

A Study on National Education Policy 2020 for Implementation in Schools

Dr. E. Sudha Madhuri

Principal, Department of Education, St. Xavier's College of Education, Visakhapatnam, Visakhapatnam
District, A.P., India

ABSTRACT

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation. Universal high-quality education is the best way forward for developing and maximizing our country's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the society, the country, and the world. India will have the highest population of young people in the world over the next decade, and our ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them will determine the future of our country. The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved.

Keywords: Developed, Education, Learning, Literacy, Methods, Resources, Schools, Talent

INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform India's education system by focusing on quality, inclusivity, and a holistic approach to learning, with a particular emphasis on early childhood education and foundational literacy. Schools will need to adapt their curricula, pedagogy, and assessment methods to align with the NEP's vision, which includes shifting from a rote-learning approach to one that emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, and 21st-century skills.

KEY CHANGES AND IMPLEMENTATION

- **Curriculum and Pedagogy:**
The NEP 2020 promotes a shift from traditional teaching methods to more engaging and interactive approaches, such as interdisciplinary learning, project-based learning, and the use of technology.
- **Early Childhood Education:**
The policy emphasizes the importance of quality early childhood care and education for children aged 3-6, recognizing its crucial role in laying the foundation for future learning.
- **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:**
A strong focus is placed on ensuring that all children in grades 1-5 develop strong foundational literacy and numeracy skills.
- **5+3+3+4 Structure:**
The NEP introduces a new school structure (5+3+3+4), moving away from the traditional 10+2 system. This new structure includes a foundational stage (ages 3-8), preparatory stage (grades 1-5), middle stage (grades 6-8), and secondary stage (grades 9-12).
- **Multilingualism:**
The policy promotes multilingualism, encouraging the use of regional languages in the curriculum and promoting multilingual education.
- **Assessment Reforms:**
The NEP aims to reform the assessment system to move away from rote memorization and towards a more holistic and continuous evaluation of student learning.
- **Teacher Training and Development:**
The policy emphasizes the importance of well-trained and skilled teachers, requiring a minimum of four years of integrated B.Ed. for teacher recruitment.
- **Technology Integration:**
The NEP encourages the integration of technology into the classroom to enhance teaching and learning.

Challenges and Mitigating Strategies:

- **Implementation Challenges:**
Implementing the NEP 2020 will require significant changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment methods, which may present challenges for some schools.
 - **Resource Constraints:**
Ensuring that all schools have the necessary resources, including trained teachers, technology, and infrastructure, to implement the NEP 2020 effectively will require significant investment.
 - **Teacher Capacity Building:**
Providing teachers with adequate training and support to implement the new curriculum and pedagogical approaches will be crucial for the success of the NEP 2020.
 - **Student Support:**
Providing adequate support for students, particularly those who may be struggling with the new curriculum or assessment methods, will be necessary to ensure equitable outcomes.
- Mitigating Strategies:
- **Phased Implementation:**
Implementing the NEP 2020 in a phased manner, allowing schools to adapt gradually, can help minimize disruption and ensure successful implementation.
 - **Collaboration:**
Collaboration among schools, state governments, and other stakeholders is essential for successful implementation of the NEP 2020.
 - **Capacity Building:**
Providing teachers and administrators with adequate training and support is crucial for ensuring that they are equipped to implement the new policy effectively.
 - **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:**
Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the NEP 2020 is essential for identifying areas that need improvement and making adjustments as needed.

