

INDIAN EDUCATION POLICY 2020: A Road Map Towards Sustainable Development of India

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Abstract:

“By nature, all people are alike, but by Education become different.”

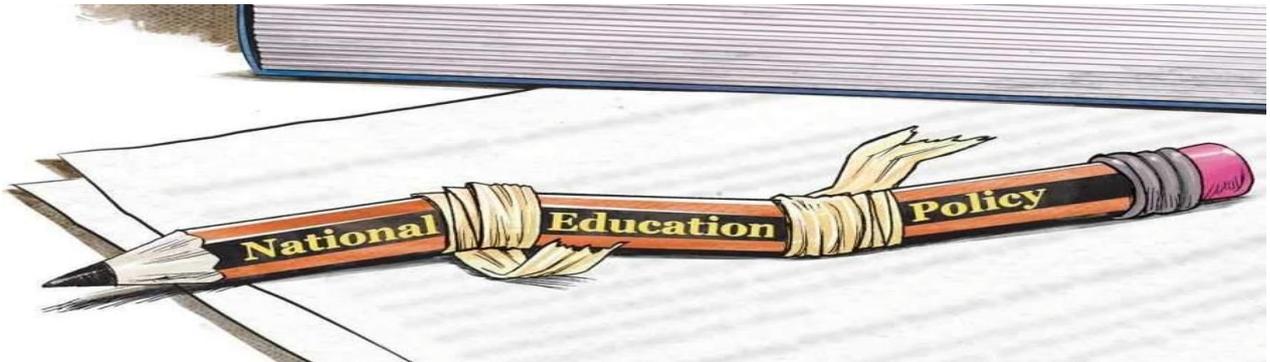
The implementation of National Education Policy 2020 needs the active participation of all stakeholders and a clear roadmap. With the roll out of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, India's education system truly ushered into the 21st century. The last education reform had come in 1986, 34 years prior to this one. Thus, NEP 2020 is being hailed as the much necessary re-imagination of the Indian education system. However, the implementation of the policy needs the active participation of all stakeholders and a clear roadmap. In that light researcher tried to point out some features and limitations with the help of some suggestions.

This research paper is based on secondary data collected through different sources and their analysis, which include research papers by different researchers, articles, journals, conference proceedings, periodicals, text books and digital available data analyzed for relevant application of New Education Policy 2020.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Features, Education Development, Limitations and suggestions

1. Introduction:

The Draft National Education Policy, 2019, was out in the public domain. Drawing inputs from the T.S.R. Subramanian Committee report and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), the K. Kasturirangan Committee has produced the policy document. The draft of New Education policy talks about the reforms in the education system of the country and holistic development of all the students.



On January 2015, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) initiated the process of developing the National Education Policy for our country. This effort culminated into the 484 page draft National Education Policy 2019 (NEP) which was made public on 31st May 2019. While the initial 30 day period that was granted to the public was thereafter extended for an additional month, it is pertinent to note that the drafters took over four years before they submitted the current iteration of this report to the Government in December 2018, where after the Government took another five and a half months before releasing the same to the public.

Though it is not directly relevant to the more substantive comments contained hereinafter, it is pertinent to note and place on record that the official press release by the Government incorrectly indicated that the report was submitted by the drafting committee to the Government on the 31st of May 2019, a fact that is clearly contradicted by the committee's own letter to the MHRD dated 15th December 2018. Changes based on verbal persuasion, affective status and modeling behavior can lead to significant changes and redefine the status of women (Mishra, 2018). The overarching comment that will emerge through the rest of this note is that while the policy is 484 pages long, it lacks the depth and context necessary for a policy of such national importance to be implemented. It is genuinely hoped that the policy drafters are clearer in their vision for India's education sector than what is evident through the NEP.

