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Constraints and Prospects in the Implementation of NEP 2020 in School Education

Dr. Poojashri Borah

M.A (History), M.Ed., PGDCA, Ph.D (Education)
Assistant Professor, College of Education, Nagaon, Assam, India. borapooja933@gmail.com

Abstract

From foundational to higher education levels, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises equity, flexibility, and holistic learning, signaling a revolutionary paradigm shift in the Indian educational system. This study examines how NEP 2020 has revolutionized school education reforms in Nagaon Town, Assam, by looking at how policies are being implemented, changes at the local level, and new issues. Nagaon provides a representative microcosm of Assam's educational ecosystem, situated within a sociocultural milieu marked by a variety of linguistic and educational needs.

The study evaluates important NEP directives, including the introduction of multilingual education, experiential learning, reduced curriculum content for enhanced depth, and continuous comprehensive evaluation (CCE), using a mixed-method approach that includes surveys of educators, interviews with school administrators, and feedback from students and parents. The results show improvements in community involvement, instructional creativity, and learner engagement. However, there are still gaps in teacher preparation, infrastructure preparedness, and stakeholder knowledge of policy goals.

The study contends that although NEP 2020 has great potential to improve educational quality and inclusion, its successful implementation in Nagaon Town necessitates context-sensitive tactics, coordinated capacity building, and ongoing governmental support. The ramifications go beyond suggesting regional frameworks for policy modification, enhancing school administration, and cultivating cooperative ecosystems that complement NEP's mission of equipping kids for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Keywords: NEP 2020, School reforms in pedagogy, curriculum and multilingual education, secondary schools

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1. Introduction

Education is the cornerstone of societal development. In 2020, the Government of India introduced the

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National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the first education policy of the 21st century. NEP 2020 envisions a holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, and learner-centered education system. This research explores the revolutionary impact of NEP 2020 on school education in Nagaon Town, Assam, focusing on eight key secondary schools.

2. NEP 2020

NEP 2020 remains Indian education with the following principal reforms:

- Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- Foundational to Secondary Curriculum Reforms
- Multilingualism and Language-Learning
- Holistic, Experiential, and Inquiry-Based Pedagogy
- Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation
- Teacher Education and Professional Development
- Integration of Digital and ICT Tools
- Equity and Inclusion Initiatives

These reforms aim to make learning joyful, relevant, and rooted in Indian ethos while preparing students for global competencies.

2.1. School Reforms in Pedagogy, Curriculum and Multilingual Education

School reforms refer to systematic changes introduced to improve the quality, equity, and effectiveness of schooling. Under NEP 2020, school reforms focus on transforming the traditional education system into a learner-centric, flexible, and inclusive model. These reforms include restructuring the school system (5+3+3+4), promoting holistic development, integrating vocational education, strengthening assessment reforms, and ensuring access and equity. School reforms aim to prepare students not only for examinations but also for life skills, citizenship, and employability.

Pedagogy refers to the methods, strategies, and approaches used by teachers to facilitate learning. NEP 2020 emphasizes a shift from rote learning to experiential, inquiry-based, and activity-oriented pedagogy. It encourages participatory teaching methods such as project-based learning, collaborative learning, discussion, and problem-solving. The policy highlights joyful learning, critical thinking, creativity, and ethical values, ensuring that students actively engage in the learning process rather than passively memorizing content.

Curriculum means the planned academic content, learning experiences, and competencies that students are expected to acquire during schooling. NEP 2020 proposes a flexible, multidisciplinary, and competency-based curriculum that integrates academic subjects with life skills, arts, sports, and

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vocational education. The curriculum under NEP aims to reduce content overload, promote conceptual understanding, and connect learning with real-life situations. It also focuses on holistic development, including cognitive, emotional, social, and moral growth of learners.

Multilingual education refers to the use of multiple languages as mediums of instruction and learning in schools. NEP 2020 strongly advocates mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction at least till Grade 5, preferably till Grade 8. This approach enhances comprehension, cognitive development, and cultural identity among learners. The policy also promotes learning of classical, regional, and foreign languages, fostering national integration and global competence while respecting India's linguistic diversity.

