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## **IMPACT OF NEP 2020 ON SECONDARY EDUCATION IN WEST BENGAL: AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE CURRENT SCENARIO**

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### **Abstract:**

This research undertakes descriptive analysis of the impact of National Education Policy in West Bengal’s secondary Education system. Well defined of the current scenario of secondary education in West Bengal highlights the extent of policy adoption, particularly under the National Education Policy 2020. It examines changes in the school system, teaching methods, and curriculum flexibility, along with their impact on student learning. The study also discusses enrolment trends, dropout rates, and gaps in skill-based education. It evaluates state government schemes and their influence on students’ cognitive and emotional development, especially across rural and urban areas. Based on research data, the findings reveal key challenges such as teacher shortages, quality gaps, and higher rural dropout rates. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is also considered. Overall, while implementation is still in progress, the policy’s impact on secondary education in West Bengal is significant.

**Keyword:** NEP 2020, Impact of NEP 2020, Current scenario, Secondary Education in West Bengal.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The National Education policy 2020 seeks to distinct holistic and multidisciplinary changes have to come into education system. NPE 1986 focused on equity and access, prioritized a uniform 10+2+3 structure, “Operation Blackboard” for primary school facility, introduced technology and vocational training. Before NEP 2020 introduced key problem include persistent rural and urban disparities, funding shortage, rote learning and limited implementation of vocational training. The reason for introduced NEP 2020 was in west Bengal to replace the 34-year-old 1986 policy, aimed to overhaul the education system to meet 21<sup>st</sup>-century needs. Core reason includes shifting from rote learning to holistic, replace the rigid 10+2 structure with a 5+3+3+4 model, skill-based education, multidisciplinary education, enhance critical thinking and bridge the gap between academic learning and employability.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

The main motive of analyze NEP 2020 impact on secondary education, analyze current scenario, To study learning and development changes.

### **REVIEW OF RELETED LITERATURE:**

Paul. (2026) conducted study on Impact of NEP 2020 on Teacher Education and professional development in India: A qualitative assessment of preparation Reforms, continuous Training, and performance outcomes. objective of the research is examining reforms in teacher preparation under NEP2020, Analyze the framework for continuous professional development, Assess the impact of NEP2020 on teacher performance and accountability and challenges in implementing teacher education reforms and Explore implications for the future of teacher professionalism in India. This research is a qualitative, interpretive research. This study findings indicate that while NEP 2020 introduces progressive reforms such as integrated teacher education programs, continuous capacity building, and performance-linked accountability, significant challenges persist in implementation, particularly regarding institutional readiness, equity, and contextual adaptation. The study argues that the success of NEP 2020 depends on sustained investment, institutional capacity building, and support-oriented professional development models rather than compliance-driven mechanisms.

Halder. (2026) conducted study on National Education Policy 2020 and West Bengal State Education Policy 2023: A Comparative Documentary Analysis. Objective of the research is examine the policy texts across domains of school education structure, higher education architecture, regulatory and structural bodies, language policy, inclusive education,



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teacher education, technology integration, research and innovation, and public investment. This research is a systematic comparative documentary analysis of India's major national education policies. The analysis reveals that while West Bengal's SEP 2023 broadly aligns with NEP 2020's progressive principles on equity, academic flexibility, research culture, internationalization, and digital learning, it consciously diverges on structural matters-retaining its existing 5+4+2+2 school framework rather than adopting NEP's 5+3+3+4 model, preserving existing regulatory bodies rather than consolidating them under HECI, and prioritizing geographic expansion and access over tiered institutional stratification. These differences reflect West Bengal's assertion of its federal prerogative within a constitutional framework that designates education as a concurrent subject.

Mehta. (2026) conducted study on School Education in West Bengal where do we stand? An Analysis of UDISE+ Data 2021–22 to 2024–25. Objective of the study is Schools and Access, Enrolment and Equity, Share of Girls' Enrolment and GPI, Enrolment Ratios, Dropout, Transition & Retention Rates, Dropout, Transition and Retention Rates: West Bengal, Teachers, PTR & Training Status, Pre-Primary Education, School Infrastructure – Critical Facilities: 2024–25, A Few Indicators as per NEP 2020 New Structure: 2024–25, Interpreting West Bengal's Position. This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research. Based on UDISE+ data (2021–22 to 2024–25), West Bengal has improved in primary education access and gender parity. However, it is still far from achieving targets set by the National Education Policy 2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, such as 100% enrolment and zero dropout. While primary-level dropout is nearly zero, the secondary level faces serious issues, with dropout around 20% and declining enrolment, further affected by infrastructural and digital gaps.

Biswas & Jaman. (2025) conducted study on The Role of National Education Policy (Nep-2020) In the Context of School Education System: An Overview. Objective of the research is discussing the central principles, the new academic structure in school education presented, the school curriculum and pedagogy adopted, significant novelties for the school education system and the significant advantages and disadvantages of NEP-2020 in school education. This research based on descriptive research and analytical method. This paper investigators have discussed the fundamental role and principles of the NEP-2020 and mainly focused on school education system. From the viewpoint of school education- new academic structure, significant innovations, curriculum, and pedagogy.

