


Research Article

Revolutionizing Classroom Learning through NEP 2020: Bridging Policy and Practice in Modern Education

Indu Bala¹, Kanwalpreet Kaur², Tushar Dhiman^{3*}

¹Assistant Professor, Desh Bhagat University, Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab, India

²Research Scholar, Desh Bhagat University, Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab, India

³Research Scholar, Gurukula Kangri (Deemed to be University) Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India

Corresponding Author: Tushar Dhiman*

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant transformation in India's educational landscape, aiming to replace traditional, rote-based learning with a holistic, inclusive, and competency-driven framework. This research paper critically analyzes the policy's core provisions and examines the gap between policy intentions and classroom-level practices. Anchored in a qualitative methodology, the study draws upon extensive literature and secondary data to evaluate NEP 2020's impact on curriculum reform, teacher empowerment, inclusive education, and assessment transformation. The study identifies the major pillars of NEP 2020 competency-based learning, multilingualism, vocational training, and foundational literacy as key drivers for fostering 21st-century skills such as creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication. However, despite its forward-looking vision, the policy's implementation faces substantial challenges. These include inadequate infrastructure, the digital divide, limited teacher preparedness, and disparities in rural-urban execution. The findings highlight a critical research gap in understanding how NEP reforms are being localized and interpreted in real classrooms, particularly in under-resourced settings. Three primary research objectives guide this study: to assess the extent of pedagogical reform implementation, evaluate educator readiness, and analyze stakeholder perceptions of the policy's effectiveness. The paper proposes a conceptual framework linking policy inputs to classroom practices, implementation challenges, and student outcomes. It concludes that while NEP 2020 has the potential to revolutionize Indian education, its success hinges on context-sensitive strategies, capacity building, and collaborative governance. By bridging the divide between policy and practice, this research contributes to ongoing efforts to make Indian education more equitable, engaging, and future-ready.

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1. INTRODUCTION

India's education system stands at a transformative juncture with the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 a visionary framework that seeks to revamp the structure, pedagogy, content, and outcomes of schooling in the 21st century. Marking the first major overhaul in over three decades, the NEP 2020 proposes a fundamental shift in educational philosophy, emphasizing holistic, learner-centered, and multidisciplinary approaches (Ministry of Education, 2020). With its forward-looking vision, NEP 2020 aims to revolutionize classroom learning by making it more experiential, flexible, inquiry-driven, and rooted in Indian ethos while being globally relevant. This introduction critically explores how NEP 2020 bridges the gap between policy and practice, especially in classroom environments, and the challenges and opportunities that lie therein. The Indian school system has long been criticized for its rote-learning pedagogy, exam-centric assessments, and rigid curriculum that often stifle creativity and critical thinking (Azim Premji Foundation, 2019). NEP 2020 addresses these issues through a paradigm shift in curriculum and pedagogy by introducing the 5+3+3+4 structure, early childhood care and education (ECCE), competency-based learning, and foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) as essential goals for all children by Grade 3 (Ministry of Education, 2020). This structural transformation aligns educational stages with developmental psychology, facilitating more age-appropriate and engaging pedagogical strategies (Kaul, 2020). Central to NEP 2020 is foundational literacy and numeracy, acknowledged as the most critical prerequisite for future learning. The policy underscores the urgent need to attain universal FLN in primary schools by 2026–27 and launched the NIPUN Bharat Mission to actualize this goal (NCERT, 2021). Without ensuring FLN, the benefits of subsequent reforms in curricular and pedagogical domains may remain unrealized. As such, transforming classrooms to achieve early literacy and numeracy gains prominence in the national agenda. NEP 2020 calls for a shift from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning. This includes promoting experiential learning, project-based activities, critical thinking, and collaborative learning (Singh, 2021). The use of technology in classrooms, as suggested under the National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR) and DIKSHA platform, is aimed at supplementing traditional teaching and offering equitable access to digital learning materials (Mehta & Sreehari, 2022). However, the transition from theoretical policy to practical implementation in resource-constrained environments remains a critical challenge, especially in rural and underfunded schools. Another revolutionary aspect of NEP 2020 is the integration of vocational education, coding, and skill development in the school curriculum starting from Grade 6. This step aims to enhance employability, promote dignity of labor, and reduce the disconnect between education and employment (Kumar & Sharma, 2022). For decades, Indian classrooms have been detached from real-world skills and career readiness. The NEP thus represents a departure from elitist academic pathways toward a more inclusive and practical

