

YOJANA SUMMARY

**NATIONAL EDUCATION
POLICY 2020**

FEBRUARY 2022

- After thirty-four years since the launch of the National Policy on Education in 1986, a new National Education Policy-2020 (NEP-2020) has been announced.
- This new policy envisions to have an education system that is second to none with equitable access to the highest quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background.
- The vision of NEP-2020 is in **sync with Goal 4 of the UN SDG**, which seeks *'to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'*.
- The New Education Policy proclaims to transform India into a global knowledge superpower. It is also India-centric, as it intends 'to instill among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian.
- NEP-2020 has set **2040 as the deadline** to fulfill the goals, targets, and pathways.

Distinctive Thrusts of NEP:

1. Universalisation of Education

- NEP aims at universalising school education (achieving 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio in preschool to secondary level) **by 2030** and higher education (increasing the GER in higher education to 50 %) by 2035.

2. Curricular and Pedagogical Restructuring

- It recommends modifying the existing 10+2 pedagogical structure in the **form of a new structure of 5+3+3+4**, having a **strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)** from the age of 3 years.
- The policy recommends universal provisioning of quality early childhood care and education based on strong pedagogical components to be achieved by 2030.
- It recommends every student should attain foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) by grade 3.
- The main thrust of **structural reforms in higher education** is transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and knowledge hubs.
- Being multidisciplinary, institutions will restructure the pedagogy, permitting the scope for choices of subjects to students and it is also expected that affiliated colleges will gradually phase out giving ways to multidisciplinary universities and colleges by 2035.
- The policy also recommends **building world class multidisciplinary Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** called Multidisciplinary Educational Research University (MERU).

National Education Policy-2020: Principles

- **recognising, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities** of each student;
 - **according the highest priority to achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)** by all students by Grade 3;
 - **flexibility** in their own paths in life according to their talents and interests;
 - **no hard separations** between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc.;
 - **multidisciplinarity** and a **holistic education** across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world;
 - **emphasis on conceptual understanding** rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams;
 - **creativity and critical thinking** to encourage logical decision-making and innovation;
 - **ethics and human & Constitutional values**;
 - **promoting multilingualism and the power of language** in teaching and learning;
 - **life skills** such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience;
 - **focus on regular formative assessment for learning**;
 - **extensive use of technology** in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for Divyang students;
 - **respect for diversity and respect for the local context**;
 - **full equity and inclusion** as the cornerstone of all educational decisions;
 - **synergy in curriculum** across all levels of education from early childhood care and education to school education to higher education;
 - **teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process**;
 - a **'light but tight regulatory framework'** to ensure integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system;
 - **outstanding research** as a requisite for outstanding education and development;
 - **continuous review** of progress based on sustained research;
 - a **rootedness and pride in India**, and its rich, diverse, ancient, and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions;
 - **education is a public service**; access to quality education must be considered a basic right of every child;
 - **substantial investment** on public education system as well as the encouragement and facilitation of true philanthropic private and community participation;
- (Source: NEP-2020, p. 5-6)

3. Equity and Inclusion in Education

- NEP 2020 envisages achieving Equitable and Inclusive quality education for all. The policy considers equity as an inclusive notion focusing on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) and areas.
- Recognising the large intra-state variations, the policy recommends declaring the regions with large populations from the disadvantaged groups as **Special Education Zones (SEZs)**, where all the schemes and policies can be implemented more effectively.
- Promoting **equity in learning outcomes** from early childhood care and education through higher education is one of the major goals of NEP-2020.

4. Reforms for Effective Governance

- **In school education**, some of the major reforms include: a) setting up school complexes/clusters, b) setting up of school standards and authority, and c) reforming school examination boards.
- The governance **reforms in higher education** include setting up a **single regulator on Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** with **four verticals for regulation**:
 - National Higher Education Resource Centre (NHERC) accreditation,
 - National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC),
 - funding Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), and
 - academic setting of General Education Council (GEC).
- The idea behind creating a single regulator is to initiate the problems of over-regulation in higher and professional education.

