

The Awareness and Implementation Challenges of National Education Policy-2020 Among Secondary School Teachers of Mathura District

Tanu Sharma*, Devki Nandan Sharma

Faculty of Education, GLA University, Mathura-281406, Uttar Pradesh, India; E-mail: tanu.upadhyay5@gmail.com,

*Corresponding author: Tanu Sharma, Faculty of Education, GLA University, Mathura-281406, Uttar Pradesh, India; E-mail: tanu.upadhyay5@gmail.com,

HOW TO CITE:

Tanu Sharma*, Devki Nandan Sharma (2026). The Awareness and Implementation Challenges of National Education Policy-2020 Among Secondary School Teachers of Mathura District. International Journal of Special Education, 41(18s), 1694-1702

ABSTRACT:

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) represents a landmark reform in Indian education, aiming to transform the nation into a vibrant knowledge society through holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary education. This study investigates the awareness of NEP-2020 among secondary school teachers and the challenges encountered in its implementation in Mathura district, Uttar Pradesh. Employing a descriptive survey method, data were collected from 400 secondary school teachers using a structured questionnaire with 50 items across four sections: demographics, awareness, implementation, and challenges. Stratified random sampling ensured representation across gender, school type (government/private), and locality (rural/urban). Findings reveal high overall awareness of NEP-2020 provisions (Mean=4.08), with structural reforms and teacher professional development awareness being highest. Implementation status was satisfactory (Mean=3.91), though a notable gap exists between awareness and implementation, indicating translation challenges. Key implementation challenges included inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, limited digital resources, resistance to change, and administrative difficulties. Significant differences were found in awareness and implementation levels based on school type and locality, with private and urban schools showing higher scores. The study concludes that while awareness of NEP-2020 among teachers is encouraging, bridging the awareness-implementation gap requires systemic interventions, enhanced teacher support, improved infrastructure, and sustained professional development programmes.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, Teacher Awareness, Implementation Challenges, Secondary School Teachers

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:

Copyright: © 2026 Authors.
Open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Introduction

Education is universally recognised as the most powerful instrument for social transformation, economic development, and the cultivation of

human potential. In a country as diverse and populous as India, the quality and accessibility of education determine not only individual life chances but also the nation's capacity to compete in an increasingly knowledge-driven

global economy. The Indian education system, with its vast network of schools, colleges, and universities, has undergone numerous reforms since independence, each reflecting the evolving aspirations of the nation and the changing demands of the times. From the University Education Commission (1948–49) and the Kothari Commission (1964–66) to the National Policy on Education of 1968, 1986, and its modified version in 1992, each policy framework sought to address the educational challenges of its era while laying the foundation for future progress. However, despite these efforts, persistent challenges such as uneven access, variable quality, rote-based learning, inadequate teacher preparation, and limited technological integration have continued to impede the realisation of a truly equitable and transformative education system. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) represents a watershed moment in the history of Indian education. Approved by the Union Cabinet on 29 July 2020, it is the first education policy of the twenty-first century and replaces the thirty-four-year-old National Policy on Education of 1986. The policy is built upon the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability, and Accountability, and aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society by making both school and higher education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, skill-based, and technology-oriented. Its chief purpose is to reform the education system and bridge the gap between current learning outcomes and those desired, producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens capable of building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by the Constitution. At the school education level, NEP 2020 introduces several far-reaching reforms. The most visible of these is the replacement of the traditional 10+2 structure with a new 5+3+3+4 curricular framework, which aligns schooling with the developmental stages of children, encompassing three years of preschool (Anganwadi) followed by twelve years of formal schooling. The policy emphasises foundational literacy and numeracy, reduces the rigid separation between academic and vocational streams, promotes experiential