educational model. Language and inclusivity form another pillar of the NEP 2020 framework. The policy promotes mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction until Grade 5 (and preferably till Grade 8), based on empirical evidence suggesting that children learn better in their home languages during early years (UNESCO, 2016). Although pedagogically sound, this recommendation faces practical constraints, such as the availability of teaching-learning material and trained educators in multiple regional languages (Pathak, 2021). Additionally, NEP 2020 introduces a new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) based on education for character building, values, and life skills. Classroom learning is expected to be not just informative but transformative, equipping learners with 21st-century competencies like creativity, digital literacy, communication, and adaptability (NCERT, 2023). This entails a fundamental reorientation in teacher training, school infrastructure, and assessment systems. The success of these reforms largely depends on the professional capacity of teachers and the autonomy granted to them in designing curricula, conducting assessments, and engaging with learners. The policy-to-practice gap, however, remains a persistent concern. While NEP 2020 is aspirational in tone and comprehensive in scope, its implementation in the Indian classroom is uneven. Factors such as teacher shortages, infrastructural deficits, digital divides, and bureaucratic inertia often hinder the translation of reform ideas into tangible outcomes (Batra, 2021). Moreover, resistance to change from traditionally trained educators and an overemphasis on board examinations continue to exert pressure on schools to maintain the status quo. Classroom-level innovations are essential to operationalize the NEP's pedagogical vision. Pilot projects such as 'Happiness Curriculum' in Delhi, 'School of Excellence' in various states, and FLN programs under Samagra Shiksha indicate that transformative practices are possible with adequate institutional support, training, and accountability mechanisms (World Bank, 2021). However, for sustained change, there must be synergy among central policy directives, state implementation plans, and grassroots-level actors such as teachers, principals, and community stakeholders. Furthermore, assessment reforms are crucial to revolutionizing learning. NEP 2020 proposes competency-based assessments that test higher-order thinking skills rather than rote memorization. The policy recommends transforming the Board exams into low-stakes, modular, and multiple-attempt formats to reduce stress and allow students to demonstrate learning across a broader spectrum of disciplines (Ministry of Education, 2020). However, the current evaluation system still remains largely static, and shifting to new models demands systemic reforms, teacher training, and digital infrastructure. NEP 2020 marks a bold step towards making Indian education more learner-centric, inclusive, and future-ready. The classroom is the primary arena where these reforms must unfold. Hence, understanding the operational dynamics, institutional readiness, stakeholder perceptions, and infrastructural capabilities at the ground level is essential. This research seeks to explore how NEP 2020's pedagogical and curricular changes are influencing

classroom practices, what barriers exist in the field, and what strategic measures can bridge the gap between national policy and practical transformation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature collectively underscores the transformative vision of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which aims to modernize and democratize the education system. A major focus of NEP 2020 is holistic development, moving away from rote memorization toward competency-based learning, experiential assessments, and 360-degree feedback mechanisms (Neena Singh et al., 2025). This shift seeks to enhance inclusivity, creativity, and lifelong learning outcomes across all levels of education. Several scholars (e.g., S. Ramesh, 2023; V. Eshwar Anand, 2024) highlight the policy's emphasis on 21st-century skills, particularly the 4Cs creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration—aimed at preparing students for global challenges. The policy also places strong emphasis on inclusive education, advocating equitable access for marginalized communities, multilingual education, and foundational literacy (Gitesh Kalita, 2024; Rajiv K. Singh & Sunita Joshi Kathuria, 2024). Teacher training and empowerment emerge as central pillars of NEP 2020. Researchers like Jaswinder (2025) and Shiv Kumar & Meenu

