New Education Policy-2020 of India is in line with Goal 4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030)

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

Purpose*: The present study is an attempt to analyse the New Education Policy (NEP), designed to replace the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. In both rural and urban India, the NEP could prove to be a comprehensive framework for primary/ secondary education, and additionally to vocational education.*
Design/Methodology/Approach*: The current study is based on the qualitative analysis of various secondary data available.*
Findings*: This study analysed and established the efficacy of the multiple exit points which now have been provided under NEP-2020, which benefit the students, by better signaling their education status and establishing their subsequent employment readiness, thereby helping India reap its demographic dividend and better utilize the yet untapped power of youth.*
Research limitations/implications*: The principal constraint being, it attempts to analyse the implications of a newly formulated policy, which has potential, as envisioned by the policymakers, yet is dependent on various intangibles which cannot be factored in while crystal gazing into the future, especially when looking at something which will likely to bear fruit by 2030 earliest.*
Practical Implications: *The current study would provide impetus to the policymakers, professionals to effectively implement the NEP in line with SDGs.*
Originality/Value: *With the multidisciplinary approach to education, the study highlights the importance of a new system that the NEP2020 is trying to implement – by seeking to establish an "Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)", which will digitally store academic credits earned from various recognized Higher Education Institutes (HEI)s.*
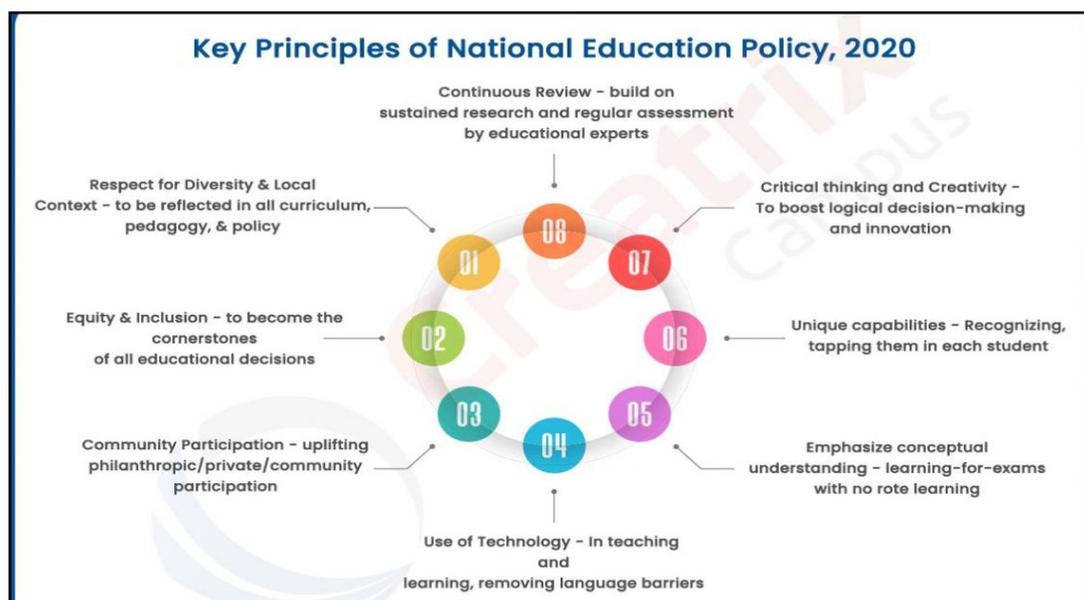
Introduction

"The National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that contributes directly towards suitably transforming our nation into a sustainable, equitable and vibrant knowledge society, thereby providing high-quality education to all"

- MHRD

The canvas of NEP 2020 can completely overhaul the existing education ecosystem in India. It banks upon a visionary obligation towards implementing the envisaged policy by all potential players, including the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and his principal Ministers' dealing with Human Resources, Education, and Youth Affairs. Before implementation, the preliminary research carried out to map the potential policy gaps has constantly flagged that to avoid a future policy failure; we need to establish fail-proof systems, processes, and mechanisms for implementation and accountability, to avoid the inevitable pitfalls.

