

Educational Policies in Transition: Reforms and Future Pathways

Dr. Anupam Bansal

Associate Professor KIIT College of Education, Gurugram

Abstract— India has the largest education system, as millions of people avail the benefit of our education system globally. Even after Independence India's Education system continues to face many challenges that hinders its effectiveness and inclusivity regardless of various efforts made on policies and reforms (Tilak, 2018). Major issues including stagnation and retention in the schools due to many reasons like shortage of good teachers, improper infrastructure, poor quality of Education, outdated curriculum, lack of sufficient government funding (Kingdon, 2020). Our education system is mainly focused on rote learning and theoretical knowledge that means heavily examination based which is lacking in practical skills and critical thinking (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011). Students encounter enormous academic pressure and unhealthy competition that leads to narrow meaning of success. Also, they feel stressed from expectations of the society; secondly, there is imbalance between the rural and urban areas in terms of accessibility and affordability which supplements and deepens the educational inequalities (ASER, 2022). Even though there are many government schemes like Mid-day Meal (1995), Sarav Siksha Abhiyan SSA (2001) & Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (2009) have improved access and enrolment (GOI, 2021), but no change in the learning outcomes. The RTE (Right to Education) Act (2009) placed the foundation for compulsory Elementary Education and improve access in secondary and inclusive education, but its implementation faces many challenges (UNESCO, 2021). However, NEP-2020 (National Education Policy-2020) signifies a substantial shift towards holistic, student-centered learning (MHRD, 2020). NEP-2020 accentuates foundation, preparatory, middle and secondary stages which emphasises early childhood care, foundation literacy, multidisciplinary education, Vocational training and give various choices in subjects. Government must have strengthened the reforms of NEP-2020, increases the funds in education and shifts Education system from memorisation to critical thinking and skill development for the better future of the country and significant improvement in education system. The objective of the paper is systematically and critically studying the determined challenges facing by education system such

as accessibility and affordability issues, also assess the previous and ongoing Government initiatives. It further aims to analyse the education reforms shift by the NEP-2020 responding to the contemporary challenges of education.

Index Terms— National Education Policy 2020, educational reform, Government Initiatives, rote learning, teacher shortage, educational inequality

I. INTRODUCTION

With more than 260 million pupils from an extensive range of socioeconomic and terrestrial experiences, World's largest educational systems is Indian educational system (MHRD, 2020). Education is not only a fundamental right but also a key factor in social justice and economic development, according to Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. Despite this, the industry finds it difficult to provide one and all with high-quality, thoughtful edification. The country's education system is vibrant to defining its socioeconomic destiny, because of millions of students engaged in primary, secondary, and university education. However, the system still faces enduring issues that impair its efficacy, quality, and inclusion despite a overabundance of policies and revisions throughout the decades. These problems incorporate firm programmes, a lack of accomplished educators, and insufficient structure and an overemphasis on rote learning. Insufficient learning outcomes and the failure of India's educational system to realize its radical possible are the results of these mechanical difficulties. Major issues including stagnation and retention in the schools due to many reasons like shortage of good teachers, improper infrastructure, poor quality of Education, outdated curriculum, lack of sufficient government funding (Kingdon, 2020). Students encounter enormous academic pressure and unhealthy competition that leads to narrow meaning of

success. Also, they feel stressed from expectations of the society; secondly, there is imbalance between the rural and urban areas in terms of accessibility and affordability which supplements and deepens the educational inequalities (ASER, 2022).

The Government vision to shape an education system of the country is possible only by enunciating educational policies. Today, when we talk about access, equity and quality in Education which is possible by encompassing strategies, goals, and the means to achieve this. Although there is always an immense gap between the promises done by policies and its execution in the school & Educational Institutes. Government plans including the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (2009), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001), and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (1995) have knowingly enhanced availability and process. Exploratory the enduring difficulties in Indian education, revising important government enterprises, and examining the fundamental potential of the NEP 2020 in creating a system of education equipped for the forthcoming are the purposes of this article. Furthermore, India's conventional educational approach still places a strong emphasis on exams and emphasizes memory over comprehension. This method has long been accused of inhibiting critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Such a system creates tremendous academic pressure, encourages unhealthy competitiveness, and limits students' definitions of success, as noted by (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011). In addition to causing tension, it alienates kids who would benefit from a more adaptable and hands-on learning environment.