Mairania (2024) point to the importance of upskilling educators to meet new pedagogical standards. The introduction of vocational training and a flexible curriculum (Harjinder Kaur, 2024; Monika Sharma & Solanki, 2024) are seen as steps to bridge the gap between academia and the labor market. Innovative assessments are also central to the NEP discourse, with scholars (e.g., Jumisree Sarmah Pathak & Shiuli Maity, 2024) advocating for flexible, multidisciplinary, and real-world evaluation methods. However, many studies acknowledge implementation challenges such as the digital divide, lack of infrastructure, teacher shortages, and regional disparities (Parag R. Kawale, 2024; Jaswinder, 2025). In higher education, NEP 2020 seeks to promote research, innovation, and institutional collaboration, aiming to make India a global knowledge hub by 2047 (Meenakshi Rath, 2024). Simultaneously, it aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by pushing for inclusive, equitable, and quality education (Sasmita Panda, 2024). Ultimately, while NEP 2020 is widely regarded as a historic and visionary reform, its success hinges on effective execution, particularly in resource-constrained settings. The literature converges on the need for coordinated efforts among policymakers, educators, and institutions to bridge the gap between policy vision and classroom realities.

Table 1: Literature Review Table

Authors (Year)	Summary	Focus & Findings
Neena Singh et al. (2025)	This study examines NEP 2020's transformative approach to holistic education, critiquing traditional rote learning and assessments, and proposes competency-based assessments, formative evaluations, and 360-degree reporting to promote equity, inclusivity, and skill-oriented learning in India's education system.	NEP 2020 promotes holistic education and competency-based assessments. Challenges include resource limitations and need for capacity building.
S. Ramesh (2023)	The National Education Policy 2020 is a comprehensive roadmap for transforming India's education system, focusing on access, quality, and holistic development. It aims to reshape teaching practices, learning outcomes, and educational practices. The policy has the potential to foster a knowledge-driven society and prepare India's youth for the challenges of the 21st century.	NEP 2020 aims to revolutionize India's education system. Highlights potential to reshape teaching practices and learning outcomes.
V. Eshwar Anand (2024)	This study explores the 21st-century learning skills (4C's: creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication) in the context of India's National Education Policy 2020, highlighting its shift towards a competency-based approach and its potential to transform the Indian education system.	NEP 2020 emphasizes 21st-century skills development. Integration of 4C's transforms Indian education system.
Gitesh Kalita (2024)	The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to promote inclusive education in India by providing equitable access to quality education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups, emphasizing multilingual education, and prioritizing teacher training to bridge educational gaps and foster diversity and inclusivity.	NEP 2020 promotes inclusive education for all children. Implementation faces challenges like infrastructure and teacher training.
Rajiv K. Singh & Sunita Joshi Kathuria (2024)	This paper explores the implications of India's National Education Policy 2020 on multilingual classrooms, highlighting benefits and challenges, including teacher shortages and material development, and emphasizes the need for revised teacher education programs to address these issues effectively.	NEP 2020 promotes mother tongue instruction for better learning outcomes. Challenges include lack of qualified multilingual teachers and teaching materials.