Fig 1: Key Principles of NEP 2020
Source: National Educational Policy-2020, Ministry of Human Resource Development, GoI

Duly factoring in and consequently propounding a de novo emphasis on revamping and revitalizing the complete fabric of the existing education structure in India, the New Education Policy2020 proposes creating fail roof checks and balances to regulate and govern, thus establishing a comprehensive new educational structure – encompassing a system within it – to help align the aspiration education goals of 21st Century, in synch with UN SDG4. It also simultaneously envisages capitalizing on the existing value systems and traditions in India.

Carrying out a de novo look at the existing lacunae of the existing education structure in India, three crucial issues that emerged and have been duly addressed, are as under:

1.   By 2030, NEP2020 aims to ensure 100 % Pre-School to Secondary level Gross Enrolment Ratio. Presently, a mere 26.3 % of students are enrolled in Higher Education Programme. Thus, by the year 2035, a minimum of 50% of Students should move towards higher education.

2.   Although the rote learning method is painful but remains popular amongst many students good at memorizing things at the last moment, before the exam. Now the due focus will be on practical applicability – less theore

3.   tical and more application-based.

4.   The buzzword being multidisciplinary – the students should be able to select the subjects on their own. Thus, with the consequent due importance being given to other subjects, especially during the secondary stage, the flexibility and freedom of only choosing a subject that the students wish to study, truth emerges.

The Ministry of Human Resources and Development, in its 52-page summary of Draft National Education Policy - 2019, has laid special emphasis on how setting up of multiple entry-exit points in pursuit of higher education goals is going to benefit students who may want

to take advantage of the multidisciplinary approach to higher education. Meaning, Undergraduate Students may drop out from their pursuit of an Undergraduate Degree at any point, to further pursue credits in another discipline, without having to lose their already earned credits. The NEP2020 advocates creating an Academic Bank of Credit (ABC), which will facilitate digital storage of academic credits given by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), thus, facilitating the awarding of degrees by the said institutions, by factoring in the academic credits earned by a student.

In addition to the flexibility allowed by multiple entry-exit points and a multidisciplinary approach, NEP 2020 also emphasizes appropriate Certifications/Diplomas that may be granted to students who decide to mid-course drop out of a specific program.

Finally, the Policy also considers the power of multilingualism, and suggests reforms in the direction of social determinants of education concerning language, factoring in, its power.

Review of Literature
"NEP 2020: Hits and Misses" (Banuri & Sarma, 2020), explains the National Education Policy (NEP), which was approved on 28th July 2020 by the Union Cabinet of India. They elaborate on "the 34 years gap, and the consolidated feedback received by the Indian Government from 2.5 lakh village-level stakeholders to two National Parliamentary level Committees, over more than 50 months of consultations and workshops".

"NEP 2020 Highlights: School and higher education to see major changes" (Nandini, 2020), the editor explains the launch of NEP 2020. She further elaborates on the review of the NEP 2020 draft by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, prepared by a panel of experts, led by Shri K Kasturirangan, former Chief of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Major Steps Identified for Implementation:

The proposed five-point Implementation Plan for executing NEP, 2020, are as under:
1. PM Narendra Modi highlighted the vision of building social and intellectual capital to create collective universal consciousness. In the chain, the next link is to match the same by establishing institutional mechanisms for countrywide implementation.

   - NEP 2020 will involve numerous interventions to succeed – primarily it

will hinge upon center-state coordination and cooperation, additional legislative interventions by the passage of new laws/amendments to existing ones, augmentation of financial resources by increased budgetary layout, based on Inter-Ministerial discussions, culminating in the execution of regulatory reforms.
   - Task Force of PM on Higher Education Reforms will act in an advisory capacity, comprising a body of public/private HEI experts, to assist the PMO in identifying and clearing the inevitable bottlenecks, to fix timelines, accountability, and ensure implementation.

2. Establishing a National level Standing Committee for NEP Implementation tasked to create Implementation Plan, having select Vice-Chancellors / Directors of Universities, etc as members to monitor the time-bound execution.
   - Chaired by the Minister for Education, the NEP Implementation Committee, will function under Education Ministry, and the Secretary of Education will be the Member Secretary.
   - Vested with specific functions and powers, the same will have a thematic sub / regional committees and will have "Ex-Officio Members" of all main regulatory organisations, tasked with identifying and removing hurdles faced by HEIs involved in implementing the NEP 2020.