The National Education Policy (NEP), which was broadcasted by the Indian regime in 2020 in response to these problems, represents a fundamental modification in the way that education is alleged about and strategic. NEP-2020 encourages a comprehensive, learner-centred strategy that incorporates transdisciplinary learning, early childhood education, vocational training, and basic literacy. To guarantee age-appropriate learning and a smooth educational experience, it suggests reorganizing the school curriculum into foundational, preparatory, intermediate, and secondary stages. Additionally, it promotes topic choice flexibility, downplays the significance of high-stakes tests, and places an emphasis on skill development, critical thinking, and experiential learning. Although the NEP-2020 lays out

a unrealistic outline, a number of things must occur for it to be executed efficaciously, such as more public subsidy for education, teacher preparation, expertise integration, and well-organized oversight. For policy to be implemented and for everyone to get an unbiased and high-quality education, these areas must be strengthened.

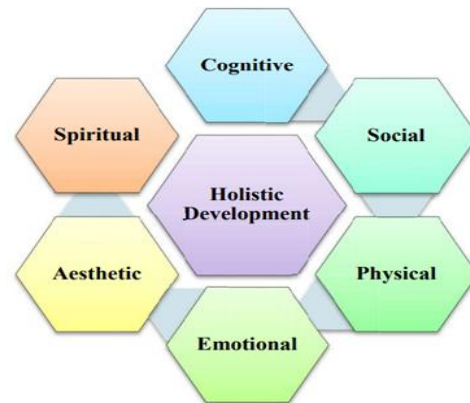


Figure 1: Holistic Development of Education

The main problems facing the Indian educational system, including those related to accessibility, affordability, quality, and regional inequities, will be critically examined in this chapter. Additionally, it will assess the success of earlier government programs and offer a thorough examination of NEP-2020, including its attempts to solve current issues in education. In the end, the chapter promotes consistent work and calculated changes to create a strong and prepared Indian educational system for the future.

II. KEY FACTORS AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

a) Quality and Learning Outcomes

Even with more students enrolled, learning quality is still low. More than 25% of Grade 5 pupils in rural India were unable to read a basic text at the Grade 2-level, according to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022. This learning disaster highlights prospectuses that highlights memory over comprehension and inadequate teaching strategies.

b) Training and Teacher Shortage

The non-existence of competent teachers is a main hindrance to high-quality education, especially in rural

and government schools. 10% of Indian schools pay just one teacher, according to the 2018–19 UDISE data. Moreover, many existing instructors lack recent training and frequent specialised development (Kingdon, 2020).

c) Inadequate Infrastructure

There are tranquil questions with infrastructure, including the absenteeism of working lavatories, power, the cyberspace, archives, and laboratories. According to UDISE+ (2021–2022), only 37.4% of schools had internet connectivity, which is essential for integrating digital learning. The eminence and availability of education are ardently unequal. Tribal people, rural schools, and economically underprivileged groups fall behind in terms of availability, cost, and inclusivity. There are more hindrances for SC/ST students, girls, and offspring with incapacities (Tilak, 2018).

d) Exam Orientation and Rote Learning

The concentration of conventional education is rote memorization. Skills, problem-solving and emotional growth and creativity are all vulnerable by an extreme stress on high-recompenses tests. Unhealthy academic competition is forced upon students, regularly at the expenses of their mental health (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011).

e) Dogmatic Motivation and Bureaucracy

The main reason of failure in policies implantation is due to amendments in various rules & regulations, lack of follow ups, government changed, or bureaucratic interruptions. Bureaucratic storage tower and management failures delay judicious implementation.

f) Funding Restraints

For the infrastructure development and recruitment of the teachers there is constrain in the funds', provided resources are also not appropriate and many times there is delay in expenditure which becomes the major issues. India's expenses on education has never intersected 4% of GDP.

g) Technological Inequalities

There is a big challenge of digital literacy in India because of inadequate infrastructure & lack of devices for technology driven education especially in the schools of rural areas but policy assume digital access for all.

III. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES & GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS

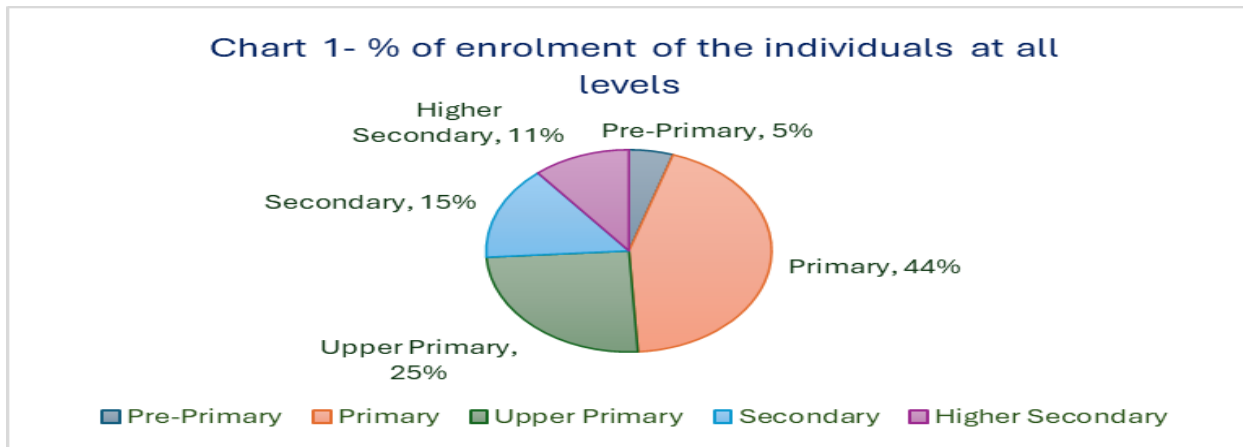
Mid-Day Meal Scheme (1995) was introduced to enhance student's admission in the school. Also improve the nutrition value in their meals. It also improves the classroom attendance and health conditions of the children, despite all these efforts learning outcomes had affected. (GOI, 2021). Main aim of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA, 2001) was to make the basic education accessible for all by enhancing school facilities, increased the number of teachers in the school and engagement of the society. Although after all these efforts quality of Education remains the same. (Muralidharan, 2013). Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA, 2009) particularly worked on the disadvantaged section of the society by increasing access to secondary Education. But it faced many hinders for implementation, particularly in countries with restricted potentialities. (UNESCO, 2021). Free and compulsory education for the Children aged 6 to 14 years were required by the Right to Education Act (2009). It recognised nominal necessities for school structure and instructor-to-pupil proportions. Nevertheless, monetary restraints and unproductive managerial practices, acquiescence is still missing in several administrations (UNESCO, 2021).

Bhagat and Gupta (2020) proposed a relative study of the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, two substantial Indian education policies. The authors efficiently featured a more inclusive and pupil centered education introducing 5+3+3+4 framework by NEP-2020 making the shift from a rigid 10+2 framework from the NEP-1986 which was the progression in educational erection and way of life. Sharma, M. (2024, February 5). Reimagining teacher education in India: A critical analysis of NEP 2020's aspirations and challenges. The research study highlights the implementation of the proposal 4-years Integrated Teacher Education (ITEP) by the year 2030. The study's objective is to assesses the policy's exertions to establish a link between the local and Indigenous knowledge systems and traditional pedagogy which promotes holistic and culturally approachable education system multidisciplinary Institution which led to systematic changes to meet

