



MIS International School, Balewadi

Introduction to NCF and NEP policies

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) in India outlines the guidelines for Educational curriculum and pedagogy across schools.

The New Education policy

The New Education Policy (NEP) was approved by the Union Cabinet of India with the aim to reform India's education system by reducing school curriculums and eliminating MPhil programs.

The policy also aims to develop both theory and creative potential among children. It aims at the overall development of individuals with more emphasis on practical learning and skill development.

New Education Policy: Overview

The government has adopted a new education policy, eliminating the 10 + 2 structure. The curriculum was reorganised into five parts: primary to second grade, third to fifth grade, sixth to eighth grade, and ninth to 12th grade.

The new education policy aims in positioning India as a International Education Hub and superpower in the world. Candidates can go through the new education policy overview stated below.

Objectives of New Education Policy

The new education policy 2024 aims to bring holistic learning, practical oriented syllabus, job centric skill development, technology, quality education in the classroom environment. Candidates' can go through the objectives of the New Education Policy stated below.

- Recognize and grow each child's potential
- Design literacy and numeracy learning among children
- Present flexible learning options
- Fund in a public education system
- Strategize quality education
- Bind children to Indian culture
- Execute top-notch research
- Teach reasonable control and empower students
- Develop a transparent Education Policy
- Emphasize the application of technology
- Emphasise evaluation of students' performance
- Introduce different languages
- Develop student's creativity and logical thinking abilities

Important Highlights of the New Education Policy

There are several changes in the new education policy that has been implemented in the Indian education system. Candidates can go through the changes stated below.

1. Children can Start Schooling Early

The new system will consist of 12 years of formal education and three years of Anganwadi/pre-school education. The 10+2 school curriculum framework will be replaced with a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure, emphasising Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Previously, children received three years of unofficial schooling called pre-schooling in the education system.

No More Science, Arts, and Commerce Streams

The new education policy aims at no formal distinctions between arts and sciences, curricular and extracurricular activities, or vocational and academic programs.

Candidates can select from a variety of disciplines throughout various streams.

Students will get internships and vocational training in sixth grade.

Challenges Regarding New Educational Policy

The New Educational Policy has brought revolutionary change in the Indian Education System in the time period. Yet, there are certain limitations in the New Educational Policy. Candidates can go through the challenges in the New Educational Policy stated below.

1. **High Enrolments Targets:** Building a new curriculum is challenging for most instructors because the New Educational Policy aims to double the gross enrolment ratio by 2035.
2. **Lack of Qualified Teachers:** India needs a sizable pool of qualified teachers familiar with the new pedagogical approach to effectively incline children with the upgraded curriculum.
3. **Lack of Financial Sources:** Adequate funding and resources are needed to implement the New Educational Policy properly. Not all institutions can gather proper financing for implementing the New Educational Policy.
4. **Lack of Adaptive Mind set among Educators:** As teachers generally share a disciplinary anchoring culture, it is challenging to have educators with exceptional skills. The New Educational Policy challenges institutions to hire multi-tasking and diverse-minded educators for holistic student development.

Interdisciplinary Curriculum

New Educational Policy encourages interdisciplinary and multilingual education. It aims to foster a flexible curriculum that nurtures diverse skills and promotes the seamless achievement of knowledge.

4. Coding and Experimental Education

In 6th grade, coding will become a crucial curriculum element. It will focus on practical and experiential understanding by integrating experiential learning methods. Thus, students will be more practical and exploratory rather than too inclined toward theoretical learning.

5. Focus on Students' Health

The New Educational Policy expands the mid-day meal scheme to include breakfast. It will incorporate counsellors and social workers to enhance students' health and mental well-being.

National Curriculum Framework (NCF) Overview

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), derived from the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, is the governing guideline for school education in India. For 2026, the NCF represents the full implementation of a modernized, holistic, and flexible system aimed at transforming the 10+2 structure into a **5+3+3+4 model**.

The framework focuses on 21st-century skills, multidisciplinary learning, and deep cultural rootedness, aiming to shift from rote memorization to competency-based education.

1. Key Structural Changes (5+3+3+4)

The NCF 2023-2026 replaces the old 10+2 structure, aiming to make education developmental, age-appropriate, and continuous.

