

POVERTY AND THE CHALLENGES TOWARDS THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020

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Abstract

The National Policy on Education, 1986 and the Programme of Action, 1992 envisaged free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children below 14 years. The new policy introduced many reforms in the Indian education system beginning with reformation at central level and renaming the Ministry of Human Resource and Development to Ministry of Education. While the act has ensured education to all, the prevailing challenges of the education system remained thereby hindering the growth of Indian education system to the global level. The recent education policy by the Government of India is the first in 34 years replacing the National Policy of Education of 1986. The NEP proposes revision and revamping of education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system aligning with the aspirational goals of 21st century education. The NEP proposes sweeping changes including opening up of Indian higher education to foreign universities, dismantling of the Universities Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education.

One of the highlights of NEP 2020 is the decision to make mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction up to Class 5. Further, the policy emphasizes the need for formative assessments and encouraging peer review system of assessment by creating National Assessment Centre and developing a system such as Performance Assessment Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development for monitoring the achievement of learning outcomes and guide the boards of education to make learning more contemporary and suited to future needs. The biggest highlights of the NEP 2020 are that there would be single regulation for higher education institutions with setting up of Higher Education Commission of India that will eventually replace the existing regulatory bodies like the UGC or AICTE. The long - term plan of the policy is to do away with the current system of colleges affiliated to universities and numerous tiny colleges that are pedagogically unviable and financially costly would be merged with larger HEIs. The NEP 2020 aims to address various gaps existing in the education system of India and through this policy, India is expected to achieve sustainable development goal of 2030 by ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education.

Keywords: Higher Education, National Education Policy 2020, NEP-2020, Overview & Analysis, Implementation Strategies, Approaches, Challenges, Opportunities of NEP 2020.

INTRODUCTION

Well defined and futuristic education policy is essential for a country at school and college levels due to the reason that education leads to economic and social progress. Different countries adopt different education systems by considering the tradition and culture and adopt different stages during their life cycle at school and college education levels to make it effective. 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 2021. Shortly after the release of the policy, the government clarified that no one will be forced to study any particular language and that the medium of instruction will not be shifted from English to any regional language. (3) The language policy in NEP is a broad guideline and advisory in nature; and it is up to the states, institutions, and schools to decide on the implementation. Education in India is a Concurrent List subject. Himachal Pradesh has become the first state to implement New Education Policy 2020. The National Education policy should be implemented in all school over india by 2022.

Background:

The NEP 2020 replaces the National Policy on Education of 1986. In January 2015, a committee under former Cabinet Secretary T. S. R. Subramanian started the consultation process for the New Education Policy. Based on the committee report, in June 2017, the draft NEP was submitted in 2019 by a panel led by former Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) chief Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan. The Draft New Education Policy (DNEP) 2019 was later released by Ministry of Human Resource Development, followed by a number of public consultations. T74 Draft NEP was 484 pages. The Ministry undertook a rigorous consultation process in formulating the draft policy: "Over two lakh suggestions from 2.5 lakh gram panchayats, 6,600 blocks, 6,000

Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), 676 districts were received." Introduction India, being a growing liberal country for educational reforms, currently has about 845 universities and approximately 40,000 higher education institutions (HIEs), reflecting the overall high fragmentation and many small sized HEIs in the country which are affiliated to these universities. It is found that over 40% of these small sized institutions are running single program me against the expected reform to a multidisciplinary style of higher education which is an essential requirement for the educational reforms in the country for the 21st century. It is also noted that over 20% of the colleges have annual enrolment less than 100 students making them nonviable to improve the quality of education and only 4% of colleges enroll more than 3,000 students annually due to regional imbalance as well as the quality of education they offer. Some of the reasons found for the fragmentation of the higher education (HE) system in India are: It is predicted that India will be the third largest economy in the world by 2030-2032 with estimated GDP of ten trillion dollars. It is evident that the ten trillion economies will be driven by knowledge resources and not by the natural resources of the country. To boost the growth of the Indian education sector, the present government decided to revamp it by introducing a comprehensive National Education Policy 2020. This is in line with the Prime Minister's recent call on leveraging the Fourth Industrial Revolution to take India to new heights. The currently introduced National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India centered education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all.

CHALLENGES OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY

- (1) The framework of the new education policy that has been placed before us is only a structural document. There is no clarity in the document as to how this seemingly ambitious education policy will be implemented.
- (2) Even after 73 years of independence, many schools still have thatched roofs or run in one or two classrooms. The present education system runs on 10 + 2 system. Building physical infrastructure of pre-primary schools for implementation of new education policy 5+3+3+4 in rural areas seems a far fetched reality.
- (3) Providing pre-primary as well as primary school education in mother tongue or regional language is a very welcome initiative. The idea sounds good on paper, but when English medium schools have reached far into the rural areas and parents have the mentality to send their children to English medium schools at any cost, does this idea seem feasible?
- (4) Subjects like vocational education and socially useful work have been introduced for skill enhancement and life-oriented education through different education policies so far. But in reality we have completely failed to develop such skills or provide vocational education at the school level, it is questionable how successful the re-introduction of vocational education can be.
- (5) When the 'coaching culture' that promotes Gokhanpatti at the secondary and higher secondary level has reached even the smallest village, to what extent can the concept of completely eradicating this culture be implemented in the new education policy?
- (6) All education policies in the past have announced expenditure of 6% of GDP, but no government has taken any concrete steps in this direction till date. Now that again the new education policy has announced to spend 6% of the total GDP on education, will it be possible?
- (7) Students are ultimately taught by teachers. The professional qualifications of teachers in private primary schools as well as the salary levels they receive raise doubts about the quality of education. In these circumstances, no matter how ambitious the education policy documents are, will they be effective in improving the quality of education?
- (8) There is a saying in English that 'Well-planned is half done'. The New Education Policy is a very ambitious document suggesting positive solutions to the current problems of education and the challenges of the 21st century. If it is implemented with meaning and value in terms of achievement of the basic objective, an unprecedented educational revolution will take place in India in the years to come.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

Although the NEP 2020 aims to bring a holistic change in the education system of India, there are substantial challenges, both quantitative and qualitative, in implementing the reforms

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is aimed at transforming India's education system into a modern, progressive and equitable one. The new policy focuses on improving poor literacy and numeracy outcomes associated with primary schools, reducing dropout levels in middle and secondary schools and introducing the multi-disciplinary approach in the higher education system.