Sarkar. (2023) conducted study on Impact of NPE 2020 on Secondary Education. The objective of research is impact of the brand new 2020 schooling coverage on secondary schooling. They look at additional evaluation features of NEP and analyse how NEP impact existing schooling structures. This research is a descriptive study. Hence, Well-defined and nice training guidelines at the school level are important, as schooling ends in monetary and social development. The modifications advocated with the aid of NEP 2020 had been something many educators had never seen before, at the same time as schooling coverage has impacted schools and higher schooling equally. The paper additionally evaluations the salient capabilities of NEP and analyze how it influences existing schooling structures. Eventually, a few guidelines are made for powerful implementations to achieve the goal.

**METHODOLOGY:**

The observation is descriptive research to have a look at the required secondary information had been collected from diverse websites which include Indian government websites, journals, books, policy documents and online sources.

**CURRENT SCENARIO ON SECONDARY EDUCATION IN WEST BENGAL:**

Key aspects of the current scenario.

**1. Policy adaptation:**

West Bengal has introduced its own education policy, designed to guide the sector up to 2035. This framework emphasizes strengthening the link between vocational and general education, promoting industry-academia partnerships, and fostering a 5+3+3+4 structure in line with national reforms. The state is investing in IT



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infrastructure, including smart classrooms, e-learning platforms, and virtual classrooms to combat the rural-urban divide, though only about 24.2% of schools have fully functional computers, indicating slow progress. The curriculum for classes VI-X is being updated to foster critical thinking rather than rote learning, with improved, standardized textbooks. Strong policy support exists for inclusive education, focusing on ramp construction and accessible materials for students with disabilities, though implementation remains a challenge.

**2. School system changes:**

Secondary education in West Bengal is still undergoing a transition under the state Education policy 2023 to align with national standards, focusing on curriculum modernization, digital integration, and vocationalization, though it faces hurdles like high student-teacher ratios (70:1 in some areas), infrastructural gaps, and high secondary dropout rates. The state has approved the State Education Policy, 2023, aiming to the schooling system to improve competitiveness. Syllabus are being upgraded to match boards like WB, CBSE, ICSE for improved academic quality. For high enrolment prompting a shift towards hybrid learning. digital integration is weak, with only 24.2% of schools having functional computers and 18.6% having internet access, prompting a shift towards hybrid learning. The Madhyamik examination (Grade 10) is undergoing changes to ensure equitable assessment. A major focus is on integrating vocational education into secondary schools to increase skill-based training.

**3. Level of Implementation:**

Secondary education in West Bengal significant reforms focusing on digital integration, semester systems, and increased enrolment. While enrolment is rising, challenges remain with high dropout rates and teacher shortages. A major change is the introduction of a semester system at the Higher Secondary level from the 2024–25 academic session. Increased investments in ICT (Information and Communication Technology), virtual classrooms. The WBSEP 2023 emphasizes a 13-year education plan focusing on quality, skills, and industry-academia partnership. Strong focus on female student enrolment and reducing the dropout rate, although high secondary dropouts persist due to socio-economic factors.

**IMPACT ON LEARNING ON SECONDARY EDUCATION IN WEST BENGAL:**

Secondary education in West Bengal faces a critical problems and infrastructural gaps in secondary schools (Classes 9-12). While the state has improved access, issues like teacher shortages, lack of digital infrastructure, and a heavy reliance on private tutoring negatively impact learning quality and student engagement.

**1. Teaching method:**

NEP 2020 seeks to holistic changes on teacher education in west Bengal. currently focuses on improving digital infrastructure and increasing enrolment. At the same time, they focus significant challenges, shortage of trained teacher. Nowadays teaching methods are shifting toward hybrid, technology based, active learning but the difference between urban and rural disparities and teacher unwillingness implementation is hampered.

**2. Curriculum flexibility:**

Before NEP 2020 in West Bengal secondary curriculum faces challenges rigid, traditional, lecture-heavy, and textbook-centric curricula. While reforms seek to align with NEP 2020 by flexible, and skill-based learning and encouraging multidisciplinary curriculum. Recently The total number of gross enrolments has increased, with improvements in school infrastructure. But enrollment decreases noticeably at secondary and higher secondary levels and many schools still rely on traditional, teacher-cantered, and lecture-heavy methods, limiting the ability to adapt curricula to individual student needs or foster critical thinking. The curriculum is seen as heavily academic, focusing on exam performance rather than skill development or conceptual understanding.

