



Integrating school social work with India's national education policy 2020: A roadmap for holistic student development

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Abstract

Policies provide a framework for consistency, accountability, and compliance with legal, ethical, or operational standards. It is considered as “a structure of guidelines to achieve balanced results through systematic decisions.”. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India envisions a transformative shift in the country’s educational landscape. One of its core features is promoting a multidisciplinary education model, aiming to make education holistic, student-centric, flexible and globally competitive. As suggested by the NEP 2020, the new education system will follow a 5+3+3+4 education system where the students will spend 5 years in strengthening their foundation, 3 years in the Preparatory stage, 3 years in the Middle stage and rest 4 years in the secondary stage. It focuses on ‘Equitable and Inclusive Education’ which vibrates the idea that no child should be left behind in terms of educational opportunity because of their background and socio-cultural identities. The NEP 2020 envisions education as a process that nurtures the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of students. The policy places significant emphasis on mental health, reducing dropout rates, ensuring equitable access to education, and fostering a culture of inclusion. In India, while the concept of school social work is still developing, its relevance has grown in light of rising concerns about student well-being, mental health challenges, and equitable access to education. School social work aligns seamlessly with these goals by addressing systemic barriers and individual challenges that hinder student development.

As the implementation of the NEP progresses, school social workers have a significant role to play in ensuring its successful execution. With their expertise in community engagement, advocacy, and support services, they can contribute to creating an inclusive, equitable, and empowering educational environment for all stakeholders. This comprehensive article examines the transformative vision of NEP 2020, thereby embracing school social work as an essential component of its education system, highlighting their responsibilities and potential contributions. It explores community engagement, equity and inclusion, counselling and support services, strengthening school-home partnerships, teacher training and professional development, and policy advocacy and research. By effectively fulfilling these roles, school social worker can help mutate the NEP's vision into a reality, promoting quality education and holistic development for all learners.

Keywords: Inclusive education, school social work, holistic development

Introduction

The 21st century requires an educated populace with the necessary knowledge, attitudes, and skills for economic and social development. The most effective means of promoting socio-economic mobility and a crucial tool in the creation of a fair and just society is education. Education provides the knowledge and abilities necessary for economic prosperity. By giving citizens the skills necessary to actively participate in the political process, education strengthens democracy. By instilling values that promote social cohesion and national identity, education also functions as an integrative force in society

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India’s continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation. Universal high-quality education is the best way forward for developing and maximizing our country's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the society, the country, and the world. India will have the highest population of young people in the world over the next decade, and our ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them will determine the future of our

country. The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved. In view of this objective National Education Policy 2020 was initiated with the vision of restructuring the education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must develop a deep sense of respect towards the fundamental duties and Constitutional values, bonding with one’s country, and a conscious awareness of one’s roles and responsibilities in a changing world.

Two prominent initiatives of the Indian government, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA – ‘Education for All Campaign’ in Hindi) in 2001 and the right of children to free and compulsory education (RTE) Act, 2009, have promoted greater foci on issues of access, inclusivity and quality in education. The mean years of schooling of the working

population (those over 25 years old) increased from 4.19 years in 2000 to 6.4 years in 2017. India has also committed to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with the initiation of several further large-scale and ambitious programmes in recent years to help achieve these objectives.

The National Education Policy 2020 envisions an inclusive and structural change in the educational system. It focuses on 'Equitable and Inclusive Education', which resonates with the idea that no child should be left behind in terms of educational opportunity because of their background and socio-cultural identities. NEP 2020 states that the purpose of education is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper, and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It seeks to create citizens who are involved, creative, and contribute to the creation of the pluralistic, inclusive, and egalitarian society that our constitution envisions.

Inclusive Education is not an indigenous concept in India. The concept was borrowed from recognised international settings (mainly through international intergovernmental organisations like UNESCO, World Bank, etc.) and started gaining currency in India post the 1990s. The initial groundwork of inclusive education was limited to 'Special Education' or inclusion of children with disability, which has seen some expansion in the past few years. India, however, still lacks a well-recognized 'working definition' and shared understanding of 'Inclusive Education. The school authorities should ensure the classrooms is always in an inclusive environment. The teacher, assistants, and school social workers must pay keen attention to children's verbal and nonverbal communication, and appreciate their works irrespective of their condition and wellness. Many studies have revealed the benefits of inclusive education for developing a sense of belonging and becoming well-prepared to live in society. It nurtures a culture of respect and unity, conveys openings to develop friendships with one another, and provides opportunities for the future

An overview of NEP 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 aims to bring transformational reforms in school and higher education and thus shape India into a global knowledge superpower.

