



RESEARCH ARTICLE

NEP 2020 policies for inclusive education

Gitesh Kalita*

Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduces transformative reforms aimed at fostering inclusive education in India, ensuring that every child, regardless of background, receives equitable access to quality education. This policy emphasizes providing support for socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs), including girls, children with disabilities, and marginalized communities. "NEP 2020 seeks to overhaul the traditional educational framework by promoting multilingual education, enhancing early childhood care and education (ECCE), and integrating technology to bridge educational gaps. Additionally, teacher training is prioritized to equip educators with the skills needed to create inclusive classrooms. However, despite these promising provisions, several challenges exist in the implementation, such as inadequate infrastructure, limited teacher training, and the digital divide. The policy highlights the importance of community involvement and collaboration with various stakeholders to achieve true inclusivity. This paper explores the key policies of NEP 2020 for inclusive education, the challenges of implementation, and strategies to overcome these barriers, ultimately evaluating the potential of NEP 2020 to transform India's educational landscape into one that embraces diversity and inclusivity. The study also compares successful case studies and international best practices to provide a comprehensive understanding of how inclusive education can be effectively realized in India under the framework of NEP 2020.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Inclusive education, Socio-economically disadvantaged groups, Educational equity, Teacher training, Multilingual education, Early childhood care and education, Digital divide.

Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a landmark reform in India's educational landscape, aimed at revolutionizing the existing system to make it more inclusive, flexible, and student-centric. At its core, NEP 2020 seeks to ensure that education becomes accessible to all, with a particular focus on socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs), including girls, children with disabilities, and those from marginalized communities. This policy highlights the need to remove systemic barriers that prevent equal participation in education, advocating for a holistic approach to learning that begins with Early

Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and extends through higher education. NEP 2020 emphasizes multilingualism, recognizing the importance of teaching in the mother tongue to enhance foundational learning, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Another crucial aspect is the integration of technology to bridge the digital divide, providing digital access and resources to students in remote and underprivileged areas. The policy also focuses on teacher training, ensuring that educators are equipped with the skills to manage inclusive classrooms and cater to the diverse needs of students. However, the successful implementation of these policies faces several challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure, limited resources for teacher training, and resistance to change within the existing system. Despite these challenges, NEP 2020 sets forth a comprehensive framework aimed at fostering equity, inclusion, and quality education for all, with community participation playing a pivotal role in achieving these goals. This paper explores the various facets of NEP 2020 related to inclusive education, the challenges involved in its implementation, and the strategies necessary to overcome these barriers. It also examines case studies and best practices from around the world to offer insights into how inclusive education can be effectively realized in India",

Department of Education, Usha Martin University, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India.

***Corresponding Author:** Gitesh Kalita, Department of Education, Usha Martin University, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India, E-Mail: gitesh.kalita.gk@gmail.com

How to cite this article: Kalita, G. (2024). NEP 2020 policies for inclusive education. *The Scientific Temper*, 15(spl-2):63-72.

Doi: 10.58414/SCIENTIFICTEMPER.2024.15.spl-2.12

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None.

with NEP 2020 acting as a catalyst for transformative change in the education system.

Overview of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

The National Education Policy "(NEP) 2020 represents a major shift in India's approach to education, focusing on creating an inclusive, holistic, and flexible education system that can meet the needs of a rapidly changing world. After nearly 34 years since the last education policy was implemented, NEP 2020 emerges as a progressive reform aimed at aligning India's education system with 21st-century aspirations and global standards. It seeks to bridge gaps in the existing system by introducing structural changes across all levels of education, from foundational to higher education, and by addressing issues of access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability. The policy emphasizes a learner-centric approach, where students are given the freedom to choose their learning paths, and the curriculum is redesigned to foster critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. NEP 2020 also introduces multidisciplinary learning, recognizing the need for flexibility in education and the importance of integrating arts, humanities, and vocational education with science and technology. At its core, NEP 2020 envisions an inclusive education system that leaves no child behind, particularly focusing on historically disadvantaged groups, including women, children with disabilities, and marginalized communities. The policy outlines key reforms such as the introduction of a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure, foundational literacy and numeracy, and a renewed focus on teacher education and professional development. Additionally, the policy highlights the importance of technology in education, advocating for the use of digital tools to enhance learning outcomes and ensure access to quality education for students in remote and underprivileged areas. NEP 2020's significance lies in its holistic approach, aiming to transform India into a global knowledge hub, foster lifelong learning, and build a more equitable and just society. With its emphasis on inclusivity, the policy has the potential to bring about transformative changes in how education is delivered and accessed, ensuring that education becomes a powerful tool for social mobility and national development.

