



Challenges in the Implementation of the New Education Policy

Ms Rozy Tigga

Research Scholar

Asian International University

Imphal South, Manipur

Abstract

The New Education Policy (NEP) represents a transformative vision for the education system, aiming to make learning more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, and aligned with the needs of the 21st century. While the policy proposes ambitious reforms across school and higher education, its successful implementation faces several structural, administrative, socio-economic, and pedagogical challenges. This article critically examines the major obstacles in implementing the New Education Policy, highlighting issues related to infrastructure, teacher preparedness, equity, governance, digital divide, and financial constraints. Understanding these challenges is essential for translating policy intent into meaningful educational outcomes.

Keywords: New Education Policy, educational reforms, implementation challenges, teacher training, digital divide, governance

Introduction

Education policies play a crucial role in shaping the intellectual and socio-economic future of a nation. The New Education Policy (NEP) introduced by the Government of India aims to overhaul the existing education system by promoting critical thinking, creativity, flexibility, and inclusivity (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2020). It replaces the earlier policy framework with a vision focused on learner-centric education and lifelong learning. However, despite its progressive intent, the implementation of the NEP presents significant challenges that must be addressed to ensure its success.

1. Infrastructure and Resource Constraints

One of the foremost challenges in implementing the NEP is the inadequate physical and digital infrastructure in many educational institutions, especially in rural and remote regions. The policy advocates for modern classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and digital resources to facilitate experiential learning (MoE, 2020). However, studies indicate that a large number of schools still lack basic facilities such as electricity, sanitation, and internet access, making effective implementation difficult (ASER, 2022).

2. Teacher Preparedness and Professional Development

Teachers play a pivotal role in translating policy objectives into classroom practices. The NEP envisions a shift from rote-based teaching to competency-based and multidisciplinary learning, requiring teachers to adopt new pedagogical approaches (Kumar & Sharma, 2021). However, insufficient training, lack of continuous professional development, and resistance to change among educators pose serious challenges. Effective implementation demands large-scale, high-quality teacher training programs and institutional support.

3. Financial Constraints

The NEP recommends increasing public expenditure on education to 6% of GDP, a target that has remained unmet for decades (Tilak, 2019). Implementing reforms related to infrastructure development, teacher recruitment, curriculum redesign, and digital integration requires substantial financial investment. Limited budgetary allocations and uneven funding across states may lead to partial implementation, undermining the policy's transformative goals.

4. Digital Divide and Technological Barriers

The integration of technology is a central feature of the NEP, particularly in promoting online and blended learning (MoE, 2020). However, unequal access to digital devices and internet connectivity has widened the digital divide. Research shows that students from economically weaker and rural backgrounds face significant barriers in accessing digital education, thereby exacerbating educational inequalities (UNESCO, 2021).

5. Equity and Inclusion Challenges

The NEP emphasizes inclusive education for marginalized groups, including students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with disabilities, and linguistic minorities. While the policy outlines measures to promote equity, their implementation requires targeted interventions, trained personnel, and adequate support systems (Nambissan, 2020). Persistent socio-economic disparities and regional inequalities continue to challenge inclusive education efforts.

6. Governance and Administrative Issues

Effective implementation of the NEP requires coordinated efforts between central, state, and local governments. Since education is a concurrent subject in India, variations in administrative capacity and political commitment across states may result in inconsistent implementation (Chakrabarti & Sen, 2021). Bureaucratic delays, limited autonomy of institutions, and lack of robust monitoring mechanisms further complicate execution.

7. Curriculum and Assessment Reforms

The NEP advocates for flexible curricula and competency-based assessment systems to move away from examination-centric education. However, restructuring curricula and assessment frameworks is complex and time-consuming. Additionally, stakeholders such as parents and institutions accustomed to traditional evaluation systems may resist these changes, slowing the reform process (NCERT, 2021).

Conclusion

The New Education Policy presents a comprehensive roadmap for transforming the education system. However, addressing challenges related to infrastructure, teacher preparedness, funding, digital access, equity, and governance is critical for its effective implementation. A phased, well-funded, and context-sensitive approach, supported by continuous evaluation and stakeholder engagement, can help bridge the gap between policy vision and practice. Only through sustained commitment and collaborative efforts can the transformative potential of the NEP be fully realized.

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