Besides, the policy also lays emphasis on early childhood education, restructuring curriculum and pedagogy, reforming the examination process and investing in teacher training.

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Let's elucidate some of the major challenges in the implementation of NEP 2020.

Curriculum and Content

The NEP seeks to introduce a shift from 10+2 structure to 5+3+3+4 structure, where early childhood education will be a part of formal education. In addition, the NEP 2020 focuses on reducing the curriculum content to make space for critical thinking and in turn, develop individuals with 21st-century skills instilled in them. Hence, all aspects of the curriculum and pedagogy need to be restructured to attain these goals.

The challenges in successfully implementing these changes include modifying the curriculum in accordance with the National Curriculum Framework. Also, educators need to rethink the learning content rubric and modify the textbooks accordingly.

TEACHER AVAILABILITY AND TRAINING

The policy envisages the redesign of the school curriculum. However, in order to deliver the curriculum effectively, schools and concerned authorities need to train teachers and understand the pedagogical needs to make a smooth transition to the new education system. Furthermore, they need to shift the focus from teacher-centred learning to student-centred learning to foster collaborative skills, critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making abilities in the youth.

A study suggests that over 250 million students are estimated to enrol in K-12 schools in India by 2030. This means that we need nearly 7 million more teachers to handle this burgeoning student population.

Since teaching is one of the low-paid professions in India, experiential learning and concept-oriented teaching will be a challenging task. Until the teacher remuneration is revised, the implementation of the NEP 2020 will be quite challenging.

TECHNOLOGY

The NEP 2020 lays emphasis on leveraging the advantage of technology in making the youth future-ready. But, developing digital infrastructure such as digital classrooms, remote expertise-driven teaching models, AR/VR tools to bridge gaps in physical teaching and laboratory infrastructure is a great challenge because the majority of the schools don't have a proper set-up to support these tools. Also, the cost associated with building digital infrastructure might not be affordable for all schools across the country.

Moreover, in rural areas of the country where the Internet connectivity is nearly absent, deploying digital learning tools is out of the question. Hence, the government should work on improving the basic infrastructure that will support the digital infrastructure in all areas.

Examination Structure

The NEP focuses on formative assessment for learning rather than summative assessment. The primary purpose of changing the assessment system is to promote continuous tracking of learning outcomes. However, continuous assessment requires schools and teachers to use innovative evaluation approaches and assignments. These approaches demand technological intervention and active involvement of teachers and students.

Thus, the government needs to have a systematic phased approach to successfully implement the NEP 2020 and provide quality education to all students, irrespective of their place of residence.

Thus, the NEP 2020 lays emphasis on making the education system holistic, flexible and aligned to the needs of 21st-century education. However, in order to accomplish all these goals, we must overcome all the execution challenges in a sustained manner for years to come.

A reality check on NEP 2020: 6 major challenges in implementation

The new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 brings in ambitious changes that could transform the education system. But the key here is good implementation and execution.

By India Today Web Desk:

The National Education Policy 2020 is a welcome and ambitious re-imagining of India's education system into a modern, progressive and equitable one. Successful execution of this policy calls for dramatic simplification of decision-making structures and re-prioritization of budgetary resources in months and years to come.

Given that there are around 350 million Indians today in school-going or college-going age groups, the NEP calls for a large-scale

implementation of a magnitude never before attempted anywhere in the world.

India today has around 1,000 universities across the country. Doubling the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education by 2035 which is one of the stated goals of the policy will mean that we must open one new university every week, for the next 15 years. Opening one University every week on an ongoing basis is an undoubtedly massive challenge. The numbers are no less daunting in reforms to our school system

The National Education Policy 2020 intends to bring 2 crore children who are currently not in schools, back into the school system. Whichever way you look at it, accomplishing this over 15 years requires the setting up of around 50 schools every week. This certainly requires a substantial amount of investment in classrooms and campuses.

Funding is a big challenge in the Covid era.

From a funding standpoint, this is not a challenge for the faint-hearted. The National Education Policy 2020 envisages an increase in education spending from 4.6% to 6% of GDP, which amounts to around INR 2.5 lakh crores per year.

This money will be well-spent building schools and colleges across the country, appointing teachers and professors, and for operational expenses such as providing free breakfast to school children.

What makes things tricky is that this policy comes into being at a time when the economy has been battered by Covid-19 related lockdowns, government tax collections are abysmally low, and the fiscal deficit was high even pre-Covid.

CONCLUSION

The NEP 2020 aims to address various gaps existing in the education system of India and through this policy, India is expected to achieve sustainable development goal of 2030 by ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education. However, the policy needs immediate collaboration between state and central authorities to establish newly proposed bodies, define rules and regulations for schools and establish convergence of various schemes and acts with NEP 2020. In order to develop skills among teachers to address manpower shortfalls, training programmes should be designed to train master faculty members.

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