

# Deciphering National Education Policy 2020 Vis-À-Vis School Education

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## **Abstract:**

Education is the key to success for an individual and for any nation. India has always strived towards the better education of the people and Indians have always stood ahead on world platform. The government of India has always worked towards the betterment and the development of the citizen with various policies. Since independence Indian education system has seen reforms which has helped in the development of the students. The first education policy came in 1968, second in 1986 with amendment in 1992 and now the third education policy has been introduced in 2020. In the paper we will be looking at the salient features of National Education Policy-2020 (NEP-2020) and its benefits and shortcomings.

**Keywords:** NEP 2020, Foundational Stage, Preparatory Stage, Middle Stage, Secondary Stage, STEAM education.

## **1. Introduction:**

It is said that if you have to destroy the nation then destroy its education system. If the education will not be proper then how the reforms will take place? How the development will happen? How the people be aware about their rights? Apart from knowing our own rights it is also important that we contribute towards the development of the nation. This contribution comes in the form of knowledge that we gain and share as scientists, doctors, engineers, businesspersons, teachers, soldiers, constructors, bankers etc. But the most important question arises is how to know in which way we can contribute in nations' development? Well! Its then that education comes into play. We all know that home is the first school but unfortunately not everyone gets to learn good things at home. This gap is filled by schools and teachers, they play a major role in students' life. Hence, schooling in early years become imperatively important for the social, cognitive, physical and emotional development of child. In this the education system play a major role by bringing reforms that are important for child's development. Various reforms are brought up for the betterment of the students and we keep on updating and upgrading ourselves in the process. In Indian education system these reforms came in the form of the policies.

The first education policy was implemented in 1968, in which emphasis was on compulsory education for children till 14 years of age, the second education policy came in the year 1986 which laid emphasis on removing disparity between various social groups and achieving uniformity of education across social groups. These policies were good enough to literate the society but were not competitive enough to make an individual stand on global landscape, which became important with the beginning of the globalization of the Indian economy post 1991 reforms. Hence, in 1992, the 1986 education policy was amended and named as National Programme of Action of 1992 (1992 POA). This Programme of Action laid stress on

the need for a reconstruction of the education system, giving greater attention to science and technology, the cultivation of ethical values and an in-depth relation between education and the life of the people.

With all the above reforms, still, we are not able to cater and contribute to the development of those who are skilled but need a platform to create a niche for themselves. Still our universities are not at par with the world universities and our institutions need practical approach to life. Keeping these points in mind the National Education Policy 2020 have been formulated with agenda that seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ by 2030.

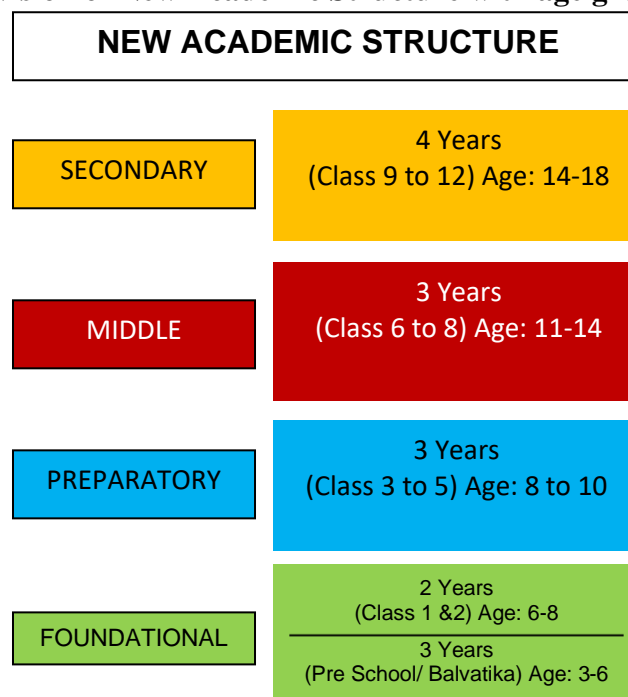
## 2. National Education Policy 2020:

The NEP 2020 has started with giving importance to the diversity by making the learning available in the local language or mother tongue. Developing the conceptual understanding and the critical thinking skills in the child will ensure his better cognitive development. Identifying unique and different abilities in each student and making them skilled accordingly will be more inclusive and reduce the number of college dropouts.