2. SALIENT FEATURES OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2019:

- The policy aims to universalize the pre-primary education by 2025 and provide foundational literacy/numeracy for all by 2025
- It proposes new Curricular and Pedagogical Structure, with 5+3+3+4 design covering the children in the age group 3-18 years. Under this, Pre-Primary & Grades 1-2 is considered as foundational Stage; Grades 3-5 as Preparatory Stage; Grades 6-8 as Middle Stage and Grades 9-12 as Secondary Stage. This is an academic restructuring only; there will be no physical restructuring of schools
- It aims at equitable & inclusive education for every child in the country, with a special focus on under-represented groups (URGs).
- Universal Access & Retention with 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio for all school education by 2030.
- Children learn languages, most quickly between 2-8 years, and multilingualism has great cognitive benefits for students. Therefore a three-language formula has been proposed. It proposes the teaching of other classical languages and literature, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit in schools.
- A new independent State School Regulatory Authority (SSRA) to be created

- It aims to consolidate 800 universities & 40,000 colleges into around 15,000 large, multidisciplinary institutions.
- The policy proposes three types of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs): Research Universities, Teaching Universities and Autonomous degree-granting colleges.
- It aims to provide autonomy to all higher education institutions. Higher education institutions to be governed by Independent Boards with complete academic and administrative autonomy
- An autonomous body called the National Research Foundation (NRF) to be set up through an Act of Parliament.
- Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog or the National Education Commission - apex body - to be constituted. It will be chaired by the Prime Minister and will comprise eminent educationists, researchers, Union Ministers, representation of Chief Ministers of States, eminent professionals from various fields.
- MHRD to be re-designated as the Ministry of Education (MoE).
- Increase in public investment by the Central and State Governments to 20% of overall public expenditure over a 10 year period.

3. POINTS IN FAVOUR OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY OF INDIA:

- The school education will cover children of 3-18 years, instead of the present 6-14 years under the RTE Act. It covers three years under early childhood care and education (ECCE) and four years under secondary education. ECCE would facilitate play and discovery-based learning for children of that age group
- Its emphasis on mother tongue-based education and oral language development are critical
- The policy focuses on online learning as an alternative to regular classroom interaction between teachers and students. It helps in achieving the twin objectives of cutting costs and increasing enrollment
- It aims to protect and promote our culture through the study of classical languages, mother tongues, and regional languages
- The teacher education system will be transformed, with rigorous preparation through a

four-year integrated stage and subject-specific programs offered in multi-disciplinary institutions

- The draft talks about the better engagement of the private sector and provisioning for government funding for R&D work through a proposed national research fund
- Professional education will become an integral part of the higher education system

4. LIMITATION OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY OF INDIA:

- The draft policy is silent on the Institutions of Eminence and agencies like the Higher Education Funding Agency
- The policy does not address with sufficient clarity curricular, pedagogical and teacher education- related issues that plague the teaching and learning of early literacy in many Indian classrooms
- The policy proposes largely oral activities for the pre-primary grades, reading hours for Grades 1-3, with an additional hour for writing starting only in Grades 4 and 5. It contradicts evidence suggesting that young children be taught listening, speaking, reading and writing simultaneously and not sequentially
- It lacks discussion about what it takes to prepare teachers to successfully teach foundational literacy in a multilingual country. Instead, the document recommends recruiting volunteers and community members to support the acquisition of early literacy. Volunteers can be used, but cannot be a primary mechanism to deliver foundational literacy to students
- It misdiagnoses the causes behind the severe learning crisis - namely poor school and teacher accountability. There is no fundamental reform proposed for revamping the accountability structures for schools. Instead, the NEP provides school management committees (SMCs). SMCs already mandated under the RTE Act are ineffectual
- With the democratization of knowledge and availability of technology for easy access to information, the draft should have focused more on how to teach and not only on what to teach
- The National Research Foundation (NRF) is tasked with "permeating the culture of research and innovation" and addressing societal challenges. But, there is no

mechanism, such as innovative curricula or extension units, for tier II or tier III institutions to work on local problems. It has no access or accountability to people or their representatives.

- The Constitution puts education in the Concurrent List, giving authority and responsibility to both the States and the Centre. However, the draft had robbed the States by creating an excessively centralized structure of authority and vesting overarching powers with the PM-led Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (RSA).
- In promoting the study of regional languages, the importance of English is neglected. Those who are fluent in the English language live in households with three times higher income than those without any knowledge of English. By ignoring this, the Draft NEP19 has laid out a "language trap", which will create social inequality and impede economic growth due to loss of the demographic dividend
- The report does not emphasize enough the role and importance of state governments in imparting education to the masses.

5. CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS:

The Human Resource Development Ministry (HRD) of India has received more than 70,000 suggestions on the draft National Education Policy (NEP), the HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank informed media at the launch of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) building in New Delhi. The online portal for accepting the feedback was closed on August 15, 2019. Following are the chapter wise suggestions:

Chapter 1: Early Childhood Care and Education: The Foundation of learning

P1.2. Significant expansion and strengthening of facilities for early childhood education: One Year of Pre-Primary initiated in all Primary Schools for children of age 5 to 6 years. School teachers can give more attention as this being their full-time responsibility. Further, they are expected to be better educated / professionally trained and teachers. This will give another advantage that teachers will not blame Anganwadi for the poor quality of PrePrimary education. Anganwadi workers can continue to provide Two Year Pre Primary to children of age 3 to 5 years. Currently, Anganwadi

workers are too burdened with several tasks and have limited education qualification. School teachers can give more attention to the early education of children.

Chapter 2: Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

P2.11. School preparation module for all Grade 1 students:

It is insufficient. This will not be required if One Year of Pre Primary is initiated in all Primary Schools for children of age 5 to 6 years. In Uttar Pradesh, Education Department (Elementary Education Board) gives Teachers month-wise division of curriculum (distribution of teachers) that teachers have to follow. Education is a process of human enlightenment and empowerment to achieve a better position in life (Mishra & Mishra, 2020). This negates the learning need and different learning pace of children. School textbook for Grade 1 itself needs major revision to address the challenge of learning crisis. This also reflects on the capacity of SCERT. So a major focus needs to be given to improve the capacity of SCERT and give it leadership overall academic matter (presently getting divided with Basic Shiksha Parishad).

P2.5. & P2.6. The major reason for the learning crisis is faulty teaching practices of teachers in Grade 1 & 2. Without addressing this issue, the problem will continue to persist. Tutors & Volunteers are more likely to follow the traditional practices of their teachers. So higher emphasis be given to enhancing the capacity of existing teachers. Only then they can take academic leadership to Tutors & Volunteers.

P2.8. Management of the NTP and RIAP programs will take too much time of teachers and it will also give teachers an excuse for not taking direct responsibility.

Chapter 3: Reintegrating dropouts and Ensuring Universal Access to Education

P3.3. Supporting hostel facilities:

There should be provision for Seasonal Hostel for children seasonally migrating to worksite along with parents (especially to Brick Kilns as molders).

P3.7 Tracking out-of-school children: Instead of Database of all only dropouts and out-of-school children, it should be for all children. This database needs to be updated annually. There is a major issue of the gap in finding out of school children. So this responsibility be given to Local Bodies (Gram Panchayat, Municipalities) and be implemented in partnership with some other government department or private agencies. Social Worker can update this database and take up other roles as mentioned in NEP. Under section 9 of the RTE Act, 2009 role of Local Authority (as defined under Section 2 (h)) duties of “Local Authority” includes following.

- d) Maintain records of children up to the age of fourteen years residing within its jurisdiction, in such manner as may be prescribed.
- e) Ensure and monitor admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by every child residing within its jurisdiction.

So it is suggested that keeping in the provision of RTE Act and spirit of promoting local governance, Local Authority (mostly Gram Panchayat and Urban Bodies) be made responsible for maintaining of records of children up to the age of 18 years with detail of current status of education and other information relating to same (e.g. migration, CWSN, etc). Most Gram Panchayats already maintain Family Register. Its format needs to be revised to include additional data and updating of data every six months should be made compulsory. All such data be updated online and be available to the public as well.