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the National Education Policy 2020 on July 29, 2020. This policy replaced the 34-year-old National Policy on Education (NPE), in 1986.

Built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability, and Accountability, this policy is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The National Education Policy (NEP) aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower by making both school and college education more holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary, suited to 21st-century needs, and aimed at bringing out the unique capabilities of each student.

The New Education Policy aims to make education a universal right from primary to higher secondary levels by 2030. It emphasizes reintegrating discontinued students into the education system and introduces a structured curriculum in a 5+3+3+4 format, comprising 12 years of schooling and three years of Anganwadi education. Foundational literacy and numeracy are given significant importance, while the

distinction between academics and extracurricular activities is minimized. Vocational courses will be introduced from class 6 onwards, and the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction is encouraged up to grade Student progress will be assessed holistically through a comprehensive analysis rather than traditional scrutiny.

In higher education, the policy aims to increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio to 50% by 2035 by offering flexible subject choices and a multi-entry, multi-exit system with certification and credit transfer options. Research will be strengthened through the establishment of the National Research Foundation, while the Higher Education authority will operate with four specialized wings for efficient governance. Autonomous colleges will be granted greater independence, and information technology will be integrated across the education system. The policy also prioritizes gender-based funding and the development of educational zones in underserved regions. Additionally, national education forums will be established to explore the integration of technology in education (Baral, 2020).

Salient features of NEP 2020

With respect to school education, universal access is the key vision. Also, major reforms are brought in curriculum and pedagogy

Ensuring Universal Access to Education

NEP 2020 emphasizes universal access to quality education across all levels. Measures such as infrastructure support, open learning pathways, vocational training from Grade 6, and flexible learning modes will help reintegrate school dropouts. Special initiatives, including tracking student progress, counseling support, and adult literacy programs, aim to create an inclusive education system. Around 2 crore out-of-school children will be brought back into the mainstream.

Strengthening Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

Recognizing the urgency of foundational literacy and numeracy, the policy proposes a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy to ensure every child achieves basic reading and mathematical skills by Grade 3 by 2025. The National Book Promotion Policy will also be implemented to encourage reading habits.

Curriculum and Pedagogical Reforms

The school curriculum will undergo significant changes to foster holistic development, critical thinking, and 21st-century skills. Rigid separations between academic, extracurricular, and vocational education will be removed, allowing students greater flexibility in subject choices. A new National Curricular Framework for School Education (NCFSE 2020-21) will be developed by NCERT to support experiential and competency-based learning.

Multilingualism and Language Policy

The NEP strongly promotes mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction up to Grade 5, preferably till Grade 8. It encourages the learning of Sanskrit and other classical Indian languages, along with foreign languages at the secondary level. Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized to support students with hearing impairments. Additionally, students will engage in fun activities on 'The Languages of India' under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative.

Assessment Reforms

NEP 2020 shifts from rote learning to competency-based assessments, focusing on higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity. School examinations will be conducted in Grades 3, 5, and 8, while board exams for Grades 10 and 12 will be redesigned for a more holistic evaluation. A new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), will be established to set national assessment standards.

Equitable and Inclusive Education

NEP 2020 is committed to ensuring education for all, especially Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), including women, minorities, tribal communities, and differently-abled children. The government will establish Gender Inclusion Funds and Special Education Zones in marginalized regions. Students with disabilities will receive assistive technology, specialized educators, and inclusive learning materials to support their educational journey.

Teacher Recruitment and Development

Teacher recruitment will be transparent and merit-based, with a structured career progression system. By 2030, the minimum qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree. The National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed by NCTE in collaboration with NCERT, SCERTs, and educational institutions to ensure high-quality teacher training. A National Mission for Mentoring will also be established to support faculty development.