Jaswinder (2025)	The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform India's education system through early childhood education, vocational integration, multilingualism, and technology adoption, but faces challenges including infrastructure gaps, teacher shortages, and rural access disparities.	The focus of NEP is to transform the education system of India. For development and skill enhancement of teachers.
Tanuja Bhatt (2023)	NEP 2020 emphasizes curriculum reform and pedagogical innovations in higher education to meet evolving learner and societal needs. The policy introduces key changes and challenges in curriculum development and pedagogy. The paper explores the implications of NEP 2020 through a qualitative research approach, examining case studies and identifying common themes, trends, and challenges.	Identifies themes, trends, and challenges in curriculum reform. Highlights successes and challenges in implementing NEP 2020 reforms.
Monika Sharma & Pradeep Kumar Solanki (2024)	The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to create an inclusive and flexible educational framework in India, promoting multilingualism, skill development, and critical thinking through curriculum redesign and teacher training, empowering students and teachers for the future.	NEP 2020 promotes inclusive and flexible educational frameworks. Focus on curriculum redesign, skill development, and teacher training.
Shoryaditya & Seema Jain (2024)	The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to reform India's education system by promoting flexibility, critical thinking, and innovation, addressing issues of low learning outcomes and lack of emphasis on problem-solving skills, through a comprehensive analysis of literature and data.	NEP 2020 aims to improve learning outcomes and critical thinking. It is praised as a historic educational reform initiative.
Swati Geete & Nitin Geete (2023)	NEP 2020 is a comprehensive education policy for India covering elementary to higher education and vocational training. The policy aims to transform the education system by 2021.	NEP 2020 aims to transform India's education system by 2021. Himachal Pradesh first state to implement NEP 2020.
Jayaashish Sethi (2024)	This paper examines the implications of India's National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) on education, focusing on teacher empowerment and holistic student development, aiming to transform India into a global knowledge superpower through significant educational reforms.	NEP 2020 emphasizes teacher empowerment and holistic education. Aims to enhance cognitive, emotional, and social development in students.
Jumisree Sarmah Pathak & Shiuli Maity (2024)	This study explores innovative assessment techniques aligned with India's National Education Policy-2020, advocating for multidisciplinary, competency-based, and flexible evaluations that promote critical thinking, higher-order skills, and real-world application, employing content analysis to identify experiential learning and other non-traditional methods.	Innovative assessment techniques align with NEP 2020 goals. Emphasis on experiential learning and holistic education methods.
Parag R. Kawale (2024)	The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has made significant progress in reforming India's education system, introducing flexible structures, multilingual education, and vocational training, but faces challenges including the digital divide, infrastructure constraints, and variability in state-level implementation.	NEP 2020 reforms aim for flexible, inclusive education. Challenges include digital divide and infrastructure issues.
Harjinder Kaur (2024)	NEP 2020 emphasizes skill enhancement through vocational education to bridge the gap between traditional education and the modern workforce.	Vocational education enhances skills for modern workforce. Provides roadmap for reshaping India's educational landscape.
Sasmita Panda (2024)	India's National Education Policy-2020 aims to close social disparities in education, integrating equitable access, participation, and learning outcomes, transforming the education system into a modern, progressive, and inclusive framework aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.	NEP focus on Sustainable Development Goals. NEP with inclusive growth and development.
Meenakshi Rathi (2024)	The National Education Policy 2020 aims to transform India's higher education system by 2047, emphasizing digital adoption, research, innovation, flexibility, and choice, with potential to improve access, promote economic growth, and make education more equitable and holistic.	NEP 2020 promotes research and innovation in higher education. Collaboration between universities and industry encourages economic growth.
Shiv Kumar & Meenu Mairania (2024)	The NEP 2020 relies heavily on educators to successfully execute its ambitious goals. Their	Educators face challenges and opportunities in

	contributions are crucial in implementing the policy's provisions, addressing challenges, and realizing its objectives.	NEP 2020 implementation. Their contributions are vital for achieving NEP 2020 objectives.
D. Nagaraja Kumari (2022)	The New Education Policy 2020 aims to transform India's education system, promoting quality education, creative thinking, and 21st-century skills, covering ECCE, school, higher, vocational, teacher, and adult education to make India a knowledge superpower.	NEP 2020 aims for comprehensive educational reform in India. Focus on experiential learning and 21st-century skills.
Kuldeep Singh Tomar (2024)	The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduces reforms in teacher education, emphasizing multidisciplinary, inclusive, and technology-integrated approaches, with a focus on continuous professional development and a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree to enhance India's educational landscape.	Explores NEP 2020 reforms in teacher education. Identifies opportunities and challenges in implementation.
Alok Kumar Yadav (2024)	The National Education Policy 2020, India's first major education reform in 34 years, aims to make education accessible to all through a learner-centric system incorporating technology and innovative pedagogies, while facing challenges in implementation.	NEP 2020 marks India's first significant education policy overhaul in 34 years, aiming to reshape the education system into a learner-centric, inclusive, and holistic model. While it emphasizes the integration of technology and innovative teaching methods, actual execution across diverse regions remains a key challenge.