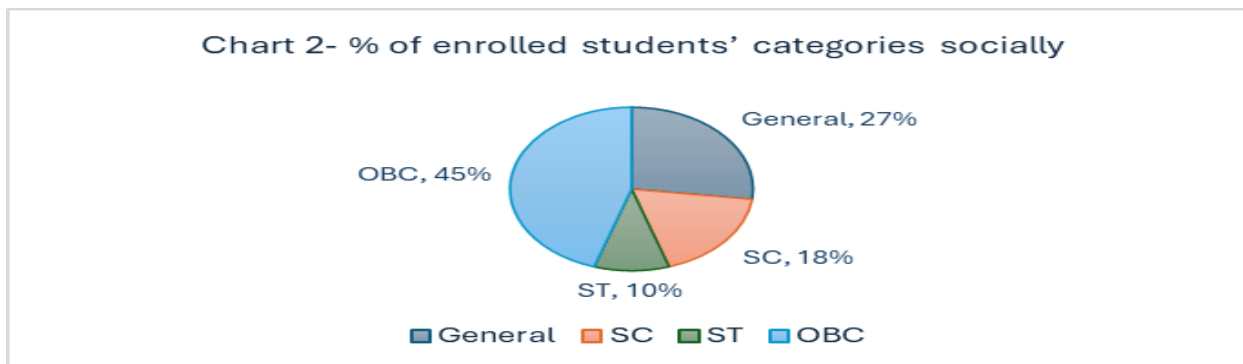
NEP 2020 goals. Rathi, M. (2024, September 10). NEP 2020 revisiting, reimagining & revamping higher education in India: Vision 2047. This paper determines that with high quality digital platforms, research and revolution, there is a revolutionary transformation in higher education through reforms of NEP-2020 & with better access to reach the remote learners. This study was conducted in Madhya Pradesh state and outlines the government's practical executed approaches for the online credit transfer system & recognised partnerships, aligning higher education as a chauffeur of commercial development and grow comprehensively. Tomar, K. S. (2024, July 8). Higher education reforms under NEP 2020: Opportunities and challenges. This study assesses to nurture the 21st century skills by transformative vision of NEP- 2020, which emphasises flexibility in the curriculum,

technology integration and multidisciplinary education for the higher education of the country. The paper also underlines the status of various efforts made by stakeholders to ensure access, quality, equity & accountability, reforms of the policy which further highlights various research enhancing opportunities, vocational training and global associations.

UDISE Survey Report (2023-24) Chart 1 depicts pupil-wise data which is collected for the first time at National level from all recognised schools of India through UDISE+ (2022–23 onwards). In 2023–24, a total of 24.8 crore students were enrolled. Chart 1 depicts enrolment of the individuals at all levels of the school excludes enrolments of the Anganwadi Centres and standalone kindergartens but includes only those in schools. Chart 2 presents the percentage of enrolled students' categories socially.



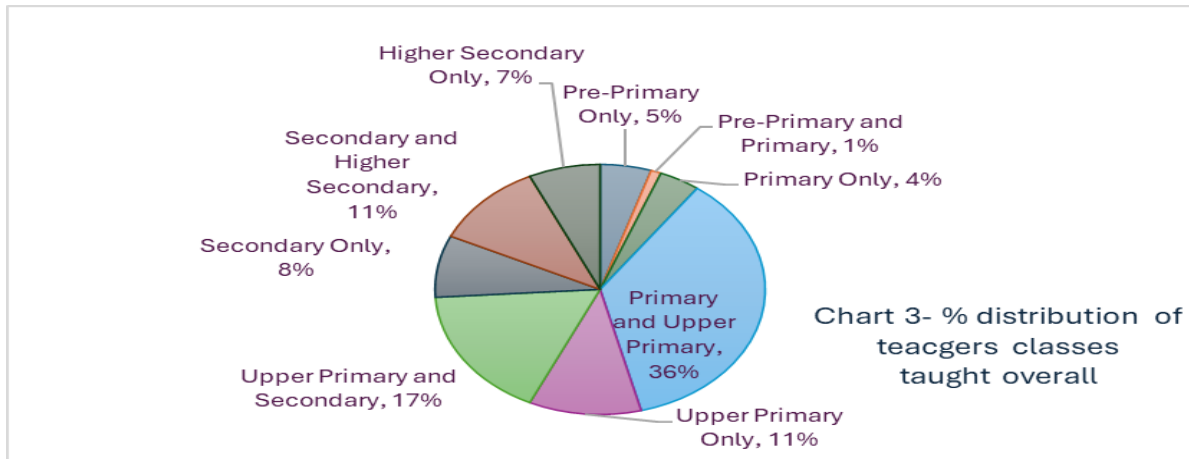
UDISE Report 2023-24, Ministry of Education, GOI



