parliament Standing Committee on Education, headed by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Vivek Thakur, tabled a report during the special session of Parliament on the "Implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 in Higher Education."

## Findings of the report:

The report looked at the salient features of the NEP's implementation in the higher education sector and the progress made so far.

The panel met representatives of various State governments, Union Ministries, higher education institutions and other stakeholders to prepare the report.

The report noted that of the **1,043 universities functioning in the country**, 70% are under the State Act and that 94% of students are in State or private institutions with **just 6% of students in Central higher educational institutions**, stressing the importance of States in providing higher education.

## Key issues discussed:

the rigid separation of disciplines,

limited access to higher education in socio-economically disadvantaged areas,

lack of higher education institutes (HEIs) that teach in local languages,

the limited number of faculty,

lack of institutional autonomy,

lesser emphasis on research,

ineffective regulatory system and

low standards of undergraduate education.

The panel said that **by 2030, every district in the country should have at least one multidisciplinary HEI** and that the **Gross Enrolment Ratio** in higher education, including vocational education, should be **increased from 26.3% in 2018 to 50% by 2035**.

## Recommendations:

The panel asked the Union Government and the State Governments to take actions such as

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Earmarking suitable funds for the education of Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs),  
setting clear targets for higher Gross Enrolment Ratio for SEDGs,  
enhancing gender balance in admissions to HEIs,  
providing more financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs in both public and private HEIs,  
making admission processes and curriculum more inclusive,  
increasing employability potential of higher education programmes and  
for developing more degree courses taught in regional languages and bilingually.  
specific infrastructural steps to help physically challenged students and  
a strict enforcement of all no-discrimination and anti-harassment rules

The Committee appreciated the manner in which the **NEP was implemented in Jammu and Kashmir**.

It said that the Union Territory was among the **first in the country to implement NEP from the academic session 2022** in all its higher educational institutions. The panel said it witnessed a paradigm shift in the methods of teaching, leading to lifelong learning opportunities to students.

#### **About funding:**

The Committee suggested improving the effectiveness and impact of the **Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)** in funding HEIs.

It asked the HEFA to **diversify its funding sources beyond government allocations and explore partnerships** with private sector organisations, philanthropic foundations, and international financial institutions.

It recommended **reviewing and adjusting the interest rates on loans** provided by HEFA “to make them more competitive and affordable” for HEIs.

#### **Multiple Entry Multiple Exit Programme:**

The panel said that Indian institutions were **likely to face several issues** in implementing the multiple entry and multiple exit (MEME) system.

The panel said while the MEME looked like a flexible system, which was being operated by Western educational institutions effectively, it might not work well in the country.

If institutions allow MEME, it would be very **difficult for the institutions to predict how many students would exit and how many would join midway**.

Since institutions **would not know the in- and out-traffic**, it will certainly **disturb the pupil-teacher ratio**.

#### **About New Education Policy 2020:**

The National Policy on Education was **framed in 1986 and modified in 1992**. Since then several changes have taken place that calls for a revision of the Policy.

The NEP 2020 is the **first education policy of the 21st century** and replaces the thirty-four year old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986.

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Built on the foundational pillars of **Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability**, this policy is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It aims to **transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower** by making both school and college education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, suited to 21st century needs and aimed at bringing out the unique capabilities of each student.

### Salient features of NEP 2020:

#### School Education:

Ensuring **Universal Access at All Levels of schooling** from pre-primary school to Grade 12;

Ensuring quality **early childhood care** and education for all children between 3-6 years;

New Curricular and Pedagogical Structure (**5+3+3+4**);

No hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams;

Establishing **National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy**;

Emphasis on **promoting multilingualism and Indian languages**; The medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language.

Assessment reforms - Board Exams on up to two occasions during any given school year, one main examination and one for improvement, if desired;

Setting up of a **new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH** (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development);

Equitable and inclusive education - Special emphasis given on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs);

A separate **Gender Inclusion fund and Special Education Zones** for disadvantaged regions and groups;

Robust and transparent processes for recruitment of teachers and merit based performance;

Ensuring availability of all resources through school complexes and clusters;

Setting up of State School Standards Authority (SSSA);

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# MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES IS NOW **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

## FOR SCHOOLS

**From 10+2 to 5+3+3+4:** Current 10+2 structure in which policy covered schooling from Class 1 to 10 (age 6-16) and then Class 11-12 (age 16-18) gives way to 5 years of foundational education, 3 of preparatory, 3 of middle & 4 years of secondary schooling