and competency-based learning, and recommends the use of the mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5. It also aims for universal access to school education with a 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio by 2030, ensuring that every child, regardless of background, has the opportunity to receive quality education. At the heart of this ambitious reform agenda lies the teacher. Teachers are not merely implementers of policy; they are the primary agents of educational change, the bridge between policy intention and classroom reality. The success of NEP 2020 depends, to a very large extent, on how well teachers understand the policy, how effectively they translate its provisions into classroom practices, and how adequately they are supported in this endeavour. The policy itself recognises this by emphasising continuous professional development, teacher training, capacity-building, and the transformation of teacher education from limited in-service training to a culture of comprehensive and ongoing Continuing Professional Development. However, research suggests that teacher training in India has often remained overly theoretical and insufficiently connected to classroom realities, and teacher agency is frequently constrained by excessive administrative duties, inconsistent training, and fragmented systems. The present study is situated within this broader context of educational reform, focusing specifically on the awareness of NEP 2020 among secondary school teachers and the challenges they face in its implementation. Secondary school teachers occupy a particularly significant position in the education system. They are responsible not only for delivering subject content but also for preparing students for higher education, vocational pathways, and active citizenship. At this stage, students are at a critical juncture in their intellectual and personal development, and the quality of teaching they receive has long-lasting implications for their future trajectories. The reforms introduced by NEP 2020—competency-based education, skill development, vocational exposure, digital learning, and assessment reforms—place new demands on secondary school teachers,

requiring them to adopt innovative pedagogical approaches, integrate technology into their teaching, and move beyond traditional examination-oriented instruction. Mathura district in Uttar Pradesh has been selected as the geographical area for this study for several compelling reasons. The district presents a diverse educational landscape, encompassing both government and private schools, urban and rural institutions, and a wide range of socio-economic contexts. This diversity provides a suitable setting to examine how NEP 2020 is being perceived and implemented across different types of schools and communities. Government schools in the district, often serving economically disadvantaged populations, may face challenges related to infrastructure, resources, and teacher training, while private schools may have greater flexibility and resources but may also encounter their own set of implementation barriers. The rural-urban divide within the district is another important dimension, as schools in rural areas frequently contend with limited digital access, inadequate infrastructure, and fewer professional development opportunities compared to their urban counterparts. Understanding these contextual variations is essential for developing nuanced recommendations that can support effective implementation across all types of schools. The study adopts a descriptive survey method, employing a structured and validated questionnaire to collect data from 400 secondary school teachers selected through stratified random sampling from 40 schools across the district. The research examines teachers' awareness of the major provisions of NEP 2020, the extent to which these provisions are being implemented in schools, and the challenges that teachers encounter in the implementation process. Demographic variables such as gender, type of school (government or private), locality (rural or urban), and teaching experience are analysed to understand how these factors influence awareness and implementation. The study also examines the relationship between awareness and implementation, exploring whether higher awareness is associated with better implementation outcomes. The

findings of this study are expected to make significant contributions to the field of educational policy and practice. For policymakers, the study provides empirical evidence about the ground-level realities of NEP 2020 implementation, highlighting the gaps between policy intention and classroom practice. For educational administrators, the study identifies specific challenges that need to be addressed through targeted interventions, resource allocation, and capacity-building programmes. For teachers and teacher educators, the study offers insights into the areas where additional training and support are most urgently needed. For researchers, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on educational policy implementation in the Indian context, providing a foundation for further investigation into the factors that facilitate or hinder the successful translation of policy into practice.

Methodology

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this study was carefully designed to systematically investigate the awareness and implementation challenges of the National Education Policy 2020 among secondary school teachers in Mathura district. The research followed a structured quantitative approach using descriptive survey method, which was considered most appropriate for collecting data from a large group of respondents and describing their current opinions, attitudes, and practices without manipulating any variables. This methodological framework ensured reliable and systematic results that could provide practical evidence about the ground-level realities of NEP 2020 implementation.