Inclusive Education Defined

Inclusive education refers to a system of education that is designed to accommodate and support the diverse learning needs of all students, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities, or socioeconomic status. It is based on the principle that every child, including those with disabilities and those from marginalized communities, has the right to access quality education in a supportive and non-discriminatory environment. Inclusive education aims to eliminate the barriers that prevent certain groups of students from fully

participating in mainstream education by ensuring that schools are equipped to meet the needs of a diverse student body. This approach goes beyond simply placing children with disabilities in general classrooms; it focuses on creating a learning environment that is flexible, adaptable, and responsive to individual needs. For inclusive education to be effective, it requires changes in curriculum design, teaching methods, and assessment practices, so that all students, regardless of their abilities, can engage meaningfully in the learning process. Teachers play a critical role in inclusive education, as they must be trained to use differentiated instruction, modify lesson plans, and adopt inclusive pedagogies that cater to diverse learning styles. Moreover, inclusive education promotes a sense of belonging among students, encouraging social interaction, collaboration, and mutual respect". This model not only benefits students with special needs but also enhances the learning experiences of all students, as it fosters empathy, adaptability, and problem-solving skills. Inclusive education is deeply rooted in the belief that diversity is a strength rather than a challenge and that schools should reflect the diversity of society by providing equal opportunities for all students to succeed. It is about creating a supportive learning environment where differences are embraced and every student is given a chance to thrive both academically and socially. By promoting inclusivity, education systems can contribute to building a more equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Importance of Inclusive Education in India

Inclusive education is particularly important in the Indian context, where diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors contribute to a wide disparity in access to quality education. India is home to various marginalized groups, including children with disabilities, children from rural and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, girls, and those belonging to minority communities. Historically, these groups have faced systemic barriers to accessing education, resulting in significant educational inequalities that perpetuate cycles of poverty and social exclusion. Inclusive education, as envisioned by NEP 2020, plays a critical role in addressing these disparities by ensuring that all children, regardless of their circumstances, have the opportunity to learn and succeed. One of the key reasons why inclusion matters in India is the country's commitment to achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly goal 4, which focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all. By promoting inclusive education, India can make significant strides toward achieving this goal and ensuring that no child is left behind. Furthermore, inclusive education is essential for fostering social cohesion and national unity in a country as diverse as India. It creates an environment where children from different backgrounds can learn and grow together, breaking down prejudices

and fostering mutual respect and understanding. This is especially important in a country where caste, religion, and economic status often dictate social interactions and opportunities. Additionally, inclusive education is an effective tool for empowering marginalized communities by providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to improve their socioeconomic status and contribute to the nation's development. For children with disabilities, inclusive education offers the chance to be part of mainstream society, reducing the stigma and isolation often associated with special education. "Moreover, inclusive education in India can help address the rural-urban divide by ensuring that children in remote and underserved areas have access to quality education, particularly through the use of technology and distance learning. In the Indian context, where millions of children still remain out of school, inclusive education is not just a moral imperative but also a practical necessity for the country's growth and development. By ensuring that every child has access to education, India can build a more equitable, just, and prosperous society.

Background of NEP 2020

Historical context of educational policies in India

India's education system has evolved significantly since its independence in 1947, with several major policies aimed at reforming and expanding access to education. The first comprehensive National Education Policy was introduced in 1968, focusing on equal access, promoting regional languages, and improving teaching quality. However, its implementation was inconsistent, especially in rural areas. The National Policy on Education (NPE) was introduced in 1986 to address educational inequality, particularly for marginalized groups. The policy was revised in 1992, introducing Operation Blackboard and the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) to improve primary education infrastructure. Despite these efforts, large sections of the population still lack access to quality education due to factors like economic disparities, geographical barriers, and gender inequality. The Right to Education Act (RTE) of 2009 did not address quality, inclusivity, or curriculum relevance to the 21st century demands.