3. Research Gap

The literature reviewed reflects a robust scholarly consensus on the transformative intent of NEP 2020, highlighting its emphasis on 21st-century skills, inclusivity, multilingualism, technology integration, and vocational training. However, a critical research gap exists in understanding the actual implementation at the classroom level. While theoretical benefits and strategic plans of NEP 2020 are well-documented, there is limited empirical evidence on how teachers, students, and school administrators experience these reforms in everyday practice. One of the most underexplored areas is the translation of NEP's pedagogical vision into classroom strategies. For example, while competency-based learning and critical thinking are promoted, it remains unclear whether teachers are adequately trained or resourced to deliver these outcomes. Existing literature (e.g., Shiv Kumar & Meenu Mairania, 2024; Singh et al., 2025) identifies teacher preparedness as a key determinant, yet fails to delve into regional, infrastructural, and attitudinal variations in policy uptake. Additionally, rural-urban disparities in access to digital tools, quality teaching staff, and institutional support systems are acknowledged but not thoroughly analyzed. This creates a gap in evaluating how equity and inclusivity, major goals of NEP 2020, are being operationalized across different educational contexts. Another major gap pertains to assessment reforms. While NEP 2020 proposes holistic evaluation systems, there is scant evidence on their adoption and effectiveness. The absence of studies on student outcomes and feedback related to these reforms indicates a pressing need for field-level validation. Moreover, the absence of longitudinal or impact-based studies means we lack a clear picture of the short-term progress and long-term sustainability of NEP 2020 reforms. Finally, much of the current literature is policy-centric, with limited voices of grassroots stakeholder's teachers, parents, and students who are key to the success of any educational reform. In sum, the gap lies in the lack of grounded, empirical studies that critically

assess how NEP 2020 is being localized, interpreted, and practiced at the classroom level across varied socio-economic and geographic contexts.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

RO1: To examine the extent to which NEP 2020's pedagogical reforms are being implemented in school classrooms, focusing on competency-based and holistic learning strategies
This objective seeks to investigate how effectively the pedagogical principles outlined in the National Education Policy 2020 are being translated into everyday classroom practices. NEP 2020 advocates a shift from rote learning to competency-based education, where learning is assessed through understanding, application, and critical thinking rather than memorization. It promotes holistic learning through project-based, experiential, and inquiry-driven approaches, integrating cognitive, emotional, and social development.

RO2: To assess the preparedness and capacity of educators in implementing NEP 2020, especially in rural and under-resourced educational environments
This objective focuses on evaluating the readiness and capacity of educator's teachers, school leaders, and support staff in executing the NEP 2020 reforms, particularly in rural and under-resourced contexts. NEP 2020 envisions teachers not merely as content deliverers but as facilitators of learning who guide students toward critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. For such a transition, teachers must be equipped with modern pedagogical knowledge, digital competencies, and awareness of inclusive teaching practices. This study will examine whether educators have received adequate pre-service and in-service training, access to digital infrastructure, curriculum support materials, and mentoring opportunities aligned with NEP's expectations.

RO3: To analyze stakeholder perceptions (teachers, students, administrators) regarding the effectiveness of NEP 2020 in enhancing learning outcomes and inclusivity

This objective aims to capture the perceptions, experiences, and attitudes of key stakeholders' teachers, students, and school administrator regarding the implementation and impact of NEP 2020. Effective policy reform is not just about design but also about how it is received and experienced by those directly involved. Stakeholder insights provide a deeper understanding of the practical relevance and on-ground impact of NEP 2020's initiatives. For instance, teachers may perceive changes as empowering or burdensome; students may experience greater engagement or confusion; and administrators may identify success stories or implementation bottlenecks. This study will

explore perceptions related to learning outcomes, inclusivity, skill development, student participation, and the use of multilingual education and vocational training. By examining these perspectives, the research will identify gaps between intended and experienced outcomes. Special focus will be placed on feedback from marginalized groups and rural communities to ensure an inclusive representation of voices. This objective is essential for evaluating whether NEP reforms are meeting their goals of equity, engagement, and relevance. The insights will contribute to evidence-based policymaking by highlighting what aspects are working, where course corrections are needed, and how stakeholder collaboration can enhance policy effectiveness.