Research Method and Design

The study employed a descriptive survey method as the primary research approach. This method was selected because it enables researchers to collect information from a specific group to describe their current opinions, attitudes, practices, or conditions without establishing cause-and-effect relationships. The

survey method was particularly suitable for this study as it allowed the researcher to examine the level of awareness of NEP-2020 among secondary school teachers, assess how far the policy provisions are being implemented in schools, and compare awareness and implementation levels based on variables such as gender, type of school, and locality. The research design was quantitative in nature, conducted in Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh with a sample of 400 teachers.

Population and Sampling

The population of the study included all secondary school teachers working in recognized government and private schools in Mathura district. Mathura was selected due to its diverse educational landscape comprising both government and private institutions, urban and rural schools, and varied socio-economic backgrounds, providing a suitable setting to understand NEP 2020 implementation in semi-urban and rural areas. A total of 40 secondary schools (25 government and 25 private) were selected from the district, from which 400 teachers were included in the study, with approximately 10 teachers selected from each school. The sample was designed to include different categories of teachers: government and private school teachers, male and female teachers, and rural and urban teachers to capture diverse views and experiences.

Sampling Technique

The study used **Stratified Random Sampling Technique** to select the sample. In this method, the population was divided into strata based on three factors: type of school (government/private), gender (male/female), and location (rural/urban). After dividing the population into these categories, teachers were randomly selected from each group in proportion to their number in the total population. This stratification ensured that every important subgroup was properly represented, reduced sampling bias, and allowed better comparison between different groups during data analysis. The use of stratified random

sampling improved the representativeness and accuracy of the study.

Data Collection Tool

To collect primary data, the researcher developed a self-prepared tool entitled "Awareness Scale on National Education Policy 2020 (Implementation and Challenges)" comprising 50 items. The scale was based on Likert-type statements with five response options: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The tool was divided into four sections: Section A collected demographic information (gender, school type, location); Section B measured awareness about NEP-2020 covering structural changes, technology integration, multidisciplinary education, assessment reforms, and teacher professional development; Section C focused on implementation of NEP-2020 in schools including curriculum changes, ICT use, skill-based teaching, and administrative support; and Section D identified challenges such as lack of infrastructure, insufficient training, resistance to change, digital resource limitations, and administrative difficulties.

Validity and Reliability

The validity of the tool was established through systematic procedures. Content validity was ensured by preparing items based on extensive review of NEP-2020 policy documents, literature, and previous research. The tool was submitted to a panel of experts comprising teacher educators, policy analysts, and experienced secondary school teachers for review and suggestions. Face validity was ensured by verifying items appeared appropriate and meaningful to respondents. Construct validity was examined by organizing items under clearly defined dimensions. A pilot study was conducted on a small sample of secondary school teachers to test suitability and comprehensibility, and necessary modifications were made based on feedback. Reliability was established using the test-retest method, where the tool was administered to 30 teachers not part of the final sample, and after a two-week gap, the same tool was administered again. The

correlation coefficient was calculated using Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, yielding a reliability coefficient of **0.82**, indicating high stability and consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process followed a planned, organized, and ethical manner. Formal permission was obtained from principals and headmasters of selected schools through official letters explaining the research purpose and ensuring that teaching activities would not be disturbed. The tool was distributed using both offline (personal visits) and online (Google Forms) methods depending on the situation and convenience of teachers. In schools where direct visits were possible, the researcher personally distributed printed copies and clarified doubts. Where personal visits were not possible, the awareness scale was shared through online platforms. Ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly followed. Teachers were assured that their responses would remain confidential, no personal details would be revealed, and participation was voluntary with the right to withdraw at any time. After completion, tools were collected and screened for completeness, with incomplete or incorrectly filled responses removed from final analysis. Valid responses were then coded for statistical analysis.

Statistical Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics including frequency,

percentage, mean, and standard deviation were computed to summarize demographic characteristics, awareness levels, implementation status, and challenges. The independent samples t-test was employed to compare awareness and implementation across two groups such as male and female teachers, government and private school teachers, and rural and urban teachers. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was used to examine the relationship between awareness of NEP-2020 and its implementation. A significance level of 0.05 was adopted for testing hypotheses. The combined use of these statistical techniques ensured objective comparison across demographic groups, clear identification of major implementation challenges, and statistically validated conclusions that could be easily interpreted and presented.