Salient features of NEP 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform India's education system into a more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, and adaptable to the 21st century needs. It introduces a 5+3+3+4 model, covering early childhood care and education (ECCE) through foundational, preparatory, middle, and secondary stages. The policy emphasizes ECCE as a critical stage for cognitive and social development and advocates for universal access to quality pre-primary education by 2030. It promotes multilingualism, encouraging the use of mother tongue or regional languages until at least grade 5. The policy also focuses on reducing rote learning

and fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills through a competency-based curriculum. The policy also introduces reforms in higher education, focusing on multidisciplinary education, flexibility, and a credit-based system for lifelong learning. It also aims to integrate vocational training with mainstream education from Grade 6, ensuring at least 50% of learners receive vocational exposure by 2025. The policy also emphasizes teacher education and professional development, with a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree becoming the minimum qualification by 2030.

Inclusive education in NEP 2020

Inclusive education is a key pillar of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, reflecting the policy's commitment to ensure that every child, regardless of background, has access to quality education in a supportive and enabling environment. NEP 2020 redefines inclusive education by focusing on accommodating students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, including children with disabilities, girls, students from scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST), and other marginalized communities. One of the central goals of inclusive education under NEP 2020 is to bridge the learning gaps that have historically marginalized these groups, ensuring that they receive equal opportunities to succeed. This begins with Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), where NEP 2020 emphasizes universal access to foundational education, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The policy advocates for greater flexibility in curricula to accommodate the different needs, abilities, and learning styles of students, moving away from the traditional one-size-fits-all approach. This is further reinforced by the integration of multilingualism, where children are encouraged to learn in their mother tongues or regional languages until at least grade 5, promoting better cognitive development, particularly for students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Inclusive education under NEP 2020 also targets children with disabilities by emphasizing the need for accessible schools and classrooms, including the provision of necessary aids, devices, and technologies that make learning environments more inclusive. Furthermore, NEP 2020 highlights the need for regular teacher training on inclusive education practices. Teachers are expected to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to teach diverse groups of students, including those with special needs. This includes adopting inclusive pedagogical practices that ensure active participation and equal learning opportunities for all students without discrimination or bias. To facilitate this, NEP 2020 proposes a revision of the B.Ed. Curriculum, making it mandatory for teacher education programs to include training in inclusive teaching practices". Additionally, the policy stresses the importance of fostering an inclusive school culture where diversity is celebrated and where

students from marginalized communities feel valued and supported. Scholarships, financial aid, and other affirmative measures are also key features of NEP 2020 to ensure that students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups have the necessary resources to complete their education. These provisions are further extended to girls, with specific emphasis on reducing dropout rates among female students, especially at the secondary and higher education levels. NEP 2020 introduces gender-sensitive policies and programs aimed at encouraging girls to pursue higher education, particularly in STEM fields. The policy also recognizes the importance of involving communities in promoting inclusive education advocating for increased collaboration between schools, parents, and local communities to create a more supportive learning environment. Digital inclusion is another major focus of NEP 2020, addressing the digital divide that disproportionately affects marginalized groups, especially in rural and remote areas. The policy aims to leverage technology to ensure that students from all backgrounds can access high-quality education, even in challenging circumstances.

Challenges to Implementing Inclusive Education

Infrastructure gaps

Inclusive education in India faces significant challenges due to inadequate infrastructure and accessible learning environments. Many schools, especially in rural areas, lack basic facilities like ramps, accessible toilets, and specialized learning resources. Overcrowded classrooms and limited space make it difficult for teachers to implement personalized teaching methods. Technological infrastructure is also lacking, limiting the participation of marginalized students and creating barriers to their educational progress. These infrastructure gaps hinder the success of NEP 2020's vision for inclusive education.

