

CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN INDIA UNDER NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

The [National Educational Policy \(2020\)](#) is a policy formulated by the Government of India to reform the education system in India. It replaces the NEP 1986 in order to meet the educational requirements of the 21st Century. The NEP 2020 aims to make “India a global knowledge superpower”. It is the third major framework in the constitutional framework in the field of education. Unlike its former predecessor the [National Educational Policy \(2020\)](#) completely revamps the educational policy of 1986 and lays down a new foundational system of education among primary students by emphasising life skills along with education. The policy focuses on other aspects like multidisciplinary and holistic education, conceptual understanding, creative & critical thinking, multilingualism, and several other aspects of cognitive development.

Keywords: National Education Policy (NEP), Pedagogical, Holistic, DIKSHA, NIPUN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2020

The NEP 2020 is one of the major education frameworks after the NEP 1986. The policy aims to provide not only universal education but also quality education by imparting language and skill developments through its new course of lessons. The NEP 2020 plans to completely alter the structure of traditional education in India. It plans to transform the elementary education by introducing several reforms and changes in the policy of education. [Aithal & Aithal \(2020\)](#)

The National Educational Policy 2020 replaces the educational structure of (10+2+3) laid down by the Kothari Commission in 1964. It reintroduces a new pedagogical structure of education and curriculum in the form of (5+ 3+3+4).

Pedagogical structure	Age Group
5	3-8 years
3	8-11 years
3	11-14 years
4	14-18 years

Source NEP 2020

The National Education Policy has reconfigured the curricular and pedagogical structure of school education according to the relevant developmental needs and interests of learners at different stages of their development, corresponding to the age ranges of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years, respectively. The current curricular framework and pedagogical for school education divides the education system into three parts:

- 1) Foundational Stage
- 2) Middle Stage
- 3) Secondary Stage

One of the main shortcomings of the National Educational Policy of 1986 was the lack of effective implementation on language and skill development. The National Education Policy of 1986 laid its main focus on enrolment of children in school. It introduced schemes like Operation Blackboard in order to draw more students particularly girls into the elementary section of education. The overall objective of the NEP 1986 was to improve the structure of the educational institution and incentivise students for attending school. The policy gave more emphasis to access of education rather than quality of education. However, the primary goal of the National Educational Policy is to lay down a foundational structure for quality education. The pedagogical structure of National Education Policy 2020 tries to make education more focused on aspects like basic arts, crafts, humanities games & sports, and cultural values & ethics. It also tries to shift the educational system from theoretical learning to self-centred, discussion based, discovery-oriented while making the course enjoyable. [National Educational Policy \(2020\)](#), 9.

The new education policy has laid much emphasis on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for the development of childhood learning unlike its former iteration. The policy considers childhood as the foundation of learning as a child's cumulative brain starts developing by the age of 6. The growth of the childhood development is to be stressed in fields like cognitive development, early language & linguistic development, cultural & ethical development, artistic, numeracy and literacy development. [National Educational Policy \(2020\)](#), 7. NEP recognizes importance of foundational literacy and numerical skills in early grade. It emphasizes the need to ensure that every child attains necessary reading, writing, and other basic skills by grade 3. These foundational skills were laid down to help strengthen the primary education system and improve learning outcomes. [Awasthi \(2023\)](#)

The policy emphasizes universal access to education, including primary education. It aims to ensure that every child in the age group of 3 to 6 years has access to preschool education, and all children between 6 to 14 years are enrolled in elementary education. This focus on universal access will help in increasing

primary school enrolment rates and reducing the dropout rate. The policy also promotes a multidisciplinary approach to learning in primary education. It emphasizes integrating subjects such as arts, sports, and vocational skills along with academic subjects. This approach aims to provide a well-rounded education experience to primary school students, fostering their overall development. [Kaurav et al. \(2020\)](#)

In order to achieve the targets the NEP 2020 introduced certain programmes for children and teacher to help achieve the desired goal. [Banerjee et al. \(2021\)](#)

2. NATIONAL CURRICULAR AND PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (NCPFECCE)

The new education policy introduces a National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) for children up to the age of 8 which is developed by NCERT in two parts, namely:

- 1) A sub-framework for 0-3 year-olds
- 2) A sub-framework for 3-8 year-olds

The NCPFECCE under Early Childhood Care plans to involve local traditions in education like stories, art, poetry games and sports. The objective of this framework is to enable play based and activity based learning among children to promote joyful learning and engaging learning experience through fun activities. It aims to target the child's playful nature and convert it into learning from an early age. It touches the imagination, natural curiosity, and the imagination of the child. The framework also promotes the inclusion of parents and the community as a whole in the development of the childhood and leaning as a whole. [Gupta & Aggarwal \(2019\)](#)