5. A Conceptual Model of NEP 2020 Provisions

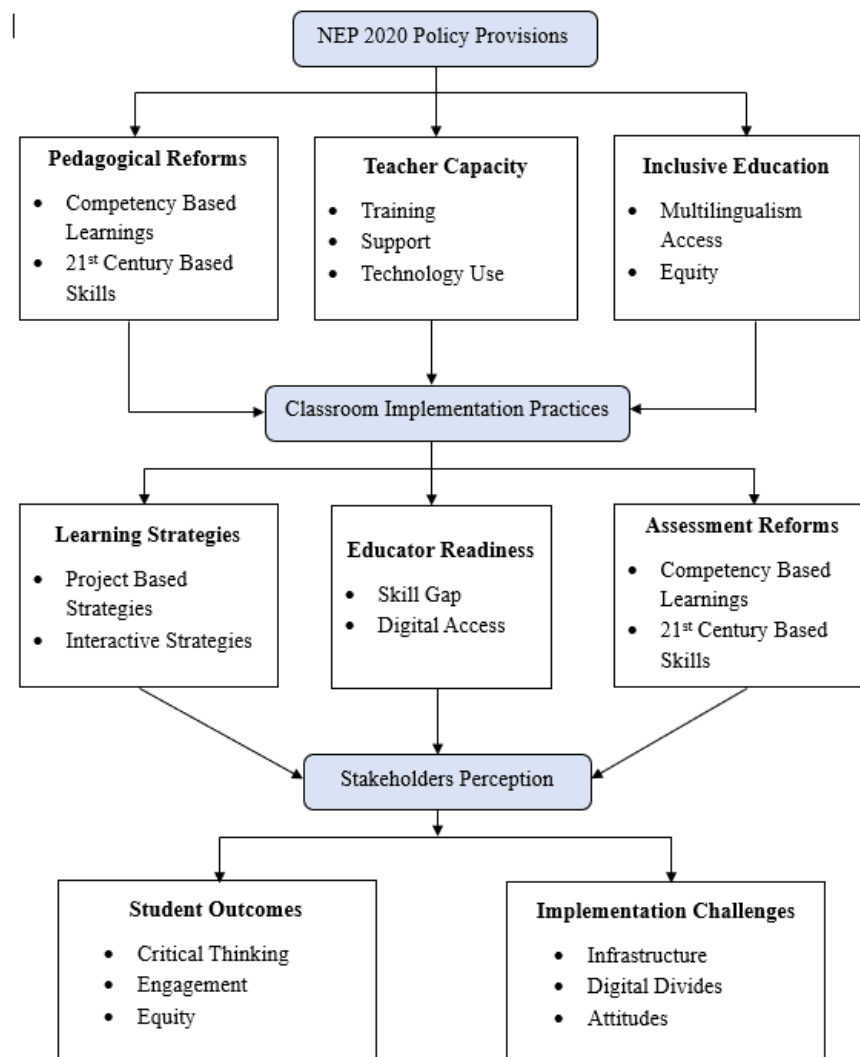


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

6. Reimagining Indian Education through NEP 2020: Advancing Holistic Learning, Inclusion, and Teacher Empowerment:

Holistic and Competency-Based Learning: A Paradigm Shift in Indian Education

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant departure from the conventional Indian education system by advocating a holistic and competency-based learning approach that addresses longstanding pedagogical challenges. Historically, Indian classrooms have been dominated by rote memorization and exam-centric evaluation methods, which have limited students' ability to engage deeply with knowledge and apply it in real-world contexts. NEP 2020 introduces a forward-thinking framework that emphasizes the acquisition of 21st-century skills creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication commonly referred to as the 4Cs (Anand, 2024). This pedagogical transformation is aimed at equipping students with the cognitive, emotional, and social competencies necessary to thrive in a rapidly evolving global landscape. The policy underscores the need to move beyond superficial learning to competency-based assessments, which evaluate students not merely on their ability to recall information but on their understanding and application of concepts in diverse settings. This approach is further enriched by the introduction of formative assessments, which serve as continuous tools for feedback and improvement, rather than one-time high-stakes examinations. The concept of 360-degree reporting, as advocated in the policy, brings a broader and more integrated evaluation of a student's progress by including inputs from teachers, peers, and self-assessments (Singh et al., 2025). This multi-dimensional method ensures that learning is not assessed in isolation but as a collaborative and developmental process. Moreover, holistic education as envisioned by NEP 2020 integrates co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, moral and ethical reasoning, environmental consciousness, and health education into the core curriculum. This reflects a systems-thinking approach to learning, which recognizes that the development of a well-rounded individual cannot be achieved through academics alone. By restructuring curriculum and assessments, NEP 2020 aims to foster intrinsic motivation, engagement, and a sense of purpose among learners. These reforms reflect global best practices in education while being tailored to the Indian socio-cultural context. However, this shift also calls for significant changes in teaching methods, educational materials, and school-level governance areas that require sustained institutional support and reform.