Teacher training and sensitization

Inclusive education faces a significant challenge due to a lack of trained educators, particularly those with disabilities or socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Despite NEP 2020's emphasis on teacher education, most training programs lack sufficient instruction on inclusive teaching strategies. This lack of sensitization leads to unconscious bias and discriminatory practices. Teachers struggle to adapt teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles, resulting in unequal learning opportunities. Without proper training and support, inclusive environments cannot be created, limiting the effectiveness of inclusive education reforms.

Social and cultural barriers

Social and cultural barriers present another significant challenge to the successful implementation of inclusive education in India. In many parts of the country, deep-rooted

cultural norms, prejudices, and societal attitudes toward marginalized groups—such as children with disabilities, girls, and students from lower castes—create resistance to the idea of inclusion. For example, there is still a stigma associated with disabilities, and many families are reluctant to send their children with disabilities to mainstream schools due to fear of discrimination or lack of acceptance. Similarly, gender biases continue to affect girls' access to education, particularly in rural and conservative communities where girls are expected to prioritize household duties over schooling. Additionally, caste-based discrimination continues to limit the educational opportunities of students from lower castes and minority groups, often resulting in exclusionary practices in schools. These social and cultural barriers affect not only enrollment rates but also the overall learning environment, making it difficult for NEP 2020's inclusive education initiatives to be fully realized.

Digital divide

The digital divide is a critical challenge in achieving inclusive education, especially in a country like India, where access to technology is unevenly distributed. While NEP 2020 advocates for the use of technology to make education more accessible, the reality is that many students, particularly those from rural areas or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, do not have access to the necessary digital devices, internet connectivity, or electricity to benefit from online learning. This digital divide was further highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic when schools shifted to online platforms, leaving millions of students without the means to participate in virtual classes. The lack of access to technology not only excludes students from digital learning opportunities but also exacerbates existing inequalities, as students from privileged backgrounds are better equipped to engage with digital tools and resources. Moreover, even when digital infrastructure is available, there is often a lack of training and awareness among teachers and students on how to effectively use digital tools for inclusive education. This disparity in access and skills hinders the potential of technology to bridge learning gaps and promote inclusion, making it a significant barrier to achieving the goals of NEP 2020.

Review of literature

(Biswas, n.d.) studied "Indian Knowledge system and NEP-2020 Scope, Challenges, and Opportunity" and said that "NEP is a comprehensive framework for education development in the country. Usually, a new NEP comes once every decade. There have been three in India so far. The first in 1968 and the second in 1986, respectively the NEP of 1986 was amended in 1992. The third is the NEP released in 2021 under the Prime Ministership of Narendra Modi".

(B. L. Gupta & Choubey, n.d.) studied "Higher Education Institutions – Some Guidelines for Obtaining and Sustaining

Autonomy in the Context of Nep 2020” and said that Education Policy 2020 aims to reengineer higher education institutions for excellence and high standards of instruction. It requires institutions to make changes, provide high-quality education, and be accredited. Higher certification levels lead to greater freedom, research, and instruction quality. Autonomy is crucial for holding institutions responsible to stakeholders and enabling responsiveness and innovation. Guidelines for attaining and maintaining autonomy are based on literature, experiences, and expert conversations.

(B. Gupta, n.d.) studied “Strategies for Promoting and Sustaining Autonomy in Higher Education Institutions in the Context of National Education Policy 2020” and said that India’s National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) aims to create multidisciplinary universities and independent higher education institutions. Existing colleges are granted autonomy based on their quality. However, achieving and maintaining autonomy is a challenge. Solutions are presented at federal, state, institute, professor, and student levels.

(Pande, n.d.) studied “A study on India’s demographic profile and NEP-2020” and said that India, with a rapidly growing economy and one of the world’s youngest countries, has a demographic dividend that began in 2005–2006 and will last until 2055–2056. However, the country faces challenges in providing employment to its young population. The educational system, which graduates hundreds of thousands with professional degrees, is one of the main factors contributing to this issue. The New Education Policy 2020 aims to revamp the educational system and help India realize its full potential. This research critically analyzes the benefits and challenges of this demographic dividend and its potential impact on society and the economy.