3. The need to constitute National Education Ministers' Council is of paramount importance – chaired by the Union Minister for Education, and all Education Ministers of all States and UTs forming part of it. The Council will prove to be critical in serving as a forum to help navigate the diverse perspectives of State Governments, and also facilitate the discussion of implementation issues and address the same.

4. Four–As articulated by the Honourable Prime Minister, the concept of Institutions of Eminence (IoE) has the vision and potential to develop World-Class Universities, in line with what existed in India, in the past.
   - The Indian Education System has a glorious past, in synch with its culture and traditions for the last 5000 years. A considerable amount of influence has been the synthesis of religions, and the consequent passing of acquired knowledge was oral, via word of mouth, from one generation to another by the

ancients, and reflects even today, in our mode of teaching.

- From the humble yet the most essential building block of the Indian Education System – the Gurukul to the might and grandeur of Nalanda and Taxila Universities –to the extensive works of literature of India combining subjects across fields, the Indian civilization, and the system of education that it spawned, has been a source of inspiration for the world for the last 3 millennia.

- Banabhatta's Kadambari, an ancient Indian work of literary excellence, described quality education as "knowledge of the 64 Klaas or arts; and among these 64 'arts' not only were subjects – such as Singing and Painting – but also 'Scientific' fields, such as Chemistry and Mathematics, 'Vocational' fields such as Carpentry and Clothes-Making, 'Professional 'fields, such as Medicine and Engineering, as well as 'Soft Skills' such as Communication, Discussion, and Debate"

5. Five –Chaired by the Union Minister for Education, ably supported by Private Sector participation, there exists an urgent need to constitute the National Higher Education Philanthropy Council. With almost 70% of Indian HEIs being Private, approximately 70%Students in India study in Private HEIs.

  - Building on this reality, there is an urgent need to raise critical financial resources to establish and control future Private HEIs. This, however, will entail, innovative new initiatives aimed at establishing institutional mechanisms, designing critical tax incentives, creating endowment frameworks, and other de novo methods to incentivize the Corporate Sector in India, to substantially contribute in terms of Individual Philanthropy /Corporate Social Responsibility.
  - The Philanthropy Council has a vital role to play in developing a comprehensive re-imagination of the tax structure that will incentivize donors.

Methodology:

The qualitative method provides "in-depth, socio-contextual, and elaborate descriptions along with insightful interpretations" (Holloway & Galvin, 2016; Smith et al., 2011). Qualitative analysis research "adopts a prevalent form,

which analyzes documents. The important policy and other forms of documents are analyzed and interpreted to give meaning to an assessment framework" (Bowen, 2009; Chima, 2020).

For this study, the documents were analyzed under the following major categories:

Multiple Entry-Exit Points, Academic Bank of Credit, and Employment Readiness:

The NEP 2020 emphasizes that at the Undergraduate level, for "integrated, rigorous exposure" to Science, Arts, Humanities, Mathematics, and Professional Fields, abroad-based liberal arts education will be put in place. With adequate imaginative and flexible curricular structures, it will have integration of vocational education, inspired combinations of study, and manifold entry-exit points.

In its goal to revolutionize education, and the largest higher education in India, the NEP 2020 seeks to change the current structure of a 3- or 4-year Bachelor's Programme to a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, 4-year pattern with multiple entry-exit points. This is being implemented, keeping in mind the objective of job readiness or employability of fresh graduates, coming out of Institutions of Higher Education.

To make the proposed curriculum and the structure of program pedagogies conducive to job readiness, the new policy scraps M.Phil and plans to start an Academic Credit Bank (ABC) so that students can move between different Universities, if desired and collect credits based on their work. These credits will finally contribute towards the degree earned. Therefore, the NEP is aligned with already existing International Systems and seeks to make the Indian Education system, similar to the contemporary global format.

In addition, the NEP also aims of creating the proposed 4 year UG programs, dependent upon the student's choice;

- Post a 1-year Programme, the Students will earn Certificate. Similarly, post a 2-year Programme, they will earn an Advanced Diploma. Post 3 years, bachelor's Degree, and post 4 years, a Bachelor's Degree with Research.

- Hence, it is reiterated that NEP 2020 wants to bring a primary change in the sphere of multidisciplinary and vocational education - something that would provide the students with the necessary practical knowledge to secure

Public Records: Documents which were available on public platforms.