5. Standard Setting and Accreditation for School and Higher Education

- The NEP-2020 advocates for the institutionalisation of effective quality assurance and accreditation system by establishing **State School Standards Authority (SSSA)** as an independent state wide body.
- In higher education the policy envisages to set up NAAC as one of the verticals of HECI.

6. Vocational Education

- NEP envisages strengthening the skills component in general education and raise the status of vocational education by integrating it into the mainstream formal education.
- It is expected that **by 2025**, over 50% of the learners through the school and higher education system will have exposure to vocational education.

7. Quality Academic Research

- It calls for setting up the **National Research Foundation (NRF)** with a special mandate to foster research and innovation in universities and colleges including interdisciplinary research.

8. Use of Technology

- The new NEP 2020 proposes to set up a **National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)** to serve as a platform to better the ideation process, improve learning, assessment, planning, and administration.
- This policy aims to see that technology is appropriately integrated into all levels of education for: improving teaching, learning, and evaluation processes etc.

9. Raising Public Expenditure on Education

- The policy commits to raise the public expenditure on education to the **recommended level of 6% of GDP**.

10. Internationalisation in Education

- NEP-2020 advocates for greater internationalisation in education by creating avenues for having larger number of international students studying in India.
- NEP 2020 points out that **high performing Indian universities** will be **encouraged to set up campuses in other countries**, and similar selected universities, e.g., those **from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India.**

11. Promotion of Indian Languages, Art and Culture

- NEP-2020 advocates the use of Indian languages, art, and culture at all levels of education.
- The policy has proposed establishing an **Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI)** to promote Indian languages.
- It has also been pointed that **Sanskrit will be mainstreamed in schools** and higher education institutions.

Conclusion:

- The policy is both global and local in its outlook and intent. It makes a significant headway from earlier policies by putting quality education as the topmost agenda of educational reforms, strengthening the foundations of education, catering to the educational needs of the most disadvantaged, and making India a global leader in education.

ASSESSMENT REFORMS

- At present, in India, assessments are commonly perceived as examinations or tests that end up measuring a very narrow range of competencies across subjects and fail to accurately measure the overall potential of the students.
- Such a system creates undue pressure, stress, and anxiety among students and reduces the goal of education to merely scoring high marks in key examinations.

NEP 2020 and Assessment reform

- NEP 2020 aims to change the very culture of assessment in our schooling system to become more constructive, developmental, and learning-focused.
- It emphasised that assessment **needs to be visualised as an ongoing process** that is instrumental in understanding how students think and learn.
- NEP 2020 suggests redesigning of Board examinations to make them more valid, reduce academic stress and pressure,

The infographic is divided into two main sections. The left section, titled 'Focus on Competency-Based Education & Assessment Reforms', lists key points: targeting students and teachers from classes I to XII; redefining the curriculum in terms of competencies and learning standards/assessment frameworks; including competency-based test questions in assessment practices; building teacher capacity to promote understanding and competency-based education; and developing teacher resources for active student-centric pedagogy. The right section, titled 'Reforms in examination to encourage Holistic development of learner', lists aims and benefits: improvement exams for students; a new marking scheme prioritizing creative, correct, and relevant answers; subjects offered at two levels to reduce stress; choice in Mathematics at the senior secondary level; internal assessment based on competencies like quizzes, oral tests, projects, and enrichment activities; facilitating sports during exams; using art to reduce stress; and replacing the word 'Fail' with 'Essential Repeat'.

and de-emphasise coaching culture.