(B. L. Gupta, 2020) studied “Governance and Management Structure for Higher Education Institutions” and said that The Indian government announced the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, aiming to transform higher education’s regulatory and governance frameworks. The policy focuses on interdisciplinary universities and independent institutions providing top-quality higher education. A research study in Maharashtra examined the governance and management of 15 autonomous technical institutes, analyzing data through questionnaires and interviews. The study aimed to characterize the current system and recommend new ones, with the governance and management structure briefly defined within the NEP 2020 framework.

(Pawan, 2020) studied “An Empirical Study on NEP 2020 [National Education Policy] with Special Reference to the Future of Indian Education System and its effects on the Stakeholders” and said that education significantly impacts a nation’s destiny and its residents. The Indian government’s National Education Policy 2020 aims to alter learning methods for the third time in 34 years. This essay explores

the policy’s effects on stakeholders and raises awareness of its long-term implications. It analyzes social media questions to understand the policy’s potential repercussions.

(Singh Kaurav et al., 2021) Studied “Theoretical extension of the new education policy 2020 using twitter mining” and said that India’s New Education Policy (NEP) aims to provide inclusive and equitable quality education, aligning with the UN’s Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 4. The study assesses the NEP’s effectiveness in the higher education sector, focusing on discipline, language, and pupils. The majority of respondents expressed positive attitudes towards the NEP’s implementation, offering recommendations for instructors, researchers, and HEIs.

(Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, PSG Institute of Technology and Applied Research et al., 2022) studied “Establishing a Constructive Mentoring Scheme for Engineering Students” and said that Generation Z students are becoming self-reliant, tech-savvy, and clever. However, teaching is more than just technology. Teachers play various roles, including mentor, facilitator, motivator, guide, and adviser. They must have both social and technical knowledge to guide students in the right direction for holistic development.

Strategies for Successful Implementation of NEP 2020 for Inclusive Education

Strengthening the educational infrastructure

NEP 2020’s inclusive education goals require strengthening educational infrastructure to make schools more accessible for all students, especially those with disabilities and marginalized communities. This includes upgrading physical facilities, providing specialized learning aids, and prioritizing rural and underserved areas. Creating resource centers for counseling, career guidance, and psychological support can help students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups overcome barriers. Investing in infrastructure improvements ensures welcoming environments for all students and supports the long-term sustainability of inclusive education initiatives by providing resources for diverse learning needs.

Capacity building and teacher training

Inclusive education under NEP 2020 requires teacher training and capacity building to handle diverse classrooms, including those with disabilities and marginalized communities. Professional development programs should focus on inclusive pedagogy, differentiated instruction, and behavior management techniques. Training should foster a non-discriminatory environment, sensitivity to marginalized groups, and continuous support through workshops, mentoring, and collaboration. Pre-service teacher training programs should incorporate inclusive education modules to prepare new educators for NEP 2020’s vision. Effective

capacity building empowers teachers to create inclusive classrooms that facilitate learning for all students.

Involvement of communities and stakeholders

Inclusive education policies under NEP 2020 require the involvement of communities and stakeholders like parents, local communities, and NGOs. These groups ensure the unique needs of students from different backgrounds are understood and addressed effectively. Parents can support their children's education through communication, workshops, and awareness programs. Communities can break down social and cultural barriers by promoting awareness and reducing stigma. NGOs can provide expertise and resources for inclusive education initiatives. Building partnerships with these stakeholders creates a more inclusive environment and ensures quality education for every child.

Role of Techno

logy in inclusive education

Technology is essential in bridging the learning gap for socio-economically disadvantaged groups and students with special needs in inclusive education. NEP 2020 emphasizes the use of Edtech to make education accessible to all, regardless of geographic or economic constraints. Digital tools like interactive content, virtual classrooms, and adaptive platforms can be customized to cater to individual needs. Assistive technologies like screen readers and audio textbooks help students with disabilities engage with educational content effectively. In rural areas, mobile phones and online platforms offer equal learning opportunities. Teacher training on technology integration is crucial for effective use in inclusive classrooms.

