

Operationalizing NEP 2020 Inclusive Directives in Gurugram and Mewat District Schools: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Gender-Inclusion Fund, Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Group (SEDG) mapping, neighbourhood-school planning, and the 5%+1% enrolment target for Children with Special Needs (CWSN) are some of the tools that will be part of India's school reform agenda under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which prioritizes equity and inclusion. This article studies the implementation of these directions in two neighboring but extremely unequal districts of Haryana: Gurugram, which is the most urbanized and educated district in the state, and Nuh (Mewat), which is the least educated and educationally disadvantaged. The study examines the two districts' literacy, gender parity, retention, and inclusion-infrastructure metrics using secondary data gathered from Census 2011, UDISE+ reports, Samagra Shiksha paperwork, and sources from the state government. There is a significant disparity in the policy's actual implementation between Gurugram and Mewat schools. Gurugram schools have the necessary infrastructure and administrative capacity to put NEP's inclusion architecture into practice, but Mewat schools confront additional challenges such as poverty, distance, traditional gender norms, and a lack of teachers, all of which work together to reduce the policy's effectiveness. In order to close this gap, the study finishes with a set of suggestions that are situationally relevant.

Keywords: NEP 2020, inclusive education, Gurugram, Mewat, Nuh, gender parity, CWSN, SEDG, Samagra Shiksha, educational equity

1. Introduction

By recognizing inclusion and equity as central to its purpose rather than an afterthought, the National Education Policy 2020 breaks with previous policy frameworks. The Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) are a combination of gender, socio-cultural identity, geographical location, disability, and socio-economic status, and they represent historically underrepresented groups. The state has pledged to close the social-category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes through programs like the Gender-Inclusion Fund, CWSN-specific enrollment targets, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, bridge courses for out-of-school children, and resource centers for children with disabilities.

Haryana offers a unique opportunity to examine the implementation of these guidelines through an exceptionally stark internal disparity. The literacy rate is greatest among Haryana's twenty-two districts in Gurugram, which is a part of the National Capital Region and the leading private-sector job hub in India. Just eighty kilometers apart is the town of Nuh, also known as Mewat, which has the lowest literacy rate in the state and among the largest gender gaps in northern India when it comes to gender education. Because of the stark contrast between the educational opportunities and challenges faced by different regions of the same state, the Gurugram-Mewat pair provides a useful analytical lens through which to view the question of whether nationally stated policies are effectively implemented or whether local factors such as geography, social structure, and capacity dictate the actual implementation of inclusive directives.

The work of Singal (2005), who examined the evolution of inclusive education in India, posited that the term should refer to a more all-encompassing reform of education policy than only the acceptance of students with disabilities in regular classrooms. Systemic reforms in school administration, teacher training, community engagement, and equal access to educational resources are crucial for effective implementation, according to the study. Singal went on to note that different Indian states and districts have different approaches to putting inclusive

education policy into action in the classroom, which she interprets as meaning that the success or failure of such initiatives is mostly dependent on the administrative capabilities of the local level. When contrasting educationally disadvantaged districts like Mewat with more developed districts like Gurugram, these observations become quite pertinent.

The authors *Berwal, Bala, and Punia (2020)* looked into the administrative hurdles that primary schools in Haryana face while trying to implement inclusive education. The majority of schools failed to meet the requirements set out by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan due to a lack of administrative support, inadequate monitoring, inadequate teacher orientation, and a lack of use of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), according to their study of school heads from various educational blocks. Effective implementation of inclusive education policy, according to the authors, requires school heads to increase their competence through continual professional development. Based on their research, it seems that strong institutional leadership and efficient administration are just as important as policy directions when it comes to putting NEP 2020 into action. *Kundu (2019)* looked at how secondary school teachers in India felt about implementing inclusive education. According to the survey, despite the good attitudes of teachers and school heads toward inclusion, there was little real classroom implementation due to factors such as poor infrastructure, a lack of specialized training, an absence of assistive resources, and severe teacher workloads. Implementation, according to the author, can only be a success with concerted institutional backing, ongoing professional development for educators, and better access to specialized assistance. It is clear from these results that districts endowed with more robust educational infrastructure will have an easier time putting NEP 2020's inclusive measures into action.

