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Article

National Education Policy 2020 - The Need of the Hour

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Abstract

The paper discusses the Pros of NEP 2020 which includes the main changes which the policy introduces. In the school system, the 10+2 system has been converted to 5+3+3+4 system. Pre-primary education has been brought into the ambit of NEP 2020. The degree of graduation programme will be of four years with multiple entry and exit option and options to change the streams as well so the students have the option to leave the course after each year. The NEP focuses on application of knowledge rather than rote learning. The policy also emphasizes on critical thinking and analytic skills of the students. It is also replacing the old report card system which is only made by the teacher, now along with the teachers, the students of the class and the student can self-assess and contribute to the grading and report card system which will enhance their critical thinking and self-analyzing abilities. The entry of top 100 universities/colleges of the world in India, it has different positive aspects including the Indian colleges will have a competition mentality and they will improve their structures and functioning. Students will receive international exposure and India can turn into a global study destination comparing the cost of education to other developed countries. As per the NEP the schools must have a mandatory counselling system for the students to help them handle their stress and emotional issues. 6% of the GDP will be invested in the education system which if implemented correctly will be the best.

Introduction

“Real education enhances the dignity of a human being and increases his or her self-respect. If only the real sense of education could be realized by each individual and carried forward in every field of human activity, the world will be so much a better place to live in.”

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

India’s ability to provide high quality education and opportunities to a big population of young population will play a decisive role in determining the future of our country. The National Education Policy 2020 lays out a vision to achieve this. On 29 July, 2020 the Union Cabinet approved New National Education Policy and renamed the Ministry of Human Resource and Development as the Ministry of Education. The Govt. said this policy will bring transformational reforms in school and higher education systems in the country. As the first education policy of the 21st century, it replaces the 34-year-old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986. The National Education Policy 1986 was modified in 1992. Various changes during this period have taken place in our country including society's economy and the world at large. Therefore, it is necessary to change or gear up the education sector as per the demands of 21st Century, latest developments changed the needs of the people, and the country. Pillars on which India will become a knowledge superpower will be quality innovation and research.

The Policy Making Process

It had been in the making over 3 to 4 years wide ranging consultations were held and Govt. received more than 2.5 lakh suggestions from a cross section of people. The process of formulating New Education Policy by the Government had initiated via consultation process for an inclusive, participatory, and holistic approach. After an unprecedented formulation of consultation, New National Education Policy 2020 has been formulated and it involved around 2 lakh suggestions from 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, 6600 Blocks, 6000 ULBs, and 676 Districts. From January 2015, the MHRD initiated an unprecedented collaborative, inclusive, and highly participatory consultation process. 'Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy' under the Chairmanship of Late Shri T.S.R. Subramanian, former

Cabinet Secretary, submitted its report in May 2016. Some inputs for the Draft National Education Policy, 2016 are prepared by the Ministry which is based on this report.

Further in June 2017 a 'Committee for the Draft National Education Policy' was constituted under the Chairmanship of eminent scientist Dr. K. Kasturirangan. On 31 May, 2019, the Draft National Education Policy, 2019 was submitted to the Hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister. It was uploaded on MHRD's website and at the 'MyGov Innovate' portal for suggestions, comments of stakeholders, including public, etc. The report was put for public consultation again as the process is followed for every policy by Govt. of India. In fact it is after 34 years that a new education policy has been introduced in India.

The Need/ Rationale

The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved. The time is crucial because India is going to have the largest working age people in the world by 2030. If we need to capitalize on India's remarkable demographic dividend we need to add now. To do this it is not only essential to improve the quality of education, but also to make it relevant in terms of providing employment opportunities. For years it was felt our education system has remained unchanged where people are focusing on becoming a doctor, engineer or lawyer etc., in real sense there is no mapping on the interest, ability and demand of education. The NEP 2020 has come in as a game changer. This National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, including SDG4, while building upon India's traditions and value systems. The NEP is based on the five foundational pillars i.e. access, affordability, equity, quality and accountability. The recommendations made in NEP can be classified into three broad categories: those relating to school education, those relating to higher education and recommendations to structural reforms that are common to both school and higher education.

Previous National Policies on Education

The first policy on Education i.e. NPE 1968 which introduced the 10+2+3 system of education which is still prevalent in the country was a landmark, the NPE 1986 recommended for changes in higher education and also for teacher education which resulted in establishments of DIET's, CTE and IASE etc. The implementation of previous policies on education has focused largely on issues of access and equity. The unfinished agenda of the National Policy on Education 1986, modified in 1992 (NPE 1986/92), is appropriately dealt with in this Policy. A major development since the last Policy of 1986/92 has been the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 which laid down legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education.