Monitoring and evaluation

A robust monitoring and evaluation framework is crucial for the effective implementation of NEP 2020's inclusive education policies. This framework should assess the progress of inclusive education initiatives at various levels, including individual schools and state and national programs. It should include quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure accessibility, equity, and quality of education for marginalized groups. Regular assessments will identify gaps in implementation and allow for timely interventions. Involving stakeholders like teachers, students, parents, and community members in the evaluation process will provide valuable insights into the on-the-ground realities of inclusive education. A comprehensive monitoring system ensures continuous improvement in educational outcomes for all students.

Case Studies of Inclusive Education in India

Successful implementations of NEP 2020 provisions

Several states and schools in India have successfully implemented provisions of NEP 2020, showcasing how

inclusive education can be achieved through focused efforts. In Kerala, the government has pioneered the use of technology and community involvement to ensure children from marginalized communities and students with disabilities are included in mainstream education. The state's "Samagra Shiksha Kerala" initiative has integrated special education with general education through resource rooms and trained special educators in many schools. Tamil Nadu has made significant strides by launching programs that focus on inclusive early childhood education, providing support to children with disabilities, and ensuring multilingual teaching in primary schools to promote linguistic diversity and cognitive development. In Rajasthan, efforts have been made to reduce gender disparities by increasing enrollment and retention rates of girls through the "Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA)" program, aligning with NEP 2020's focus on equity and gender sensitivity. Additionally, Delhi's "Chunauti" program has targeted students from underprivileged backgrounds to improve foundational literacy and numeracy, addressing the core learning needs of students from disadvantaged communities. These examples highlight how NEP 2020 provisions can be effectively translated into action when state governments focus on capacity building, teacher training, and community engagement to create inclusive and accessible learning environments.

International comparisons

Several countries across the world offer valuable lessons in implementing inclusive education policies that align with the goals of NEP 2020. Finland is renowned for its inclusive education system, where there is minimal segregation of students with disabilities, and all students receive individualized learning plans. The emphasis on flexible curricula, teacher autonomy, and early intervention strategies has led to impressive outcomes, ensuring that students of all abilities can participate fully in the learning process. In Canada, inclusive education is a fundamental part of the school system, with a focus on differentiated instruction, where teachers tailor lessons to meet the diverse needs of students, including those with disabilities, from indigenous communities, or socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Canada's support systems, which include resource teachers, psychological services, and collaboration with families, have proven effective in fostering inclusive learning environments. New Zealand is another example, where the "Success for All" policy promotes full inclusion of students with special needs in mainstream schools. The government provides significant funding and resources to support schools in making necessary accommodations for students with disabilities, ensuring their active participation. These international practices underscore the importance of governmental support, professional development

Table 1: Role of Technology in inclusive education

<i>Gender</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Male	127	63.5	63.5	63.5
	Female	73	36.5	36.5	100.0
<i>Age</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	25-34	72	36.0	36.0	36.0
	35-44	22	11.0	11.0	47.0
	45-54	55	27.5	27.5	74.5
	55-64	51	25.5	25.5	100.0
<i>School Status</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Public	125	62.5	62.5	62.5
	Private	75	37.5	37.5	100.0
<i>Role</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Student	82	41.0	41.0	41.0
	Teacher	76	38.0	38.0	79.0
	Administrator	42	21.0	21.0	100.0
<i>Years of Experience (if teacher/administrator):</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	0-5 years	41	20.5	20.5	20.5
	6-10 years	53	26.5	26.5	47.0
	11-15 years	75	37.5	37.5	84.5
	16+ years	31	15.5	15.5	100.0

for teachers, and collaboration between educational institutions and communities in making inclusive education a reality. By adopting some of these global best practices, India can enhance the effectiveness of its inclusive education framework under NEP 2020.

Recommendations

Policy recommendations

To improve inclusive education under NEP 2020, the government should allocate more funding for infrastructure development in rural and underserved areas, emphasize continuous professional development for teachers, establish specialized resource centers, introduce robust monitoring mechanisms, strengthen collaboration between schools, local communities, and NGOs, incentivize private schools to adopt inclusive education practices, and develop clearer guidelines for integrating technology into classrooms, particularly for students with disabilities. These

recommendations aim to bridge the digital divide and foster equitable access to education, ensuring that inclusive education is not limited to public schools.