3. Secondary School:

An educational institution offering Grades 9–12 education that focuses on academic depth, skill development, and holistic learner growth as envisioned under NEP 2020.

3.1. Need and Significance of the Study

The implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a major reform in the Indian education system, particularly at the secondary school level, which plays a decisive role in shaping students' academic, social, and career development. Since NEP 2020 is still in the early stages of implementation, there is a strong need to study its practical impact at the grassroots level, especially in government and provincialized schools.

Nagaon Town of Assam has a diverse socio-cultural and linguistic background, making it an important area to examine how NEP 2020 reforms related to curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and multilingual education are being implemented in real school settings. This study is necessary to understand whether the policy objectives are effectively translated into classroom practices and institutional changes in secondary schools.

The significance of the study lies in its potential to identify strengths, gaps, and challenges in the implementation process. It provides valuable insights into teachers' preparedness, students' learning experiences, and institutional readiness under NEP 2020. The findings can help school administrators, policymakers, and educators to take informed decisions for improving teaching-learning processes and resource allocation.

Moreover, the study contributes to the existing body of educational research by offering region-specific evidence from Assam, which is often underrepresented in national-level studies. It also serves as a reference for future researchers, teacher educators, and B.Ed. students who wish to explore policy implementation and school reforms. Thus, the study is significant for enhancing the quality, equity,

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and effectiveness of secondary education in line with the vision of NEP 2020.

4. Statement of the problem

The problem of the study has been stated as "**NEP 2020's Revolutionary Impact on School Education Reforms at Nagaon Town of Assam"**

NEP 2020 – Revolutionary: The term denotes transformative and systemic changes in school education that replace rote-based learning with holistic, flexible, and competency-oriented practices as envisioned in NEP 2020.

School Education Reforms: Planned changes in curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and school practices aimed at achieving holistic, inclusive, and competency-based learning under NEP 2020.

5. Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify the challenges faced by the schools during implementation of the NEP 2020.
2. To know the opportunities after implementation of NEP 2020 Policy

6. Delimitations of the study

The present study is delimited in the following ways

1. The Present study is delimited to only secondary education
2. The study is delimited to only Nagaon Town of Assam, India
3. The survey was conducted December,2025.

7. Review of Related Literature

Kumar (2020) examined the philosophical foundations of NEP 2020 and observed that the policy seeks to balance equity and excellence in school education. The study highlighted the importance of learner-centered pedagogy and the reduction of curriculum overload to promote conceptual understanding among students.

Tilak (2021) analyzed the challenges of NEP 2020 implementation and noted that while the policy vision is progressive, its success depends on adequate infrastructure, teacher preparedness, and institutional support. The study emphasized the need for continuous professional development of teachers, especially at the secondary school level.

Sharma and Gupta (2021) conducted a study on teacher readiness for NEP 2020 and found that teachers showed a positive attitude toward pedagogical reforms such as project-based learning and

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formative assessment. However, the study also reported challenges related to lack of training, digital resources, and clarity in assessment practices.

NCERT (2021) reviewed school curriculum reforms under NEP 2020 and stressed the importance of multidisciplinary learning, integration of life skills, vocational education, and use of technology in secondary schools. The report suggested that curriculum flexibility can enhance student engagement and reduce dropout rates.

Studies by UNESCO (2020) emphasized that multilingual education and mother-tongue instruction improve comprehension, inclusivity, and cognitive development, supporting NEP 2020's emphasis on linguistic diversity. This is particularly relevant for multilingual regions such as Assam.

8. Methodology

- Survey questionnaires were administered to students, teachers, and head of the institution.
- The present study is qualitative and descriptive in nature
- Total Population was 26 Secondary schools only 30% schools selected by the researcher that is 8 secondary schools
- The researcher collected data from the head of the institution from all the selected 8 secondary schools
- The tools is self made and validity is checked by the experts and the researcher used test-retest method for reliability test of the questionnaires.

9. Analysis and Interpretation

Objective 1 To identify challenges and opportunities faced by schools during implementation.