The NEP 2020 represents a significant step towards transforming India's education system. By embracing its principles and addressing the challenges it presents, schools can help ensure that all students have access to quality education that prepares them for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Education Policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities - both the 'foundational capacities' of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving - but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions. The rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought has been a guiding light for this Policy. The pursuit of knowledge (Jnan), wisdom (Pragyaa), and truth (Satya) was always considered in Indian thought and philosophy as the highest human goal. The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for the complete realization and liberation of the self. World-class institutions of ancient India such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabhi, set the highest standards of multidisciplinary teaching and research and hosted scholars and students from across backgrounds and countries. The Indian education system produced great scholars such as Charaka, Susruta, Aryabhata, Varahamihira, Bhaskaracharya, Brahmagupta, Chanakya, Chakrapani Datta, Madhava, Panini, Patanjali, Nagarjuna, Gautama, Pingala, Sankardev, Maitreyi, Gargi and Thiruvalluvar, among numerous others, who made seminal contributions to world knowledge in diverse fields such as mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical science and surgery, civil engineering, architecture, shipbuilding and navigation, yoga, fine arts, chess, and more. Indian culture and philosophy have had a strong influence on the world. These rich legacies to world heritage must not only be nurtured and preserved for posterity but also researched, enhanced, and put to new uses through our education system. The teacher must be at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system. The new education policy must help re-establish teachers, at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly shape our next generation of citizens. It must do everything to empower teachers and help them to do their job as effectively as possible.

The new education policy must help recruit the very best and brightest to enter the teaching profession at all levels, by ensuring livelihood, respect, dignity, and autonomy, while also instilling in the system basic methods of quality control and accountability. The new education policy must provide to all students, irrespective of their place of residence, a quality education system, with particular focus on historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. Education is a great leveler and is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. Initiatives must be in place to ensure that all students from such groups, despite inherent obstacles, are provided various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system. These elements must be incorporated taking into account the local and global needs of the country, and with a respect for and deference to its rich diversity and culture. Instilling knowledge of India and its varied social, cultural, and technological needs, its inimitable artistic, language, and knowledge traditions, and its strong ethics in India's young people is considered

critical for purposes of national pride, self-confidence, self-knowledge, cooperation, and integration. Previous Policies The implementation of previous policies on education has focused largely on issues of access and equity. The unfinished agenda of the National Policy on Education 1986, modified in 1992 (NPE 1986/92), is appropriately dealt with in this Policy. A major development since the last Policy of 1986/92 has been the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 which laid down legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education.

Principles of this Policy

The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and National Education Policy 2020 5 creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution. A good education institution is one in which every student feels welcomed and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, where a wide range of learning experiences are offered, and where good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students. Attaining these qualities must be the goal of every educational institution. However, at the same time, there must also be seamless integration and coordination across institutions and across all stages of education.

The fundamental principles that will guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions within it are:

- Recognizing, Identifying, And Fostering The Unique Capabilities Of Each Student, By Sensitizing Teachers As Well As Parents To Promote Each Student's Holistic Development In Both Academic And Non-Academic Spheres;
- According The Highest Priority To Achieving Foundational Literacy And Numeracy By All Students By Grade 3;
- Flexibility, So That Learners Have The Ability To Choose Their Learning Trajectories And Programmes, And Thereby Choose Their Own Paths In Life According To Their Talents And Interests;
- No Hard Separations Between Arts And Sciences, Between Curricular And Extra-Curricular Activities, Between Vocational And Academic Streams, Etc. In Order To Eliminate Harmful Hierarchies Among, And Silos Between Different Areas Of Learning;
- Multidisciplinarity And A Holistic Education Across The Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts, Humanities, And Sports For A Multidisciplinary World In Order To Ensure The Unity And Integrity Of All Knowledge;
- Emphasis On Conceptual Understanding Rather Than Rote Learning And Learning-For-Exams;
- Creativity And Critical Thinking To Encourage Logical Decision-Making And Innovation;
- Ethics And Human & Constitutional Values Like Empathy, Respect For Others, Cleanliness, Courtesy, Democratic Spirit, Spirit Of Service, Respect For Public Property, Scientific Temper, Liberty, Responsibility, Pluralism, Equality, And Justice;
- Promoting Multilingualism And The Power Of Language In Teaching And Learning;
- Life Skills Such As Communication, Cooperation, Teamwork, And Resilience;
- Focus On Regular Formative Assessment For Learning Rather Than The Summative Assessment That Encourages Today's 'Coaching Culture';
- Extensive Use Of Technology In Teaching And Learning, Removing Language Barriers, Increasing Access For Divyang Students, And Educational Planning And Management;
- Respect For Diversity And Respect For The Local Context In All Curriculum, Pedagogy, And Policy, Always Keeping In Mind That Education Is A Concurrent Subject;
- Full Equity And Inclusion As The Cornerstone Of All Educational Decisions To Ensure That All Students Are Able To Thrive In The Education System;
- Synergy In Curriculum Across All Levels Of Education From Early Childhood Care And Education To School Education To Higher Education;
- Teachers And Faculty As The Heart Of The Learning Process – Their Recruitment, Continuous Professional Development, Positive Working Environments And Service Conditions;
- A 'Light But Tight' Regulatory Framework To Ensure Integrity, Transparency, And Resource Efficiency Of The Educational System Through Audit And Public Disclosure While Encouraging Innovation And Out-Of-The-Box Ideas Through Autonomy, Good Governance, And Empowerment;
- Outstanding Research As A Corequisite For Outstanding Education And Development;
- Continuous Review Of Progress Based On Sustained Research And Regular Assessment By Educational Experts; National Education Policy 2020.
- A Rootedness And Pride In India, And Its Rich, Diverse, Ancient And Modern Culture And Knowledge Systems And Traditions;
- Education Is A Public Service; Access To Quality Education Must Be Considered A Basic Right Of Every Child;