## 3. NEP 2020 - Academic Structure:

An academic structure or an educational structure of schooling years under different stages depending on the age of child and grade has been restructured into a new (5+3+3+4) design consisting of four stages as Foundational stage (5years), Preparatory stage (3years), Middle stage (3 years) and Secondary stage (4years).

**Figure 1: Division of New Academic Structure with age group and classes**



**3.1. The Foundational Stage** will cater the need for early childhood care and education (ECCE). “ECCE ideally consists of flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity-based, and inquiry-based learning, comprising of alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colours, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles and logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting and other visual art, craft, drama

and puppetry, music and movement. It also includes a focus on developing social capacities, sensitivity, good behaviour, courtesy, ethics, personal and public cleanliness, teamwork, and cooperation. The overall aim of ECCE will be to attain optimal outcomes in the domains of: physical and motor development, cognitive development, socio-emotional-ethical development, cultural/artistic development, and the development of communication and early language, literacy, and numeracy.” [NEP 2020, 1.2]. ECCE shall be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of early-childhood education institutions consisting of Standalone Anganwadis, Anganwadis co-located with primary schools and Pre-primary schools covering at least age 5 to 6 years co-located with existing primary schools or Stand-alone pre-schools - all of which would recruit workers/teachers specially trained in the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE.

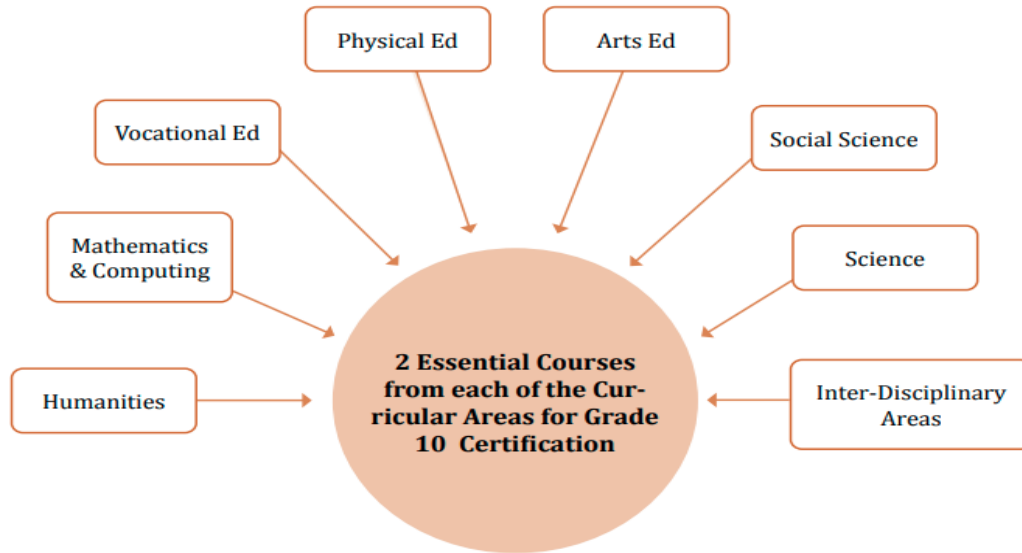
**3.2 The Preparatory Stage** will comprise three years of education, building on the play, discovery, and activity-based pedagogical and curricular style of the Foundational Stage, but also gradually beginning to incorporate textbooks as well as aspects of more formal classroom learning which will include reading, writing, speaking, science, so that students are prepared to delve deeper into learning areas through specialized subjects and subject teachers in the stages that follow.” [NEP 4.1.1]. Interactive classroom learning is also incorporated in this stage. Students are expected to develop fluency in literacy and numeracy and develop further capacities that are helpful in a systematic exploration of the natural and social worlds around them. Art integration will be an important aspect of their learning.

**3.3 The Middle Stage** will introduce subject teachers for learning and discussing. Experiential learning within each subject will also be followed. The curricular areas will expand to include the Sciences – the study of the natural world, and Social Sciences – the study of the human world, and students get exposure to Vocational Education. Based on the capacities and dispositions in the Preparatory Stage, students engage more formally with knowledge and values in the Middle Stage. Curricular Areas are dealt with as ‘forms of understanding’ with explicit engagement with paradigmatic theories and conceptual structures that frame each area. The more generic capacities (like observation and data collection) developed in the Preparatory Stage are now specialized into specific methods of inquiry that is appropriate for each form of understanding

**3.4 The Secondary Stage** will be divided into two phases, Broad Curricular Areas (e.g., Science, Social Science, Humanities) will be offered in Grade 9 and 10 to enable breadth. Disciplines (e.g., History, Physics, Language) within each Curricular Area will be offered in Grade 11 and 12 to enable depth. The students will have a choice in selecting specific areas and disciplines. They make these choices based on their interests and their future plans either in the world of work or in higher education after their school completion.