- The Board examinations should primarily assess core capacities rather than content memorisation.
- The focus of such certification examinations should be on holistic learning and development rather than a narrow range of content or textbook material learnt in a single stream.
- In this context, NEP 2020 offers choice and flexibility to students to reduce the stress and anxiety currently associated with Board examinations.
- NEP 2020 also discusses the need for a **holistic, 360-degree, multidimensional report** that reflects in great detail the progress as well as the uniqueness of each student in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

Way Forward

- Building consensus among stakeholders is the first principle. NCERT, SCERT, and Boards should together work towards reforming the curriculum, the syllabus, and associated assessments.
- We need agreement among stakeholders on what are the core and essential competencies that must be assessed through various systems of assessment. To enable this, we need contextualised learning standards, competency frameworks and assessment processes for all subjects.
 - This will also **enable equivalence across Boards**. Currently, it is practically impossible to compare performance across Boards.

REINVENTING TEACHER EDUCATION

The National Education Policy's stated goal is to **reinstate teachers as the most respected members of our society**.

Evolution of Teacher Education

- The current style of schooling and teaching emerged during the British rule in India. This system focused on a behaviourist paradigm where education was concerned with preparing students to be disciplined, English-speaking clerks, to submissively execute the tasks of the British administration.
- It prepared **teachers too as mechanics** mainly concerned with classroom teaching.
- There has been a slow paradigm shift in the system of teacher education in India, with the successful introduction of National Curriculum Framework (NCF)-2005, National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009, and Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009.
- The **Justice Verma Commission in 2012** also stressed upon the need to improve the quality of pre-service and in-service teacher education.
- In 2014, the erstwhile Ministry of Human and Resource Development (MHRD) restructured its B Ed. programme by doubling the duration of the programme to two years.
- The new teacher education curriculum, designed by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) introduced several changes in the curriculum.

Challenges

- The present system of training and recruitment is churning ill-equipped and poorly trained teachers.
- Mushrooming of colleges providing B Ed courses with no proper regulatory oversight.
- Teacher Education Institutions have been working in isolation from rest of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

- There has been no system to ensure only motivated and meritorious individuals select teaching as a profession.

Teacher Education Post NEP- 2020

- Recognising the power of teacher, NEP 2020 has put in place systemic reforms that would help teaching emerge as an attractive profession of choice for bright and talented young minds.
- It has put in place **different interventions like:**
 - Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP),
 - National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST),
 - National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) and
 - at least 50 hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for every teacher in a year.
- **Minimum entry requirement** - The four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), a dual-major holistic bachelor's degree programme offering B.A., B.Ed/B. Sc., B. Ed., and B.Com. B.Ed, will be the **minimum entry requirement for teachers**.
- **Breaking the silos** - Multidisciplinary universities and institutions will be encouraged to establish education departments and run teacher education programmes. All stand-alone Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs) will be required to transform to multidisciplinary institutions by 2030.
- **Continuum in teacher education** - The roll out of **National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)** is a continuum in teacher education so far as it would cover expectations for the role of teacher at different levels of expertise/experience at different stages of his/her career, and the competencies required for that stage. As and when it fully evolves, linkage of career promotion, financial incentives, etc. will enable the teachers to strive for the next level of professional competence.
- **Mentoring** - *National Mission for Mentoring (NMM)* for schools will be operationalised by NCTE by **creating a large pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty as potential mentors** for mentees (school teachers, Principals, teacher educators, etc.)
- **Continuous learning** - NEP, 2020 envisages each teacher to undergo at least 50 hours of CPD per year.
- **Online training** - NCERT has initiated the **NISHTHA** (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement) integrated training programme. It is an online programme for different stages of school education– Teachers, Head Teachers/Principals, and other stakeholders in Educational Management and Administration.

Conclusion

- The multipronged approach adopted by NEP, 2020 is likely to revitalise the teacher education, allow bright students to opt for ITEP as a matter of choice rather than by chance.
- Interventions like NPST, NMM, CPD, etc. contribute to qualitative changes in teachers' pedagogic transaction.
- Dr APJ Abdul Kalam had said "Enlightened citizenship has **three components**: education with value system, religion transforming into spiritual force, and creating economic prosperity through development".
- We repose faith in our teachers to become torch-bearers for the young generation and shape India's development and sustained progress in the right direction.