Chapter 7: Efficient Resourcing and Effective Governance through School Complexes *P7.7.1. School Management Committees as a mechanism for community support and supervision:*

Majority of members in SMC should be parents, at least two-third or three-fourth. Half of the parents are a mother. There is no need to have three teachers as members. Just Head Teacher will do as secretary of SMC. Chairperson & Vice Chairperson should be elected from among parent members. Instead of adding an ex-student as a member, (some of the parents will be ex-students) there should be a provision of School Children Forum and SMC listening to opinions of representatives of School Children Forum in its meetings.

P7.7.2. Enabling the School Management Committees to function effectively: To improve the functioning and effectiveness of the SMCs, it is most

important to ensure that SMCs are periodically reconstituted democratically, in a large assembly of Parents, with equal representation from each Grade. A major challenge wrt to SMC is lack of proper formation of SMC. Teachers haven't been properly oriented on the overall benefit of SMC and involvement of parent and community. SMC gets formed in an undemocratic manner in a hurriedly called meeting of parents, with little participation of parents. Quite often, SMCs are formed by teachers (without following the norms) in a manner that it remains a rubber stamp. Even Block and District officials are not serious about it. Including District Magistrate, It seems no one in the system wants to empower SMCs. So Local Body should be given the responsibility of forming SMC as per state RTE Rules. Moreover, there should be an Education committee in Local Bodies. Chairperson of SMCs should become a member of Local Body Education committees. Moreover, SMCs should be empowered by having a federation of SMCs at Block and District level. Only then parents in SMCs will get truly empowered to raise lacunas in the functioning of school and gaps in the system, implementation. Otherwise, parents and children get harassed by officials/schools/teachers for raising any issue. Periodic meeting of BEO & DEO with SMC federation will provide an opportunity to BEOs and DEOs to get feedback from SMCs and SCMCs in their geography.

P7.5.3 School Complex Management Committee:

SCMC should include members from Local Bodies and Urban Development Authorities (Chairperson or member from Municipality & Gram Panchayat). Plan for the physical development of school may feed into Plan of Local Body and Urban Development Authorities.

P7.5.4. Managing school complexes:

While recommending that there should be sufficient staff in School Complex to reduce the load of non-teaching tasks on teachers, there is no specific mention of support staff for Mid-Day Meal & Breakfast. Provision of staff to take care of Mid-Day Meal & Breakfast be specifically mentioned. The same person can support Kitchen Garden, School Health Program, and Cleanliness & Sanitation as well.

P7.6.3. District Education Council — Zilla Shiksha Parishad:

Making the Collector/District Magistrate will chair the DEC is not a good idea. Experience in this regard is not so positive. This is mainly because District Magistrates have to head too many Committees and do many other works that are in high priority. As a result, meetings get delayed, hurriedly called, just for namesake. Moreover quite often District Magistrates get school teachers engaged in non-teaching duty like pre-election voter awareness, supervision of many other development activities, etc.

So the suggestion is that instead of District Magistrates, the responsibility of Chairmanship of District Education Council is given to DIET (District Institute of Education and Training) Principle or Chief Development Officer. District Magistrates themselves are at fault for engaging teachers for non-teaching tasks.

P7.7.4. Addressing School Management Committee issues and grievances:

A major challenge with reference to SMC is lack of proper formation of SMC. Teachers haven't been properly oriented on the overall benefit of SMC and involvement of parent and community. SMC gets formed in an undemocratic manner in a hurriedly called meeting of parents, with little participation of parents. Quite often, SMCs are formed by teachers (without following the norms) in a manner that it remains a rubber stamp. Even Block and District officials are not serious about it. Including District Magistrate. It seems no one in the system wants to empower SMCs. SO Local Body should be given the responsibility of forming SMC as per state RTE Rules. Moreover, there should an Education committee in Local Bodies. Chairperson of SMCs should become a member of Local Body Education committees. Moreover, SMCs should be empowered by having federation SMC at Block and District level. Only then parents in SMCs will get truly empowered to raise lacunas in the functioning of school and gaps in the system, implementation. Otherwise, parents and children get harassed by officials/schools/teachers for raising any issue. Periodic meeting of BEO & DEO with SMC federation will provide an opportunity to BEOs and DEOs to get feedback from SMCs and SCMCs in their geography.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT:

The author declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.