

A Study on National Educational Policy 2020 Transformation in India

Dr.G.Srilakshmi

HoD MBA, Ellenki College of Engineering & Technology Patelguda (v), Hyderabad

Abstract - The year 2020 marked a major positive breakthrough in the form of the National Education Policy 2020 re-imagining the educational landscape through equity, inclusion and excellence in education. Though the year started with unprecedented times, NEP 2020 was the much-needed silver lining. As we complete a year to this progressive roadmap, let's look at the instructional sensitivity and mounting steps which are accelerating our progress towards the realisation of this omnibus policy. Based on the pillars of "Accessibility, Equity, Quality, Affordability, Accountability", NEP aims at transforming India into a vibrant knowledge hub. With almost 85 percent of brain development of children occurring before the age of 6, the policy emphasises early childhood care and education with universal provisioning and equipping young children to participate and flourish in the educational ecosystem. Schools are gradually moving towards a flexible, multifaceted, multilevel, play-based, activity-based and inquiry and domain-based learning. With this overarching goal, it has already made headway towards universal access to high-quality ECCE in a phased manner. The policy necessitates the continuation of the three-language formula and its implementation to promote multilingualism a USP of the educated Indian.

Index Terms – Multilingualism, Accessibility, Equity, Affordability, Accountability.

INTRODUCTION

In India, a new education policy typically comes along only once every few decades. The first education policy was in 1968, introduced by the administration under Mrs. Indira Gandhi. This was replaced by the National education policy in 1986, by her son Mr. Rajiv Gandhi who was Prime Minister at that time. A few years later in 1992, it was slightly modified again by Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao. And now in 2020, approximately three decades later, a new education policy with drastic changes has been brought in by the ruling government. The details of the

policy were released to the nation after cabinet approval on 29th June. It was said that this NEP 2020, would be a comprehensive framework to guide the development of education in the country.

Discussions: In 2021, we have already shifted assessment gears to a diagnostic approach from content-based assessment to competency-based, making Board exams "easier" in the sense that they test primarily core competencies rather than content memorisation. With the ongoing emphasis on transforming assessment for optimising learning and the holistic development of all students in tandem with the environment, the focus is on regular, formative and competency-based learning and development; focus on "assessment for learning", testing of higher-order skills (analysis, critical thinking and conceptual clarity, etc), multimodal assessment through multiple-choice questions to reach the top bracket of Bloom's Taxonomy, learning through reasoning, storytelling, podcasts, puppetry, etc. Report cards are becoming 360-degree holistic progress cards that will give comprehensive feedback on skills and capabilities, substituting the age-old system of marks.

Holistic development and a wide choice of subjects and courses are proposed as the new distinguishing feature of secondary school education. Today, the school planners and annual calendars are reflecting no hard separation amongst "curricular", "extra-curricular" and "co-curricular" activities among arts, humanities, and science or between vocational or academic streams. With the idea that learning should be child-centric, holistic, integrated, enjoyable and engaging, schools are slowly breaking the straitjackets of arts, commerce and science streams in high school, and aiming to introduce vocational courses with internships. The policy envisages a 100 percent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030. It is said that the jobs of the future are yet to be invented, but with the focus on 21st-century skills

scientific temper and evidence-based thinking, creativity and innovativeness, sense of aesthetics and art, oral and written communication, health and nutrition, physical education, wellness, fitness and sports, collaboration and teamwork, problem solving and logical reasoning, coding and computational thinking, environmental awareness, water and resources conservation, etc. we are slowly beginning to resonate with the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Therefore, one of the targets is that curricular and pedagogical initiatives including the introduction of contemporary subjects such as artificial intelligence, design thinking, holistic health, organic living, etc. are integrated.

To ensure the quality of teacher education across all stages, the policy envisions teacher career progression via meritocracy and 360-degree assessments. Aiming for equitable and inclusive education, the policy reaffirms every citizen's right to dream, thrive and contribute to the nation, bridging the social category gaps in access, participation and learning outcomes. To specially address their educational needs, the NEP has clubbed gender identities, socio-cultural identities, geographical identities, disabilities, and socio-economic conditions to create a new social group called SEDGs.

More significantly, schools are to be hubs for endorsing resource efficiency and robust governance in the form of school clusters which aim to improve support for children where we care and share, collaborate and co-create the best pedagogical practices. NEP 2020 aims to provide infrastructure support, innovative education centres to bring back dropouts into the mainstream, besides tracking students and their learning levels, facilitating multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes and association of counsellors or well-trained social workers with schools. Having a single regulator for higher education institutions, multiple entry and exit options in degree courses, the low-stakes board exams, and common entrance exams for universities these are some of the key takeaways from the new policy. Each of these reforms reflects the fact that India is evolving as an economy and is preparing to be recognised as a force to be reckoned with.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education 1986. The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The policy aims to transform India's education system by 2040. A New Education Policy aims to facilitate an inclusive, participatory and holistic approach, which takes into consideration field experiences, empirical research, stakeholder feedback, as well as lessons learned from best practices.