UDISE Report 2023-24, Ministry of Education, GOI

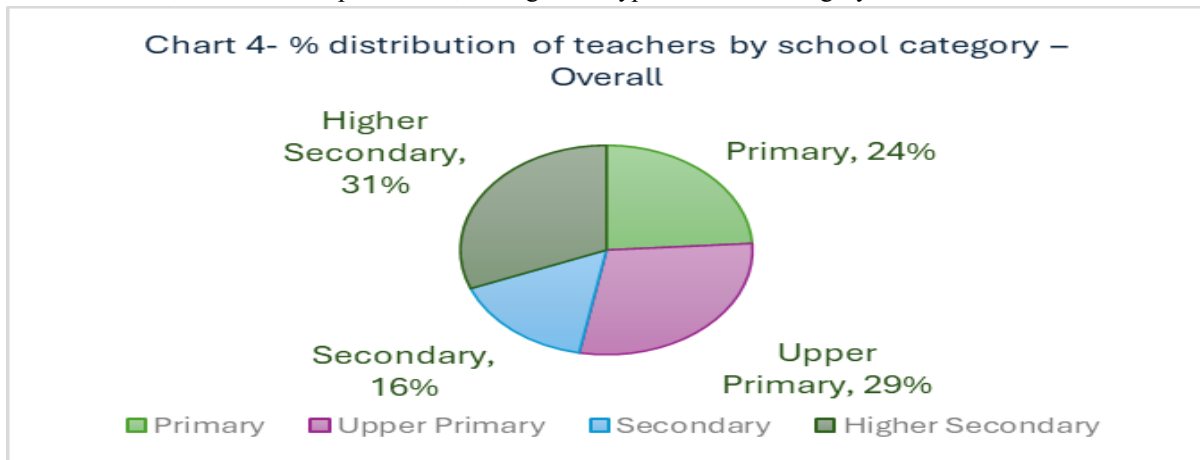
Teachers are very important part of the school system categorises socially and play a vigorous role in shaping the future of their students. Chart below depicts the classes taught by the teachers' distribution in the year

2023–24 from pre-primary to higher secondary levels. Next three Charts further depict school, management type and social category of the distribution of teachers.

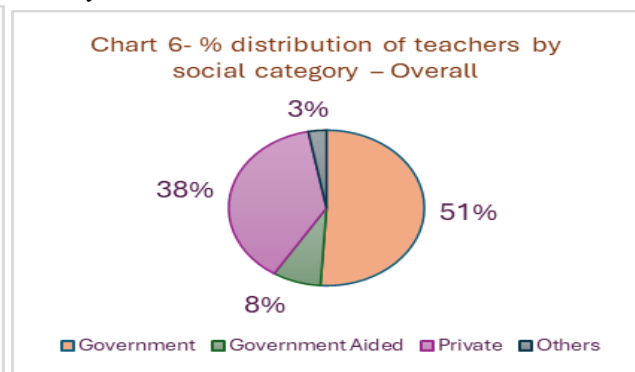
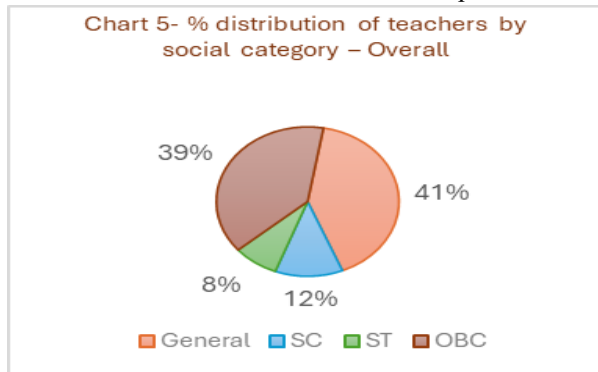