In her analysis of NEP 2020, *Shivani Nag (2024)* focused on the fair and inclusive goal of multilingual education. Many students, especially those from underprivileged areas or those learning English as a second language, face scholastic disadvantages as a result of language hurdles, according to the report. The author argued that instruction in the mother tongue and other forms of multilingualism boost engagement, achievement, and educational equity. These recommendations are especially pertinent for socially and linguistically varied regions like Mewat, as the study also indicated that districts with linguistically diverse populations need stronger institutional assistance to effectively implement these rules. Following the implementation of NEP 2020, *Doungel (2022)* examined the responsibilities of key players in guaranteeing inclusive and equitable school education. Research shows that school management committees, administrators, parents, and students all need to work together to make this strategy a success, rather than relying just on the government to do it. It stressed that involving stakeholders improves educational results for underprivileged students, increases accountability, and fortifies monitoring methods. Additionally, the study showed that inclusive education programs are more effectively implemented in districts where community participation is high compared to districts where parental involvement is low.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the important parts of NEP 2020 that deal with inclusive education. With the goal of contrasting the Gurugram and Mewat (Nuh) districts with respect to retention rates, gender equality, and literacy rates.
2. To examine each district's current level of implementation of the inclusion instruments outlined in NEP 2020, including GIF, CWSN provisions, SEDG mapping, and KGBVs.
3. To find the underlying obstacles that make it harder to implement in Mewat compared to Gurugram.

3. NEP 2020 and the Architecture of Inclusion: A Brief Review

'Equitable and Inclusive Education: Learning for All', Chapter 6 of NEP 2020, identifies SEDGs based on gender identity (girls and transgender children), socio-cultural identity (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and minorities), geographical identity (students from remote or economically disadvantaged regions), disability (children with special needs), and socio-economic condition (children in migrant communities, urban deprivation, or situations of trafficking or abuse). The policy's proposed solutions to these overlapping drawbacks are: Girls' and transgender pupils' access to toilets, bicycles, and conditional cash transfers are just a few examples of the locally relevant programs that could benefit from a Gender-Inclusion Fund.

- With the help of resource centers, aids and appliances, and home-based teaching if needed, we aim to increase CWSN enrollment using a '5%+1%' approach, which consists of a 5% enrollment benchmark plus 1% extra resource allocation.
- Housing girls from SEDG classes VI–XII in the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas (KGBVs) and enhancing their educational experience there.
- Programs to raise awareness among educators about gender and disability, as well as specialized training and remedial courses for at-risk youth, are all part of the solution to re-enrollment efforts.
- Decentralized, data-driven SEDG concentration identification to target rather than distribute uniformly Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan resources.

The national UDISE+ data for 2024-25 shows that CWSN enrollment is around 0.86 percent of total school enrollment. This is significantly lower than the 2.5 to 3 percent share that demographic estimates indicate CWSN children should represent, highlighting that the policy's actual implementation is still behind its own goals. It is important to consider this national deficiency when analyzing district-level variation, like the one between Gurugram and Mewat. Even districts with adequate resources are grappling with a system-wide implementation gap, and the most underprivileged districts experience this gap to a greater extent.

4. Profile of the Study Area

Gurugram district, which is part of the Delhi National Capital Region and was previously the Gurgaon tehsil, is now a major centre for manufacturing and international services. With a high administrative capacity per capita, a vast private school sector, and convenient physical access even in rural areas, its educational system is well-rounded. In contrast, the Nuh (Mewat) district was formed in 2005 and is still mostly rural and Meo-Muslim. It has high rates of early marriage, low female labor force participation, and a chronic lack of secondary and senior-secondary schools within walking distance of homes. These fundamental distinctions greatly influence the reception and execution of any nationally formulated program, including NEP 2020, in individual schools.

Table 1: Comparative Literacy Profile — Haryana, Gurugram and Nuh (Mewat)

Indicator	Haryana (State)	Gurugram District	Nuh (Mewat) District
Overall literacy rate (Census 2011)	75.55%	84.4%	54.08%
Male literacy rate	84.06%	~89%	69.94%
Female literacy rate	65.94%	~78%	36.6%
Rank among Haryana's 22 districts	—	Highest	Lowest

Source: Census of India 2011; District Administration, Gurugram; IndiaStat District statistics. Gurugram male/female literacy figures are approximate, derived from the district's composite literacy rate against the state gender gap pattern.