Personal Documents/Archives: Documents chronicling individual / group actions of Govt Bodies, experiences, and beliefs. The entire range included e-mails, blogs, posts on social media, to include Facebook, and Government White Papers / reports. Analyzing documents, policies, and archives as a social and crucial research tool, it proved to be an invaluable part of this study.

The Policy Document of NEP 2020 was downloaded from the website of the MHRD (www.mhrd.gov.in).

This Policy Document, along with other Twitter sentiments, was analyzed to achieve the research objectives.

Fig 2: Source of Documents

Transforming Curricular & Pedagogical Structure

New pedagogical and curricular structure of school education (5+3+3+4): 3 years in Anganwadi/pre-school and 12 years in school

- **Secondary Stage(4)** multidisciplinary study, greater critical thinking, flexibility and student choice of subjects

- **Middle Stage (3)** experiential learning in the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities

- **Preparatory Stage (3)** play, discovery, and activity-based and interactive classroom learning

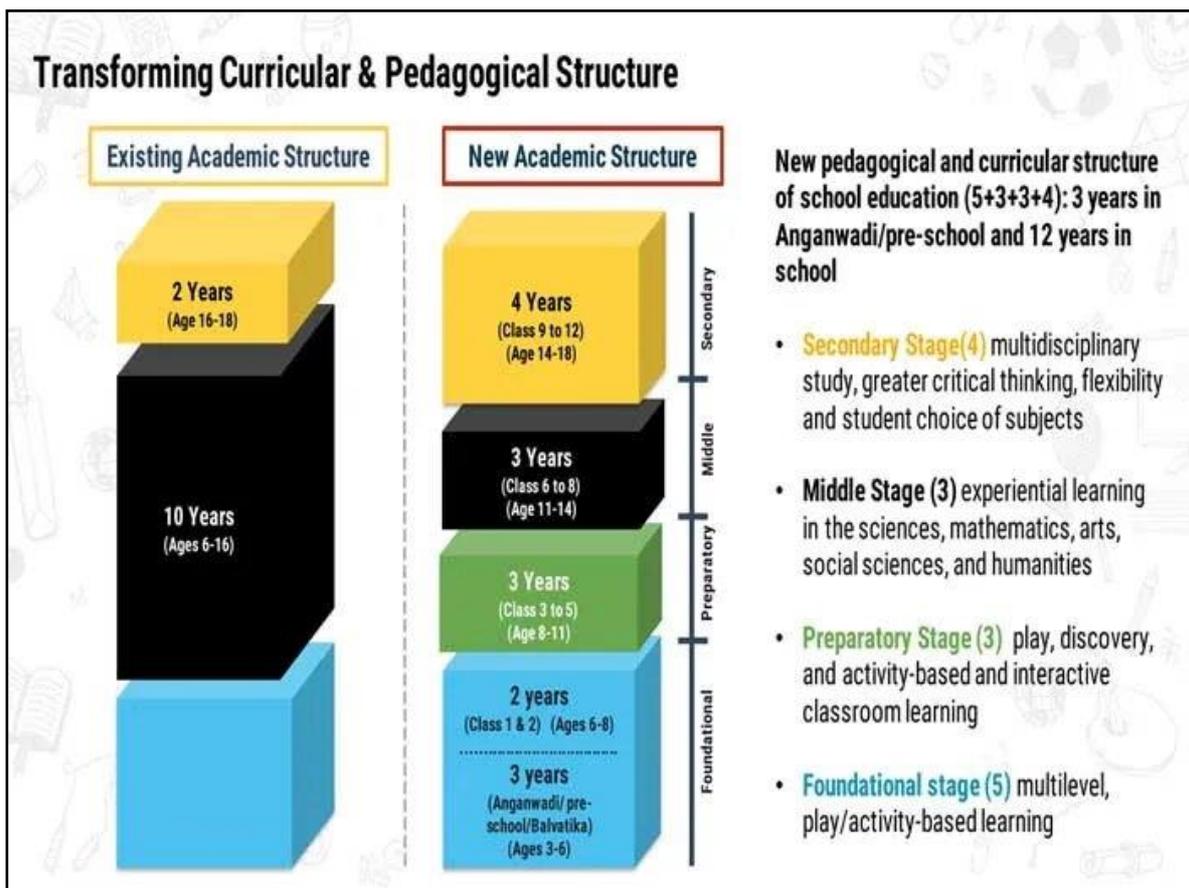- **Foundational stage (5)** multilevel, play/activity-based learning

Fig 3: National Educational Policy-2020, Ministry of Human Resource Development, GoI,

employment and be job-ready, the day they are out of college. NEP 2020 with its provisions is expected to minimize drop-out rates and maximize the enrollment ratio.

