



What to Expect from the National Education Policy 2020

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ABSTRACT

In 1986, India established and executed its first education policy. After 34 years, India's National Education Policy was released in 2020, marking a new milestone in the country's educational system. "Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability, and Accountability" are the cornerstones of the policy. It has the potential to turn the country into a thriving information centre. It emphasises systemic and institutional changes in India's higher education establishments' regulation, governance, and promotion of multidisciplinary academics and research. Learning will be less stressful and more learner-centered as a result of its student-centric approach. It also fosters a vibrant and responsive research ecosystem, which is required to advance India's economic, social, and intellectual progress. Teachers, who are the foundation of any educational system, have received special attention in policy, with the creation of National Professional Standards for Teachers and the development of a performance-based reward system for them. The existing educational system, which has been criticised for being strict and repetitious, focusing more on material and outcomes, will now give way to the National Education Policy, which intends to stimulate creativity and innovation. With a comparison of the NEP 2020 and current policy, this paper attempts to look at the education system through the decades of numerous commissions to the present.

Keywords : Education, NEP, Teachers.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (INTRODUCTION)-When India gained independence, it became clear that the country's education system needed to be improved in order to meet the burgeoning ambitions of a free India. The University Education Commission, chaired by Dr Radhakrishnan, was established by the Indian government in 1948. The group advocated sweeping improvements to the school sector at the time. This was followed by the Directive Principles of State Policy in 1950, which said, "Within ten years after the start of the Constitution, the state shall endeavour to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen." The Secondary Education Commission, chaired by Dr. A. L. Mudaliar, was established in 1952 and recommended that the educational period be reduced from 12 to 11 years, with the Senior School Certificate examination being transferred to specifically constituted boards of secondary education. However, under the supervision of Dr. D. S. Kothari, the first National Policy on

Education was released in July 1968, recommending the reconstruction and total restructuring of the Indian Education System.

The Kothari Commission report remained the country's primary educational structure for the next two decades. A national debate and Parliamentary ratification resulted in the 1986 New Education Policy. It emphasised the importance of inclusivity, calling for the abolition of all forms of discrimination based on caste, creed, religion, sex, or geography. Due to changes in government between the Congress and the BJP, the strategy has suffered numerous political defeats. However, with the beginning of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2000, with the aid of the World Bank, the UK Department for International Development, and UNICEF, education became universal. When Congress-led UPA government came to power in 2004, the National Knowledge Commission was appointed under the chairmanship of Mr. Sam Pitroda in 2005, which recommended massive expansion of higher education, increase in private investment in universities and establishing an independent regulatory authority for higher education. When UPA came to power again in 2009, The Right to Education (RTE) Act became effective from 2010, which was a very significant step in the right direction for making education egalitarian. However, five major bills pertaining to higher education were at various stages of finalisation when the BJP led government under Shri Narendra Modi came to power. It aimed to implement worldwide educational standards, which necessitated the development of a new national education strategy. Equity, accountability, affordability, accessibility, and quality were to be prioritised.

The NEP 2020 draft report - Before NEP 2020, India had two policies: one issued in 1968 and the other in 1986, both under Prime Ministers Smt. Indira Gandhi and Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, the then-prime minister, updated the NEP 1986 in 1992. The prior policies' implementation mostly focused on concerns of access and equity. The NEP 2020 picks up the unfinished agenda of the 1986 policy, which was updated in 1992. The march toward universal elementary education has been a major development since the 1986/92 programme. A five-member committee led by T.S.R. Subramanian submitted a report on the draught national education policy 2016 before the NEP 2020 policy was created. The provision of universal pre-primary education, assessing learning outcomes, curriculum improvements, teacher education reforms, and internationalisation of education were all significant factors. This was followed by the National Education Policy, which was developed by a committee led by K. Kasturirangan. Finally, some daring decisions for a long-term education policy were made. With the emphasis on knowledge economy-driven growth in the twenty-first century, this is precisely what India requires to lead the country's progress in the coming decades. A new global educational standard is being established. The NEP is the result of a massive effort and a solid commitment from the top leadership to write an education policy that will change the way people think about students and treat everyone in the system as a seeker of knowledge. When it comes to transforming governance, delivery, and financing of education, the policy attempts a significant overhaul of the system - from terminologies and institutional frameworks to functionality. Education is the bedrock of any nation, and India has been in desperate need of such a forward-thinking programme for the past 34 years. It was critical to develop an education system that is strongly entrenched in Indian culture and capable of re-establishing India as a worldwide knowledge

