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Special Issue

on

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR NATIONAL
EDUCATION POLICY--2020**

*Reimagining Teacher Education, Vocational Education
and Professional Education*

on the occasion of

AIU WEST ZONE VICE CHANCELLORS' MEET--2021

hosted by

JAIPUR NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, JAIPUR, RAJASTHAN

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National Education Policy—2020: A Critical Analysis

Lissy Koshi*

Education has been one of the foundational sectors in the national developmental planning. A National Education Policy (NEP) is a comprehensive framework to guide the development of education in the country. It is a document which provides a vision for education both at school and Higher education level. The first was promulgated in 1968 the second in 1986, which was later modified in 1992. And now in 2020, it has come with some major changes. A panel of experts led by the former ISRO chief Dr. Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan after a vivid study have come out with the National Education Policy 2020 which is a 60 page document refined from a 484 page draft.

The Major Changes Coming With NEP- 2020

- HRD Ministry is renamed as Ministry of Education
- GDP investment on education is planned to be raised from 3 per cent to at least 6 per cent. From 3-4 per cent of GDP to 6 per cent of GDP being invested into education is a very welcome change. It used to be quite low as compared to developed and developing countries.
- The policy aims at universalisation of education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 per cent Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030.
- The New Education Policy proposes to follow "5+3+3+4" design wherein the formal education of the child starts at the age of three. The stage from 3-8 years will be the foundation stage, that from 8-11 shall be named the preparatory stage, ages 11-14 the middle stage and a student from 14-18 years shall belong to the secondary stage. Free and compulsory education is thus extended from 6-14 to 3-18 years.
- According to the New Education Policy, from the age of 3, children will be part of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). This would recruit teachers specially trained in the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE.
- The mother tongue or local or regional language will be the medium of instruction in all schools up to Class 5 (preferably till Class 8 and beyond). Local language keeps students at advantage at understanding concepts.
- Vocational integration is planned to initiate from Class 6 onwards. Every child will come out of school adept in at least one skill. Skill development would be emphasized based on child's aptitudes and interest. Coding shall be taught from class 6. This may be with an aim to make the learners computer savvy by the time they finish schooling.
- Curriculum will integrate 21st Century Skills, Mathematical Thinking and Scientific temper. Attaining Foundational Learning & Numeracy Skills through National Mission by 2025. The NEP 2020 aims at uplifting the learner to achieve application level of learning. Academic, vocational and extra-curricular activities shall be given equal footing.
- According to the NEP, Sanskrit will be offered at all levels and foreign languages will be offered from the secondary school level. Other classical languages to be offered too. Inclusive & Equitable Education System by 2030. Universalisation from ECCE to Secondary Education by 2030, aligning with SDG4 (an educational goal that aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all)
- The new NEP focuses on overhauling the curriculum and making board exams easier. The board exams for class 10 and 12 will continue. However, they will primarily test core concepts, competencies application of knowledge rather than memorization. It has focused on a reduction in the syllabus to retain core essentials and has put thrust on experiential learning and critical thinking. Common Standards of Learning will be set in Public and Private Schools.
- A common guiding set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed by 2022, by the National Council for Teachers Education (NCTE). The policy also lays down that

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the NCTE will be restructured as a professional standard setting body (PSSB) under a General Education Council (GEC). Teacher education will be gradually moved into multidisciplinary colleges and universities by 2030. By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree. The 2-year B.Ed. programmes will also be offered only for those who have already obtained Bachelor's Degrees in other specialized subjects.

- It is proposed to set up a National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) as a standard setting body under MHRD to set the norms, standards and guidelines for assessments across all recognized schools. PARAKH is also expected to conduct National Achievement Surveys to monitor achievement of learning outcomes and guide the boards of education to make learning suited to the requirements of contemporary India.
- Changes in report card: The progress card of all students for school-based assessment will be redesigned. It will be a holistic, 360-degree, multidimensional report card that will reflect in great detail the progress and uniqueness of each learner in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The progress card will include self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher assessment.
- NEP ends science-commerce-arts streams: NEP has eliminated the rigid separation of streams. Students will now be able to choose subjects like history and physics at the same time in class 11 and 12. Dilution of strict division of subjects shall be implemented.
- National Educational Technology Forum: An autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration.
- Holistic undergraduate programs to be provided. Multidisciplinary approach will be adopted. Interdisciplinary combination of subjects to be provided. It also proposes phasing out of all institutions offering single streams. It says that all universities and colleges must aim to become multidisciplinary by 2040. In order to foster research culture in higher education, The National Research Foundation will be set up as an apex body.
- NEP proposes to introduce a 4-year multidisciplinary UG programme with multiple entry and exit options. Under this proposed 4-year programme, students can exit, after one year with a certificate, after two years with a diploma, and after three years with a bachelor's degree making them eligible for masters. And after four years, the student will be eligible for a research. (M.Phil. to be discontinued) Four-year bachelor's programmes generally include a certain amount of research work. Therefore, the student will get deeper knowledge in the subject he/she decides to major in. After four years, a UG student could enter a research degree programme directly depending on how well she/he has performed.
- Academic Bank of Credit shall be established for digitally storing academic credits earned from different HEIs so that these can be transferred and counted towards final degree earned. The academic credit stored in a digital locker will be like a bank credit through which a student will be able to resume education after a break as specified by the higher education commission later. Students can opt for sabbatical for one year and once they join they can continue from where they had discontinued. The multiple entry and exit will be done through academic bank of credit.
- Many regulators in education like UGC, NCTE, AICTE etc. will be combined into a single regulatory body. Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) to be a sole body to administer Higher Education in India. (excluding Legal and Medical).
- Promoting libraries: A National Book Promotion Policy will be formulated, and extensive initiatives will be undertaken to ensure the availability, accessibility, quality, and readership of books across geographies, languages, levels, and genres.
- Foreign universities in India: NEP has paved the way for foreign universities to set up campuses in India. Internationalisation of education will be facilitated through both institutional collaborations as well as student and faculty mobility. This will allow the entry of top world-ranked universities to open campuses in India.