**Multi-Stream:** Flexibility to choose subjects across streams; all subjects to be offered at two levels of proficiency

**Diluted Board:** Board exams to test only core competencies; could become modular (object and subjective) and will be offered twice a year

**Multilingual:** 3-language policy to continue with preference for local language medium of instruction till class 8



**Bag-Less Days:** School students to have 10 bag-less days in a year during which they are exposed to a vocation of choice (i.e. informal internship)



## FOR COLLEGES

**SAT-Like College Test:** National Testing Agency to conduct common college entrance exam twice a year



**4-Year Bachelor:** 4-year multi-disciplinary bachelor's programme to be preferred; mid-term dropouts to be given credit with option to complete degree after a break



**No Affiliation:** Over next 15 years colleges will be given graded autonomy to give degrees, affiliation with universities to end, so would be deemed university status

**Fee Cap:** Proposal to cap fee charged by private institutions of higher learning



**Going Global:** Top-rated global universities to be facilitated to come to India, top Indian institutions to be encouraged to go global

**TOI**

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## Higher Education:

Exposure of vocational education in school and higher education system;

Increasing **GER in higher education to 50%**; Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education with **multiple entry/exit options**;

NTA to offer **Common Entrance Exam for Admission to HEIs**; Establishment of **Academic Bank of Credit**;

Setting up of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs);

Setting up of **National Research Foundation (NRF)**; **'Light but Tight' regulation**;

Single **overarching umbrella body for promotion of higher education** sector including teacher education and excluding medical and legal education- the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)-with independent bodies for standard setting- the General Education Council; funding-Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC); accreditation- National Accreditation Council (NAC); and regulation- National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC);

Expansion of **open and distance learning** to increase Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). **Internationalization of Education**

**Professional Education** will be an **integral part** of the higher education system. Stand-alone technical universities, health science universities, legal and agricultural universities, or institutions in these or other fields, will aim to become multi-disciplinary institutions.

Teacher Education - **4-year integrated stage-specific**, subject- specific Bachelor of Education

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Establishing a **National Mission for Mentoring**.

Creation of an autonomous body, the **National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)** to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration. Appropriate integration of technology into all levels of education.

Achieving **100% youth and adult literacy**.

Multiple mechanisms with checks and balances will combat and stop the commercialization of higher education.

All education institutions will be held to **similar standards of audit and disclosure as a 'not for profit' entity**.

The Centre and the States will work together to **increase the public investment** in Education sector to reach **6% of GDP at the earliest**.

Strengthening of the **Central Advisory Board of Education** to ensure coordination to bring overall focus on quality education.

### **Outcomes of NEP 2020:**

Universalization from ECCE to Secondary Education by 2030, aligning with SDG 4

Attaining Foundational Learning & Numeracy Skills through National Mission by 2025

**100% GER** in Pre-School to Secondary Level by 2030

Bring Back 2 Cr Out of School Children

Teachers to be prepared for assessment reforms by 2023

Inclusive & Equitable Education System by 2030

Board Exams to test core concepts and application of knowledge

Every Child will come out of School adept in at least one Skill

Common Standards of Learning in Public & Private Schools

### **Criticisms of NEP 2020:**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has received mixed reactions and criticisms from various stakeholders. Critics argue that NEP 2020 **promotes privatization of education** by encouraging public-private partnerships, which may lead to the exclusion of marginalized communities from quality education.

NEP 2020 has been **criticized for centralizing power in the hands of the central government**, as it gives the central government the authority to set up a National Educational Technology Forum and a National Research Foundation.

NEP 2020 **lacks clarity on the implementation of various reforms**, and it does not provide a roadmap for the effective implementation of the policy.

Some critics have argued that NEP 2020 was developed **without adequate consultation** with all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and students.

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NEP 2020 has faced **criticism for legal complexities** arising from the coexistence of two policies, the Right to Education Act 2009 and the new policy.

### **Challenges in the implementation:**

The **sheer size and diversity of India's education sector** make implementation an uphill task.

The **internal capacities** within the education ministries (centre and states) and other regulatory bodies are inadequate to steer the magnitude of transformations envisaged in the NEP.

Due to the **diverse linguistic landscape in India**, with 22 official languages and numerous dialects, adapting curriculum materials to be **taught in the mother tongue** can be challenging.

The NEP 2020's emphasis on **digitization and e-learning** may not take into account the digital divide in India, as **only around 30% of the population can afford smartphones**, and even fewer have access to computers.

The NEP 2020 calls for a significant expansion of educational resources and facilities (6% of GDP), which may be difficult to achieve in light of competing **demands for government funding and limited resources**.