giant. In the twenty-first century, when education requires a holistic and multidisciplinary approach, it was critical to shift the emphasis from the development of "higher order" cognitive skills to the development of "soft skills," such as cultural awareness and empathy, perseverance and grit, teamwork, leadership, and communication among the nation's children.

HOW DOES THE NEP 2020 RESPOND TO TODAY'S AND FUTURE DEMANDS?

A) An educational method that is multidisciplinary - The strategy aims to correct certain major flaws in the previous system, such as low literacy and numeracy skills, both of which are connected with primary schools, as well as a decrease in the number of dropouts from middle and secondary schools. Furthermore, it aspires to introduce a multidisciplinary approach to higher education. It aids pupils in grasping concepts holistically and retaining them for longer and better periods of time. In addition, the strategy focuses on other critical areas such as curriculum restructuring, assessment reform, and teacher preparation. The NEP takes a completely new look at the entire educational system. It discusses overhauling the system from the ground up, with a focus on discovering each individual's uniqueness. The NEP spends a lot of time talking about how to make learning tactile and experiential, and how instructors should be prepared to give their topics a practical component. The curriculum will include more excursions, field trips, project and play-based learning, and research-based activities. The NEP fosters a child's development of creative expression. It advocates exposing a child to a variety of hobbies from an early age, such as music, dancing, theatre, art, pottery, and so on, so that he can explore all of his options and determine where his true interest resides. Each school should have a solid Early Childhood Care programme to give the correct amount of care and supervision to children from the beginning of their lives. The National Education Policy (NEP) states unequivocally that a child's comprehensive and integrated development can be ensured by reducing curricular content and focusing on vital learning and critical thinking. The discovery strategy, inquiry-based learning, conversation, and analysis-based approach should all be emphasised in the syllabus. By 2030, the NEP 2020 intends to achieve a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 100% in schools. Classroom learning will be more relatable to the child's outer social world if it is delivered in a language that they understand. Because they follow a pedagogy that connects with the children, well-qualified, likeable, and motivated instructors can reduce dropouts. Giving them examples of real-life applications of classroom learning, for example, makes it more meaningful to them. Human beings' full powers and capabilities are developed through holistic multidisciplinary education. Providing opportunities for research based on experiential learning can help to attain the goal of integrating multiple perspectives. Experiential learning should be incorporated into the curriculum from the beginning to develop autonomous thinking, teamwork, and collaboration among students.

B) Educator quality

The foundation of any educational system is its teachers. Training in time-tested pedagogy, multi-level teaching and evaluation, teaching children with disabilities, particular interests or skills, use of educational technology, and learner-centered and collaborative learning must all be established as part of

a strong process for teacher recruitment. It is necessary to be fluent in the local language. To improve teachers' capacity to accomplish their jobs effectively, they should be given a better service environment that includes more autonomy in choosing methodology in their classroom instruction. As is the case in many public institutions, teachers should no longer be engaged in work that is not directly related to teaching. Those who excel at their jobs should be acknowledged and promoted, with remuneration based on a strong merit-based system that includes peer reviews, attendance, dedication to CPD, and other kinds of service to the school and community. For a performance-based reward system, National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) are being developed.