A brief comparison between the legendary Kothari Commission Report, which was the foundation for the first National Policy on Education in1968, and the NEP 2020 – throws up numerous similarities in form of challenges, concerns, and the proposed solutions –less the present focus of NEP 2020 on 21stCentury skills.

- This comparison forces us to realize that we are poor implementers of plans and policies and that Education in India has not evolved since independence, and our Socio-Economic challenges are more worrisomely, self-created, and thus appear insurmountable.
- The effective implementation of NEP 2020, across the existing spectrum of educational institutions in India –Small / Big, Public / Private, Rural / Urban, Academic / Vocational, Schools / Colleges, IITs / ITIs, etc – will be the *'concern of the nation'*.

NEP- Empowering Teachers:
The sheer demographic size and variables are likely to slow us down; however, **one common factor** is likely to help turn the tide and move the Indian Education System out of the mire of aimless inflexibility. The same will transform the current education system into a flexible, progressive, multidisciplinary, technology and skill-dependent one, with the capability to produce ethical learners, who are competent, creative, skilled, and thus employable.

The concept of an **empowered teacher** is the fundamental building block of a civilized society. "Justice JS Verma Committee" Report in 2012 said, "**a broken teacher education sector is putting over 370 million children at risk**".

Instead of blaming the teachers for the country's poor learning outcomes, the NEP 2020 blames the teachers' poor performance on the various factors that contribute to the lack of motivation and quality in their service.

- NEP 2020, having duly *recognized the "Power of a Teacher"* has duly factored in the systemic reforms necessary to ensure 'Teaching' emerges as an attractive profession of choice, for the talented and bright young minds in the country.

- The NEP 2020 proposes numerous reforms countrywide to empower the

Teachers and *"restore the status and high respect"* as due to the profession; well ensuring that it will end up attracting the best talented and bright young minds to choose the honorable profession of teaching as their vocation.

Pre-Service Teacher Education:
A National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021 to be drafted, based on the NEP 2020 recommendations, for Teacher Education &Training –to regulate and oversee all issues related to Teacher Education, Pre-Service /In-Service working of the Teachers in Academic, Special Education &Vocational Streams. Now with the minimal degree qualification for School Teachers being a 4-year integrated B.Ed., the admission to this course shall be through suitable Subject and Aptitude Tests conducted by the **National Testing Agency (NTA).** The said curriculum has been designed as a **multidisciplinary/integrated dual-major bachelor's degree in Education** as well as a specialized subject.

Teacher Recruitment & Employment:
A Teacher must qualify via TET, impart a demonstration class, pass the interview, and have knowledge of a local language(s), to get recruited in Private /Government Schools. The NEP 2020 provides

Teaching Career & Professionalism:
NEP 2020 formulates" quantifying performance standards for Teachers, thus clearly listing out the role of a teacher at different levels of expertise/stage and the competencies required for each stage"

Teacher Empowerment and Socialization:
Investing in Teachers, and providing them with the right opportunities to participate and determine School policies/goals and exercise professional judgment regarding what / how to teach, constitutes Teacher empowerment. Teachers need freedom and control over their work when engaged in the reform process; thus, making them feel empowered, motivating them to work harder, and enhance their commitment to their learners.

NEP's Multi-Pronged Strategy to Curb Drop Out Rates:
As per Government of India data, the average Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of Elementary School Students was 96.9%, for 2015-16. Correspondingly, the same for Secondary level was 80%, and for Senior Secondary level, it

Countrywide, the multidisciplinary Universities are tasked to establish an education department to run B.Ed. programmes in cooperation with their own other departments of Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, Neuroscience, Languages, Arts, Music, History, Literature, Physical Education, Science, and Mathematics.