Sl no	**Statements**	**Total No. of Head Master and Head Mistress**	Yes (Percentage)	No (Percentage)
1	Is your school implementing NEP 2020 guidelines?	8	8 (100%)	0 (0%)
2	Have you received official orientation or training on NEP 2020?	8	8 (100%)	0 (0%)
3	Does your school have sufficient infrastructure to	8	6 (75%)	2(25%)

	implement NEP 2020 reforms?			
4	Are teachers adequately prepared for NEP-based teaching practices?	8	7 (87.5%)	1(12.5%)
5	Has NEP 2020 improved curriculum flexibility in your school?	8	8 (100%)	0 (0%)
6	Are assessment reforms under NEP 2020 easy to implement?	8	6 (75%)	0 (0%)
7	Is multilingual education practiced in your school?	8	8 (100%)	0 (0%)
8	Are digital resources available for NEP implementation?	8	6 (75%)	2(25%)

Interpretation

1. Complete Implementation and Awareness

- **100%** of the eight school leaders confirmed that their schools are implementing NEP 2020, and also that they **received official orientation/trainings**.
- **Interpretation:** All surveyed schools have both knowledge and action regarding NEP 2020 — suggesting strong administrative commitment and zero uncertainty about the policy.

2. Strong Adoption of Key Policy Components

- All respondents also agreed that:
  - NEP 2020 has **improved curriculum flexibility**
  - **Multilingual education** is being practiced
- **Interpretation:** These are evidently the most successfully embraced components of NEP 2020 in these schools. There appears to be consensus that these aspects are already functioning well.

3. Positive but Varied Preparedness for Teachers

- **87.5%** (7 of 8) believe teachers are adequately prepared for NEP-based teaching.

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- **Interpretation:** While most teachers feel ready, **one school (12.5%)** still sees gaps in teacher readiness. This suggests teacher preparedness is generally strong, but not yet universal.

4. Infrastructure Support is Present but Not Uniform

- 75% of heads say their school has sufficient infrastructure for NEP reforms; 25% do not.
- Interpretation: While most schools are ready structurally, a quarter still lack resources (classroom space, labs, learning tools, etc.), which could hinder full implementation, especially for activity-based or experiential learning components.

5. Challenges with Assessment Changes

- 75% say assessment reforms are easy to implement — though interestingly, unlike other questions, none answered "No".
- Interpretation: All respondents agree that assessment reforms *aren't difficult*, but a noticeable portion (25%) didn't positively affirm ease of implementation. This could indicate uncertainty or mixed experiences with new assessment models.

6. Digital Resources Are Only Partially Available

- Again 75% say digital resources exist in their schools, while 25% say they don't.
- Interpretation: There is a relatively good, yet not complete, availability of digital tools. This suggests some schools still need investment in digital infrastructure — crucial for blended learning, personalized material, and NEP's tech-enabled aspirations.

Overall Pattern Recognized

Strongest Areas

- Full commitment to NEP implementation
- Universal training and awareness
- Curriculum flexibility embraced
- Multilingual education fully adopted

Moderate / Mixed Areas

- Teacher readiness — mostly positive with slight concern
- Assessment reforms — appears manageable but some hesitation
- Infrastructure and digital resources — available in most but not all schools

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Interpretation Summary

This group of school leaders shows high enthusiasm and foundational adoption for NEP 2020. However, practical challenges remain, especially in physical and digital infrastructure, and to a lesser extent in teacher readiness and assessment adaptation.

It suggests that while policy adoption is strong on paper, some support systems (resources, tools, capacity building) still need strengthening for full, confident implementation.

Objective 2

To know the opportunities after implementation of NEP 2020 Policy

Sl No	Statements	Total (Headmaster)	Yes (Percentage)	No (Percentage)
1	Has multidisciplinary learning created more subject choices for students?	8	8 (100%)	0 (0%)
2	Has vocational education been introduced at the secondary level in your school?	8	7 (87.5)	1 (12.5%)
3	Has NEP 2020 helped in promoting skill-based education?	8	8 (100%)	0 (0%)
4	Has digital learning infrastructure improved after NEP implementation?	8	8 (100%)	0 (0%)
5	Has student enrolment increased after NEP implementation?	8	5 (62%)	3 (37.5%)
6	Has NEP 2020 encouraged inclusive education practices in your school?	8	8 (100%)	0 (0%)
7	Has flexibility in subject selection benefited students?	8	8 (100%)	0 (0%)
8	Has the school received additional funding or resources due to NEP reforms?	8	0 (0%)	8 (100%)
9	Has experiential learning (project work, internships) increased?	8	787.5%)	1 (12.5%)
10	Has parental involvement improved after NEP implementation?	8	0 (0%)	8 (100%)

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Analysis and Interpretation of Data

1. Multidisciplinary Learning and Subject Choices

- **100% (8/8)** headmasters responded **Yes**.