Result & Discussion

It presents a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of data collected from 400 secondary school teachers in Mathura district regarding their awareness of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020), its implementation status in schools, and the challenges encountered during implementation. The data were collected from both government and private schools, covering rural and urban areas of the district. The findings are systematically organized through tables, figures, and detailed interpretations. The chapter includes demographic analysis, awareness assessment across multiple dimensions, implementation evaluation, challenge identification, hypothesis testing, and discussion of findings in relation to existing literature.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents (N = 400)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	240	60.0
	Female	160	40.0
Location	Rural	280	70.0
	Urban	120	30.0
School Type	Government	240	60.0
	Private	160	40.0
Teaching Experience	Below 5 Years	90	22.5
	5–10 Years	125	31.3
	11–15 Years	95	23.7
	Above 15 Years	90	22.5
Total		400	100.0

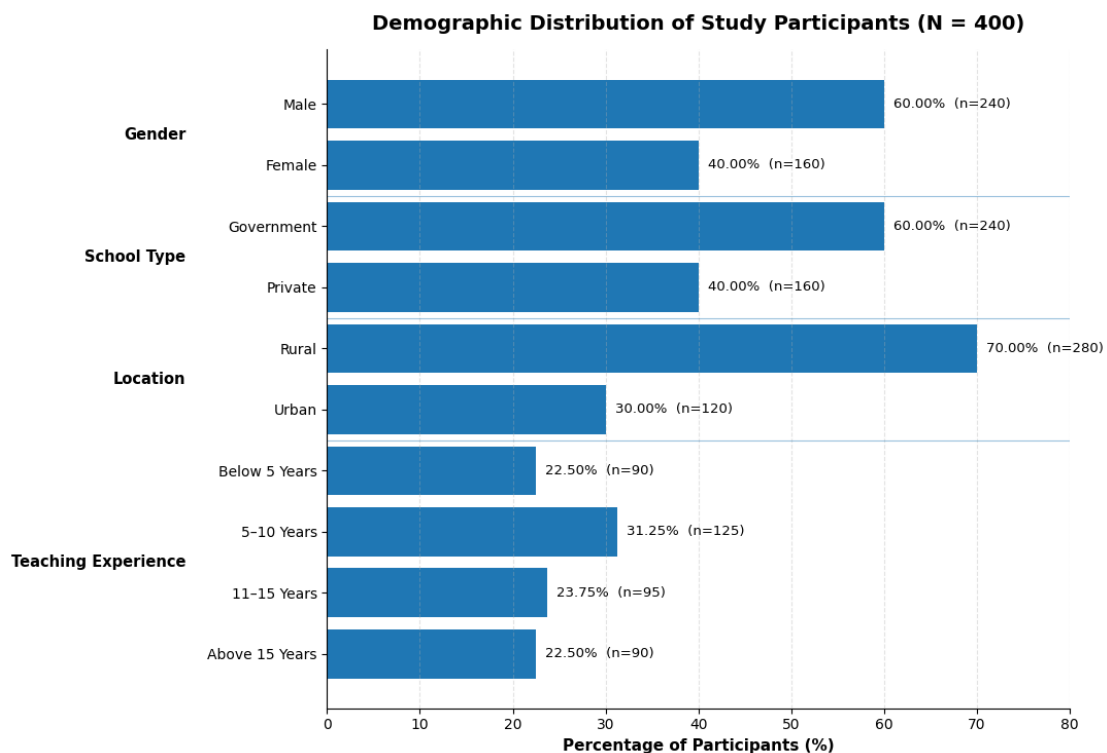


Fig: 1 Demographic distribution of participants

Awareness of NEP-2020 Across Multiple Dimensions

The assessment of awareness levels among secondary school teachers reveals remarkably high overall awareness of NEP-2020 provisions, with a mean score of 4.08 on a 5-point scale, indicating that teachers possess substantial knowledge about the policy's transformative vision and key provisions. Among the various dimensions assessed, structural reform awareness emerged as the highest (Mean = 4.18), demonstrating that teachers are particularly well-informed about the revolutionary 5+3+3+4 curriculum structure that replaces the traditional 10+2 system, which represents a fundamental paradigm shift in Indian education. Teacher professional development awareness follows closely (Mean = 4.17), suggesting that educators recognize the enhanced expectations placed upon them and the need for continuous professional growth in the evolving educational landscape, which is encouraging given that teacher capacity is central to successful policy implementation. Technology integration awareness (Mean = 4.12) and

assessment reform awareness (Mean = 4.12) show comparable levels of understanding, reflecting teachers' recognition of the digital transformation imperative and the shift toward competency-based evaluation methodologies advocated by NEP-2020. Vocational education awareness (Mean = 4.11) and multilingual education awareness (Mean = 4.09) demonstrate slightly lower scores, suggesting that while teachers have general awareness of these provisions, deeper orientation specifically in these areas is still needed. The classification of awareness levels reveals that 57.5% of teachers exhibit high awareness, 32.0% moderate awareness, and only 10.5% low awareness, indicating that the NEP-2020 awareness campaigns have been largely successful in reaching the teaching community in Mathura district. This high awareness foundation is crucial because research consistently demonstrates that teacher knowledge of policy provisions significantly influences implementation quality, as teachers cannot effectively implement what they do not adequately understand.

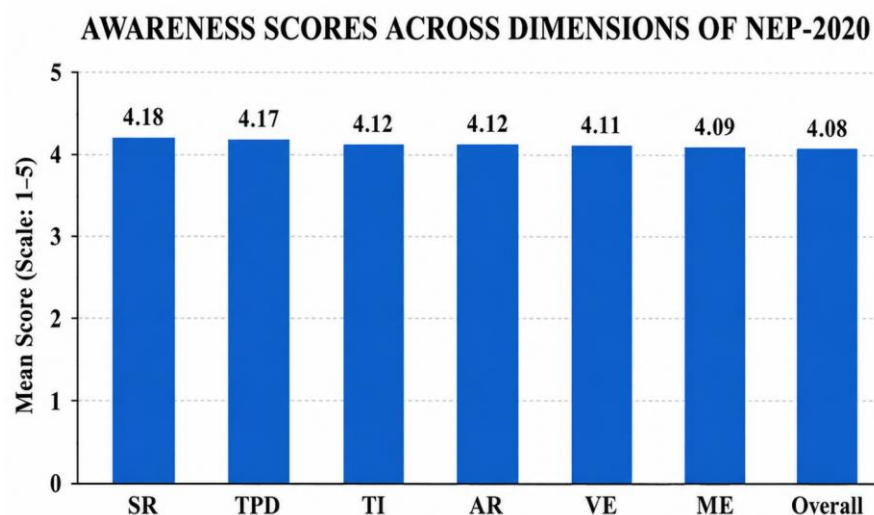


Fig: 2 Awareness scores across dimensions of NEP-2020

Table 2: Awareness Levels Across Different Dimensions of NEP-2020

Dimension	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Overall Awareness of NEP-2020	400	4.08	0.74	High
Structural Reform Awareness	400	4.18	0.71	High
Technology Integration Awareness	400	4.12	0.74	High
Teacher Professional Development Awareness	400	4.17	0.72	High
Assessment Reform Awareness	400	4.12	0.74	High
Vocational Education Awareness	400	4.11	0.74	High
Multilingual Education Awareness	400	4.09	0.75	High