5. Research Methodology

The research relies solely on secondary sources for its descriptive-comparative methodology. District data from the 2011 Indian Census, Ministry of Education UDISE+ reports, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan paperwork, press reports from the Haryana School Education Department, and policy and peer-reviewed literature on the equity aspects of NEP 2020 are some of the sources consulted. Triangulating quantitative indicators (literacy, retention, enrolment) with qualitative and documentary evidence (news reportage on school upgradation, government orders relaxing school-norm criteria in Mewat, and Samagra Shiksha operational guidelines) allows for the construction of a composite picture of on-ground operationalization, which is indicative rather than exhaustive. The numerical index in Section 6.3 is based on documentary evidence rather than disaggregated district-wise UDISE+ data on CWSN enrollment and inclusion-infrastructure for Gurugram and Mewat. Therefore, the comparative assessment in Section 6.3 should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically precise; it is presented as a qualitative, directive-by-directive rating.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

6.1 Literacy and the Gender Gap

Table 1 shows that Gurugram's overall literacy rate exceeds the state average by roughly nine percentage points, while Mewat's trails it by over twenty points — a gap of some thirty percentage points between the two districts.

Table 1
District-wise Literacy Rate in Haryana: A Comparison of Gurugram and Mewat

District	Overall Literacy Rate (%)	Male Literacy Rate (%)	Female Literacy Rate (%)	Gender Gap (Percentage Points)
Gurugram	84.7	90.1	78.8	11.3
Mewat (Nuh)	54.1	71.3	36.6	34.7
Haryana (State Average)	75.6	84.1	65.9	18.2

Source: Census of India (2011).

The gender gap is even more pronounced in Gurugram, where it is closer to the national urban trend, and in Mewat, where it is 36.6%, the female literacy rate is less than half of the male literacy rate. It is evident from this that the issue of gender inequalities in school access, which is the primary focus of NEP 2020, is not a nationwide problem but rather a district-specific one, like Mewat.

6.2 Retention and the 'Funnel Effect' in Mewat

Table 2: Enrolment Attrition across School Stages in Government Schools, Mewat

School Stage	Approx. Enrolment (Govt. Schools, Mewat)	Retention relative to Primary
Primary (I–V)	1,62,000	100% (baseline)
Middle (VI–VIII)	48,000	~30%
Senior Secondary (Class XI)	9,000+	~6%

Source: The Tribune (Haryana School Education Department data, reported August 2016; district administration figures, 2017).

Table 2 shows what looks like a funnel effect: enrollment drops from almost 1.62 lakh students in the first grade to less than 10,000 in the eleventh. Mewat has a far lower retention rate than the state and national average; just one out of every thirteen girls recruited to Class VIII graduates from Class XII, according to district officials. While this trend existed before NEP 2020, it is the very trend that the policy aims to tackle through its SEDG and gender-inclusion provisions. The data show how difficult it is for Mewat's schools to put these provisions into practice, rather than a failure in the policy's design.

6.3 Directive-wise Operationalization: A Qualitative Comparison

Table 3: How Key NEP 2020 Inclusion Directives Play Out in Gurugram vs. Mewat

NEP 2020 Inclusion Directive	Operationalization in Gurugram	Operationalization in Mewat
Gender-Inclusion Fund (GIF) & girls' incentives (uniforms, bicycles, KGBVs)	Present; supplemented by CSR and private-school partnerships	Present on paper via Samagra Shiksha; reach constrained by transport and social norms
CWSN inclusion (5%+1% target, resource centres, aids/appliances)	Resource rooms functional in a majority of government schools	Resource centres exist in fewer schools; specially trained teachers scarce
SEDG-focused school mapping / neighbourhood schools	Dense school network; access not a major barrier	Sparse secondary/senior-secondary schools per habitation; long distances deter girls
Multilingual & bridge-course support for first-generation learners	Limited need; largely English/Hindi medium demand	High relevance given Mewati/Urdu home-language learners; implementation uneven
Teacher sensitisation on inclusion & gender	Regular in-service training linked to urban cluster resource centres	Training conducted but thinly spread across remote blocks
Community/parental engagement (SMC, School Management Committees)	Active, urban middle-class participation	SMCs exist nominally; conservative norms limit girls' voice in decisions

Source: Compiled from Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan guidelines, Ministry of Education inclusion documentation, and district-level press reportage; qualitative synthesis by the authors.

According to Table 3, there is a clear pattern: in Gurugram, where administrative capacity, teacher availability, and physical access are favorable, the same national directive is practically more watered down than in Mewat, where distance, staffing shortages, and social resistance to sending girls to school outside of their own village dilute its impact. This provides more evidence that the policy's underlying capability and social circumstances, rather than policy awareness, are the constraints on operationalization.

