

India's National Education Policies: A Comparative Analysis of 1968, 1986 and 2020

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Abstract

India's education policies have always been about more than just classrooms- they reflect the country's changing priorities. The 1968 policy focused on nation-building, equal access, and unity, though implementation remained weak. By 1986, attention shifted to expanding education, reducing inequalities, and improving access through targeted programmes, especially for disadvantaged groups. The 2020 policy reflects a modern, globalised India. It emphasises flexibility, skills, and real learning over rote methods, along with reforms like early childhood education and multidisciplinary higher education. It also gives teachers more freedom and highlights technology as a key tool. Overall, the shift is clear- from access to quality, and from state control to a more flexible system. However, like earlier policies, the biggest challenge remains effective implementation on the ground.

Keywords: Education Policy, Equity, Quality, NEP 2020, Nation Building