UDISE Report 2023-24, Ministry of Education, GOI

Charts 4,5, & 6 further depict school, management type and social category of the distribution of teachers.



UDISE Report 2023-24, Ministry of Education, GOI



UDISE Report 2023-24, Ministry of Education, GOI

IV. BRIDGING THE GAP: A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

National Education Policy 2020 recommended a flexible 5+3+3+4 framework which lays out stress on the regional language of the child till class 5 and

vocational education integrated till class 6. It also emphasises multidisciplinary education at higher level which offers one flexible course also. Establishment of National Educational Technology Forum which funds the integration of digital education at all levels.

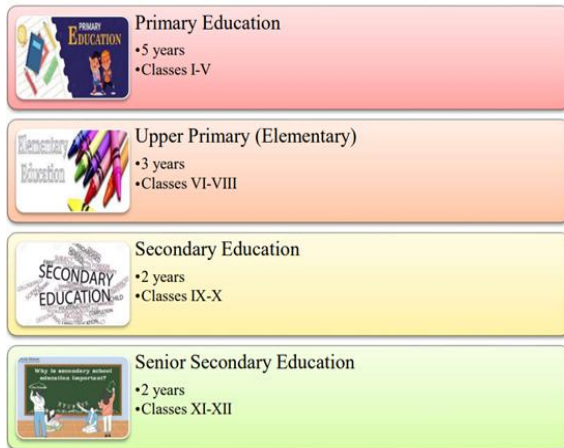


Figure 2: Structure of School system by NEP-2020

Holistic Approach to Education National Education Policy (2020) restructures the whole school system into a new framework which is 5+3+3+4 as discussed above that includes age span of students from 3 to 18 such as 3-8, 8-11, 11-14 & 14-18 respectively. This design of schooling make sure the learning should be holistic, inclusive, unified, pleasant and engaging, allied with the pupil's requirements.



Figure 3: Holistic Education Strategies

Reforming the Curriculum and Pedagogy NEP shifts the leaning from rote memory to the more realistic education, concept formation, experiential learning and as well the development of critical thinking among the individuals by extracting the syllabus to the essentials. Moreover, it promotes the pedagogy which focuses on the holistic development of the individual that is not only based on cognitive progress but also emphasise on the character and skill development of individuals equipped with the 21st-century skills.

NCERT will categorise these essential skill sets and include devices for their process for early childhood and school education in the National Curriculum Framework. For improvement and augmentation of critical thinking & vigorous knowledge the syllabus abridged.

Education Based on Skills and Vocational Training Students will have access to internships, coding, and vocational training starting in Grade 6. The goal is to close the education-employment gap and improve employability (MHRD, 2020). NEP 2020 proposes a few changes to the way vocational education is delivered in India, including

- Increasing the affordability and accessibility of vocational education. This includes making it simpler for students to switch between academic and vocational streams and offering financial aid to those who wish to pursue vocational education.
- By aligning vocational education programs with the National Skills Qualification Framework and giving students the competencies that employers value, we can increase the relevance of vocational education in response to the demands of the economy.
- Increasing the length of time students spend in vocational training and making sure they are exposed to real-world work experiences are two ways to increase the demands and rigor of vocational education.

Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Implementation of Inclusion and equity is one of the key areas of NEP-2020, through this policy emphasises on change in curriculum for students with disabilities, funds for gender inclusion. It emphasises on authorising socially and economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) to ensure that every child has access to quality learning opportunities through targeted intercessions, equitable resource distribution, and the advancement of education in mother tongue.

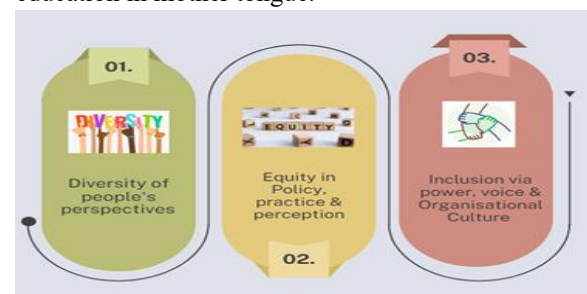


Figure 4: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Autonomy and Teacher Development NEP seeks to provide ongoing professional development, merit-based advancement, and improved working conditions since it views teachers as the "heart of the learning process."



Figure 4: Teacher Autonomy & Professional Independence

V. THE PATH FORWARD FOR IMPLANTING NEW EDUCATION POLICY

- Stimulating Devices of Execution Decentralization, state-level capacity building, and actual supervision of schemes are all essential for the execution of policies. For this it is important that Central, State and local units/sections manage well.
- Greater Allocation of Funds and Resources Indian government expenses very few amounts on education which is 2.9% of GDP, very low than recommended although NEP, 2020 endorses 6% disbursement of GDP on education.
- Encouraging Digital Access For online and blended learning, NEP emphasizes on the digital platforms like SWAYAM and DIKSHA to be inclusive. For the same an institution should have enhancement in ICT infrastructure and tech Savy teachers are required.
- Reforming Assessment Assessments should be reformed to highlight educational objectives, results and proficiencies rather than memorization to promote authentic learning and diminish the academic pressure

VI. CONCLUSION

Now in this transforming phase of the world, India is also transforming its education system from history by reforming the Educational System, which is essential, not optional. The five principles of the New Education Policy, 2020 access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability can resolve several relentless problems and help in the effective implementation of the policy. However, radical willpower, reliable subsidy, cooperation from all departments, and strong investor involvement are all necessary for accomplishment. However, in the 21st century, India's teachers, educators, policy makers & stakeholders will surely prepare for the transition from rote learning to skill-oriented methods

REFERENCES

- [1] ASER (2023). Annual Status of Education Report. Pratham.
- [2] Ministry of Education (2022). UDISE+ 2023–24 Report. Government of India.
- [3] National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Ministry of Education, Government of India.
- [4] Kingdon, G. G. (2020). The Emptying of Learning from Indian Schools: Evidence and Policy Recommendations.
- [5] National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023. Ministry of Education, Government of India.
- [6] ASER (2022). Annual Status of Education Report. Pratham Education Foundation.
- [7] Banerjee, A., & Duflo, E. (2011). Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty. PublicAffairs.
- [8] Government of India (GOI). (2021). Education Statistics at a Glance. Ministry of Education.
- [9] Muralidharan, K. (2013). Priorities for Primary Education Policy in India's 12th Five-Year Plan. India Policy Forum.
- [10] Tilak, J. B. G. (2018). Education and Development in India: Critical Issues in Public Policy. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [11] UNESCO (2021). State of the Education Report for India 2021: No Teacher, No Class. New Delhi: UNESCO.
- [12] Rastogi, P. (2020). Positive aspects of NEP 2020. Financial Express.

- [13] Saxena, M. (2020, August 13). NEP 2020: A roadmap for teacher education. The Indian Express
- [14] Bhagat, A., & Gupta, S. (n.d.). Critical analysis of
- [15] Mukhopadhyay, M. (2021). Educational Reforms and their Implementation in India