School Governance and Accreditation

Schools will be organized into complexes or clusters to optimize resources and enhance teaching quality. States will set up independent regulatory bodies, such as the State School Standards Authority (SSSA), for transparent governance and public accountability. The School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (SQAAP) will be developed by SCERT for continuous evaluation.

Higher Education Reforms

Expanding Access to Higher Education: NEP 2020 aims to increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) to 50% by 2035, adding 3.5 crore seats in higher education institutions. A multi-entry and multi-exit system will allow students to earn certificates, diplomas, or degrees based on their academic progress. An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) will digitally store credits for seamless transfer across institutions.

Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education

Undergraduate programs will become flexible, offering 3-year or 4-year options with multiple exit points:

- 1-year: Certificate
- 2-year: Advanced Diploma
- 3-year: Bachelor's Degree
- 4-year: Bachelor's Degree with Research

The policy promotes multidisciplinary education through the establishment of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), modeled on IITs and IIMs, to provide world-class education. A National Research Foundation (NRF) will be set up to enhance research capacity across institutions.

Regulation and Governance

A single Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will oversee the sector, excluding medical and legal education. It will have four verticals:

1. National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) – Regulation
2. General Education Council (GEC) – Academic Standards
3. Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) – Funding
4. National Accreditation Council (NAC) – Accreditation

Public and private institutions will follow the same regulatory framework, ensuring accountability and quality assurance. Over 15 years, college affiliations will be phased out, enabling institutions to become autonomous degree-granting colleges or constituent universities.

Faculty Empowerment and Teacher Education

The policy prioritizes faculty autonomy, professional development, and career progression. Under the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE 2021), teacher education programs will be redesigned, with substandard institutions being phased out.

Digital and Online Education

To expand open and distance learning (ODL), the policy recommends:

- Online courses and MOOCs with credit recognition
- Digital repositories and virtual labs
- A dedicated e-learning unit under MHRD

The National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) will be established to promote technological advancements in education.

Promotion of Indian Languages and Internationalization

To preserve and promote Indian languages, the government will establish:

- Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI)
- National Institutes for Pali, Persian, and Prakrit
- Strengthened Sanskrit and regional language departments

Global collaboration will be encouraged by allowing top-ranked foreign universities to open campuses in India.

Adult Education and Financial Support

NEP 2020 aims to achieve 100% youth and adult literacy. The National Scholarship Portal will be expanded to support financially disadvantaged students. Private institutions will also be encouraged to increase scholarships.

Financing and Implementation

The central and state governments will work together to increase public investment in education to 6% of GDP. NEP 2020 was formulated after extensive consultations with over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, 6,600 Blocks, and 676 Districts. Thus, the National Education Policy 2020 envisions a transformative education system that is inclusive, flexible, and innovation-driven. By promoting holistic development, critical thinking, interdisciplinary learning, and digital education, it prepares students for 21st-century challenges. However, its success depends on effective implementation, adequate funding, and well-trained educators. If executed

properly, NEP 2020 has the potential to revolutionize education in India, fostering a knowledge-driven society that is equitable, competitive, and future-ready

School Social Work: Structured Understanding

School Social Work is a specialized field within the broader domain of Social Work, aimed at bringing unique expertise and skills to both students and the educational system. As education became increasingly regarded as a right for every child, the importance of linking school and community took on more significance. It was during this period that school social workers (then known as visiting teachers) recognized that their role should be more in tune with the social conditions and social movements of the day, and they sought changes in school policies that adversely affected the lives of children. Essentially, they served as the link between the school and the home

The role of a School Social Worker begins where a teacher's responsibilities end, focusing on the emotional and psychological well-being of students. These professionals are trained to address mental health concerns, behavioral issues, academic challenges, absenteeism, and classroom support. Additionally, they provide individual and group counseling or therapy to students in need.

Globally, School Social Work is a well-established profession, practiced in over ten countries, including the USA, the United Kingdom, Canada, Finland, Ghana, Argentina, Germany, Hong Kong, Malta, Hungary, Korea, and Japan (Huxtable, 2002). The roots of this practice date back to the early 20th century when settlement workers from Hartley House and Greenwich House emphasized the importance of understanding teachers' perspectives on children. Early School Social Workers were initially known as Visiting Teachers, while the settlement house movement contributed to the development of social group work, social action, and community organization.