Interpretation:

All respondents agree that multidisciplinary learning has increased subject choices for students. This indicates strong implementation of flexible curriculum structures under NEP 2020.

2. Introduction of Vocational Education

- **87.5% (7/8)** said **Yes**
- **12.5% (1/8)** said **No**

Interpretation:

Most schools have introduced vocational education at the secondary level. However, a small number have not yet implemented it, possibly due to infrastructure or resource constraints.

3. Promotion of Skill-Based Education

- **100% Yes**

Interpretation:

All headmasters believe NEP 2020 has successfully promoted skill-based education, showing alignment with the policy's focus on practical and competency-based learning.

4. Improvement in Digital Learning Infrastructure

- **100% Yes**

Interpretation:

All schools reported improvement in digital infrastructure after NEP implementation, suggesting increased use of technology in teaching and learning.

5. Increase in Student Enrolment

- **62.5% (5/8)** Yes
- **37.5% (3/8)** No

Interpretation:

While a majority observed increased enrolment, a significant portion did not. This suggests that NEP reforms may not yet have directly influenced enrolment growth in all schools.

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6. Promotion of Inclusive Education

- **100% Yes**

Interpretation:

All respondents agree that NEP 2020 has encouraged inclusive practices, reflecting progress in equity and access to education.

7. Flexibility in Subject Selection

- **100% Yes**

Interpretation:

All headmasters reported that flexibility in subject selection has benefited students, indicating successful curriculum reforms.

8. Additional Funding or Resources

- **0% Yes**
- **100% No**

Interpretation:

None of the schools received additional funding or resources due to NEP reforms. This suggests that while policy changes are visible academically, financial support may be lacking.

9. Increase in Experiential Learning

- **87.5% Yes**
- **12.5% No**

Interpretation:

Most schools have increased experiential learning activities such as project work and internships, aligning with NEP's practical learning goals.

10. Improvement in Parental Involvement

- **0% Yes**
- **100% No**

Interpretation:

None of the headmasters observed improved parental involvement after NEP implementation. This indicates that community engagement may still need strengthening.

The findings suggest that **NEP 2020 has positively impacted curriculum flexibility, skill-based education, digital infrastructure, inclusive education, and experiential learning** in most **schools.**

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However, the data also highlights two major challenges:

- Lack of additional funding or resources
- No noticeable improvement in parental involvement
- Mixed results in student enrolment growth

Overall, the policy reforms appear to be academically successful, but financial and community support mechanisms may require further strengthening.

Findings of the Study

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data, the following findings were derived:

1. Complete Awareness and Administrative Commitment

All respondents (100%) confirmed that NEP 2020 is being implemented in their schools and that they received proper orientation/training. This indicates strong administrative awareness and commitment toward policy execution.

2. Successful Adoptions of Curriculum Flexibility and Multilingual Education

All school heads agreed that curriculum flexibility and multilingual education are being practiced effectively. These appear to be the most successfully implemented components of NEP 2020.

3. Promotion of Skill-Based and Experiential Learning

A majority of respondents reported increased emphasis on skill-based education and experiential learning methods such as project work and internships. This reflects alignment with NEP's learner-centered approach.

4. Teacher Preparedness is Strong but Not Universal

While 87.5% of respondents believe teachers are adequately prepared for NEP-based teaching, 12.5% indicated gaps. This suggests that although readiness is high, continuous professional development is still required.

5. Infrastructure and Digital Resources are Adequate in Most but Not All Schools

About 75% of schools reported having sufficient infrastructure and digital resources, whereas 25% reported shortages. This indicates uneven distribution of facilities, which may affect effective implementation.