The **National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education** in NEP 2020 aims to lay down a foundation for children's education ensuring an all-round development and preparing them for future learning and experiences. [Kumar \(2021\)](#)

3. NATIONAL MISSION ON FOUNDATIONAL AND LITERACY NUMERACY (NMFLN)

The NEP 2020 declared India in a state of learning crisis as over 5 crore students have not achieved foundational literacy and numeracy. The students couldn't even read basic text as well as carry out basic addition and subtraction. In order to tackle this national crisis the NEP 2020 introduced the National Mission on Foundation Literacy and Numeracy (NMFLN). The objective of the mission is to address the significant challenge of low learning levels in foundational literacy and numeracy among children in India. The top priority of this NEP is to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025. The objective of the mission is to ensure that every child achieves basic literacy and numeracy skills by the end of third grade, which NEP considers as the critical age in a child's development and learning. NMFLN recognizes that a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy is essential for further learning and crucial for a child's all round development. A number of strategies have been developed under this mission to improvise and improve the quality of education:

- 1) Developing a curriculum framework:** NMFLM plans to develop a comprehensive curriculum framework that focuses specifically on

foundational literacy and numeracy. The curriculum plans to focus on numeracy and foundational learning from an early age by emphasising on aspects such as speaking, reading, writing, counting, arithmetic and mathematical learning. This approach is to occur from preparatory till middle school to ensure that students develop the necessary foundation skill. This framework will provide guidelines for teachers to teach these skills effectively. To ensure that all students are school ready, the policy introduces an interim 3-month play-based 'school preparation module' for all Grade 1 student. This curriculum consist activities and workbooks which will focus its learning around alphabets, words, colours, shapes, and numbers. This curriculum will be developed by NCERT and SCERT. [Kumar \(2022\)](#)

- 2) **Strengthening teacher capacity:** The mission emphasizes the importance of well-trained and proficient teachers. It proposes the development of specialized training programs and resources for teachers, with a focus on foundational literacy and numeracy. This will ensure that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to support children's learning. The policy will also focus on Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) of 30:1 at each school level and a PTR of 25:1 for socially disadvantage student to ensure that students gets enough attention during their learning phase.
- 3) **Formative assessment and remediation:** The mission recognizes the importance of continuous monitoring and assessment of children's progress. It promotes the use of formative assessments to identify learning gaps and provide timely remedial support to students. [Muralidharan et al. \(2022\)](#)
- 4) **Community and parental involvement:** The mission emphasizes the role of parents and the community in supporting children's learning. It encourages the active participation of parents and community members in promoting foundational literacy and numeracy skills. [Pal & Bhutani \(2021\)](#).
- 5) **Leveraging technology and digital resources:** The mission acknowledges the potential of technology in enhancing teaching and learning. It proposes the use of digital resources and technology-based interventions to improve foundational literacy and numeracy. [Praveen & Abhishek \(2024\)](#)

Initiatives launched under National Mission on Foundation Literacy and Numeracy (NMFLN):

3.1. NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR PROFICIENCY IN READING WITH UNDERSTANDING AND NUMERACY (NIPUN BHARAT)

NIPUN Bharat is an initiative under NEP 2020. It aims to improve the foundational skills of children in reading, writing and numeracy from grades 1-3. Under NIPUN Bharat, the Government of India aims to achieve universal foundation literacy and numeracy by 2025. The initiative under NIPUN Bharat recognizes that literacy and numerical skills are crucial for a child's future growth and development. NIPUN Bharat aims to focus on early identification and intervention for students who are lagging in foundational skills. It aims to strengthen both the learning and the teaching process by providing teachers with proper training, classroom resources and assessment tools. [Rani \(2022\)](#)

3.2. FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY (FLN)

The curriculum structure of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy under NEP 2020 emphasizes on strengthening the foundational skills of children in reading, writing and numeracy. The curriculum is designed to help children develop these skills effectively and progressively from grades 1 to 3. The overview of the structure is as follows:

3.2.1. FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY

- 1) **Introduction to Phonemic Awareness:** Students will be introduced to different sounds and their corresponding letters to develop phonemic awareness, which is the ability to hear, identify and manipulate individual sounds in words.
- 2) **Letter Recognition and Formation:** Students learn to recognize and write letters of the alphabet in both uppercase and lower case.
- 3) **Word Recognition:** Students learn to recognize common words and high frequency sight words which will help them to improve their reading fluency.
- 4) **Vocabulary Development:** Students are exposed to a range of age appropriate vocabulary to build their comprehension and language skills.
- 5) **Reading Comprehension:** Students will be made to practice basic reading skills such as identifying the central idea, making predictions, and understanding simple texts.