- Substantial Investment In A Strong, Vibrant Public Education System As Well As The Encouragement And Facilitation Of True Philanthropic Private And Community Participation.

The Vision of this Policy This National Education Policy envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The Policy envisages that the curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must develop among the students a deep sense of respect towards the Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values, bonding with one's country, and a conscious awareness of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world. The vision of the Policy is to instill among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen.

School Education

This policy envisages that the extant 10+2 structure in school education will be modified with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18. Middle 10 (Ages 6-16) 2 (Ages 16-18) 2 years (Class 1 & 2) (Ages 6-8) ... 3 years (Anganwadi/ preschool/Balvatika) (Ages 3-6) 3 (Class 3 to 5) (Ages 8-11) 3 (Class 6 to 8) (Ages 11-14) 4 (Class 9 to 12) (Ages 14-18) Previous academic structure New Pedagogical & Curricular Structure Foundational Preparatory Secondary National Education Policy 2020. Currently, children in the age group of 3-6 are not covered in the 10+2 structure as Class 1 begins at age 6. In the new 5+3+3+4 structure, a strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from age 3 is also included, which is aimed at promoting better overall learning, development, and well-being.

Early Childhood Care and Education: The Foundation of Learning

1.1. Over 85% of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in the early years in order to ensure healthy brain development and growth. Presently, quality ECCE is not available to crores of young children, particularly children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Strong investment in ECCE has the potential to give all young children such access, enabling them to participate and flourish in the educational system throughout their lives. Universal provisioning of quality early childhood development, care, and education must thus be achieved as soon as possible, and no later than 2030, to ensure that all students entering Grade 1 are school ready.

1.2. 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.

1.3. A National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) for children up to the age of 8 will be developed by NCERT in two parts, namely, a sub-framework for 0-3 year-olds, and a sub-framework for 3-8 year-olds, aligned with the above guidelines, the latest research on ECCE, and national and international best practices. In particular, the numerous rich local traditions of India developed over millennia in ECCE involving art, stories, poetry, games, songs, and more, will also be suitably incorporated. The framework will serve as a guide both for parents and for early childhood care and education institutions.

1.4. The overarching goal will be to ensure universal access to high-quality ECCE across the country in a phased manner. Special attention and priority will be given to districts and locations that are particularly socio-economically disadvantaged. ECCE shall be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of early-childhood education institutions consisting of (a) standalone Anganwadis; (b) Anganwadis co-located with primary schools; (c) pre-primary schools/sections covering at least age 5 to 6 years co-located with existing primary schools; and (d) standalone pre-schools - all of which would recruit workers/teachers specially trained in the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE.

1.5. For universal access to ECCE, Anganwadi Centres will be strengthened with high-quality infrastructure, play equipment, and well-trained Anganwadi workers/teachers. Every Anganwadi will have a well-ventilated, well-

designed, child-friendly and well-constructed building with an enriched learning environment. Children in Anganwadi Centres shall take activity-filled tours - and meet the teachers and students of their local primary schools, in order to make the transition from Anganwadi Centres to primary schools a smooth one. Anganwadis shall be fully integrated into school complexes/clusters, and Anganwadi children, parents, and teachers will be invited to attend and participate in school/school complex programmes and vice versa.