**3. Skill- based Education:**

Secondary education in West initiatives like ‘Utkarsha Bangla’ and NEP 2020 reforms aim to introduce vocational training fulfil uneven infrastructural gaps. include many Vocational courses offered industry-relevant training, failing to generate significant student interest. Teacher shortages, and a curriculum heavily weighted toward traditional academic learning, resulting in low vocational engagement. Despite implementation gaps, studies show



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students, particularly in rural areas, have a positive attitude toward Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

**IMPACT OF NEP 2020 ON SECONDARY STUDENT DEVELOPMENT IN WEST BENGAL:**

The West Bengal government provides several schemes and initiatives to support secondary education students including, *Sabooj Sathi* schemes provides bicycles and *Kanyashree* for girls' incentives, free textbook supplies and under *Taruner swapna* project for students grant 10,000 rupees to purchase a tablet or smart phone. Alongside significant challenges including a high secondary dropout rate. While literacy is improving, systemic issues impact student development, creating a divide between urban and rural, public and private, and limiting critical thinking skills.

**1. Impact on cognitive development:**

In the context of secondary education in west Bengal, two different scenarios can be observed. On one side high enrollment and infrastructure development can be seen, on other side various quality related challenges are also evident, along with possibility to lack of digital access, and a high dropout rate is also observed. Because of these different kinds of developmental effects are occurring among students and cognitive development is not free from these impacts. If we look from the perspective of metacognition or achievement motivation then in the case of secondary school students, its is observed that there are significant differences based on location or gender and also a significant difference in the cognitive style that how individuals think and perceive between boys and girls.

**2. Impact on emotional growth:**

In the context of secondary education, present day students experience academic pressure and competition. As a result, they face infrastructure challenges and barrier is created in their emotional imbalance. Often, due to high academic stress, a negative impact is created on their overall emotional growth hindered. Additionally, social and economic barriers impact on peer interaction. On other side difference of family financial background lead to higher level of anxiety and depression among secondary school student which also creates effects on emotional growth.

**3. Enrolment Ratios, Dropout, Transition & Retention Rates in secondary education in west Bengal:**

- In the 2024–25 academic year, West Bengal recorded a total school enrolment of 15,984,707 students and secondary level education 18.55%. Between 2021–22 and 2024–25.
- Total enrolment of girls (Classes I to XII) in West Bengal from 8642983 to 8020394 students.
  - GER, NER & Age-specific Enrolment Ratio: West Bengal, 2021–22 to 2024–25

Year	Level	GER	NER	GER(SC)	ASER	GER(ST)
2021-22	secondary	88.2	69.4	101.1	89.9	102.5
2024-25	secondary	46.1	44.2	114.6	92.1	103.6

- Retention Rate of secondary Education: 2021-22 & 2024-25

Year	Girls	Boys
2021-22	53.5	45.9
2022-25	77.5	64.6

- Data as per NEP 2020 Structure, 2024-25: West Bengal

Indicator/Parameter	All India	West Bengal
Total number of secondary	306942	10896
Total enrolment in secondary	64809153	4540327
Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)- secondary	68.5	75.2



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Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of SC	70.8	84.8
Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)- ST	66.9	72.5
Dropout rates- Secondary	66.9	72.5
Transition Rates middle to secondary	86.6	91.9
PTR at secondary level	21	25
Retention Rate of secondary (class 1-12)	47.2	49.7

### CHALLENGES AND LIMITATION:

In the context of secondary education in West Bengal faces several significant structural and infrastructure challenges. a significant difference can be observed dropout rates especially in rural areas, teacher shortages, and the gap in the quality of education. There are many differences between rural and urban areas in terms of infrastructure and technology. Moreover, one of the biggest differences is between private tutors or private schools and this difference is quite clear, For example, in secondary education, the dropout rate is much higher in rural areas compared to urban areas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a massive digital divide was observed between rural and urban areas. The reason is that in rural areas, most students did not get the advantages of online platforms They faced problems with internet connectivity which were not as prominent in urban areas. Furthermore, if we talk about quality and infrastructure, a clear difference can be observed in those aspects as well.

### SUGGESTION:

To reduce dropout rate more opportunities implement in rural area, especially focusing on girls and disadvantage communities. Every school should be equipped with basic computer lab and priority should be given to internet access and digital pedagogical tools. A strong linkage between academic curriculum and vocational training should be developed to improve employability. Additionally, teacher recruitment needs to be increased, teacher training programs, workshop and theoretical sessions should be organized to enhance teacher's skills and effectiveness. It is also essential to ensure that state funds allocated for infrastructure development are properly utilized and processed efficiently.

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION:

The NEP 2020 restructures secondary education from the traditional 10+2 system to 5+3+3+4 model. The final four years class 9-12 focus on multidisciplinary learning with flexible subject choices instead of rigid streams. It introduces a 360-degree holistic progress card to track overall student development, including cognitive, social and emotional growth. In National Education Policy 2020, secondary education is designed as a four-year integrated stage (Classes 9–12). However, West Bengal still follows a segmented system (9–10 and 11–12), limiting subject flexibility and integration. Reforms like reducing rote learning, semester system, vocational education, and CBCS are not fully implemented. A digital gap also exists, with limited access to computers and internet in schools. Thus, the full implementation of NEP 2020 remains incomplete in West Bengal. In conclusion, secondary education in West Bengal requires a comprehensive reform aligned with the goals of the National Education Policy 2020, focusing on infrastructure development, institutional governance, teacher capacity, accountability, and equitable distribution of resources.

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