

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Education has long been recognized as the cornerstone of national development, shaping societies, economies, and individual destinies. In India, the evolution of education policies has been a reflection of the country's socio-economic aspirations, addressing critical concerns of access, quality, and equity. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a paradigm shift in India's approach to education, seeking to modernize the system to meet the demands of the 21st century while preserving the nation's rich cultural heritage and diversity. This policy proposes a holistic, flexible, and learner-centric framework that aims to nurture creativity, critical thinking, and innovation among students, thereby preparing them for global competitiveness.

To fully appreciate the significance of the NEP 2020, it is essential to examine the education policies that preceded it. Before 2020, India's education sector was primarily governed by the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1968 and NPE 1986, which laid the groundwork for expanding access to education. The NPE 1968, formulated in the wake of the Kothari Commission's recommendations, emphasized the need for universal elementary education, the standardization of educational structure (10+2+3), and the promotion of regional languages alongside English. Although it provided the first structured approach to educational development, implementation challenges persisted due to inadequate funding and administrative bottlenecks.

Subsequently, the NPE 1986, later modified in 1992, brought about a more structured intervention by prioritizing equal educational opportunities, particularly for marginalized communities. Policies such as Operation Blackboard, which aimed to improve school infrastructure, and District Primary Education Program (DPEP), focused on enhancing primary education, were introduced. Further, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001 and the Right to Education (RTE) Act in 2009 strengthened the legal framework for compulsory education. While these initiatives significantly increased enrollment rates, challenges such as rote-based learning, outdated curricula, limited teacher training, and excessive focus on examinations hindered educational quality and student engagement.

Recognizing these limitations, NEP 2020 introduces a competency-based learning model, emphasizing conceptual understanding over memorization. It proposes several transformative changes, including a shift from the 10+2 system to a 5+3+3+4 framework, multidisciplinary education, flexibility in subject choices, emphasis on vocational training, and integration of technology into teaching methodologies. Additionally, it underscores the importance of teacher empowerment through robust training programs, ensuring that educators are well-equipped to implement the policy effectively.

Among the key stakeholders in this transformation is the teaching community, which plays a central role in translating policy objectives into practical outcomes. The success of NEP 2020 largely depends on teachers' awareness, understanding, and willingness to adopt the new methodologies. Therefore, evaluating their preparedness and familiarity with the policy is crucial to identifying challenges in its implementation.

This study aims to assess the awareness levels of teachers in Bhopal, a city in Madhya Pradesh known for its rich educational heritage. With numerous schools and higher education institutions, Bhopal presents a microcosm of India's diverse educational landscape, making it an ideal setting to examine teachers' reception of NEP 2020. By evaluating their knowledge, perceptions, and readiness, this study will provide valuable insights into the extent to which teachers are equipped to integrate policy reforms into classroom practices.

Furthermore, the findings of this research will contribute to the broader discourse on education policy implementation, serving as a basis for designing targeted interventions such as teacher training programs, workshops, and professional development initiatives. Policymakers, educational institutions, and teacher training organizations can leverage these insights to address gaps in knowledge and preparedness, thereby ensuring the effective rollout of NEP 2020.

It is important to note that this study is not an evaluation of NEP 2020's overall effectiveness or impact but rather an exploration of teachers' initial awareness regarding its provisions. The outcomes of this research can serve as a foundation for future studies examining the policy's long-term influence on India's educational system.

## 1.1 THE SALIENT FEATURES OF NEP 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced several salient features aimed at transforming the education system in India. Some of the key features of the NEP 2020 include:

**Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education:** The NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of holistic and multidisciplinary education, promoting the overall development of students. It encourages the integration of various subjects, including arts, humanities, sports, and vocational skills, into the curriculum.

**Flexible Curricular Choices:** The NEP 2020 provides students with increased flexibility in choosing subjects based on their interests and aptitudes. It promotes a multidisciplinary approach and offers a wide range of electives, allowing students to explore diverse areas of knowledge.

**Early Childhood Care and Education:** The policy recognizes the significance of early childhood care and education (ECCE) in a child's development. It focuses on providing quality ECCE for children aged 3 to 6 years, promoting their cognitive, social, and emotional growth.

**Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:** The NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy for all students. It aims to ensure that every child achieves basic proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics by Grade 3 through dedicated efforts and remedial interventions.

**Integration of Technology:** The policy acknowledges the role of technology in education and promotes its effective integration. It emphasizes the use of digital resources, e-learning platforms, and online teaching methods to enhance the learning experience and expand access to quality education.

**Teacher Training and Professional Development:** The NEP 2020 recognizes the critical role of teachers and emphasizes the need for their continuous professional development. It focuses on improving the quality of teacher training programs, promoting innovative teaching practices, and providing opportunities for their upskilling and reskilling.