C) Providing Access to Digital Education - The government intends to create a new autonomous agency called the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to oversee capacity building, develop e-content, and provide a platform for educational institutions and stakeholders to discuss best practises in technology integration. This will be critical in bridging the country's digital divide and ensuring a larger reach of online education in the future. Students will have remote access to hands-on experiment-based learning as more virtual laboratories are created. Virtual field visits, the use of AR/VR in experiments, and online lessons demonstrate that the policy places a high emphasis on experiential learning. As a result of the implementation of these cutting-edge technologies, immersive learning experiences will be enhanced. Not only that, but the policy is forward-thinking, as it aims to make online learning and virtual classrooms available to all students in the country. The Smart Classrooms, Diksha, and Swayam Portals will serve as a solid foundation for fostering interactivity through webinars, live conversations, online courses, and study materials. It also aims to prepare alternative forms of delivering education in times of crisis, like as the present pandemic, when traditional educational methods fail. A technology-oriented new education strategy would undoubtedly help today's young and will serve as a crucial tool in the development of India as a technology-driven educational powerhouse.

D) Making education accessible to all - Diversity in the classroom can foster active engagement by forcing students to think in deeper, more sophisticated ways. Student diversity creates settings in which the majority of students can connect with and learn about persons who are different from themselves, resulting in a more affirmative campus atmosphere. For equitable and inclusive education, in-service training programmes for general educators and special educators in all disabilities will be made mandatory. School supplies, such as audio learning or Braille textbooks, should be made available. It may be necessary to make appropriate changes to the examination system in order to eliminate pure mathematical, practical, and logical assessments. Bringing exceptional children into the mainstream necessitates preparations on the part of schools. Disability sensitization should be a part of all teaching activities. Disabled-friendly transportation should be made available so that these children can get around with relative ease. In service areas, ramps should be designed with wheelchair accessibility in mind. The goal of equity and inclusion is now at the centre of the new NEP, which will aid in the development of a more united India.

E) Emphasize the importance of skill development through vocational education- The policy tries to break down the status hierarchy, which holds that learning a skill is inferior to learning any other subject. It

advocates a progressive integration of vocational programmes to convey skill at an early age in middle and secondary school. Even pupils in grades VI-VIII will be exposed to hands-on instruction in practical skills such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical repair, horticulture, pottery, needlework, and so on, according to the NEP 2020. The strategy has established a goal of offering vocational skills to at least 50% of pupils by 2025, with the goal of allowing students to extend their vocational skills acquired in school to higher education. Many new professions are expected to be created in fields such as robotics, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, data analytics, the internet of everything, and so on. Secondary schools will work with ITIs, polytechnics, local industry, and other organisations to achieve this goal. In a central location, skill labs will be built up and created. There could be value-added courses in teaching methodology, research methodology, and so on in higher education. Students who do not intend to follow traditional fields should include some skill-based courses, such as entrepreneurship, in their curriculum. Students, particularly in Masters Courses, receive project-based research instruction in addition to their academics. The educational system could be made more practical and job-oriented, which would naturally improve employability by allowing us to have more job-givers rather than merely job-seekers. To ensure that our graduates and post-graduates develop the ability to find work in the market, NEP has completely covered components such as skill upgrading, entrepreneurial development, and vocational education.

E) Improved governance to maintain educational quality - NEP 2020 envisions distinct systems for policy development, regulation, operations, and academics. The primary purpose of the school education regulation system is to improve educational outcomes on a continuous basis. The National Education Policy (NEP) calls for the establishment of an independent, state-wide agency known as the State School Standards Authority (SSSA) to ensure that all schools adhere to specific minimum professional and quality standards. It is necessary to ensure that each stakeholder and participant in the educational system is interested in the establishment of these entities. Everyone should be held accountable for carrying out their responsibilities with the utmost integrity and commitment. In addition, technology should be used appropriately to ensure efficiency and transparency in the SSSA's operations. To get a complete picture of performance, the assessment method should be objective and transparent, and different sources of input should be employed. Setting standards is one of the most important jobs under the NEP, because standards are used to judge each and every outcome. It will then assist us in reflecting on and taking the necessary steps to improve learning outcomes. Government representatives, private entrepreneurs and industrialists, educationists, autonomous educational bodies like NCERT, SCERT, civil society and professionals from various walks of life, nominees of the armed forces, parents, students, and people from disadvantaged groups must all be included in the SSSA. Greater engagement from all segments of society will undoubtedly aid in the establishment of realistically optimal and achievable standards for the school education system.