Additionally, to enhance the overall quality of the B.Ed. Programme, they also will carry out **cutting-edge research** on varied aspects of education.

Based on rigorous practical training, the B.Ed. Programme will impart a varied range of pedagogy and knowledge content. The curriculum will also include effective techniques in pedagogy on foundational literacy and numeracy, multi-level teaching and evaluation, teaching children with disabilities, with special interests or talents, use of educational technology, and learner-centered collaborative learning.

For the overall career growth of Teachers, wishing to move into ultra-specialized areas of Teaching, including Leadership and Management Positions in the Schooling System, and also willing to move from one stage to another – Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary Stages – pertinent shorter, **post-B.Ed. Certification Courses** will be made available.

In order to enhance respectability and acceptance of teaching profession, the provision of all fresh **Ph.D. entrants** to take credit-based courses in Teaching / Education / Pedagogy / Writing related to their chosen Ph.D. subject during their Doctoral training period – including actual teaching experience gathered through teaching assistantships – truly has the potential, to be a game changer.

Figure 4: Pre-Service Teacher Education and National Educational Policy-2020

Teacher Eligibility Tests (TETs) will cover Teachers across the spectrum – viz Foundational, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary stages of School education.

For Subject Teachers recruitment, the **TET** as well as **NTA** test scores in the corresponding subjects will also be considered.

NEP 2020 propagates recruiting Teachers to a School Complex and subsequently, sharing them across a group of Schools to cater for the shortage of Teachers – especially for Art & Craft, Classical Language, Counsellors, Dance, Music, Sports Coaches Vocational Education Trainers, Social Workers, Technical and Maintenance Staff.

NEP 2020 also formulates the School Complexes to **hire local experts / eminent persons as "Master Instructors"** for various subjects –Agriculture, Entrepreneurship, Traditional Local Arts, Vocational Crafts,etc, to cater for Teachers to impart classes in the newly introduced classical languages, vocational and skill subjects.

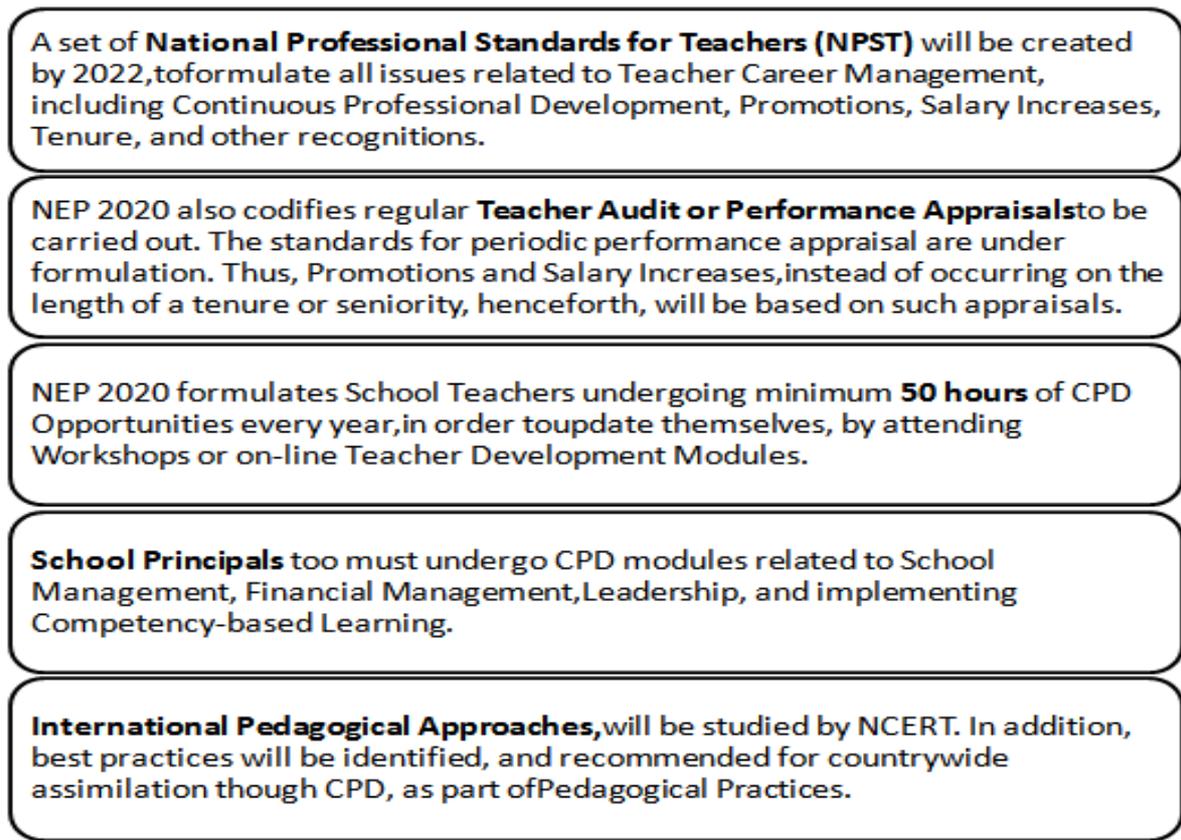**Figure 5: Teacher recruitment and National Educational Policy-2020**