Principles of NPE 2020

The fundamental principles that will guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions within it are:

- recognizing, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres;
- according the highest priority to achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by all students by Grade 3;
- flexibility, so that learners have the ability to choose their learning trajectories and programmes, and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests;
- no hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc. in order to eliminate harmful hierarchies among, and silos between different areas of learning;
- multidisciplinary and a holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world in order to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge;
- emphasis on conceptual understanding rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams;
- creativity and critical thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation;

- ethics and human & Constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice;
- promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning;
- life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience;
- focus on regular formative assessment for learning rather than the summative assessment that encourages today's 'coaching culture' ;
- extensive use of technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for Divyang students, and educational planning and management;
- respect for diversity and respect for the local context in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject;
- full equity and inclusion as the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system;
- synergy in curriculum across all levels of education from early childhood care and education to school education to higher education;
- teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process – their recruitment, continuous professional development, positive working environments and service conditions;
- a 'light but tight' regulatory framework to ensure integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system through audit and public disclosure while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment;
- outstanding research as a co requisite for outstanding education and development;
- continuous review of progress based on sustained research and regular assessment by educational experts;
- a rootedness and pride in India, and its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions;
- education is a public service; access to quality education must be considered a basic right of every child;
- Substantial investment in a strong, vibrant public education system as well as the encouragement and facilitation of true philanthropic private and community participation.

Pros/ Advantages of the NEP 2020

1. When it comes to school education the most remarkable change is the replacement of the 10+2 system by 5+3+3+4 pattern. The first five years will be foundational school. Learning will be through play way method. It has been ascertained that 85% of the cumulative brain development of the child takes place till the age of 6. And hence it is the crucial stage of preparing the future scientists, academia, professors, administrators, managers etc.
2. Pre-primary education has been brought into the ambit of NEP 2020. This preprimary was predominantly in the unorganized sector and has no control on what was given to the children. Now we are going to regulate even the pre-primary part. The MDM will be available even to the preprimary children. That means good nutrition to the children at age 3 onwards, ensuring the brain develops well.
3. This policy has attempted to lay strong foundation for school education. This policy breaks many trios and water tight compartment that existed in our school system. Flexible nature of the NEP 2020 is one of the main merit. No discrimination of the students on the basis of the stream, equal status of the students in the society as well in the peer group. Increased flexibility and choice of subjects to study particularly in secondary schools.
4. No student will be deprived of higher education due to financial lacking. Students will get financial assistance for lodging, boarding, tuition fee etc. from govt.
5. Govt. has given more emphasis on practical education from class sixth onwards i.e. emphasis on vocational education such as carpentering, gardening, welding etc.
6. Internship to children at a younger age will give an exposure to the practicality/ pragmatism of the education they are receiving. The students will be connected and will also acquire the skills.
7. Coding as mandatory subject from class sixth onwards. Coding is the basis for mathematics hence recommended to be introduced at the middle level. Introduction of artificial intelligence, life skills, experiential learning as subjects, preparing the students for the 21st century. It is recognized that mathematics and mathematical thinking will be very important for India' s future and India's leadership role in the numerous upcoming fields and professions that will involve artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data science, etc. Thus, mathematics and computational

thinking will be given increased emphasis throughout the school years, starting with the foundational stage, through a variety of innovative methods, including the regular use of puzzles and games that make mathematical thinking more enjoyable and engaging. Activities involving coding will be introduced in Middle Stage.

8. It is well understood that young children learn and grasp nontrivial concepts more quickly in their home language/mother tongue. Home language is usually the same language as the mother tongue or that which is spoken by local communities. As research clearly shows that children pick up languages extremely quickly between the ages of 2 and 8 and that multilingualism has great cognitive benefits to young students, children will be exposed to different languages early on (but with a particular emphasis on the mother tongue), starting from the Foundational Stage onwards. Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language.
9. The assessment of a student in school education will be done by the teacher, the students will self-evaluate and peer group evaluation. The student will critically evaluate and analyze themselves. Thus critical thinking will be developed.
10. There is a continuous provision of regular grading and audits of the schools.
11. In the teacher education programme, recognizing that the teachers will require training in high-quality content as well as pedagogy, teacher education will gradually be moved by 2030 into multidisciplinary colleges and universities. This strongly advocates that by 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree that teaches a range of knowledge content and pedagogy and includes strong practicum training in the form of student-teaching at local schools.
12. In higher education, the gross enrollment is to be raised to 50% till 2035 and addition of 3.5 seats in the higher education. Flexible curriculum, creative combination of subjects, integration of vocational education in the curriculum and multiple entry and exits are the merits.
13. Creation of academic credit banks will make reassurance easy in higher education. Due to flexibility enrolments will be high.

14. Autonomy to institutions of national importance like IIM and IIT's will help them in realization of true potential.
15. 21st century is the era of globalization and ever increasing institutional professionalism. This is the time increase focus on the learning, research and innovation has to be placed hence there is a proposal to create National Research Foundation, an apex body for fostering strong research culture and building research capacity across higher education.
16. The NRF allows to collaborate hence recommends to allow top 100 universities of the world to set up campus in India will increase competition, best practices and will definitely bring a pressure on India to gear their game. Thus education will become world class and contextual.
17. This policy lays great thrust on online and digital education.

Conclusion

We need a Need based education today and also the **preparation for the future**. Any policy is only as good as its implementation. Such implementation will require multiple initiatives and actions, which will have to be taken by multiple bodies in a synchronized and systematic manner. The NEP 2020 is really a progressive one if implemented correctly. Thus with such advantages the NEP 2020 is the need of the hour.

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