In India, formal Social Work education was introduced in 1936 in Mumbai by Clifford Marshall. However, to date, there is no dedicated council or licensing body for Social Workers in the country. The absence of a regulatory framework has led to significant challenges, including a lack of clear job descriptions, well-defined roles, and professional recognition for social workers. The low level of professionalization in social welfare, undefined social work functions, the absence of standardized training requirements for specific roles, and inadequate service conditions compared to other professions continue to hinder the growth of the field (Manohar, 1999). Despite the presence of various subfields such as School Social Work, Clinical Social Work, and Psychiatric Social Work, these disciplines have yet to gain a distinct professional identity in India.

The Origin of School Social Work

School Social Work emerged as a response to concerns about underprivileged students. The practice began independently in New York City, Boston, and Hartford during the 1906-1907 school year. In New York City, settlement workers from Hartley House and Greenwich House recognized the importance of understanding teachers' perspectives on the children attending their settlements. To bridge this gap, they appointed specialists to visit schools and homes, fostering close collaboration between schools and the local community.

In Boston, the Women's Education Association introduced visiting teachers in schools to strengthen the connection between school and home, ultimately supporting children's education. Similarly, in Hartford, the Psychological Clinic initiated a visiting teacher program, which laid the foundation for the modern School Social Worker role.

Over the years, the number of School Social Workers grew, and their focus shifted towards addressing student-specific challenges.

In 1916, Jane Culbert defined the role of school social worker as follows:

Interpreting to the school the child's out-of-school life; supplementing the teacher's knowledge of the child so that she may be able to teach the whole child; assisting the school to know the life of a neighborhood, in order that it may train the children for the life to which they look forward. Secondly, the visiting teacher interprets to the parents the demands of the school and explains the particular difficulties and needs of the child. (Culbert, 1916, p. 595)

It is oriented toward helping students make satisfactory adjustments and coordinating and influencing the efforts of the school, the family, and the community to achieve this goal (NASW, 2002, p. 9)

The school social work profession has consistently focused on coordinating the efforts of schools, families, and communities toward helping students improve their academic achievement and social, emotional, and behavioral competence by using its unique perspective of viewing the person in his or her environment.

School social workers are responsible for designing and implementing the school-based programs to provide a positive school environment. They are also engaged in working to identify students in need of more intensive interventions and refer such students to additional services provided by the state. School social workers serve as a resource to the school authorities and other educators, by providing consultations on various matters. They also provide training on various aspects of mental health needs and identify such students for the referral process. School Social Workers work in close cooperation with individual students and their families and in the process create a bridge between the school and the community. This coordination is critical for building a successful partnership between the school and the community for optimizing the use of limited resources, facilitating better service delivery, and maintaining communication between partners.

Multifaceted Roles of School Social Worker

The main goal of school social work is to enable students to function and learn in the school environment. School social workers practice in a secondary setting—the primary purpose of schools is to educate students, not to provide social services. The school social work practitioner will often be the only social worker in a school and sometimes in an entire school district. Therefore, autonomous school social work practice requires skills for all levels of practice—micro, mezzo, and macro. School social workers work primarily with individual students. However, they also develop and facilitate groups for students and parents. Effective school social work practice consists of collaborating, consulting, developing behavior plans, and training others to work with difficult children in the context

of a child's daily school experience (Frey & George-Nichols, 2003). School social workers are involved in training and resource-building activities such as staff development, community education, and grant writing. School social workers assist interdisciplinary teams by providing information from a thorough assessment of students that usually includes information from collateral sources. School social workers draw on a number of diverse roles and tasks to meet the unique needs of each school and the priorities of each building principal. Using the ecological framework as an organizing principle, these tasks include advocating for at-risk students and their families; empowering families to share their concerns with school officials; maintaining open lines of communication between home and school; helping families understand their children's educational needs; consulting with teachers about students' living situations and neighborhood conditions; making referrals to community agencies; tracking students involved with multiple agencies; and working with the larger community to identify and develop resources to better serve the needs of at-risk students and their families. As members of a school's multidisciplinary team, school social workers are involved in a number of activities including: participating in conferences related to students' behavior and academic progress; collaborating with teachers and other school professionals to assess student needs and developing strategies to meet their needs; being a member of a schoolwide crisis response team; preparing a comprehensive developmental assessment and social history as part of the required multidisciplinary evaluation; and preventing inappropriate labelling of students by assessing adaptive behavior, cultural background, and socioeconomic factors that may interfere with a child's learning or impact a child's behavior in school. School social workers also provide individual and group counseling to students; conduct classroom activities; and design, implement, and evaluate school-based prevention programs.