A set of **National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)** will be created by 2022,toformulate all issues related to Teacher Career Management, including Continuous Professional Development, Promotions, Salary Increases, Tenure, and other recognitions.

NEP 2020 also codifies regular **Teacher Audit or Performance Appraisals**to be carried out. The standards for periodic performance appraisal are under formulation. Thus, Promotions and Salary Increases,instead of occurring on the length of a tenure or seniority, henceforth, will be based on such appraisals.

NEP 2020 formulates School Teachers undergoing minimum **50 hours** of CPD Opportunities every year,in order toupdate themselves, by attending Workshops or on-line Teacher Development Modules.

School Principals too must undergo CPD modules related to School Management, Financial Management,Leadership, and implementing Competency-based Learning.

International Pedagogical Approaches,will be studied by NCERT. In addition, best practices will be identified, and recommended for countrywide assimilation though CPD, as part ofPedagogical Practices.

Figure 6: Teaching Career & Professionalism and National Educational Policy-2020

NEP 2020, having recognized the contribution that Teachers can make towards reforming pedagogy and improving the learning outcomes, provides the Teachers with due autonomy in ensuring socio-emotional learning of their students, by selecting appropriate pedagogy, being a critical function of holistic development.

Innovative Teaching Methods adopted by Teachers having due initiative and drive, in order to help improve the learning outcomes, will be duly identified, documented, and shared widely as recommended best practices.

To reduce Teacher isolation experienced by Teachers working in smaller Schools, close collaboration among Schools within a School Complex is recommended. This will create vibrant Teacher communities, working collaboratively, and sharing their best teaching practices.