Implementation Status of NEP-2020 Reforms

The implementation status of NEP-2020 in secondary schools demonstrates a satisfactory level with an overall mean score of 3.91, indicating that schools have commenced adopting the policy's provisions despite facing various operational challenges in the process. Competency-based education implementation leads the implementation efforts (Mean = 3.97), reflecting teachers' increasing orientation toward learning outcome-focused approaches that emphasize what students can actually do with their knowledge, representing a significant pedagogical shift from traditional content-centered instruction. Curriculum reform implementation follows closely (Mean = 3.95), demonstrating progress in reorganizing curricula

to incorporate experiential learning, interdisciplinary approaches, and holistic development components as envisioned in the policy framework. Skill-based learning implementation (Mean = 3.92) indicates that teachers are making efforts to integrate vocational and practical skills into their teaching, though the process remains in developmental stages, requiring more comprehensive integration strategies. ICT and digital learning implementation (Mean = 3.89) shows comparatively lower scores, suggesting that while teachers recognize the importance of technology integration, practical challenges in access, infrastructure, and digital literacy limit the actual implementation. Teacher training participation (Mean = 3.88) and administrative support (Mean = 3.85) represent the

implementation dimensions with the lowest scores, highlighting that professional development opportunities and institutional backing require substantial strengthening to facilitate effective reform implementation. The classification of implementation levels indicates that 55.0% of teachers report high implementation, 33.0% moderate implementation, and 12.0% low implementation, revealing a generally positive trend while acknowledging the existence of

implementation gaps that need targeted intervention. The notable gap between awareness scores (4.08) and implementation scores (3.91) is particularly significant, suggesting that while teachers possess substantial knowledge of NEP-2020 provisions, translating this awareness into classroom practice encounters practical barriers that require systemic attention and support mechanisms.

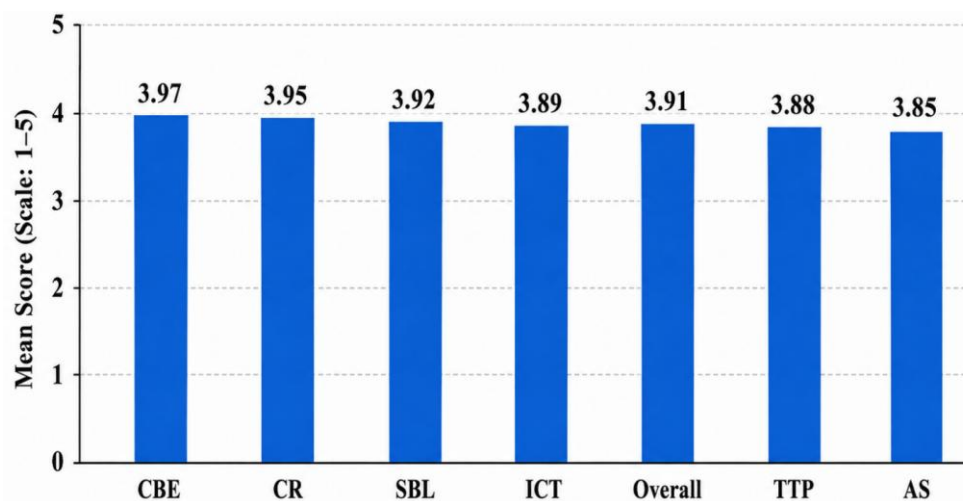


Fig: 3 Implementation Status of NEP-2020 Reforms

Conclusion

The present study investigated the awareness of National Education Policy 2020 and the challenges faced in its implementation among secondary school teachers in Mathura district, providing empirical evidence about ground-level realities of India's most ambitious educational

reform initiative. Based on data collected from 400 teachers across 40 schools representing diverse demographic and institutional contexts, the study offers comprehensive insights into the current state of NEP-2020 implementation and identifies critical areas requiring immediate policy attention and systemic intervention.

