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CURRENT AFFAIRS



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NATIONAL EDUCATIONS POLICY

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The news about Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's address at the 101st convocation of the University of Delhi is significant because it highlights India's strategic focus on education to drive national progress. His emphasis on the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 shows the government's intent to elevate India's educational framework to a global standard. By addressing youth—the majority of India's population—Pradhan reiterated how crucial it is for students to contribute to the vision of a developed India by 2047. His acknowledgement of Delhi University's role in implementing NEP 2020 adds a layer of recognition to the university's efforts in shaping future leaders, making the story relevant both for educational reforms and for Delhi University's contribution to India's educational goals.

WHAT IS EDUCATION POLICY?

Education policy is a set of principles, guidelines, rules, and laws that govern the educational system within a country or region. It defines the goals, structure, methods, and practices for delivering education, aiming to shape and improve how education is provided to students. Education policy is designed to ensure that education is accessible, equitable, and of high quality, and it establishes frameworks for curriculum design, teaching standards, student assessment, and overall educational governance.

- 1. Objectives:** These are the broad goals that the policy seeks to achieve, such as ensuring equitable access to education, improving quality, and fostering skills development.
- 2. Curriculum and Instruction:** Policies often define what subjects or courses should be taught, how teachers should teach, and the standards of learning expected at different education levels.
- 3. Governance and Administration:** This includes how education systems are organized, the roles of local, regional, and national authorities, and who is responsible for decision-making.
- 4. Assessment and Accountability:** Education policies often set standards for assessing students' progress, as well as holding educational institutions accountable for meeting educational goals.
- 5. Funding and Resources:** Policies may also outline how education is funded, how resources are allocated to schools, and how to address disparities in funding.

EVOLUTION OF EDUCATION POLICY

- 1. National Policy on Education (1967):** Focused on expanding access to education and promoting national integration after independence. Emphasized quality, teacher training, and adult education. Aimed to address illiteracy and promote education as a tool for social and economic development.
- 2. National Policy on Education (1986):** Introduced by Rajiv Gandhi, it emphasized universalizing elementary education, improving quality, and equity. Focused on science and technology education, vocational skills, and

a national education framework. Promoted multilingualism and integration of education with social development, especially for marginalized groups.

3. National Education Policy (2020): Introduced a 5+3+3+4 education structure and emphasized holistic and multidisciplinary education. Focused on foundational literacy and numeracy, early childhood education, and integration of vocational education. Pushed for mother tongue as the medium of instruction, digital learning, and improving teacher quality.

KEY FEATURES OF NEP 2020

Feature	Description
Universal Access & Early Education	Ensures access to education from pre-primary to Grade 12 and quality early childhood care for children aged 3-6.
Curricular Reforms	Implements a 5+3+3+4 structure and removes barriers between arts, sciences, vocational, and academic streams.
Language & Literacy	Promotes multilingualism, with mother tongue as the medium of instruction till Grade 5, and ensures foundational literacy and numeracy for all children.
Assessment Reforms	Allows two board exams a year (main and improvement) and establishes PARAKH for holistic assessment.
Equity & Inclusion	Focus on SEDGs , Gender Inclusion Funds, and Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups.
Teacher Development	Merit-based recruitment, continuous performance reviews, and a 4-year integrated B.Ed program.
Higher Education	Aims to raise the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) to 50%, promotes multidisciplinary education , and introduces common entrance exams.
Research & Excellence	Establishes MERUs (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities) and a National Research Foundation .
Regulation	Establishes the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) to oversee higher education and set standards.
Technology Integration	Establishes NETF for technology in education and aims for 100% adult literacy .
Investment	Focuses on increasing public spending on education to 6% of GDP.

ROLE OF NEP- 2020 TO ELEVATE INDIA TO THE GLOBAL LEVEL

1. Holistic, Multidisciplinary Education: NEP encourages a flexible, interdisciplinary approach, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and global competencies.

2. Focus on Research & Innovation: The policy promotes research through the National Research Foundation (NRF) and strengthens global research collaborations.

3. Integration of Technology: NETF and digital tools enhance education accessibility and align India with global EdTech advancements.

- 4. Internationalization of Higher Education:** NEP supports Indian universities in setting up campuses abroad and attracting global universities to India.
- 5. Promotion of Language and Culture:** Emphasizes multilingual education and preserves Indian languages while preparing students for global engagement.
- 6. Increased Access & Inclusivity:** Aim for 100% GER in education by 2030, ensuring a diverse, skilled workforce.
- 7. Vocational Education:** Integrates practical skills and internships, making students globally competitive.
- 8. Attracting Global Talent:** The policy's focus on quality education and research draws international talent to India.
- 9. Sustainability & Global Citizenship:** Aligns with SDG 4 for quality education and promotes global citizenship.
- 10. Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourages collaborations to improve educational infrastructure and global competitiveness.

ISSUES WITH THE EDUCATION SECTOR

- 1. Quality Disparities:** Uneven education quality, especially in rural areas, due to lack of infrastructure, qualified teachers, and outdated curriculum.
- 2. Access & Inclusivity:** Limited access to education in rural areas, with socioeconomic disparities hindering marginalized groups' educational opportunities.
- 3. Teacher Training:** Shortage of trained teachers and lack of professional development impacting the quality of education.
- 4. Infrastructure Deficiencies:** Inadequate school facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of learning resources limit effective teaching and learning.
- 5. Affordability & Privatization:** High costs of private education make it inaccessible for many, while privatization can lead to exclusion and inequality.
- 6. Technology Divide:** Digital gap between urban and rural areas, hindering effective online learning due to lack of devices and internet access.
- 7. Examination System:** Over-reliance on rote learning and traditional exams, causing stress and neglecting skills like creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

WAYS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- 1. Teacher Training:** Invest in continuous professional development to improve teaching quality and adapt to digital tools.
 - 2. Improved Infrastructure:** Upgrade school facilities and ensure reliable internet access, especially in rural areas.
 - 3. Inclusive Education:** Provide equal opportunities for marginalized groups with scholarships and targeted programs.
 - 4. Curriculum & Assessment Reform:** Focus on critical thinking and vocational skills, with alternative assessment methods beyond rote memorization.
 - 5. Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborate with private institutions to enhance resources and ensure affordability.
 - 6. Community Engagement:** Involve stakeholders (teachers, parents, students) in decision-making for relevant and inclusive reforms.
 - 7. Monitoring & Accountability:** Implement strong tracking systems to ensure reforms are on track and continuously improve based on feedback.
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CONCLUSION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a transformative step towards reshaping India's education system, focusing on inclusivity, quality, and global competitiveness. By emphasizing holistic education, research, vocational skills, and the integration of technology, NEP aims to elevate India's position globally. However, effective implementation will require addressing existing challenges such as quality disparities, teacher training, and infrastructure gaps. Through continuous reforms, strategic partnerships, and robust monitoring systems, India can move closer to achieving its educational goals and fostering a skilled, innovative, and globally competitive workforce.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q. Which of the following statements is correct about the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020?

1. NEP 2020 aims to increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) to 50% by 2030.
2. NEP 2020 promotes the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction till grade 8.
3. NEP 2020 mandates the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) as a compulsory subject at the school level.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

MAINS QUESTIONS:

Q. Analyze the role of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in transforming India's educational landscape. How does NEP 2020 aim to elevate India's education system to global standards, and what challenges need to be addressed for its successful implementation? (250 words, 15 marks)

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