1.6. It is envisaged that prior to the age of 5 every child will move to a “Preparatory Class” or “Balavatika” (that is, before Class 1), which has an ECCE-qualified teacher. The learning in the Preparatory Class shall be based primarily on play-based learning with a focus on developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities and early literacy and numeracy. The mid- National Education Policy 2020 8 day meal programme shall also be extended to the Preparatory Classes in primary schools. Health check-ups and growth monitoring that are available in the Anganwadi system shall also be made available to Preparatory Class students of Anganwadi as well as of primary schools.

1.7. To prepare an initial cadre of high-quality ECCE teachers in Anganwadis, current Anganwadi workers/teachers will be trained through a systematic effort in accordance with the curricular/pedagogical framework developed by NCERT. Anganwadi workers/teachers with qualifications of 10+2 and above shall be given a 6-month certificate programme in ECCE; and those with lower educational qualifications shall be given a one-year diploma programme covering early literacy, numeracy, and other relevant aspects of ECCE. These programmes may be run through digital/distance mode using DTH channels as well as smartphones, allowing teachers to acquire ECCE qualifications with minimal disruption to their current work. The ECCE training of Anganwadi workers/teachers will be mentored by the Cluster Resource Centres of the School Education Department which shall hold at least one monthly contact class for continuous assessment. In the longer term, State Governments shall prepare cadres of professionally qualified educators for early childhood care and education, through stage-specific professional training, mentoring mechanisms, and career mapping. Necessary facilities will also be created for the initial professional preparation of these educators and their Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

1.8. ECCE will also be introduced in Ashramshalas in tribal-dominated areas and in all formats of alternative schooling in a phased manner. The process for integration and implementation of ECCE in Ashramshalas and alternative schooling will be similar to that detailed above.

1.9. The responsibility for ECCE curriculum and pedagogy will lie with MHRD to ensure its continuity from pre-primary school through primary school, and to ensure due attention to the foundational aspects of education. The planning and implementation of early childhood care and education curriculum will be carried out jointly by the Ministries of HRD, Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW), and Tribal Affairs. A special joint task force will be constituted for continuous guidance of the smooth integration of early childhood care and education into school education.

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: An Urgent & Necessary Prerequisite to Learning

2.1. The ability to read and write, and perform basic operations with numbers, is a necessary foundation and an indispensable prerequisite for all future schooling and lifelong learning. However, various governmental, as well as non-governmental surveys, indicate that we are currently in a learning crisis: a large proportion of students currently in elementary school - estimated to be over 5 crore in number - have not attained foundational literacy and numeracy, i.e., the ability to read and comprehend basic text and the ability to carry out basic addition and subtraction with Indian numerals.

2.2. Attaining foundational literacy and numeracy for all children will thus become an urgent national mission, with immediate measures to be taken on many fronts and with clear goals that will be attained in the short term (including that every student will attain foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3). The highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025. The rest of this Policy will become relevant for our students only if this most basic learning requirement (i.e., reading, writing, and arithmetic at the foundational level) is first achieved. To this end, a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) on priority. Accordingly, all State/UT governments will immediately prepare an implementation plan for attaining universal foundational literacy and numeracy in all primary schools, identifying stage-wise targets and goals to be achieved by 2025, and closely tracking and monitoring progress of the same.

2.3. First, teacher vacancies will be filled at the earliest, in a time-bound manner - especially in disadvantaged areas and areas with large pupil-to-teacher ratios or high rates of illiteracy. Special National Education Policy 2020 9 attention will be given to employing local teachers or those with familiarity with local languages. A pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of under 30:1 will be ensured at the level of each school; areas having large numbers of socio-economically disadvantaged

students will aim for a PTR of under 25:1. Teachers will be trained, encouraged, and supported - with continuous professional development - to impart foundational literacy and numeracy.