Some of the specific services that the School Social Workers can provide have been discussed below:

Services for Students

Working with environmental issues that impact a child's adjustment in school, the home, and the community is the responsibility of school social workers. For the target groups (group, individual, and/or family), they offer counselling services. To help the child learn as well as possible, the school social workers are in charge of enlisting the help of the community, school, and family. For kids with behavioural problems, they also help create positive behavioural intervention techniques. School social workers develop intervention plans to improve children's academic performance. They are also in charge of helping people manage their anger and resolve conflicts. For improved social adaptations and efficient communication, they assist the youngster in acquiring the necessary social interaction skills. They also help people grasp things better.

Services to parents/families

The school social worker is in charge of collaborating with families to identify issues affecting the child's performance and adjustment to school. They collaborate with parents to help them with their kids' transition to school. They assist in reducing family stress so that the child can perform better in school and the community. They help parents get their

children enrolled in special education programs. In order to help parents, deal with their numerous issues, the school social workers also help them access and use community and school resources.

Services to school personnel

School social workers give the staff the knowledge they need to comprehend the different aspects (cultural, sociological, economic, familial, health, etc.) that influence a student's behaviour and performance. They make it easier to create staff training initiatives. They aid educators in comprehending different facets of behaviour control.

School-community liaison

In order to address the diverse needs of the kids, the school social workers help coordinate with the community and mobilise its resources. They assist the various state and non-state organisations in providing the schools with sufficient support. Additionally, they support enhanced and additional programs for families and kids. The school social workers help the system successfully address the children's needs.

They are in charge of creating and carrying out educational initiatives for kids. Additionally, they help create substitute programs for school dropouts, kids with special needs, and kids who are in trouble with the law. They are also in charge of spotting and reporting instances of child neglect and abuse. They offer advice on matters pertaining to school policy including rules and regulations. At last, they provide case management for students and families requiring multiple resources.

Thus, the roles of a School Social Worker are multiple. They act as an advocate in promoting child's rights, as a manager, as a collaborator, as a consultant, as a coordinator, and last but not the least as a facilitator. School social workers bring unique knowledge and skills to the school system. School social workers are instrumental in furthering the purpose and objectives of the schools. School social workers are hired by schools to enhance the institutional abilities to meet its academic mission, especially where home, school and community collaboration is the key to achieving that mission. Historically, the foremost role of the school social worker has been that of a home-school-community liaison. Although the field of school social work has evolved considerably with the dynamic changes of society, school social workers function as change agents more so than ever before and they continue to serve as the vital link between home, school, and community.

Integrating School Social Work and NEP 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions an inclusive, student-centered education system that fosters holistic learning, equity, and well-being. To achieve these goals, school social work plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between students, educators, families, and communities. By addressing social, emotional, and psychological barriers to education, school social workers align with NEP 2020's mission of ensuring universal access, equity, and quality education for all. To put the policies into practice, the timely and systematic involvement and participation of social workers and social sciences play a great role.

Here's how school social work aligns with the key principles of the policy:

Encouraging Holistic Assessment and Development: The policy promotes competency-based assessments over rote memorization. School social workers work with teachers to develop individualized education plans (IEPs) and encourage experiential and project-based learning, ensuring students develop critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence.

Ensuring Universal Access to Education: NEP 2020 emphasizes bringing out-of-school children back into the mainstream through innovative education centers and tracking student progress. School social workers can support this by identifying at-risk students, addressing socio-economic challenges, and facilitating re-enrollment through counseling, outreach programs, and collaboration with families and communities.