- Vocational education in schools has been accorded high priority since National Policy on Education, 1986, and Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary Education was launched in 1988.
- Currently, the scheme is being implemented as part of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme ‘Samagra Shiksha’ and has been aligned with the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF).
- The vocational subjects are introduced as an additional subject at the Secondary level and as a compulsory elective subject at Senior Secondary level.

Achievements

- Under Samagra Shiksha, 14,435 schools have been approved to impart Vocational Education.
- Currently, more than 1.5 million students are undertaking vocational education under Samagra Shiksha as a part of their Secondary and Senior Secondary curriculum.

Goal set by NEP

- NEP has set a goal that by 2025, **at least 50% of learners** through the school and higher education system, shall have exposure to vocational education.
- It also encourages different models of Vocational Education in schools so that locally relevant skill education can be offered in appropriate manner.

Several efforts to achieve these goals

- Provisions have been made to provide exposure to Vocational Education at Upper Primary level (Grade 6-8). The pre-vocational education programme to be introduced from Grades 6 to 8 will mainly focus on activity-based teaching-learning.
- At Secondary and Sr. Secondary level, NSQF compliant vocational courses are offered to the students along with other academic subjects.
 - NSQF is a nationally integrated education and competency-based framework.
- The State Governments have been advised that **Vocational courses are to be treated at par with other academic subjects** and accorded a similar status in the scheme of subjects.
- Employability Skills module consisting of Communication Skills, Self-Management Skills, Information and Communication Technology Skills, Entrepreneurship Skills, and Green Skills has been made a mandatory part of the Vocational Courses.

Adaptability

- NEP aims to address **integration of vocational education** into all schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This provides mobility between general and Vocational Education.
- A **unified credit accumulation and transfer framework** is being devised for integration of academics and Vocational Education.

Coverage and Convergence

- To achieving the goal of up to 50% of learners into Vocational Education, Under Samagra Shiksha, new schools are being approved every year for the implementation of Vocational Education.
- In addition, the Hub and Spoke model is being implemented where schools with requisite infrastructure will act as hubs and provide skill education to the children from surrounding schools.

Way Forward

- Vocational Education and Training (VET) or Skilling Programmes will be successfully implemented if the supply of skilled manpower matches with the demand in the industry or the world of work. Therefore, it is important to **assess the emerging requirements for knowledge and skills**.
- Emerging trends, such as Internet of Things (IoT), machine learning, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and robotic process automation need to be explored besides the 21st century skills.

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

- With the arrival of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, focus has shifted from the traditional **teacher-centred to learner-centric approach**.
- The policy stresses on the core principle that education **must develop not only the cognitive skills** – both ‘foundational skills’ of literacy and numeracy, and ‘higher-order’ skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, but also **social and emotional skills**.

What is needed to promote quality in education?

- Attempt to improve quality of education will succeed only if it goes hand in hand with steps to promote equity and inclusion.
- This requires schools to be sufficiently equipped and prepared to address the diverse learning needs of all children with special focus on children belonging to SC, ST and Minorities, CwSN (Child with Special Needs), as well as the girl children.
- Another dimension of quality is to **address the rural-urban divide** and **regional disparities** as also the **digital divide**.

Challenges with the existing system

- **Persistent gaps in learning outcomes**, including lack of clear definition and lack of understanding of the same among teachers and parents.
- Children being unprepared for schooling, teachers lacking the skills and motivation to be effective,
- Time spent on different activities in classroom transactions, and ineffective school leadership.