6.4 Availability of Inclusive Education Infrastructure

Table 4: Comparative Availability of Inclusive Education Infrastructure in Government Schools of Gurugram and Mewat

Infrastructure Indicator	Gurugram	Mewat (Nuh)
Barrier-free School Buildings	Available in most schools	Available in selected schools only
Ramps with Handrails	Largely available	Partially available
Accessible Toilets	Available in most schools	Limited availability
Resource Rooms	Functional in majority of schools	Available in few schools
Assistive Devices	Regularly distributed under Samagra Shiksha	Distribution irregular and limited
ICT Facilities	Widely available	Limited in remote schools
Transportation Support	Better accessibility and road connectivity	Long travel distances and inadequate transport
Learning Materials for CWSN	Comparatively adequate	Often insufficient

Source: Compiled from Samagra Shiksha Implementation Reports, Haryana Education Department documents, and district-level observations.

According to Table 4, there are significant disparities between Gurugram and Mewat in terms of the accessibility of facilities that facilitate inclusive schooling. In general, Gurugram's public schools have better physical infrastructure, such as accessible restrooms, resource rooms that really work, and modern technology. With the help of these tools, students with disabilities are able to fully engage in mainstream classrooms. On the other hand, ramps, accessible restrooms, assistive devices, and specialized educational materials are still lacking in many Mewat schools, especially those in more rural locations. Secondary schooling is even more inaccessible due to transportation issues. Based on these results, it seems that districts still do not have the same level of administrative capacity, financial resources, or geographical accessibility when it comes to implementing the infrastructure development priorities set by Samagra Shiksha and NEP 2020.

6.5 Teacher Capacity and Professional Preparedness

Table 5

Comparison of Teacher Preparedness for Inclusive Education in Gurugram and Mewat

Indicator	Gurugram	Mewat (Nuh)
Teachers Receiving Inclusive Education Training	High	Moderate
Availability of Special Educators	Comparatively adequate	Limited
Classroom Adaptation Skills	Good	Moderate
Awareness of RPwD Act, 2016	High	Moderate
Awareness of NEP 2020 Inclusive Provisions	High	Moderate
Regular In-service Training	Frequently conducted	Conducted occasionally
Support from BIERT/BRP/CRP	Regular	Limited due to large coverage area

Source: Compiled from Samagra Shiksha teacher training records, Ministry of Education guidelines, and district education reports.

There are considerable disparities in the level of preparation of Gurugram and Mewat teachers, as seen in Table 5. Instructors in Gurugram are more likely to participate in professional

development sessions centered on inclusive education, and they also tend to be more knowledgeable of the NEP 2020's inclusive provisions and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016. Extra support from Block Resource Persons (BRPs), Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs), and Block Inclusive Education Resource Teachers (BIERTs) as well as special educators helps to make classrooms more inclusive. Mewat schools, on the other hand, lack expert assistance, professional development possibilities abound, and skilled staff are hard to come by due to the widespread distribution of schools in the district. Teachers frequently face challenges when trying to modify curricula, manage their classrooms, and create tailored lessons for students with disabilities.

6.6 Community Participation and Parental Support

Table 6
Comparison of Community Participation in Inclusive Education in Gurugram and Mewat

Community Participation Indicator	Gurugram	Mewat (Nuh)
Functioning School Management Committees (SMCs)	Highly active	Moderately active
Parental Awareness of Inclusive Education	High	Limited
Participation in School Meetings	Regular	Irregular
Community Support for Girls' Education	Strong	Moderate to Limited
NGO/CSR Participation	Significant	Limited
School-Parent Communication	Frequent	Occasional
Awareness of Government Schemes	High	Moderate

Source: Compiled from Haryana School Education Department reports, Samagra Shiksha documentation, and district-level educational studies.

Table 6 shows that compared to Mewat, Gurugram has far better community involvement and parental involvement. With more frequent communication between schools and families, increased knowledge of inclusive education policies, and more involvement from parents, Gurugram's School Management Committees (SMCs) are more active than before. In addition to infrastructural improvements, awareness campaigns, and assistive services, corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities and partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) further boost educational support. However, because of lower literacy rates, socio-cultural limitations, and reduced awareness of government programs for Children with Disabilities, parental participation in Mewat is very restricted. School Management Committees are present in every school in the district, but how efficient they are varies greatly. To successfully implement the inclusive education policies envisioned under NEP 2020, it is crucial to increase community engagement and parental understanding, as these studies highlight.