F) Higher education and the transfer of skills - To bridge the gap between industry and education, more connectivity is required in college courses. A formal industry induction and internship programme, in which students are offered an in-dustry internship, is required. Business and industry are increasingly concerned that the skills available among the workforce may not be able to satisfy the economy's rapidly

changing demands, posing a significant impediment to growth and development. A continuously changing labour market, influenced by technology advancements, globalisation, demographic shifts, and other factors, makes skill and knowledge development more urgent. Currently, vocational training centres are ill-equipped to meet the changing demands of the labour market. This is addressed in the NEP 2020 by prioritising vocational education alongside academic subjects.

G) Creating a culture of research -Many policies have been enacted as part of the NEP to help the country develop a strong and robust research culture. On a monthly basis, teachers can plan a few intriguing interdisciplinary activities for students to build cognitive competencies from many fields. To develop critical thinking, multidisciplinary research-based projects should be conceptualised and assigned to students. In comparison to other developed economies, our country's research spending is quite low. Research funding should be increased significantly from the present 0.69 percent of GDP, compared to 2.8 percent in the United States, 4.3 percent in Israel, and 4.2 percent in South Korea. Dedicated and autonomous research institutions must be established, with appropriate incentives for individuals who work there, in order to attract talent from both within India and from Indians working abroad. To instil the idea and importance of research in the country's development, case teaching and case discussion should be pushed across all disciplines in college and school instruction.

H) Increasing the level of autonomy -It is critical to have academic autonomy, decentralise decision-making, and provide an enabling atmosphere for improving the teaching-learning assessment process for effective governance and leadership. Positive student attitudes toward learning, teacher commitment to educational objectives, and strong governance are all necessary factors for high-quality education. Autonomy is supposed to provide a more conducive environment for these characteristics to flourish. Successful autonomous implementation, on the other hand, necessitates the active participation of students, instructors, and management. It is necessary to establish a system of academic auditing at each stage of implementation. Academic auditing is dependent on student feedback and its implementation. Carrying out independent academic functions such as curricular content innovation, pedagogy, and evaluation methodologies necessitates both enough financial resources and ongoing teacher training. Academic leadership should be promoted and nurtured since it is critical to the long-term sustainability of educational success.

I) The impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on budgetary allocations - The National Education Policy 2020 calls for a rise in education spending from 4.6 percent of GDP to 6% of GDP, or INR 2.5 lakh crores per year. This money must be wisely spent on things like developing schools and universities around the country, hiring instructors and professors, and covering operational costs like giving free meals to students. The fact that this policy is being implemented at a time when the economy is being pounded by Covid-19-induced lockdowns, government tax collections are abysmally low, and the fiscal deficit is huge adds to the complication. India spends 4.43 percent of GDP on education (Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure 2017-18) and barely 10% of overall government spending on education (Economic survey 2017-18). To execute NEP 2020, at least 6% of GDP must be invested in education, which may be achieved if the

federal and state governments work together to enhance educational investment.

CONCLUSION -The policy envisions an education system based on Indian values, with education as a fundamental right for all children. It envisions a curriculum and teaching methodology that teaches students how to live their best lives and achieve their full potential. Among the many imperatives, achieving universal literacy and numeracy by 2025 should be the top priority, as it will have a significant impact on progress at higher levels. The goal of the National Education Policy is to show pupils how to build a deep sense of pride in their culture, not just in their minds, but also in their hearts, minds, and deeds. It is built on the pillars of accessibility, affordability, equity, quality, and transparency. It is the only way to realise a new India's aspirations and hopes. NEP have the resources necessary to improve pedagogies, erase structural injustices, address asymmetries, and eliminate rampant commercialization. Its success will be determined by the manner in which it is implemented.

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