Major recommendations of NEP 2020

- **Transforming Curricular & Pedagogical Structure**– It recommends a new pedagogical and curricular structure of school education (5+3+3+4):
 - Foundational stage (5 years up to class II) multilevel, play/activity-based learning;
 - Preparatory Stage (3 years from class 3 to 5) having play, discovery, activity-based, and interactive classroom learning;
 - Middle Stage (3 years from class 6 to 8) offering experiential learning in sciences, mathematics, arts, and social sciences, and
 - Secondary Stage offering 4 years of multidisciplinary study, critical thinking, flexibility, and choice of subjects.
- **Integration of Experiential Learning**, Play-based, Sports-integrated, art-integrated, storytelling, toybased pedagogies at all the stages of school education.
- **Integration of Pre-vocational education into the curriculum** from upper primary level onwards.

- **Strengthening and universalisation of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**, and Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN).
- **Reform in Assessment and Examination** by creating Holistic Progress Card (HPC)
- **Enhancing quality of pre-service and in-service training of teachers**
- **Tracking Student Progress for Achieving Learning Outcomes.**
- **National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) & National Mission for Mentoring (NMM)** for teachers.

Enhancing Quality of School Education

1. Samagra Shiksha

- The Samagra Shiksha Scheme was launched in 2018-19. It subsumed the three erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Schemes of SSA, RMSA and Teacher Education.
- The major objectives of the Samagra Shiksha Scheme are:
 - Support States and UTs in implementing the recommendations of NEP 2020 and RTE Act, 2009;
 - Focus on ECCE and FLN;
 - Provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students;
 - Bridging Social and Gender Gaps; ensuring equity and inclusion at all levels of school education;
 - Strengthening and upgradation of State Councils for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs)

2. Other Programmes

- The Central RTE Rules 2010, were amended to include reference on **class-wise, subject-wise learning outcomes** at the elementary level.
- The **National Achievement Survey (NAS)** is conducted periodically to enable a health check on the education system, identify gaps in learning outcomes, and take remedial steps.
- **Performance Grading Index (PGI)** has been developed to grade the States/UTs, against certain common benchmarks and provide them a roadmap for making improvements.
- Focus on teachers' training and capacity building through the launch of **National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA)**.
- **National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat)** has been launched for ensuring that every child in the country attains Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) at Grade 3 by 2026-27.
- **PM eVidya:** It is a comprehensive initiative under Atmanirbhar Bharat Programme, which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable coherent multi-mode access to education.
- It includes access to a variety of e-resources in 33 languages including Indian Sign Language over **DIKSHA (One nation; One digital platform)**, **Swayam Prabha DTH TV channels (One Class; one channel for class 1 to 12)**, Extensive use of Radio, Community radio, and Podcast- **ShikshaVani**.
- **PM Poshan Shakti Nirman** covers all children of Balvatika to Class VIII in Government and Government-Aided schools for provision of supplementary nutrition at school.
- NEP 2020 recommends the development of 3-month play-based school preparation module for all Grade 1 Students. Accordingly, NCERT has developed the **VIDYA PRAVESH module** that can be adapted or adopted by States and UTs as per their need.

- **SAFAL** (Structured Assessment for Analysing Learning levels) - It will focus on testing for core concepts, application-based questions, and higher order thinking skills.
- **Vidyanjali 2.0**: It is a volunteer management programme. It will help the community/volunteers to interact and connect directly with the Government and Government-aided schools of their choice and share their knowledge and skills and/or contribute in the form of assets/material/equipment to meet the requirement of these schools.

EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- For any accessible reading material, it is important that the **content to be adapted is also inclusive**.
- When developing any teaching-learning material, we must think of all children, with variations in their ability, socio-economic backgrounds, interests, strengths, and access as being able to use it and find it relevant.
- Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs (DEGSN) at NCERT is entrusted with the work of developing inclusive content.