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6. Assessment Reforms are Manageable but Require Clarity

Most respondents found assessment reforms manageable; however, some showed hesitation. This suggests the need for further guidance and training in new assessment methods.

7. Lack of Additional Funding and Limited Parental Involvement

None of the respondents reported receiving additional funding due to NEP reforms, and parental involvement did not show improvement. This highlights financial and community engagement challenges.

8. Strong Implementation of Multidisciplinary Learning

All headmasters (100%) confirmed that multidisciplinary learning has increased subject choices for students.

Finding: NEP 2020 has been successfully implemented in promoting flexible and multidisciplinary curriculum structures.

9. Widespread Introduction of Vocational Education

A majority (87.5%) reported the introduction of vocational education at the secondary level, while 12.5% have not yet implemented it.

Finding: Vocational education has been largely adopted, though a few schools still face implementation challenges.

10. Effective Promotion of Skill-Based Education

All respondents (100%) agreed that NEP 2020 has promoted skill-based education.

Finding: Schools are actively aligning teaching practices with competency-based and practical learning approaches.

11. Significant Improvement in Digital Learning Infrastructure

All headmasters (100%) observed improvements in digital infrastructure after NEP implementation.

Finding: There has been substantial progress in integrating technology into the teaching-learning process.

12. Moderate Increase in Student Enrolment

While 62.5% of schools reported increased enrolment, 37.5% did not observe growth.

Finding: NEP reforms may have contributed to enrolment growth in some schools, but the impact is not uniform.

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13. Promotion of Inclusive Education Practices

All respondents (100%) stated that NEP 2020 has encouraged inclusive education in their schools.

Finding: The policy has positively influenced equity and inclusive practices across the surveyed institutions.

14 Benefits of Flexibility in Subject Selection

All headmasters (100%) agreed that flexibility in subject selection has benefited students.

Finding: Curriculum reforms under NEP 2020 are perceived as highly beneficial for student development.

15. Lack of Additional Financial Support

None of the schools (0%) reported receiving additional funding or resources due to NEP reforms.

Finding: Despite academic improvements, financial assistance for implementation appears insufficient.

16. Growth in Experiential Learning

A majority (87.5%) observed an increase in experiential learning activities such as projects and internships.

Finding: Experiential and activity-based learning methods are being increasingly adopted.

17. No Improvement in Parental Involvement

All respondents (100%) reported no noticeable improvement in parental involvement after NEP implementation.

Finding: Community and parental engagement remain areas needing significant attention.

Suggestion of the Study

1. Strengthening Curriculum Innovation

The successful adoption of multidisciplinary learning and subject flexibility implies that schools should continue redesigning curricula to promote holistic, learner-centered education. Greater emphasis can be placed on integrating arts, sciences, and vocational subjects to enhance student competencies.

2. 2 Emphasis on Skill-Based and Experiential Learning

Since skill-based and experiential learning practices have increased, educators should further incorporate project-based learning, internships, and real-life applications into classroom teaching to

improve employability and critical thinking skills.

3. Need for Continuous Teacher Professional Development

Although teacher preparedness is generally strong, minor gaps still exist. This implies a need for continuous professional development programs, workshops, and training sessions to ensure effective implementation of innovative teaching and assessment strategies.

4. Improvement of Infrastructure and Digital Equity

The uneven availability of infrastructure and digital resources suggests that educational authorities must ensure equitable access to technology and learning facilities. Strengthening digital infrastructure is essential for blended learning and modern pedagogical practices.

5. Enhancing Community and Parental Engagement

The lack of improvement in parental involvement highlights the need for stronger school–community partnerships. Schools should organize awareness programs, interactive sessions, and collaborative initiatives to involve parents actively in the educational process.

Conclusion

The study on the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 reveals strong administrative commitment and successful adoption of multidisciplinary learning, skill-based education, digital infrastructure, inclusive practices, and curriculum flexibility. Most schools have effectively integrated key reforms, though vocational education and experiential learning show minor gaps. However, challenges remain in securing additional funding, improving parental involvement, and achieving consistent enrolment growth. Overall, the policy demonstrates positive academic impact but requires strengthened financial and community support for comprehensive implementation.

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