- Common entrance exam for college admission: The National Testing Agency (NTA) will conduct entrance examinations for admissions to universities across the country. The NTA already conducts the all-India engineering entrance exam --JEE Main, NEET, UGC NET, and others. As per the NEP 2020, the entrance exam to be conducted by the NTA for admission to universities and colleges will be optional.
- In next 10 years, vocational education will be integrated into all schools and HEIs in a phased manner. This may pave way for better employability among the student community. By 2025, 50 per cent of learners in the school as well as HEI will get an exposure of vocational education. This demands a phenomenal change in the supply of higher education.

Positives in NEP- 2020

- The 86th Amendment made the right to education an enforceable fundamental right (Article 21A). Subsequently, the Right to Education Act, 2009 provides for universal education to all children between ages 6 and 14. Right to education is now changed from 6-14 to 3-18 years
- More fund is allotted for Early Childhood Care and Education. Special programme is to be designed to increase literacy in children.
- The present choice-based system opens the playfield for the students and is not just linear but is also horizontal. These flexi possibilities that allow the pursuits of vocational and non-vocational subjects alongside co-curricular and extra-curricular activities may reduce school dropouts and multiple points of entry will make it easy for some dropouts to enter the system. There will be bag less days for children wherein they will undergo training on different vocations from neighbouring skilled professionals.
- It suggests a clear student-centric approach in the entire system and also appears to make room for critical thinking, holistic approach, inquiry-based, discovery-based, discussion-based and analysis-based learning.
- Besides, it envisages new modes of evaluations to overcome rote learning, where assimilation of concepts and their applications are emphasized.
- Rote learning discouraged and deep understanding of the concepts and application level of achievement is focussed. The new NEP may probably train our students to fix some common real life problems.
- Top 100 foreign colleges to be permitted to set up their campuses in India, so our students can pursue their education while being in India.
- Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education to be raised to 50 per cent by 2035. Also, 3.5 crore seats to be added in higher education. The current Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education is 26.3 per cent. This suggests that there has to be a great amount of enhancement in the provisions of HEIs, the infrastructure, the qualified personnel, the administrative personnel, and all the allied mandatory issues required for issues.
- The proposed examination system will be more robust. However the existing education system is too exam centric. Board exams will be given lesser emphasis and hence may become more stress free. Schools will have two exams rather than a single final exam.

Negatives of NEP-2020

- The NEP 2020, being a visionary document it remains vague and has several ambiguities and loose ends that are confusing if not disturbing. The new system will require improved and expanded infrastructure in the schools to run its choice-based modules as well as make room for vocational courses like carpentry, electric work, gardening, and pottery. In order that the learning outcomes of the student finds a place in the job market, a thorough reshuffling and remodeling of selection criteria in the job markets needs to be made. The challenges in employability is on the high in the present conditions.
- The 42nd Amendment to the constitution moved education from state list to concurrent list-making way for overall standardization on the national level. In this sense, some state governments call it anti-democratic and are apprehensive and dissatisfied at the apparently power centralized form of NEP-2020.
- Options of having home language or regional language up to class 5 may in some cases bring along some serious issues. For example, the

children of the central government employees who often get transferred to other states, will be struggling to catch up with new languages at each transfer. English learning should not be discouraged. It is because our students are conversant with English that our students are able to compete and succeed in the US, Europe and other western countries.

- It is discussed by some states as an anti-democratic NEP because education being in the concurrent list, which means that it is in state list as well as central list, must give more space for the state governments to have their share of choices. But this policy apparently promotes power centralization.
- The policy is more theoretical than practical. The implementation is a challenge. There is dearth of teachers. How to carry out vocational training for children. Bagless days for children. How do we catch up with skilled workers and lack of infrastructure in schools. Coding – lack of devices with learners. Nothing is mentioned with regard to providing devices and accessibility to the learners belonging to the economically weaker sections of the society.

Apprehensions

- Will the commercialization and privatization of education be curbed?
- Allocation for the Economically Weaker Sections is not mentioned at all. Is the early allocation too being planned to be withdrawn? No concrete provisions is seen for the economically poor students and the first generation learners
- By 2030, the minimum educational qualification of teacher's will be a four year integrated B.Ed.

Degree. While multiple entry and exit system is initialized in degree courses, the functioning of four year integrated B.Ed. courses raises high degrees of apprehension.

- As the RTE is extended, will the specifications and conditions of infrastructure facilities set in 2009, be diluted?
- Not much concern is shown for the marginalized, Dalit, and the *Adivasi* folks.
- Will there be any objectivity and transparency in the formation and functioning of the single unified body that replaces University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE). How far will the implementation comply with the frame of NEP.

Conclusion

The new National Educational Policy or NEP-2020 is both visionary and ambitious. Much of its success will depend on its execution. If the Gross domestic product (GDP) investment is objectively executed, India will witness a real growth in the infrastructure and employment of qualified personnel both at school and higher education level. One of its strengths is its multi-disciplinarity and availability of choice based pursuits to the students at the level of the school. This has opened several entry points and exit points for the students within the system. The government has set a target of 2040 to implement the entire policy. If implemented in its true vision, the new structure can bring India at par with the leading countries of the world.

Reference:

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