Long-term strategies

A sustainable model for inclusive education requires long-term strategies beyond policy implementation. This includes establishing a strong foundation in early childhood education, building robust teacher education systems, involving community engagement, establishing public-private partnerships, revising and updating curricula, integrating inclusive education into national and state education standards, investing in research and development to improve policy effectiveness, and creating financial sustainability through targeted investments and resource efficient use. This approach ensures that all children, regardless of background, develop foundational skills and creates an ecosystem where education is a collective effort.

Table 2: Background access to quality education

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
NEP 2020 ensures that all children, regardless of their background, have access to quality education.	19	24	22	103	32	200
The policy addresses the educational needs of socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs).	36	45	35	58	26	200
There are sufficient provisions in NEP 2020 to ensure girls' education.	36	36	27	75	26	200

Table 3: Accommodating children with disabilities in regular classrooms

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
NEP 2020 has introduced effective strategies for accommodating children with disabilities in regular classrooms.	44	48	28	55	25	200
The infrastructure in schools has improved to cater to the needs of differently-abled students.	44	42	24	65	25	200
There is adequate financial support for schools to implement inclusive education programs for students with disabilities.	47	36	21	78	18	200

Methodology

The methodology for this study involves a mixed-methods approach to understand the implementation and impact of NEP 2020 on inclusive education. Quantitative data was collected through surveys distributed among teachers, administrators, and students across various schools to gather their perceptions of NEP 2020's policies on inclusive education. Qualitative data was also obtained through interviews and case studies to explore in-depth insights into the challenges and best practices related to inclusive education. The data was analyzed to assess the effectiveness of NEP 2020 in promoting inclusivity, focusing on key areas such as infrastructure, teacher training, and student support systems.

Data analysis

The demographic data provides insights into the composition of the respondents participating in the survey on NEP 2020. "The gender distribution shows that 63.5% of respondents are male and 36.5% are female. In terms of age, the majority (36%) fall within the 25 to 34 age group, followed by 27.5% in the 45 to 54 age group, 25.5% in the 55 to 64 age group, and 11% in the 35 to 44 age group. Regarding school status, 62.5% of respondents are from public schools, while 37.5% are from private schools. When analyzing roles, 41% of the participants are students, 38% are teachers, and 21% are administrators. Among the teachers and administrators, their years of experience vary, with 37.5% having 11 to 15 years of experience, 26.5% having 6 to 10 years, 20.5% with 0 to 5 years, and 15.5% with over 16 years of experience (Table 1).

The data on NEP 2020's impact reflects varied opinions on its provisions for inclusive education. A majority of respondents (51.5%) agree that NEP 2020 ensures access to quality education for all children, regardless of background, with 16% strongly agreeing, while 12% disagree and 9.5% strongly disagree. Regarding the policy's focus on socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs), 29% agree and 13% strongly agree that the policy addresses their educational needs, though a significant portion (22.5%) disagree and 18% strongly disagree, showing mixed perspectives on this issue. As for provisions to ensure girls' education, 37.5% agree and 13% strongly agree that the policy is sufficient, but 18% strongly disagree, indicating that some believe improvements are still needed to fully address gender-based educational disparities (Table 2).

The data on NEP 2020's provisions for inclusive education of children with disabilities reveals mixed sentiments among respondents. Regarding strategies for accommodating children with disabilities in regular classrooms, 27.5% agree and 12.5% strongly agree that NEP 2020 has introduced effective strategies, while a significant portion disagrees (24%) and strongly disagrees (22%), indicating that many see room for improvement. Similarly, the perception of school infrastructure improvements for differently-abled students is divided, with 32.5% agreeing and 12.5% strongly agreeing, but 21% disagreeing and 22% strongly disagreeing, suggesting varied experiences across schools. On the availability of financial support for inclusive education, 39% agree and 9% strongly agree that schools receive adequate funding, but a considerable percentage (23.5%) strongly

Table 4: Learning materials student

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
The curriculum reforms in NEP 2020 have made learning more inclusive for all students.	44	34	28	87	7	200
Textbooks and other learning materials reflect the diversity and inclusion that NEP 2020 advocates for.	55	31	31	51	32	200
Digital learning tools introduced post-NEP 2020 are accessible to all students.	19	24	22	103	32	200

Table 5: Learning materials teachers

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
NEP 2020 emphasizes the need for inclusive training for teachers.	45	36	25	76	18	200
Teachers in my school/region have received adequate training to handle inclusive classrooms.	36	36	35	84	9	200
Professional development opportunities in inclusive education have increased post-NEP 2020 implementation.	45	27	36	59	33	200

disagrees, reflecting concerns about insufficient financial resources to fully implement inclusive education programs (Table 3).