To complete Grade 10, students will complete two Essential Courses from each of the eight Curricular Areas available i.e., a total of 16 Essential Courses across two years of Grade 9 and 10. These either Curricular Areas – Humanities (that includes languages), Mathematics & Computing, Vocational Education, Physical Education, Arts, Social Science, Science, and Inter-disciplinary Areas gives the necessary breadth of understanding and capacities for the students.

**Figure 2: Course classification according to NCF 2023**



The final certification will be based on the cumulative result of each of the examinations.

Refer Fig in NCF 2023

For Grades 11 and 12 the same set of eight Curricular Areas will continue (Refer Table 1) , but choice-based courses will be designed based on the Disciplines within the Curricular Areas to ensure deeper and more rigorous engagement. Choice-based courses and their content will be designed on the basis of the specific nature of disciplines. This phase of the Secondary Stage would be divided into semesters and each choice-based course would be for a semester. Students must complete 16 choice-based courses to complete Grade 12. To ensure that the students have adequate breadth, they have to choose Disciplines from at least three Curricular Areas. To ensure depth, when they choose a Discipline, they have to complete four choice-based courses in that Discipline. For example: if a student chooses Science (Curricular Area) and Physics (Discipline) within that, she must complete all four courses in Physics. She could then choose Arts as the second Curricular Area and do four courses in Music. Mathematics could be the third Curricular Area with four courses in Mathematics. The fourth set of courses could be from one of the three Curricular Areas already chosen or from a completely different one.

**Table 1: The eight curriculum areas as defined in NCF 2023 and the subjects included.**

#	Curricular Areas	Disciplines (four courses within each discipline)
1.	Humanities	Languages, Literature, Philosophy
2.	Social Science	History, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, Economics, Sociology
3.	Science	Physics, Chemistry, Biology
4.	Mathematics & Computing	Mathematics, Computer Science, Business Mathematics
5.	Arts	Music, Dance, Theatre, Sculpture, Painting, Film appreciation, Scriptwriting, Set design
6.	Vocational education	Aligned to the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF)

7.	Sports	Courses on specific sports/games/yoga to include all aspects (e.g., coaching, financing)
8.	Inter-disciplinary Areas	Commerce, Sustainability and Climate Change (Environmental Education), Health (Public, community health), Media and Journalism, Family and Community Sciences (the current form of home science), Knowledge of India/Indian Knowledge, Traditions and Practices/Indian Knowledge Systems, Legal studies. List may be enhanced continually.

The three-language formula will be continued from the old policy but now there will be greater flexibility as no language will be imposed on any state. Three languages to be learned will be the choice of state and the students themselves. Textbooks and teaching-learning materials for mathematics and Science subject will be bilingual so that students will be able to understand these two subjects in a better way. They will learn these subjects in both languages that are English and their mother tongue.

#### 4. Challenges to be met:

When we talk about mother tongue it is not clear as whether the local dialect will be used or the language spoken in the state will be given importance. Also, how the migrant workers be dealing with this language dichotomy. Now a days, students from foundational level are using computer so will the computers which code in English, will they be changed to the mother tongue and if not, how will this discrepancy be dealt with. English is the language of communication world over and the stand of this language is not clear as how will those learning in mother tongue will be benefitted compared to English learners. At secondary level the choice of subjects has been given but if the selection of subjects doesn't meet the competitive criteria then how will it be beneficial to students. For eg. students have chosen biology and physics as two Disciplines but will those students choose the complementing Discipline and subject chemistry too, as for further competition these subjects are needed. How can that be presumed and assured? Also, its not clear as the vocational courses introduced at secondary level how will they help in career progression of the student.

#### 5. Conclusion

To conclude with we can say that NEP 2020 will definitely open door to many opportunities and possibilities. While in the process and the vision of 2030 that is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all is a road full of challenges and modifications and updates to this is warranted in coming years as the NEP 2020 comes into flow.

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