NEP Encourages Inclusive Education

- NEP 2020 makes available the provisions for accessible material, which have not been used widely so far, to reach classrooms and transform the way in which all students learn.
- NEP 2020 has clarified a move to prioritise the inclusion and equal **participation of children with disabilities** in ECCE and the schooling system. Children with disabilities will be enabled to fully participate in the regular schooling process from the Foundational Stage to higher education.
- NEP is also affirming a commitment to actualising the provisions of RPwD Act, 2016 on adapting the schooling system to the needs of children with disabilities.

Some of the Projects undertaken by the NCERT

Accessibility in the Current NCERT Curriculum

- In the current NCERT textbooks developed post the NCF 2005, inclusion has been ensured in the content of various chapters.
- On the **ePathshala portal**, e-versions are freely available for all textbooks from grades 1-12.
- The ePathshala mobile app allows for Text To Speech (TTS) which makes the content accessible to persons with disabilities related to low vision.

Barkhaa: Reading for 'All' Children

- The Barkhaa Reading series was developed originally by the Department of Elementary Education (DEE) at the NCERT.
- It is an attempt to provide reading material in both print and digital versions with additional accessible features. These features give a **multi-sensory experience to readers** - auditory and visual.



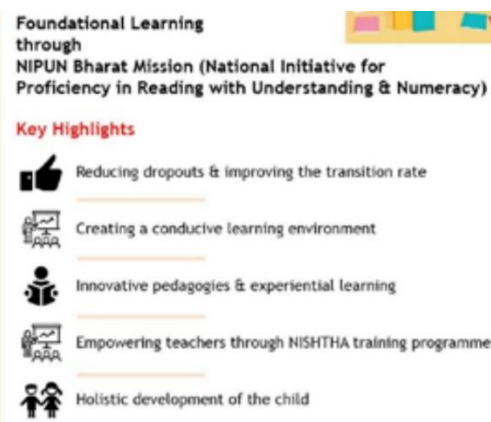
Various researches have clearly pointed out that foundational learning forms the cornerstone to successful academic development in later grades and is considered to be the gateway to learning.

Status of Foundational Learning

- As per UDISE 2019-20, there are 15 lakh schools including all categories (govt., govt. aided, and private unaided) with total enrolment of 25 crore children.
- The **gross enrolment ratio (GER) at the primary level is 102.7%** (as per UDISE + 2019-20) which indicates that nearly all children at primary level are enrolled in schools.
 - However, **learning levels have remained consistently low.**

NEP 2020 and NIPUN Bharat Mission

- One of the major recommendations of NEP 2020 is **emphasis on universal acquisition of foundational skills** by all children at the end of Grade III.
 - Foundational learning accounts for children's ability to read and meaningfully comprehend, as well as use basic mathematical operations in real life.
- Department of School Education and Literacy has launched a national mission namely **'NIPUN Bharat'** (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy) in July, 2021.
- The vision of the NIPUN Bharat Mission is to create an enabling environment to ensure universal acquisition of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN). The mission will cover the learning needs of **children in the age group of 3 to 9 years.**
- It focuses on three following major goals:
 - Developmental Goal 1: Children maintain good health and well-being
 - Developmental Goal 2: Children become effective communicators
 - Developmental Goal 3: Children become involved learners and connect with their immediate environment.



VIDYA PRAVESH

- There are many children **who directly enter grade I without having any exposure to pre-school.**
- Therefore, NEP 2020 has recommended a 3-month-activity-based school preparation module so that children become ready for Grade I.
- In accordance of this recommendation, **NCERT has developed Vidya Pravesh, a 3 Months Play Based School Preparation Module** as an integral part of the NIPUN Bharat mission.
- The objective of Vidya Pravesh is to provide age and developmentally appropriate early learning experiences and learning of all children with a focus on FLN.

Conclusion

- The time is now ripe for every citizen to understand importance of foundational learning and participate wholeheartedly in the endeavours to make NIPUN Bharat Mission a grand and sustainable success.

RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND ASSESSMENT OF TEACHERS

There is a need for complete overhaul by **keeping teachers at the core of the reforms** in the education system. The new National Education Policy 2020 stresses on the importance of the role of teachers.

Teacher Recruitment Process

- NEP 2020 recommends **strengthening the Teacher Eligibility Tests (TET)** in various ways and inclusion of evaluation of subject knowledge and teaching competencies through demonstrations and interviews.
- The policy aims to make the **teacher recruitment process more transparent** by halting mass transfers, using computerised systems for automation of the transfer process, and also encouraging States to have technology-enabled planning and forecasting exercises to determine vacancies by subject.
- One of the major challenges is the scarcity of teachers. The policy promotes the idea of hiring local experts to a school complex and sharing them across the cluster of schools.
- The policy suggests **incentives for teachers to take up teaching jobs in rural areas**. In addition, merit-based scholarships will be provided for rural students and teachers.

Training

- NEP states teachers will be given continuous opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations and advances in their professions.
- Platforms (especially online platforms) will be developed so that teachers may share ideas and best practices.
- Each teacher will be expected to **participate in at least 50 hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD)** opportunities, driven by their own interests.

Merit-based Assessment

- According to NEP, teachers doing outstanding work must be recognised, appreciated, promoted, and given an increment in the salary.
- The policy also hinted at the development of the **National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)**. This will be developed by 2022.
- It will comprise of standards for performance appraisal, for each stage, that would be carried out on a periodic basis.
- The NPST will also inform the design of pre-service teacher education programmes. Promotions and salary increment will not occur based on the length of tenure or seniority, **but only on the basis of such appraisal**.

TEACH THEM YOUNG

- At present, there are likely to be **about 100 million children between the ages of 3-6 years**.
- These years are the bridge years between home and school, critical for physical, cognitive, socioemotional, language, and early numeracy development - components together comprising Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).
 - It has become imperative to lay a solid foundation of ECCE since population trends show that **India's child population has reached a peak**.
- For overall development, a child in the early years needs:
 - **Care**, in the form of good health & nutrition and a safe environment, as well as,

- **Stimulation** that fosters curiosity particularly planned play, adult-child interactions, child-child interactions, and opportunities for holistic development.

ECCE in India

- India has one of **largest network of child care or anganwadi centres**, set up under the Ministry of Women & Child Development's **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme (1975)**.
 - It provides a range of services, from health and nutrition to pre-school non-formal education.
- In addition, private preschool, and day care services have been accessible at various price points.
- Despite multiple actors and a variety of interventions and initiatives, achieving quality ECCE still remains a challenge.

Unprepared Schooling

- Of the nearly 25 million children born in India every year, **about 99% enroll in school at the age of 5 or 6**. However, many enter school without being school-ready. This was revealed by ASER 2019: Early Years reports.
- This is due to the fact that ECCE is not available to crores of young children, particularly children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

ECCE: A Core Policy Imperative

- The NEP 2020 has taken a big step in making ECCE a core Policy imperative.
- Following NEP 2020, detailed guidelines for ECCE and FLN have been formulated through the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding & Numeracy or NIPUN Bharat.
- NEP 2020 lays **emphasis on multilingualism and the power of language**.
 - It argues for children to be exposed to multilingualism early on as research clearly shows that children pick up languages extremely quickly between the ages of 2 and 8.

Inclusion of All

- NEP 2020 advocates inclusion of all SocioEconomically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) at the three levels of access, participation, and learning outcomes.
- It draws attention to:
 - disparities experienced by socio-cultural groups based on caste, tribe, and religion
 - certain geographical areas contain significantly larger proportions of SEDGs, and hence these areas should be declared Special Education Zones (SEZs), where all the schemes and policies are implemented to the maximum
 - specially targeting girls, who cut across all underrepresented groups
 - ensuring inclusion and equal participation of children with disabilities in ECCE
 - Support to teachers to sense & identify learning disabilities early and plan for their mitigation.