- **Foundational Stage (5 years):** Ages 3-8 (Pre-school to Grade 2). Focuses on play-based/activity-based learning, foundational literacy, and numeracy.
- **Preparatory Stage (3 years):** Ages 8-11 (Grades 3-5). Introduces formal, interactive, and experimental learning in subjects.
- **Middle Stage (3 years):** Ages 11-14 (Grades 6-8). Emphasizes subject-specific learning, critical thinking, vocational training, and digital literacy.
- **Secondary Stage (4 years):** Ages 14-18 (Grades 9-12). Features multidisciplinary study, increased flexibility, and choice of subjects.

2. Major Highlights for 2026

- **Board Exam Changes:** Board exams for Classes 9-12 will be conducted twice a year to reduce stress, allowing students to retain their best score.
- **Multilingualism:** Compulsory instruction of 3 languages up to Class 10, with at least two being native Indian languages.
- **Flexible Subject Choices:** The rigid separation between science, commerce, and arts is removed in Classes 11 and 12.
- **Content Localization:** At least 20% of the content in social sciences will be based on local context.
- **Increased Mandatory Subjects:** Classes 9-10 will have seven mandatory subjects, while Classes 11-12 will have six.

3. Core Pillars of NCF

- **Holistic Development:** Focus on social, emotional, and physical well-being alongside academic excellence.
- **Competency-Based Education (CBE):** Focuses on developing specific, measurable skills rather than just covering the syllabus.
- **Inclusive Education:** Ensures equal access to quality education for all, including marginalized groups.
- **Technology Integration:** Use of AI, ICT, and digital tools in classrooms for enhanced learning.
- **Teacher Autonomy:** Empowering teachers to design creative, student-centric lesson plans.

4. Pedagogical and Assessment Shifts

- **Shift from Rote Learning:** The focus is on critical thinking, problem-solving, and conceptual understanding.
- **Formative Assessment:** Continuous, comprehensive, and formative assessment is prioritized over high-stakes, end-of-year exams.
- **Pedagogy:** Integration of art, sport, and story-telling to foster engagement.

5. Implementation Roadmap

As of 2026, the NCF is being rolled out across various boards, including CBSE. NCERT is developing new textbooks based on these guidelines for Grades 3 to 12. It also involves teacher training programs focused on new pedagogical approaches.

SUMMARY

NCF OVERVIEW IN DETAIL FOR 2026

As of 2026, the **National Curriculum Framework (NCF)** serves as the operational roadmap for India's [National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#). It is a comprehensive set of four distinct frameworks designed to transform the educational landscape from early childhood to adulthood.

Core Structure: The 5+3+3+4 Model

The most significant shift under the NCF is the replacement of the old 10+2 system with a developmental structure that starts at age 3:

1. **Foundational Stage (Ages 3–8):** Focuses on play-based and discovery-oriented learning. It covers three years of preschool plus Grades 1 and 2.

2. **Preparatory Stage (Ages 8–11):** Transitioning to more formal but activity-based learning in Grades 3 to 5.
3. **Middle Stage (Ages 11–14):** Emphasises experiential learning in sciences, mathematics, arts, and social sciences for Grades 6 to 8.
4. **Secondary Stage (Ages 14–18):** Provides greater flexibility in subject choices across Grades 9 to 12, removing rigid boundaries between "streams" like Science and Arts.

Key Features for 2026 Implementation

- **Board Exam Reforms:** Students can now take Board exams **twice a year** and retain their best score to reduce high-stakes pressure.
- **Multilingualism:**
 - **Classes 9–10:** Mandatory to study **three languages**, at least two of which must be native Indian languages.
 - **Classes 11–12:** Mandatory to study **two languages**, with at least one being an Indian language.
- **Competency-Based Education:** A shift from rote memorisation to assessments that measure a student's actual skills and conceptual understanding.
- **Digital & AI Integration:** Modern classrooms are envisioned as "intelligent" spaces using AI and augmented reality to personalise learning.
- **Holistic Assessment:** Evaluation now covers five domains: physical, socio-emotional/ethical, cognitive, language, and aesthetic/cultural.

The Four Frameworks

The NCF is divided into four specific focus areas to ensure a unified vision:

- **NCF for School Education (NCF-SE):** The primary guide for K-12 schooling.
- **NCF for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS):** Specifically, for early childhood care and education.
- **NCF for Teacher Education (NCF-TE):** Upgrading teacher training to match new pedagogical standards.
- **NCF for Adult Education (NCF-AE):** Promoting lifelong learning and literacy.