3.3. FOUNDATIONAL NUMERACY

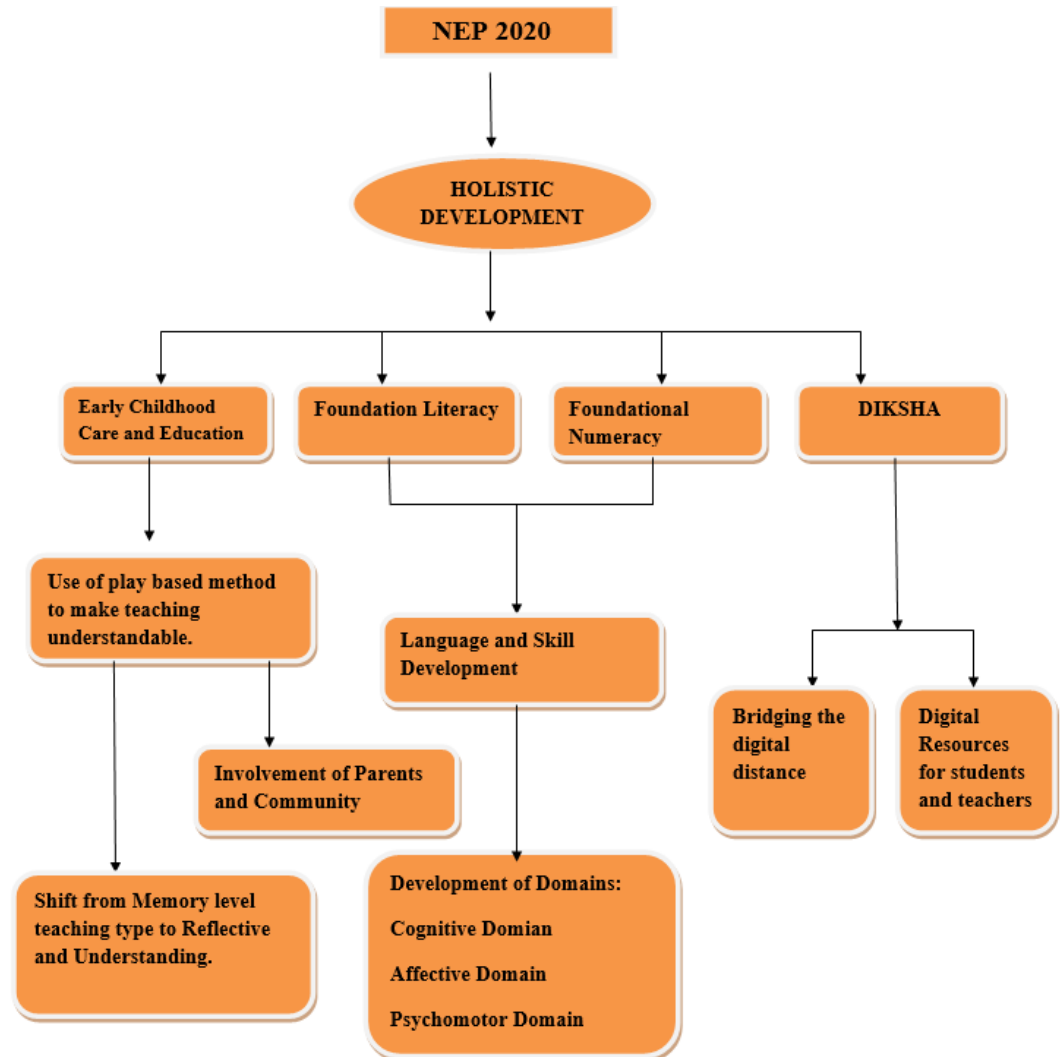
- 1) **Number Recognition and Counting:** Students learn to recognize and write numbers from 1- 100. Students will also be made to practice counting objects, understanding number patterns and sequencing.
- 2) **Basic Operations:** Students learn addition and subtraction using concrete objects, manipulative and visual aids.
- 3) **Number Sense and Place Value:** Students will be made to develop an understanding of the value of digits in a number and how they are related to reach other.
- 4) **Measurement and Geometry:** Students will be made to explore measurement concepts such as length, weight and time and learn basic geometrical shapes.
- 5) **Problem-Solving:** Students engage in hands-on activities and real life problem solving scenarios to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.

4. DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING (DIKSHA)

Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) is an online learning platform launched by Ministry of Human Resource Development. DIKSHA is an initiative under the NEP 2020. It aims to provide students and teachers with access to high- quality educational resources in multiple languages, on various subjects and for different grade levels. DIKSHA offers digital textbooks, videos, audios, interactive

modules, lesson plans, and other resources to help support learning and teaching. DIKSHA under NEP 2020 has been further enhanced to align the vision of transforming the educational system in India. It follows a holistic approach in the development of skill and experimental learning. DIKSHA aims to bridge the digital divide by ensuring equal access to quality education for all students across the country, including those in remote and undeserved areas. [Santoshi \(2021\)](#)

5. OVERVIEW OF NEP 2020



6. CHANGES IN CONTENT AND TEACHING METHODS

The new proposal of the NEP 2020 plans to change the system of teaching methods. The new structural plans of education of NEP 2020 changes the traditional system of learning. In current system of learning where education is based on Memory Level Teaching where the students learn through a process of rote memorization. This system of learning doesn't seem to provide any sort of lifelong learning skills and development. The NEP 2020 shifts the system of teaching from memory level to a Reflective Level of Teaching. In this new system of teaching the students are made to learn their lessons through activities and play alongside their

curriculum. This teaching method helps students develop their critical thinking skills and capabilities through various real life activities. It offers the students wide varieties of choice based syllabus on various subjects, activities and vocational learning for an overall holistic development. This understanding level of teaching methods ensures that a child understands the concept which will meet their learning requirement and foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Moreover when children receive instructions at an understanding level, they are more compelled to develop a strong foundation for future learning this can have a profound impact on their academic performances, problem solving abilities, critical thinking and overall intellectual development. [Saroja & Anand \(2020\)](#)

Comparison of NEP 1986 and NEP 2020 in terms of Elementary Education:

Policy and Implementations	National Educational Policy (1986)	National Educational Policy (2020)
Enrolment of Students	Heavy emphasis on enrolment of students. Schemes like Operation Blackboard, Mid-Day meal schemes and Balwadi centres were introduced.	Less emphasis on enrolment but prevents children from dropping out.
Educational Structure	(10 + 2 + 3) 10 yrs of schooling 2 years Higher Secondary 3 years of college	(5 + 3 + 3 + 4) 5 years in Foundational Stage 3 years in Preparatory Stage 3 years in Middle Stage 4 years in Secondary Stage
Facilities for children and teacher	Provides educational material for children. (Text books, globes, maps and educational charts) Training of teachers.	Provides educational material for children and teachers online. (DIKSHA) Proper training of teachers. Instruction in Mother tongue till 5 th grade.
Content and Curriculum	Discourages the use of 3 R's. (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) Use of play method. Involvement of parent and community.	Emphasis on language and skill development. Use of play method. Involvement of Parents and community in the child's education.
Policy and Target Audience	Free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14 years.	Focus on children from ages 5-8 for early development.
Objective of the policy	To spread education and increase enrolment of children in schools	To improve the outdated curriculum for development of skills alongside education.

7. CONCLUSION

The NEP 2020 has completely laid down a new foundation and structure of education in India. Unlike the NEP 1986 which focuses on the availability of education the NEP 2020 has planned to improve the overall curriculum and pedagogical structure of education. The NEP 2020 promotes more of a multidisciplinary approach rather than a theoretical one. It emphasizes on subjects like arts, sports and vocational skills along with academics. The NEP 2020 not only focuses on student's curriculum but also recognizes the role of teachers and provides several training programs, mentoring and career advancement opportunities for teachers. The focus on the teacher's training will enhance the quality of elementary education. The policy gives an emphasis on the importance of technology integration in education even at primary level. The policy encourages the use of digital resources, e-learning tools and online platforms to enhance the teacher learning process. This

technological adaptation will modernize elementary education and modernize modern education. The NEP 2020 proposes a shift towards a competency-based assessment approach in primary education. It aims to move away from the rote of traditional memorization and emphasise on other critical aspects such as critical thinking, creativity and conceptual understanding. This shift in assessment method will reduce the stress associated with exams and encourage a deep understanding of the subjects. Despite the entire proposal introduced the National Education Policy 2020 is fresh and at its development is still in the grass root levels. It might take some time to achieve its expected result. Overall, the programs and schemes of NEP 2020 will help in transforming the elementary education system and ensuring that every child receives a high quality education. [Thakur et al. \(2021\)](#), [Singh et al. \(2023\)](#), [Soni \(2022\)](#)

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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