It is a progressive shift towards a more scientific approach to education. The prescribed structure will help to cater the ability of the child – stages of cognitive development as well as social and physical awareness. If implemented in its true vision, the new structure can bring India at par with the leading countries of the world.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all. The NEP 2020 enacts numerous changes in India's education policy. It aims to increase state expenditure on education from around 3% to 6% of the GDP as soon as possible. The National Education Policy 2020 has 'emphasised' on the use of local language as the medium of instruction till Class 5 while, recommending its continuance till Class 8 and beyond sanskrit and foreign languages will also be given emphasis. The Policy recommends that all students will learn three languages in their school under the 'formula'. At least two of the three languages should be native to India. It also states that no language will be imposed on the students.

School education

The policy accords the highest priority to achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by all students by Grade 3. The policy states, "The highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school

by 2025. The rest of this Policy will become relevant for our students only if this most basic learning requirement i.e., reading, writing, and arithmetic at the foundational level is first achieved. To this end, a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be set up by the Ministry of Education on priority. Accordingly, all State governments will immediately prepare an implementation plan for attaining universal foundational literacy and numeracy in all primary schools, identifying stage-wise targets and goals to be achieved by 2025, and closely tracking and monitoring progress of the same." Subsequently, the NIPUN Bharat Mission was launched on 5 July 2021 to achieve this goal

The "10+2" structure will be replaced with "5+3+3+4" model This will be implemented as follows:

- Foundational Stage: This is further subdivided into two parts: 3 years of preschool or anganwadi, followed by classes 1 and 2 in primary school. This will cover children of ages 3–8 years. The focus of studies will be in activity-based learning.
- Preparatory Stage: Classes 3 to 5, which will cover the ages of 8–11 years. It will gradually introduce subjects like speaking, reading, writing, physical education, languages, art, science and mathematics.
- Middle Stage: Classes 6 to 8, covering children between ages 11 and 14. It will introduce students to the more abstract concepts in subjects of mathematics, sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities.
- Secondary Stage: Classes 9 to 12, covering the ages of 14–19 years. It is again subdivided into two parts: classes 9 and 10 covering the first phase while classes 11 and 12 covering the second phase. These 4 years of study are intended to inculcate multidisciplinary study, coupled with depth and critical thinking. Multiple options of subjects will be provided.
 - Instead of exams being held every academic year, school students will only attend three exams, in classes 2, 5 and 8.
 - Board exams will be continued to be held for classes 10 and 12 but will be re-designed. Standards for this will be established by an assessment body, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of

Knowledge for Holistic Development)To make them easier, these exams would be conducted twice a year, with students being offered up to two attempts. The exam itself would have two parts, namely the objective and the descriptive.

- This policy aims at reducing the curriculum load of students and allowing them to be more "inter-disciplinary" and "multi-lingual". One example given was "If a student wants to pursue fashion studies with physics, or if one wants to learn bakery with chemistry, they'll be allowed to do so."Report cards will be "holistic", offering information about the student's skills.
- Coding will be introduced from class 6 and experiential learning
- The Midday meal scheme will be extended to include breakfasts. More focus will be given to students' health, particularly mental health, through the deployment of counsellors and social workers.

Higher education

- It proposes a 4-year multi-disciplinary bachelor's degree in an undergraduate programme with multiple exit options. These will include professional and vocational areas and will be implemented as follows:
 - A certificate after completing 1 year of study
 - A diploma after completing 2 years of study
 - A Bachelor's degree after completion of a 3-year programme
 - A 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's degree (the preferred option)
 - MPhil (Master of Philosophy) courses are to be discontinued to align degree education with how it is in Western models.
 - A Higher Education Council of India (HECI) will be set up to regulate higher education. The council's goal will be to increase gross enrollment ratio. The HECI will have 4 verticals:
- National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), to regulate higher education, including teacher education, while excluding medical and legal education.

- National Accreditation Council (NAC), a "meta-accrediting body".

CONCLUSIONS

The NEP 2020 puts forward many policy changes when it comes to teacher education, a 4-year Bachelor of Education will be the minimum requirement needed by 2030. The teacher recruitment process will also be strengthened and made transparent. The National Council for Teacher Education will frame a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education by 2021 and a National Professional Standards for Teachers by 2022. The policy aims to ensure that all students at all levels of school education are taught by passionate, motivated, highly qualified, professionally trained, and well-equipped teachers. The policy proposes new language institutions such as the Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation and the National Institutes for Pali, Persian and Prakrit. Other bodies proposed include the National Mission for Mentoring, National Book Promotion Policy, National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy with education transformation.

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