2.4. On the curricular side, there will be an increased focus on foundational literacy and numeracy - and generally, on reading, writing, speaking, counting, arithmetic, and mathematical thinking - throughout the preparatory and middle school curriculum, with a robust system of continuous formative/adaptive assessment to track and thereby individualize and ensure each student's learning. Specific hours daily - and regular events over the year-on activities involving these subjects will be dedicated to encourage and enthuse students. Teacher education and the early grade curriculum will be redesigned to have a renewed emphasis on foundational literacy and numeracy.

2.5. Currently, with the lack of universal access to ECCE, a large proportion of children already fall behind within the first few weeks of Grade 1. Thus, to ensure that all students are school ready, an interim 3-month play-based 'school preparation module' for all Grade 1 students, consisting of activities and workbooks around the learning of alphabets, sounds, words, colours, shapes, and numbers, and involving collaborations with peers and parents, will be developed by NCERT and SCERTs.

2.6. A national repository of high-quality resources on foundational literacy and numeracy will be made available on the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA). Technological interventions to serve as aids to teachers and to help bridge any language barriers that may exist between teachers and students, will be piloted and implemented

2.7. Due to the scale of the current learning crisis, all viable methods will be explored to support teachers in the mission of attaining universal foundational literacy and numeracy. Studies around the world show one-on-one peer tutoring to be extremely effective for learning not just for the learner, but also for the tutor. Thus, peer tutoring can be taken up as a voluntary and joyful activity for fellow students under the supervision of trained teachers and by taking due care of safety aspects. Additionally, it will also be made far easier for trained volunteers - from both the local community and beyond - to participate in this large-scale mission. Every literate member of the community could commit to teaching one student/person how to read, it would change the country's landscape very quickly. States may consider establishing innovative models to foster such peer-tutoring and volunteer activities, as well as launch other programmes to support learners, in this nationwide mission to promote foundational literacy and numeracy.

2.8. Enjoyable and inspirational books for students at all levels will be developed, including through high-quality translation (technology assisted as needed) in all local and Indian languages, and will be made available extensively in both school and local public libraries. Public and school libraries will be significantly expanded to build a culture of reading across the country. Digital libraries will also be established. School libraries will be set up - particularly in villages - to serve the community during non-school hours, and book clubs may meet in public/school libraries to further facilitate and promote widespread reading. A National Book Promotion Policy will be formulated, and extensive initiatives will be undertaken to ensure the availability, accessibility, quality, and readership of books across geographies, languages, levels, and genres.

2.9. Children are unable to learn optimally when they are undernourished or unwell. Hence, the nutrition and health (including mental health) of children will be addressed, through healthy meals and the introduction of well-trained social workers, counsellors, and community involvement into the schooling system. Furthermore, research shows that the morning hours after a nutritious breakfast can be particularly productive for the study of cognitively more demanding subjects and hence these hours may be leveraged by providing a simple but energizing breakfast in addition to midday meals. In locations where hot meals are not possible, a simple but nutritious meal, e.g., groundnuts/chana mixed with jaggery and/or local fruits may be provided. All school children shall undergo regular National Education Policy 2020 10 health check-ups especially for 100% immunization in schools and health cards will be issued to monitor the same.

Curtailing Dropout Rates and Ensuring Universal Access to Education at All Levels

3.1. One of the primary goals of the schooling system must be to ensure that children are enrolled in and are attending school. Through initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (now the Samagra Shiksha) and the Right to Education Act, India has made remarkable strides in recent years in attaining near-universal enrolment in elementary education. However, the data for later grades indicates some serious issues in retaining children in the schooling system. The GER for Grades 6-8 was 90.9%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12 it was only 79.3% and 56.5%, respectively - indicating that a significant proportion of enrolled students drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8. As per the 75th round household survey by NSSO in 2017-18, the number of out of school children in the age group of 6 to 17 years is 3.22 crore. It will be a top priority to bring these children back into the educational fold as early as possible, and to prevent further students from dropping out, with a goal to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio in preschool to secondary level

by 2030. A concerted national effort will be made to ensure universal access and afford opportunity to all children of the country to obtain quality holistic education—including vocational education - from pre-school to Grade 12.