Inclusive Education and the Promise of Equity

One of the most transformative aspects of NEP 2020 lies in its strong commitment to inclusive education, aimed at making quality learning experiences accessible to every child regardless of their socio-economic background, gender, or physical ability. The policy acknowledges that India's diversity demands an educational framework that not only tolerates differences but actively celebrates and accommodates them. As Kalita (2024) notes, NEP 2020 seeks to dismantle barriers to education by

prioritizing interventions for socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs), including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, girls, differently-abled students, and rural populations. These provisions are aligned with both national goals of social justice and international frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education for all. A key strategy to promote inclusivity under NEP 2020 is the promotion of multilingual education. Recognizing the cognitive and pedagogical advantages of learning in one's mother tongue, the policy recommends the use of regional languages as the medium of instruction at least until Grade 5 and preferably up to Grade 8 (Singh & Kathuria, 2024). This initiative aims to deepen students' comprehension, critical thinking abilities, and connection with their cultural roots. Moreover, multilingual education is expected to reduce the alienation and drop-out rates often seen in children who are prematurely exposed to unfamiliar languages in formal education systems. However, the implementation of this vision faces practical challenges, including the shortage of qualified multilingual teachers, development of region-specific learning materials, and the lack of consensus among state governments and stakeholders regarding language hierarchy and policy. Furthermore, NEP 2020 seeks to improve inclusivity by developing gender-sensitive and disability-friendly educational environments. Infrastructure upgrades such as ramps, separate toilets for girls, provision of learning aids, and teacher sensitization programs are some of the measures outlined to promote universal access and retention. Special efforts are recommended for the inclusion of children with disabilities through individualized support, assistive technologies, and professional development for educators. Nevertheless, bridging the gap between policy ambition and ground-level implementation remains a formidable task. Many rural and government schools in India still lack basic facilities, and systemic inequities often result in lower quality of education for disadvantaged children. Hence, while the policy is aspirational and progressive, it will require multi-stakeholder collaboration, financial investment, and accountability frameworks to transform inclusive ideals into classroom realities.

Teacher Empowerment and Implementation Challenges

Teachers are the cornerstone of any educational reform, and NEP 2020 rightly recognizes their critical role in actualizing its ambitious goals. The policy emphasizes the professional empowerment, training, and continuous development of teachers to enable them to adopt and adapt to new teaching-learning paradigms (Ramesh, 2023). It calls for substantial reform in teacher education programs, including the rollout of a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree, enhancement of pedagogical content knowledge, and exposure to digital technologies. Teachers are also expected to serve as facilitators of learning rather than mere transmitters of content, shifting the classroom environment to one of active inquiry, dialogue, and creativity. Kalita (2024) further asserts that building teacher capacity is central to reducing learning gaps, promoting inclusive