The data on curriculum reforms and learning materials under NEP 2020 indicates mixed responses. Regarding curriculum reforms making learning more inclusive, 43.5% agree and 3.5% strongly agree, while 17% disagree and 22% strongly disagree, reflecting some dissatisfaction with inclusivity efforts. In terms of textbooks and learning materials reflecting diversity and inclusion, 25.5% agree and 16% strongly agree, but a notable 27.5% strongly disagree, and 15.5% disagree, indicating concerns that diversity and inclusion are not fully reflected in educational resources". As for digital learning tools, a majority "(51.5%) agree and 16% strongly agree that they are accessible to all students, but 12% disagree and 9.5% strongly disagree, suggesting that while digital inclusion is recognized, some barriers still exist (Table 4).

The data on NEP 2020's focus on teacher training and professional development for inclusive education presents varied opinions. A majority (38%) agree and 9% strongly agree that teachers have received adequate training to handle inclusive classrooms, though 18% disagree and 18% strongly disagree, indicating room for improvement. Regarding the need for inclusive teacher training emphasized by NEP 2020, 38% agree and 9% strongly agree, while 22.5% strongly disagree, reflecting mixed views on how well this aspect has been addressed. As for professional development opportunities in inclusive education post-NEP 2020, 29.5% agree and 16.5% strongly agree, but a significant portion (22.5%) strongly disagree,

with 13.5% disagreeing, showing that while some progress is acknowledged, many believe that more needs to be done to expand professional development opportunities for educators (Table 5).

Conclusion

In conclusion, NEP 2020 has introduced significant reforms aimed at promoting inclusive education in India. While the policy's emphasis on accessibility, teacher training, and the use of technology is recognized, the survey data reflects mixed opinions on its implementation. Challenges such as insufficient infrastructure, inadequate teacher training, and unequal access to resources, particularly for marginalized groups", remain. Although many respondents acknowledge improvements, particularly in digital tools and inclusive practices, more effort is needed to ensure that the policy's inclusive vision is fully realized across all levels of education, ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all students.

References

- Biswas, D. S. (n.d.). Indian Knowledge system and NEP-2020 Scope, Challenges and Opportunity.
- Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, PSG Institute of Technology and Applied Research, G., S., M., D., Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, PSG Institute of Technology and Applied Research, N., S., Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, PSG Institute of Technology and Applied Research, P., R., & Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, PSG Institute of Technology and Applied Research. (2022). Establishing a Constructive Mentoring Scheme for Engineering Students—A Case Study. *Journal of Engineering Education Transformations*, 35(is1), 303–311. <https://doi.org/>

- org/10.16920/jeet/2022/v35is1/22044
- Gupta, B. (n.d.). Strategies for promoting and sustaining autonomy in higher education institutions in the context of national education policy 2020.
- Gupta, B. L. (2020). Governance and Management Structure for Higher Education Institutions. 1(1).
- Gupta, B. L., & Choubey, A. K. (n.d.). Higher Education Institutions – Some Guidelines for Obtaining and Sustaining Autonomy in the Context of Nep 2020. 9(1).
- Pande, S. (n.d.). A study on India's demographic profile and NEP-2020.
- Pawan, K. (2020). An Empirical Study on NEP 2020 [National Education Policy] with Special Reference to the Future of Indian Education System and Its effects on the Stakeholders. <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.4159546>
- Singh Kaurav, R. P., Narula, S., Baber, R., & Tiwari, P. (2021). THEORETICAL EXTENSION OF THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020 USING TWITTER MINING. *Journal of Content Community and Communication*, 13(7), 17–26. <https://doi.org/10.31620/JCCC.06.21/03>