3.2. There are two overall initiatives that will be undertaken to bring children who have dropped out back to school and to prevent further children from dropping out. The first is to provide effective and sufficient infrastructure so that all students have access to safe and engaging school education at all levels from pre-primary school to Grade 12. Besides providing regular trained teachers at each stage, special care shall be taken to ensure that no school remains deficient on infrastructure support. The credibility of Government schools shall be re-established and this will be attained by upgrading and enlarging the schools that already exist, building additional quality schools in areas where they do not exist, and providing safe and practical conveyances and/or hostels, especially for the girl children, so that all children have the opportunity to attend a quality school and learn at the appropriate level. Alternative and innovative education centres will be put in place in cooperation with civil society to ensure that children of migrant labourers, and other children who are dropping out of school due to various circumstances are brought back into mainstream education.

3.3. The second is to achieve universal participation in school by carefully tracking students, as well as their learning levels, in order to ensure that they (a) are enrolled in and attending school, and (b) have suitable opportunities to catch up and re-enter school in case they have fallen behind or dropped out. For providing equitable and quality education from the Foundational Stage through Grade 12 to all children up to the age of 18, suitable facilitating systems shall be put in place. Counsellors or welltrained social workers connected to schools/school complexes and teachers will continuously work with students and their parents and will travel through and engage with communities to ensure that all school-age children are attending and learning in school. Trained and qualified social workers from civil society organizations/departments of Social Justice and Empowerment and government functionaries dealing with empowerment of Persons with Disabilities at the State and district level, could be connected to schools, through various innovative mechanisms adopted by State/UT Governments, to help in carrying out this important work.

3.4. Once infrastructure and participation are in place, ensuring quality will be the key in retention of students, so that they (particularly, girls and students from other socio-economically disadvantaged groups) do not lose interest in attending school. This will require a system of incentives for deploying teachers with knowledge of the local language to areas with high dropout rates, as well as overhauling the curriculum to make it more engaging and useful.

3.5. To facilitate learning for all students, with special emphasis on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), the scope of school education will be broadened to facilitate multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) National Education Policy 2020 11 and State Open Schools will be expanded and strengthened for meeting the learning needs of young people in India who are not able to attend a physical school. NIOS and State Open Schools will offer the following programmes in addition to the present programmes: A, B and C levels that are equivalent to Grades 3, 5, and 8 of the formal school system; secondary education programmes that are equivalent to Grades 10 and 12; vocational education courses/programmes; and adult literacy and life-enrichment programmes. States will be encouraged to develop these offerings in regional languages by establishing new/strengthening existing State Institutes of Open Schooling (SIOS).

3.6. To make it easier for both governments as well as non-governmental philanthropic organizations to build schools, to encourage local variations on account of culture, geography, and demographics, and to allow alternative models of education, the requirements for schools will be made less restrictive. The focus will be to have less emphasis on input and greater emphasis on output potential concerning desired learning outcomes. Regulations on inputs will be limited to certain areas as enumerated in Chapter 8. Other models for schools will also be piloted, such as public-philanthropic partnerships.

3.7. Efforts will be made to involve community and alumni in volunteer efforts for enhancing learning by providing at schools: one-on-one tutoring; the teaching of literacy and holding of extrahelp sessions; teaching support and guidance for educators; career guidance and mentoring to students; etc. In this regard, the support of active and healthy senior citizens, school alumni and local community members will be suitably garnered. Databases of literate volunteers, retired scientists/government/semi government employees, alumni, and educators will be created for this purpose.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Badyal, S., & Sharma, N. (2022). National Education Policy (NEP2020): Reflections, challenges and the way forward. *Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Science and English Language*.
- [2]. Dhawale, D., Borade, M., & Sharma, M. (2023). A critical study of NEP 2020: Intentions for implementation in higher education, opportunity, factors, challenges. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*.

- [3]. Venkateshwarlu, B. (2021, February). A critical study of NEP 2020: Issues, approaches, challenges, opportunities and criticism. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, 195- 196.
- [4]. D. (2023). NEP 2020 - Opportunities and challenges. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 5(3).
- [5]. Rajeev, S. (2023). An analysis of NEP 2020: Certain key issues. *Indian Journal of Information Sources and Services*.
- [6]. Govinda, R. (2020). NEP 2020: A critical examination. *Social Change*, 50, 603-607.
- [7]. Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. Government of India.