Promoting Equity and Inclusion: The policy highlights the importance of equitable and inclusive education, particularly for Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs). School social workers advocate for gender inclusion, special education zones, and resources for children with disabilities, ensuring all students have equal opportunities to learn and grow.

Addressing Mental Health and Emotional Well-being: NEP 2020 recognizes the need for counselors and mental health support in schools. School social workers provide counseling, behavior interventions, and crisis management to help students deal with stress, trauma, bullying, or family issues, creating a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Supporting Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: The policy stresses achieving foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3. School social workers assist teachers in identifying students struggling with learning difficulties and work with families to create personalized learning support systems. They also collaborate with NGOs and government programs to provide necessary interventions.

Strengthening Vocational Education and Life Skills Development: NEP 2020 introduces vocational training from Grade 6 onwards to equip students with practical skills. School social workers facilitate career guidance, skill-building programs, and industry linkages, helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds access these opportunities.

Strengthening Parent-School-Community Engagement: NEP 2020 calls for increased collaboration between schools, families, and communities. School social workers act as liaisons, strengthening communication, conducting parenting workshops, and mobilizing community resources to support students' holistic development.

Support for Migrant and Nomadic Population: The policy highlights the need for education to reach migrant children and other transient populations. Social workers are essential in ensuring that migrant families and their children receive the necessary educational support, including overcoming language barriers, adjusting to new school environments, and ensuring that these children are not excluded from educational opportunities.

Environmental Education and Sustainability: Social work also plays a role in promoting 'environmental education' within the framework of sustainable development. Social workers can help integrate environmental awareness into school curricula and work with communities to address issues like climate change and environmental justice, ensuring that education systems contribute to both ecological and social sustainability.

Life Skills and Value-based Education: NEP 2020 encourages education that promotes values like responsibility, empathy, and social cohesion. Social workers contribute by facilitating life skills training, guiding students through personal development programs, and fostering a sense of social responsibility among young people. These programs can include topics such as conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and community engagement.

Research and Policy Development: NEP 2020 encourages the development of evidence-based practices, and social work education equips students with research skills that help identify effective interventions in educational and community settings. Social workers contribute to research on issues like educational equity, community health, and social development, influencing educational policy and improving practices at both local and national level.

Reducing Dropout Rates: A key focus of NEP 2020 is reducing the school dropout rate. Social workers contribute by identifying students at risk of dropping out and implementing support systems such as mentorship, counseling, and financial assistance programs. They also work to address underlying issues like child labor or family instability that contribute to dropout rates.

Conclusion

Throughout the world, schools are becoming the main public institution for social development. Schools are working to include those who have been previously excluded from the opportunity of education. They are raising standards for educational outcomes to prepare citizens to participate in a multinational world, bound together by communication and by economic and social relations. The school social worker is becoming a useful professional to assist children who are marginalized whether economically, socially, politically, or personally to participate in this. Social workers work to make the education process effective. To do this, their central focus is working in partnership with parents on the pupil in transaction with a complex school and home environment. Education has become crucial, not only for each person to cope with the demands of modern living, but also for national economic survival. Thus, the role of a school social worker has become all the more critical for the overall wellbeing of the students as a whole. The successful implementation of the New Education Policy (NEP) in India requires the active involvement of school social workers. Through their expertise in community engagement, advocacy, counseling, and support services, social workers can contribute significantly to the transformative goals of the NEP. By actively engaging with communities, fostering equity and inclusion, providing counseling and support services, strengthening school-home partnerships, facilitating teacher training, and engaging in policy

advocacy and research, social workers can help create an inclusive, equitable, and empowering educational environment. Their contributions will ensure that the NEP's vision of quality education, holistic development, and equal opportunities for all learners becomes a reality. By effectively fulfilling their roles, social workers can contribute to shaping an education system that nurtures the potential of every individual and paves the way for a brighter future for generations to come.

While concluding all, it may be stated that school social work has a great potential to make the school system conducive for all the children, and make the education process more meaningful. It has the capacity to realize the Right to Education (and quality education) for all. Hopefully, the social planners and policy makers soon recognize the value of school social work and make provisions to ensure their presence in each and every school of the country.

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