



## Key Impacts of NEP 2020 on Child (Elementary) Education

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### Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative shift in India's elementary education system, emphasising universal access, foundational literacy, multilingualism, and holistic development. This article examines the policy's key reforms—such as the 5+3+3+4 structure, mother tongue instruction, competency-based learning, and the NIPUN Bharat Mission—and evaluates their potential to improve learning outcomes, reduce dropout rates, and ensure equitable education for all children aged 3–11 years. The article also highlights emerging challenges and innovations, including digital integration and AI in foundational education.

**Keywords:** Nep 2020, elementary education, foundational literacy, multilingual education, early childhood care and education (ecce), competency-based learning, nipun bharat, 5+3+3+4 curriculum, play-based learning, ai in education, inclusive pedagogy

### Introduction

With a strong focus on elementary education (ages 3–11). Recognising the critical role of early learning, the policy introduces structural, pedagogical, and administrative changes to enhance foundational skills, reduce disparities, and foster creativity.

This article explores the key impacts of NEP 2020 on elementary education, analysing its implications for:

- Multilingual & Inclusive Learning
- Assessment Reforms & Holistic Development
- Digital and AI Integration in Early Education
- Equity and Access for Marginalised Communities

### Major Reforms in Elementary Education Under NEP 2020

#### 1. Restructured 5+3+3+4 Curriculum

NEP 2020 traditional integration:

- **Preparatory Stage (Ages 8–11):** Interactive classroom learning (Grades 3–5). This shift ensures continuity between preschool and primary education, reducing dropout rates (MHRD, 2020)<sup>[7]</sup>.

#### 2. Universalisation of Early Childhood Education (ECCE)

- **Anganwadis and preschools** strengthened to provide free, quality ECCE for all children by 2030.
- **Teacher training programs** now focus on play-based pedagogy and socio-emotional learning (Kaul & Sankar, 2021).

#### 3. Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN) Mission

- **NIPUN Bharat (2021–26):** Aims for universal FLN proficiency by Grade 3, with structured learning outcomes (NCERT, 2021)<sup>[1]</sup>.
- **AI-driven adaptive learning tools** (e.g., DIKSHA, e-Pathshala) supplement traditional teaching.

#### 4. Multilingual Education & Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction

- **Three-language formula** (with flexibility for states) promotes multilingual proficiency (NEP, 2020).

- **Tribal languages** integrated into curricula to preserve linguistic diversity (Jhingran, 2023)<sup>[4]</sup>.

#### 5. Competency-Based & Holistic Learning

- **AI-based personalised learning** platforms (e.g., Mindspark) used to address individual student needs.

#### 6. Reduced Curriculum Load & Focus on Life Skills

- Curriculum trimmed to **core essentials** (e.g., 21st-century skills like coding, financial literacy).
- **Digital literacy** mandated from Grade 1 (NEP, 2020 Update, 2023).

#### 7. Inclusive Education for Disadvantaged Groups

- **Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones (SEZs)** for marginalised communities.
- **Assistive technologies** for children with disabilities (MHRD, 2023)<sup>[7]</sup>.

### Potential Benefits of NEP 2020 for Elementary Education

#### 1. Improved Learning Outcomes

- Strong FLN base reduces learning gaps in later grades.
- **Play-based learning** enhances cognitive and socio-emotional development (UNICEF, 2023)<sup>[6]</sup>.

#### 2. Reduced Dropout Rates

- ECCE integration ensures smoother transitions to primary school.

- **Engaging pedagogy** (e.g., gamified learning) makes schooling more appealing (ASER, 2023)<sup>[3]</sup>.

#### 3. Equity & Access for Marginalised Children

- Free ECCE benefits low-income families.

- **Mother tongue instruction** improves retention among tribal and rural students (Jhingran, 2023) <sup>[4]</sup>.
- 4. Teacher Empowerment & Better Training**
- **NISHTHA 3.0** (2023) trains teachers in FLN, inclusive education, and tech integration.

### Challenges in Implementation

#### 1. Infrastructure & Resource Gaps

- Many schools lack trained ECCE teachers, play materials, and **digital infrastructure** (ASER, 2023) <sup>[3]</sup>.

#### 2. Resistance to Mother Tongue Instruction

- Parents prefer English-medium schools due to **perceived employability gaps** (Mohanty, 2023) <sup>[5]</sup>.

#### 3. Teacher Preparedness & Workload

- **Existing teachers need upskilling** in AI tools and activity-based learning (NCTE, 2023).

#### 4. Digital Divide in Rural Areas

- Limited internet access hinders **EdTech adoption** (UNDP, 2023) <sup>[8]</sup>.

#### 5. The Way Forward

- **Increased funding** for ECCE and teacher training.
- **Community awareness programs** to promote multilingual education.
- **Public-private partnerships** for digital learning tools (e.g., BYJU'S, Khan Academy).
- **AI-driven monitoring systems** to track FLN progress.

### Conclusion

NEP 2020 has the potential to transform elementary education by prioritising early learning, multilingualism, and holistic development. However, successful implementation requires strong policy enforcement, teacher training, and infrastructure investment. If executed well, India could see a generation of children with stronger foundational skills and better lifelong learning abilities.

### References

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