References

- Government of India, Ministry of Education. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. New Delhi: Government of India.
- Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (1968). *National Policy on Education 1968*. New Delhi: Government of India.
- Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (1986). *National Policy on Education 1986*. New Delhi: Government of India.
- Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development. (1992). *National Policy on Education 1986 (Modified in 1992)*. New Delhi: Government of India.
- Education Commission (Kothari Commission). (1966). *Education and National Development: Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66*. New Delhi: Government of India.
- Heena, Roshan, K., Chetan, S., & Vikram, S. (2024). NEP-2020 awareness among teachers: A study of knowledge, perceptions and challenges. *Journal for Research in Applied Sciences and Biotechnology*.

- Kulal, A., Abhishek, N., Dinesh, S., Bhat, D. C., & Girish, A. (2024). Evaluating the promise and pitfalls of India's National Education Policy 2020: Insights from the perspectives of students, teachers, and experts. *SAGE Open*, 14(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241279367>
- Neelofar, & Bai, G. S. (2024). Awareness and attitude of secondary school teachers towards NEP 2020 with reference to school education. *ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*.
- Sharma, P., & Bala, S. (2022). A study of national education policy 2020, awareness among secondary school teachers in district Kangra. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Studies*.
- Ravindranath, S., Rijo, J. T., Roychoudhury, S., Bhatnagar, A., Kumar, A. V., Dyl, R., & Qargha, G. O. (2026). *India's National Education Policy 2020 in classrooms: Teachers shaping practice and system change. Invisible pedagogical mindsets in India: How culture, education ecosystems, and beliefs about teaching and learning shape education reform* (ERIC Document No. ED678457). Brookings Institution, Center for Universal Education.
- Agarwal, G., Chakraborty, A., Sood, D., Sharma, P., Malviya, A., Shreevarshini, K., & Bhagat, A. (2025). *Educators' reflections on competency-based learning: Reflecting 5 years of NEP 2020*. Australian Council for Educational Research. <https://doi.org/10.37517/978-1-74286-804-2>
- (2026). India's National Education Policy 2020 in classrooms. *Brookings Institution*. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/indias-national-education-policy-2020-in-classrooms/>
- Palai, P., & Nanda. (2025). Awareness of NEP 2020 on in-service teacher education: A professional development perspective of elementary school teachers. In *[Book Title]* (Chapter). Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003684459-53>
- (2024). Teacher education in India: Tracing the shift from training to holistic development. *ERIC*.
- Dubey, M., & Mitra, S. (Eds.). *Vision of education in India*. [Publisher].
- Mondal, A. (Ed.). *National education policy 2020: Policy reforms and perspectives*.
- Singh, C. (2013). *National policy on education*. Wisdom Press.
- Bhalla, V., & Agarwal, M. R. (Eds.). (2020). *Handbook of national education policy 2020*. Oxford Book Co.
- Indira Gandhi National Open University. (2025). Unit-5: National Education Policy (NEP, 2020). In *Block-1: Concept and Nature of Education*. IGNOU.
- (2026, May 16). From policy to practice: What can unlock NEP's full potential. *Times of India*.
- (2025, August 6). Five years of NEP 2020: The India-Bharat divide deepens, not diminishes. *ETV Bharat*.
- (2025, November 20). NEP exposes how inequality decides who benefits – and who gets left behind. *The Wire*.
- (2026, June 5). NEP 2020 and the crisis of teaching in India's universities. *Frontline*.
- Yenugu, S. (2022). The new National Education Policy (NEP) of India: Will it be a paradigm shift in Indian higher education? *[Journal Name]*.
- Maseeh, M. (2023). Innovations and new reforms in teacher education: Adapting to vision of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- Tripathi, K., & Bhattacharya, S. (2025). Post-intervention awareness on India's National Education Policy 2020 among higher education teachers: A case study among some teachers of HEIs.
- (2025). Impact of NEP 2020 on teacher education in India: Implementation challenges and opportunities. *Zenodo*.
- (2026). Integrating Indian knowledge systems under NEP 2020: Teachers' epistemological negotiations and pedagogical challenges. *Zenodo*.
- Chauhan, A. (2025). A study of satisfaction and perception of teachers in the context of NEP 2020 in the study area. *Zenodo*.