



# National Education Policy 2020 in Higher Education

**For Prelims:** [National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#), [India's higher education system](#), [National Research Foundation](#), [PARAKH](#)

**For Mains:** Salient Features of NEP 2020, Challenges in Implementing NEP 2020.

**Source:** TH

## Why in News?

In a **special session of Parliament**, the **Parliament Standing Committee on Education**, presented a comprehensive report on the "**Implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in Higher Education.**"

- The report examined the **progress and challenges** in implementing this significant policy shift in India's higher education sector.

## What are the Major Highlights of the Report?

- **Diversity of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):**
  - The report emphasized that a **significant portion of India's higher education system operates under State Acts**, with **70% of universities falling under this category**.
  - Furthermore, **94% of students are enrolled in State or private institutions**, leaving just **6% in Central higher educational institutions**.
    - This underscores the critical role played by States in providing higher education
- **Key Issues Discussed:**
  - **Disciplinary Rigidity:** The panel raised concerns about the **rigid separation of disciplines**, which can **hinder interdisciplinary learning and innovation**.
  - **Limited Access in Disadvantaged Areas:** Access to higher education in **socio-economically disadvantaged regions** remains limited, impeding the equitable distribution of educational opportunities.
  - **Language Barriers:** There's a dearth of higher education institutes (HEIs) that **offer instruction in local languages**, potentially excluding a substantial section of the population.
  - **Faculty Shortage:** A scarcity of qualified faculty members is **plaguing the higher education sector**, adversely impacting the quality of education.
  - **Lack of Institutional Autonomy:** Many institutions face a lack of autonomy, hindering their ability to adapt and innovate.
  - **Research Emphasis:** The panel noted a diminished emphasis on research within the current higher education system.
  - **Ineffective Regulatory System:** The regulatory framework governing higher education was deemed ineffective, requiring comprehensive reform.
  - **Concern Related to Multiple Entry Multiple Exit Programme:** The panel expressed concerns that implementing the **MEME system** in Indian institutions, **while flexible in**

**theory, may not align effectively due to unpredictability** in student entry and exits. This unpredictability could **disrupt the [pupil-teacher ratio](#)**.

▪ **Recommendations:**

- **Equitable Funding:** Both the **Union and State Governments** should allocate sufficient funds to support **[Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups \(SEDGs\)](#) in higher education.**
  - Clear targets for the **[Gross Enrolment Ratio](#) should be set for SEDGs** to ensure increased access to higher education.
- **Gender Balance:** Efforts should be made to **enhance gender balance in admissions to HEIs.**
- **Inclusive Admissions and Curriculum:** Admission processes and curriculum should be made more **inclusive to cater to diverse learner needs.**
- **Regional Language Courses:** Development of **more degree courses** taught in regional languages and bilingually should be encouraged.
- **Accessibility for Physically Challenged:** Specific infrastructural steps should be taken to make higher education institutions **more accessible to physically challenged students.**
- **Anti-discrimination Measures:** Strict **enforcement of no-discrimination and anti-harassment rules** was recommended to ensure a safe and inclusive environment.
- **HEFA Diversification:** The **Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)** should **diversify its funding sources beyond government allocations.**
  - Exploration of partnerships with private sector organizations, philanthropic foundations, and international financial institutions for funding should be pursued.

## What is National Education Policy 2020?

▪ **About:**

- The **National Education Policy 2020** seeks to tackle the evolving development needs of India.
  - It calls for a **comprehensive overhaul of the education system**, including its **regulations and management**, to establish a modern system that aligns with 21st-century educational goals, including **[Sustainable Development Goal 4 \(SDG4\)](#)**, while respecting **India's cultural heritage and values.**
- It replaces the thirty-four year old **National Policy on Education, 1986, modified in 1992** (NPE 1986/92).

▪ **Salient Features:**

- **Universal Access:** NEP 2020 focuses on **universal access to school education**, including pre-school to secondary levels.
- **Early Childhood Education:** The **10+2 structure will shift to a 5+3+3+4 system**, bringing 3-6-year-olds under school curriculum, with a focus on **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).**
- **Multilingualism:** **Mother tongue or regional language will be the medium of instruction till Grade 5**, with options for Sanskrit and other languages.
  - Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized.
- **Inclusive Education:** Special emphasis on **Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)**, support for children with disabilities, and **establishment of "Bal Bhavans."**
- **Elimination of Barriers:** The policy promotes a seamless education system with **no rigid distinctions between arts and sciences**, curricular and extracurricular activities, and vocational and academic streams.
- **GER Enhancement:** Aim to increase **Gross Enrolment Ratio from 26.3% to 50% by 2035**, adding 3.5 crore new seats.
- **Research Focus:** Creation of **[National Research Foundation](#)** to boost research culture and capacity.
- **Language Preservation:** Support for Indian languages, including an **Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI)** and strengthening language departments.
- **Internationalization:** Facilitation of international collaborations and **entry of [top-ranked foreign universities](#).**
- **Funding:** Joint efforts to increase **public investment in education to 6% of GDP.**

- **PARAKH Assessment Center:** The establishment of **PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)** as a national assessment center signifies a significant step towards competency-based and holistic assessment in education.
- **Gender Inclusion Fund:** The policy introduces a **Gender Inclusion Fund**, emphasizing the importance of gender equality in education and supporting initiatives to empower disadvantaged groups.
- **Special Education Zones:** **Special Education Zones** are envisioned to address the specific needs of disadvantaged regions and groups, furthering the policy's commitment to equitable access to quality education for all.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. Which of the following provisions of the Constitution does India have a bearing on Education? (2012)**

1. Directive Principles of State Policy
2. Rural and Urban Local Bodies
3. Fifth Schedule
4. Sixth Schedule
5. Seventh Schedule

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

- (a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 3, 4 and 5 only  
(c) 1, 2 and 5 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

**Ans- (d)**

### Mains

**Q1.** How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the education system in the country? Elaborate on your answer. **(2020)**

**Q2.** Discuss the main objectives of Population Education and point out the measures to achieve them in India in detail. **(2021)**