# Reimagining Youth Employability: A Qualitative Assessment of India's New Education Policy 2020

**Author: Sakshi Yadav**
Research Scholar
Department of Sociology
D.A.V. College, Kanpur

Research Supervisor:
**Dr. Ramjee Prasad**
Professor & Head, Department of Sociology
D.A.V. College, Kanpur

## Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, launched by the Government of India in July 2020, marks a paradigm shift in the Indian education system with its emphasis on a multidisciplinary, skill-oriented, and inclusive approach. As India battles the challenge of underemployment—where workers are engaged below their skill level or full potential—this policy offers a promising framework to align education with market demands. This paper explores the policy's implications for youth employability, focusing on its potential to mitigate underemployment through reforms in pedagogy, curriculum, and vocational education. The research critically evaluates the challenges of implementation and assesses the scope for long-term transformation, emphasizing inclusivity, equity, and alignment with economic goals.

**Keywords**: NEP 2020, Youth Employment, Skill Development, Underemployment, Education Policy

## Introduction

In a rapidly evolving global economy driven by technological advancements, educational policies are pivotal in shaping the workforce of the future. India, with its burgeoning youth population comprising approximately 34% of the total, faces a dual challenge: to equip its youth with 21st-century skills and to address the persistent issue of underemployment.

Underemployment—characterized by individuals working below their skill or educational level,

or part-time due to lack of full-time opportunities—is a pressing concern, with a reported rate of 37.5% among Indian youth (PLFS 2018-19). This situation hampers economic growth, perpetuates income inequality, and undermines individual aspirations.

The NEP 2020 is a comprehensive framework aimed at overhauling India's education system. With its student-centric, flexible, and multidisciplinary design, the policy endeavors to align educational outcomes with the demands of the job market. This paper investigates the potential of NEP 2020 to reduce underemployment among India's youth while identifying key challenges and proposing actionable solutions.

## Review of Literature

The discourse on the interplay between education policies and employment outcomes has been enriched by several scholars:

*Agarwal (2019)* provides a historical perspective on Indian educational reforms, contextualizing the NEP 2020 within the broader trajectory of policy evolution.

*Sharma (2020)* emphasizes skill-based education, highlighting its critical role in bridging the gap between education and employability.

*Kapoor (2021)* delves into the socio-economic implications of NEP 2020, emphasizing its potential to reduce youth underemployment.

*Patel (2022)* explores rural-urban disparities in educational access, underscoring the challenges of equitable implementation.

*Mallik & Verick (2023)* identify structural challenges in the policy's rollout, such as funding deficits, infrastructural limitations, and teacher shortages.

*Sachdev (2021)* compares the NEP's vocational education initiatives with global best practices, offering insights into potential adaptation strategies.

These works collectively highlight both the transformative potential and the implementation challenges of NEP 2020.

## Challenges of NEP 2020 Related to Underemployment

### 1. Mismatch Between Education and Employment
The multidisciplinary approach of NEP 2020 allows students flexibility in choosing subjects. However, this may inadvertently create an imbalance between skills acquired and market demand. The goal to achieve a 50% Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education by 2035 may lead to an oversupply of graduates in certain fields, exacerbating underemployment.

### 2. Quality and Relevance of Education
Despite policy emphasis on quality, systemic deficiencies in infrastructure, teacher training, and

access to digital tools remain significant barriers. Rural and marginalized communities are particularly disadvantaged, perpetuating inequities in educational outcomes and employability.

## 3. Inadequate Funding and Coordination

NEP 2020 envisions increasing public expenditure on education to 6% of GDP, yet achieving this target amid fiscal constraints poses a challenge. Effective coordination between central and state governments, regulatory bodies, and educational institutions is critical but fraught with overlapping jurisdictions and accountability issues.

## Potential of NEP 2020 to Mitigate Underemployment

### 1. Skill-Oriented Curriculum

The introduction of vocational courses, internships, and skill development programs aims to equip students with practical knowledge aligned with industry demands.

### 2. Promotion of Digital and Lifelong Learning

The integration of technology and online learning platforms fosters adaptability and continuous upskilling, crucial for addressing the dynamic nature of employment markets.

### 3. Focus on Innovation and Entrepreneurship

By fostering creativity and critical thinking, NEP 2020 encourages entrepreneurial ventures, offering youth alternative pathways to traditional employment.

### 4. Holistic Development

The policy's emphasis on cognitive, social, and emotional learning prepares students for diverse roles, enhancing their employability across formal and informal sectors.

## Recommendations for Effective Implementation

1. Strengthen Infrastructure and Digital Access
Bridge the digital divide by ensuring affordable internet connectivity and modern infrastructure in rural and urban areas alike.

2. Align Education with Market Needs
Regularly update curricula to reflect evolving industry requirements and promote industry-academia collaboration for practical exposure.

3. Increase Funding and Resource Allocation
Secure sustainable financing for educational reforms, prioritizing teacher training, vocational education, and research.

4. Monitor and Evaluate Outcomes
Establish robust mechanisms to track policy impact, ensuring accountability and course corrections as needed.

## Conclusion

The NEP 2020 offers a transformative blueprint for the Indian education system, aiming to address underemployment through holistic, skill-oriented reforms. However, its success hinges on effective implementation, equitable access, and sustained investment in quality education. By fostering innovation, inclusivity, and adaptability, the policy has the potential to transform India's youth into a globally competitive workforce, thereby driving the nation toward sustainable growth and development.

## References

(Updated citations for academic formatting and relevance. Ensure consistency with your university's preferred referencing style.)

Agarwal, Y. (2019). Educational Reforms in India: A Historical Perspective. Mallik, C., & Verick, S. (2023). Critical Analysis of NEP 2020 and Its Implementation. Patel, N. (2022). Rural-Urban Divide in Educational Opportunities.

Sachdev, A. A. (2021). How India's Revised Education System Will Increase Youth Employability.

Sharma, A. (2020). New Education Policy 2020: How NEP Will Help Create Jobs and Entrepreneurs.

Singh, A., & Singh, S. (2020). The New Education Policy 2020: Addressing Challenges of Education in Modern India.