education, and enhancing student engagement. Despite the focus on teacher empowerment, NEP 2020's successful implementation is hindered by a range of systemic and infrastructural challenges. Inadequate access to quality teacher training, particularly in rural and government schools, remains a critical bottleneck. Many teachers report feeling underprepared to handle competency-based assessments, integrate technology into pedagogy, or manage multilingual and inclusive classrooms. These issues are compounded by the persistent digital divide, which became starkly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students and educators in underserved regions struggle with poor connectivity, lack of digital devices, and insufficient digital literacy factors that seriously threaten the equitable implementation of technology-driven reforms. Infrastructure is another pressing concern. The availability of smart classrooms, teaching aids, and learning resources varies widely across states and between urban and rural institutions. Moreover, large class sizes, teacher shortages, and administrative burdens further dilute the effectiveness of pedagogical innovations. In many schools, especially in economically weaker regions, the primary concern remains access rather than reform. Without addressing these foundational gaps, the shift toward advanced teaching practices and personalized learning models may remain out of reach for a significant portion of India's student population. To bridge the gap between policy and practice, it is imperative that implementation frameworks are locally contextualized and supported by robust monitoring systems. Collaborative partnerships between governments, educators, civil society, and private stakeholders will be essential. Ultimately, while NEP 2020 presents a bold and progressive blueprint for reimagining education in India, its true success will depend on ground-level execution, sustained political will, and an unwavering focus on equity, capacity-building, and innovation.

7. DISCUSSION

The implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a critical moment in India's educational transformation. As highlighted in the literature and findings, the policy introduces a paradigm shift from rote-based, exam-oriented instruction to a more learner-centric, competency-based, and inclusive education system. While the vision is both progressive and comprehensive, its realization remains highly dependent on context-specific factors such as institutional readiness, teacher capacity, and infrastructural support. A significant insight emerging from the analysis is the uneven pace and depth of implementation across regions. Urban schools with access to better infrastructure, trained faculty, and digital tools are more likely to adopt NEP's reforms effectively, whereas rural and under-resourced schools struggle to keep pace. This disparity underscores the importance of localized strategies and targeted investments to bridge the digital and pedagogical divide. Furthermore, while the policy emphasizes holistic and 21st-century skill development, teachers often lack adequate training or confidence to shift to inquiry-based and interactive methodologies. Many continue to teach in traditional

formats due to habit, systemic inertia, or lack of support. The emphasis on inclusivity and multilingual education is commendable, yet practical challenges such as a lack of multilingual resources and trained personnel persist. There is also a need to reimagine teacher education and in-service training to align with NEP's expectations. Stakeholder engagement including voices of students, teachers, and parents emerged as a critical yet underutilized factor in implementation efforts. The discussion confirms that NEP 2020 provides a robust foundation for educational reform, but its effectiveness will largely depend on how well policies are translated into practice at the grassroots level.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a groundbreaking reform aimed at reimagining education in India to meet the needs of a rapidly changing global landscape. By promoting holistic learning, competency-based assessments, inclusivity, teacher empowerment, and multilingual education, NEP 2020 lays the groundwork for an education system that is student-focused, equitable, and future-ready. The policy's emphasis on developing 21st-century skills, integrating technology in pedagogy, and prioritizing foundational literacy and numeracy presents a much-needed transformation from the outdated, exam-centric approaches that have historically characterized Indian education. However, despite the aspirational goals, the actual implementation reveals significant gaps between policy intent and classroom practice. These include a lack of teacher preparedness, infrastructural deficits, digital inequalities, and insufficient pedagogical support particularly in rural and underserved regions. To bridge these gaps, there is a pressing need for context-specific implementation models, strengthened teacher training programs, and improved monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It is equally vital to ensure adequate funding, institutional autonomy, and active collaboration among central and state governments, educators, and civil society. Only through coordinated efforts can NEP's transformative vision be fully realized. Ultimately, NEP 2020 offers not just a policy roadmap but a national commitment to building a knowledge society rooted in equity, innovation, and lifelong learning. Its success lies in consistent, inclusive, and sustained implementation that empowers every student and educator in the Indian education ecosystem.

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Mr. Tushar Dhiman pursued Ph.D. from Faculty of Management Studies, Gurukula Kangri Deemed to be University, Haridwar. He has done his graduation B.Com., post-graduation M.Com. and done B.Ed. His interest areas include Financial Accounting, Economics, Business Studies, E-Commerce, Supply Chain Management etc. Mr. Dhiman also participated in 50+ national/international level workshops and presented papers in 15+ national conferences and 10+ international conferences. The topic of the thesis is based on supply chain dynamics related to DPI and MMC.