



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** “India faces challenges in providing quality education to its children and the youth”. Discuss the importance of new education policy in the light of this statement. (250 words)

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### Approach

- Explain the problems of quality education in India.
- Explain how these problems will be catered by the new education policy by citing the relevant proposals of the policy.
- State the challenges this new policy would encounter.
- Conclude with some suggestions on a positive note.

### Introduction

Over the years the Indian government and institutions have been working to reform the existing education model and have been successful on many counts yet there are several issues that the Indian education system is grappled with.

### Body

#### Issues in Indian Education System

Some of these issues can be summed up as follows:

- **Inadequate government Funding:** The country spent 3% of its total GDP on education in 2018-19 according to the Economic Survey which is very less in comparison to the developed and OECD countries.
- **Lack of infrastructure:** Most of the schools are not yet compliant with the complete set of RTE infrastructure. They lack drinking water facilities, a functional common toilet, and do not have separate toilets for girls.
- **Poor global ranking of institutes:** Very few Indian universities are featured in the top rankings of the world primarily due to low faculty-student ratio and lack of research capacity.
- **No coherence between education and demand of Industry:** Industries in India face problems to find suitable employees as education provided is not suitable for directly working in industry and hence have to spend large amounts on providing training for employees.
- **Inadequate teachers and their training:** The 24:1 ratio of India is way lower than Sweden's 12:1, Britain's 16:1, Russia's 10:1 and Canada's 9:1. Moreover the quality of teachers who are sometimes appointed politically or are not trained adequately is another huge challenge.
- **Quality of Education:** The ASER reports present a very dismal picture of learning outcomes in India.

#### National Education Policy (NEP)

The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 has the potential to eradicate many of the challenges ailing the educational system of this country which we just discussed. Some of its features can be summed up as

follows:

- **Higher public spending on education:** It will be raised to 6% of the GDP. Ministry of Human Resource Development to be renamed Minister of Education.
- **Skill education:** It is to be induced at school level from pre-school to class 12th and it aims to empower each student in one vocational skill. A National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE) will be constituted to set the framework.
- **Internationalisation of Higher Education:** It targets on creating India as a knowledge hub attracting foreign nationals and to promote research collaboration and student exchanges between Indian institutions and global institutions through organised efforts.
- **Teacher training:** A new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2021, will be formulated by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in consultation with NCERT.
- **Push to digital education:** The new NEP has a new section on digital education to ensure “equitable use of technology”. A dedicated unit to coordinate digital infrastructure, content and capacity building will be created within the Education Ministry to look after the online learning needs of both school and higher education.
- **Assessment Centre:** An autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration. National Assessment Centre- 'PARAKH' has been created to assess the students.
- **Miscellaneous Provisions:** It also envisions universalisation of early childhood education from ages 3 to 6 by 2030, child’s mother tongue being used as the medium of instruction till Class 5. and a departure from 10+2 format to a 5+3+3+4

### Challenge in implementation

However the major challenge would be of implementation and some of the challenges can be summed up as follows:

- **Education is a concurrent subject** and most states have their own school boards. Therefore, state governments would have to be brought on board for actual implementation of this decision.
- **Three language formula** is another problem. Many of the states especially in South India have always been very sceptical about it and have seen it as an imposition of Hindi.
- Providing **education till 5<sup>th</sup> class in mother language** may pose problems to students to learn English which is a global language suddenly in Class 6th.

### Conclusion

National Education Policy 2020 is sweeping in its vision and seeks to address the entire gamut of education. It acknowledges the 21<sup>st</sup> century need for mobility, flexibility, alternate pathways to learning, and self-actualisation and can prove to be a game changer for India.