The School Managements countrywide, have been tasked to ensure provision of basic amenities and safe infrastructure, to include –Hygiene, Computing Devices, Internet, Libraries, and Sports and Recreational Resources – to all Teachers and Students, so as to assist Schools /School Complexes to evolve into vibrant, caring, and inclusive communities of Principals, Teachers, Parents and Students.
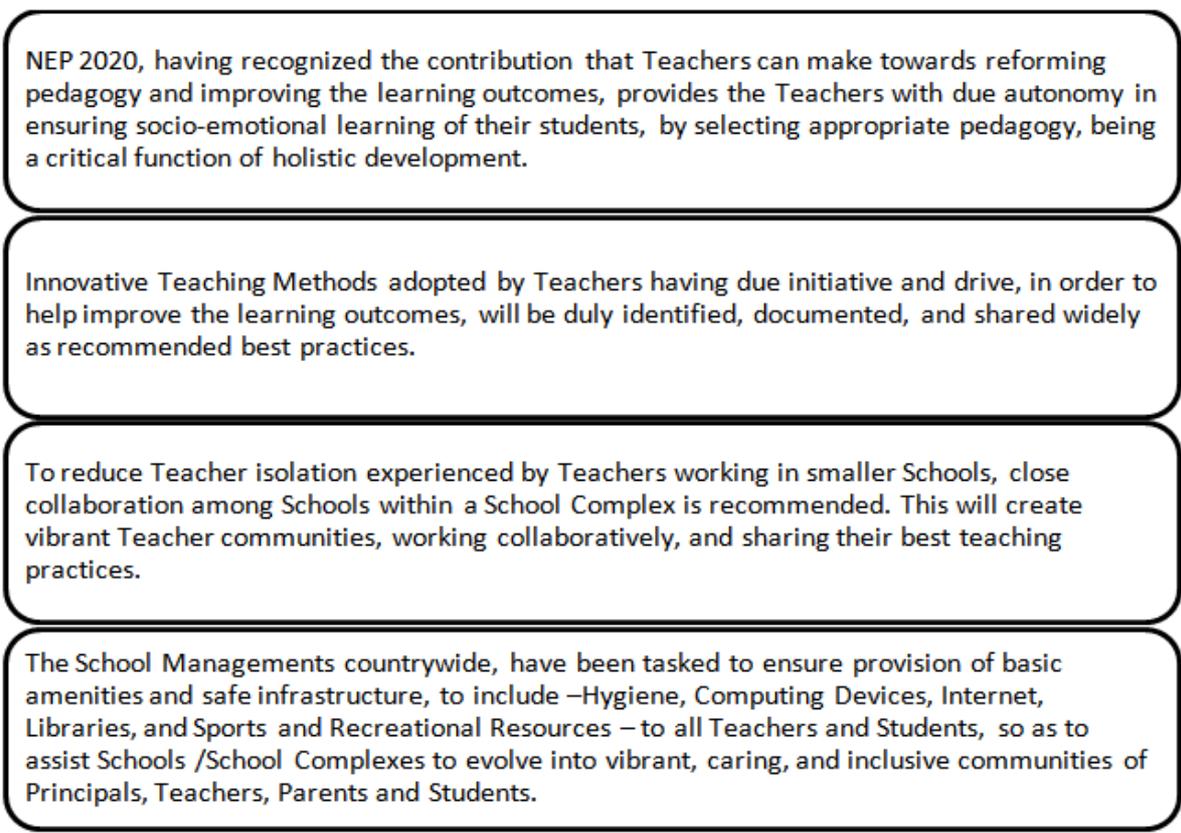
Figure 7: Teacher Empowerment and Socialization and National Educational Policy-2020

stood at 56.2%,

- The overall GER of Students at the Elementary level was 91.64%, for 2018-19. Correspondingly, the same for the Secondary level was79.55%, and Senior Secondary level, it stood at 58.56%.
- By carrying out a comparison of the Annual Enrolment Data, it is evident that a significant number of students drop out of Schools, post 8th Class, for varied reasons and all measures initiated to get them back to Schools, have so far failed.
- NEP 2020, to ensure 100% GER up to Secondary level by 2030, formulated a multi-pronged strategy, as unveiled by the Union Government recently, to successfully arrest this disturbing trend of a significant number of students dropping out of Schools, post 8th Class.
- With "special emphasis" on socio-economically disadvantaged groups, and to facilitate learning for all Students, NEP 2020emphasizes on broadening the scope of School education and thus provide "multiple pathways" to learning, which involves, both – formal and non-formal – modes of education.
- "Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programs offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and the State Open Schools (SIOS) will be expanded and strengthened for meeting the learning needs of young people in India who are not able to attend a physical school". The emphasis on strengthening the NIOS / SIOS for disadvantaged segments of our society will ensure parity of opportunity in our school education ecosystem.
- In 2017-18, the number of non-School going children of the age group – 6 to 17 years – was 3.22 Crores, as per the 75th round of household survey by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO).
- According to Shri Praveen Raju, Co-Chairman of FICCI ARISE & Founder of Suchitra Academy, "NEP 2020 has taken a 360-degree view on the problem of dropouts in Schools by addressing issues of infrastructures, making sure of participation from Students and ensuring the quality of delivery".

Conclusion

Through the National Educational Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), India aims to achieve the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. It is a historic opportunity to build inclusive and diverse educational institutions that will enable social transformation. The National Educational Policy 2020 aims to democratize higher education and enable the world's youngest and most capable demographic to participate in it. This historic initiative will help in uplifting the quality of education and making it more accessible to all. This will affect the operations of State Universities as they are already facing a shortage of faculty members and equipment R & D. This will also make them compete with National Institutes. The new education policy aims to provide the best possible education to the students. It allows select universities from all around the world to operate in India. There are also changes in the degree format that will enable students to earn a living without dropping out.

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