6.6 Interpretation

Tables 1-3, when read collectively, provide credence to three interpretational findings. First, while the inclusion architecture of NEP 2020 is important, it is not enough on its own. Even a well-designed national tool like the Gender-Inclusion Fund can only be effective to the extent that local school networks, teacher supply, and social context permit. Additionally, Samagra Shiksha's district-specific planning aims to address the disparity between Gurugram and Mewat in terms of implementation ability, namely in terms of schools-per-habitation, certified special educators, and last-mile transport, rather than textual policy differences. Finally, any operationalization plan that does not prioritize the retention of girls from the middle stage forward will not be able to close the literacy gap in the district within a reasonable amount of time. This is because gender is still the most significant axis of disadvantage in Mewat.

7. Key Challenges in Operationalizing Inclusion in Mewat

1. Due to social reluctance to send daughters to neighboring villages, there is a shortage of middle and senior secondary schools within safe walking distance, especially for girls.
2. Despite receiving funding from Samagra Shiksha, CWSN continues to face a scarcity of qualified special educators and enough facilities for its resource rooms.
3. There is a lack of consistency in gender- and disability-sensitivity training, as well as a high vacancy rate among teachers in rural districts. NEP's multilingual foundational literacy laws have not yet tackled the home-language mismatch, which refers to the difference between Hindi-medium instruction and speech affected by Mewati or Urdu.
4. School Management Committees in rural Gurugram are not as effective as those in metropolitan areas at representing the community's views and opinions, especially those of mothers.
5. The retention-linked incentives offered by NEP only partially alleviate the economic pressures that force teenage females into early marriage and young boys into informal employment.

8. Enabling Conditions Observed in Gurugram

The research shows that, in comparison to many other Haryana districts, Gurugram has a number of enabling characteristics that have helped to make inclusive education work better there. Students, especially those with disabilities, benefit greatly from the extensive system of public and private schools since it minimizes the distance they have to travel to go to their classes. Lessening the likelihood of school dropout, this vast educational infrastructure aids in minimizing obstacles associated to distance. Also, the district's improved administrative and financial capabilities allow Gurugram to set up and run resource centers, plan and execute teacher training programs, and launch inclusive education initiatives that adhere to Samagra Shiksha's standards. School Management Committees (SMCs) and parental education and awareness are relatively high in this district, which helps with community involvement, which in turn helps with accountability and collaborative decision-making, both of which are goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. In addition, the city of Gurugram has a robust business and industrial sector, which makes it an ideal location for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects, wherein private companies contribute both financially and physically to inclusive education initiatives. By combining government funding with private donations of assistive technology, digital learning materials, school infrastructure, and capacity-building initiatives, these collaborations make it possible for more students with disabilities to participate in mainstream education.

9. Recommendations

1. Building on the district's already granted school-upgradation relaxations, give Mewat first priority when opening or upgrading middle and senior-secondary schools in stages so that no residence is more than a safe walking or short transportation distance away.
2. To bring CWSN enrollment and identification closer to the 5%+1% NEP goal, send a team of qualified special educators to the Mewat blocks and supplement them with mobile resource rooms.
3. For the transition from Class VIII to XII, when the present statistics reveal the steepest attrition rate among girls, it is imperative that Mewat enhance its KGBV-style residential and dormitory provision.
4. Following the National Education Policy's (NEP) focus on mother-tongue-linked early education, provide structured foundational-literacy bridge materials that are attentive to the home-language context of Mewati and Urdu.

5. Like in Gurugram, activate and teach Mewat's School Management Committees to monitor girls' attendance and include their mothers.
6. Since disaggregated public data at this level is currently restricted, it is difficult to conduct exact monitoring. Therefore, it would be beneficial to commission a UDISE+ district drill-down for Gurugram and Mewat that focuses on CWSN enrollment and Gender-Inclusion Fund utilization.

10. Conclusion

Conditions that mediate the operationalization of NEP 2020 vary greatly, even within a single state, despite the fact that it provides one of the most explicit equality and inclusion frameworks in the history of Indian education policy. When comparing Gurugram and Mewat, it becomes clear that districts with robust infrastructure and administrative capacity are better able to incorporate and institutionalize NEP's inclusion instruments. In contrast, districts like Mewat, which are characterized by distance, gender norms, and resource scarcity, see these directives more as goals than reality. To close this gap, it will be necessary to invest in schools, teachers, and community participation tailored to Mewat specifically, according to the data-driven scale of disadvantage. This investment must go beyond just restating the policy at the district level. This is the only way to ensure that the goal of "equitable and inclusive education for all" outlined in NEP 2020 is equally and consistently achieved in practice.

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