**Assessment Reforms:** The policy advocates for a shift in assessment practices from rote memorization and high-stakes examinations to a more comprehensive and competency-based evaluation system. It encourages formative and continuous assessment methods that assess a student's overall development and critical thinking abilities.

**Promoting Indian Languages:** The NEP 2020 emphasizes the preservation and promotion of regional languages and the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in early education. It recognizes the importance of linguistic diversity and aims to create a multilingual society that appreciates and values different languages.

**Higher Education Reforms:** The policy proposes several reforms in the higher education sector, including the establishment of a single regulatory authority, flexible undergraduate programs, multidisciplinary education, and increased focus on research and innovation.

**Equity and Inclusion:** The NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on promoting equity, inclusion, and access to education for all. It aims to bridge the gender gap, reduce disparities among different social and economic groups, and provide equal educational opportunities to children with disabilities.

These salient features of the NEP 2020 reflect a comprehensive approach towards transforming the education system in India, fostering a learner-centric, inclusive, and holistic environment that prepares students for the challenges of the 21st century.

## 1.2 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The study on the awareness level of teachers in Bhopal regarding the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is important for several reasons: **Policy Implementation:** The NEP 2020 introduces significant reforms in the education system, and the effective implementation of these reforms depends on the awareness and understanding of teachers. Assessing the awareness level of teachers in Bhopal will provide insights into their preparedness, knowledge gaps, and potential challenges in translating the policy objectives into classroom practices.

**Teacher Professional Development:** Understanding the awareness level of teachers regarding the NEP 2020 can help identify the specific areas where they require further training and professional development. The findings of the study can guide policymakers, educational institutions, and teacher training organizations in designing targeted programs and resources to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills related to the policy.

**Identifying Gaps and Misconceptions:** The study can reveal any misconceptions or gaps in teachers' understanding of the NEP 2020. Identifying these gaps is crucial for addressing misconceptions, clarifying doubts, and providing accurate information about the policy. This can prevent the implementation of the policy from being hindered by misinformation or incomplete understanding.

**Policy Feedback and Refinement:** By studying the awareness level of teachers, the findings can serve as valuable feedback for policymakers and education authorities. The insights gained from the study can contribute to the ongoing process of refining and improving the NEP- 2020. It can help policymakers identify areas that require further clarification, modification, or support to ensure successful implementation of the policy.

### 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

## “A STUDY ON AWARENESS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 AMONG TEACHER EDUCATORS OF BHOPAL DISTRICT”

### 1.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

**Awareness:** Awareness is defined as the understanding or knowledge of the facts and key provisions outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

**The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29th July 2020, presents a visionary framework for transforming the Indian education system. This policy replaces the National Policy on Education, 1986, and offers a comprehensive roadmap encompassing all levels of education—from early childhood and elementary education to higher education and vocational training—across both rural and urban areas of the country.

NEP 2020 aspires to overhaul the existing education structure and achieve transformative outcomes by the year 2030. Following its release, the government emphasized that the policy does not mandate any specific language of instruction; rather, no student will be compelled to learn any particular language, and English will not be replaced as the medium of instruction unless institutions choose to do so. The language-related provisions in the policy are advisory in nature, allowing states and educational institutions the autonomy to determine their mode of implementation.

It is important to note that education in India falls under the Concurrent List, giving both the central and state governments the authority to legislate and make policy decisions in this domain.

**TEACHER EDUCATORS:** Teacher educators are professionals engaged in the training, preparation, and professional development of future teachers. They work in teacher education institutions or programs and are responsible for imparting pedagogical knowledge, teaching skills, and educational theory to help trainee teachers become effective educators in schools.

## 1.5 OBJECTIVES

The proposed study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the level of awareness of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 among teacher educators.
2. To study the level of awareness of NEP 2020 among teacher educators on the basis of Gender.
3. To study the level of awareness of NEP 2020 among teacher educators on the basis of Locale.
4. To study the level of awareness of NEP 2020 among teacher educators on the basis of training/ workshop attended.

## 1.6 HYPOTHESIS

The researcher has framed the following hypotheses.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of NEP-2020 between ‘male’ and ‘female’ teacher educators.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of NEP-2020 between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ teacher educators.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of NEP-2020 between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ teacher educators.

## 1.7 DELIMITATION

The proposed study was conducted under the following constraints.

1. **Target population:** Only Teacher educators were selected for the study
2. **Location:** Only Bhopal district was selected for the study
3. **Time:** Study is conducted in 2025, awareness may change with time
4. **Data collection:** The data is collected using online survey with fixed questionnaire. Actual knowledge of respondents may vary.
5. **Language:** The survey is conducted in English and some respondents might prefer other language.