

# Relevance of National Education Policy -2020 In Present Scenario

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**Abstract-** *The government of India launched the National Education Policy -2020 to promote education among people of India. The aims of NEP are to universalisation of education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030 and aims to raise GER in higher education to 50 per cent by 2025. The NEP-2020 has more positives than negatives. However, it is only after the execution that the people will finally be able to judge its effectiveness.*

**Indexed Terms-** *NEP-2020, Merits, Demerits,*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The federal government on 29, July 2020 launched the NEP-2020 to promote education among people of India. The policy covers elementary education to colleges in both rural and urban India. This is the third national policy on education. The first was promulgated in 1968 by the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the second by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986, which was later modified by the P.V. Narshima Rao government in 1992. After 34 years, we have a new policy that aims to bring about a revolution in our education system. The new national educational policy, or NEP, is both visionary and ambitious but much of its success will depend on its execution. The draft was prepared by a panel of experts led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief K. Kasturirangan. A new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), will be set up as a standard-setting body. The prevailing view among policy makers and the judiciary is that education remains a non-profit and should still be funded via philanthropic contributions; tuition fees paid by the students and parents should be kept at a minimum. This sentiment is again echoed in NEP 2020.

The aims of NEP are to making “India a global knowledge superpower” and overhaul the country’s education system by universalisation of education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030 and aims to raise GER in higher education to 50 per cent by 2025. All in all, one can trace that a clear student-centric approach is inscribed in the entire system and appears to make room for critical thinking, holistic approach, inquiry-based discovery-based, discussion-based and analysis-based learning.

The National Education Policy (NEP) has laid out a grand vision about what education in India should be like over the next 50 years. Most of the commentary about NEP 2020 has focused on the many changes to teaching, learning and regulatory framework of primary, secondary and higher education. As far as higher education is concerned, consolidation of regulators at the central level, more academic and administrative freedom for colleges and universities, and a more liberal education system would be welcome reforms.

Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for the entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education. HECI to have four independent verticals - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulation, General Education Council (GEC) for standard setting, Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding, and National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation.

A dedicated unit for the purpose of orchestrating the building of digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building will be created in the MHRD to look after the e-education needs of both school and higher education. A comprehensive set of recommendations for promoting online education consequent to the recent rise in epidemics and pandemics in order to

ensure preparedness with alternative modes of quality education whenever and wherever traditional and in-person modes of education are not possible, has been covered.

## II. STRENGTHENS OF NEP-2020

With the help of the NEP 2020 devised by the Government of India, education will be made available to everyone in the country from the pre-school to the secondary school level. NCERT has been given the job to design and develop the National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE). This will be for children within eight years of age. Children with disabilities will be enabled to fully participate in the regular schooling process from the foundational stage to higher education, with support of educators with cross disability training, resource centers, accommodations, assistive devices, appropriate technology-based tools and other support mechanisms tailored to suit their needs.

Bal Bhavans will be established in every state. This will be a boarding school where the students can take part in art, play or career-related activities. Free school infrastructure can be used as Samajik Chetna Kendras. Pre-school sections covering at least one year of early childhood care and education will be added to Kendriya Vidyalayas and other primary schools around the nation, particularly in disadvantaged areas. The streamlining of pre-school education is a welcome move and has rightly proposed activity-based, play-based and discover-based pedagogies for our children.

The existing 10+2 structure will be replaced by 5+3+3+4 structure which will focus on the formative years of learning of a student. This constitutes 12 years in school and 2 years in pre-school for each student. With this focus, the 3 years of graduation has been upgraded to 4 years. This move has been made to scrap M Phil and allow possibilities of pursuing PhD program after a Masters' degree. To allow this to happen, it has radically transformed the entire structure of our education.

It has also tried to overcome the prevailing education system and opened the multi-disciplinary and choice-based system. The multidisciplinary approach that is

introduced at the school level is continued at higher education and is clearly aligned to the global system. This approach opens possibilities of bringing research focus into our institutions of higher education.

The previous system provides linearized education and did not accommodate the different needs of the students. The present choice-based system opens the playfield for the students and is not just linear but is also horizontal. This flexibility allows the student to pursue vocational and non-vocational subjects along with co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The primary goal of the NEP is to ensure that all Indians can receive a quality education at an affordable price. The greatest success of NEP 2020 is that it recognises the need for fewer regulations, more autonomy, better teaching and learning methods, better teacher training and more meaningful exams; essentially, it has given India a vision for the future. However, it has not provided a realistic way in which private institutions can raise funds to meet the needs of their students and their communities.

The policy envisages broad-based, multi-disciplinary, holistic Under Graduate education with flexible curricula, creative combinations of subjects, integration of vocational education and multiple entry and exit points with appropriate certification.

Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) will be set up in the country. These institutions will be at par with the existing IITs and IIMs and will aim to showcase multidisciplinary education for the Indian students. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards.

It has also been announced that a National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be formulated by the National Council for Teacher Education by the year 2022. This will be done after consulting with SCERTs, NCERT, teachers and institutions.

There will be an establishment of an Academic Bank of Credit where the credits earned by the students will

be stored so that it can be later on counted when the final degree is completed.

Emphasis has been given on setting up Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones. This will be beneficial for underprivileged people. A four-year B. Ed degree will be recognised as a minimal degree for teaching by the year 2030.

Online education will be promoted so that the students can be prepared for pandemic situations. This will also prepare the system while imparting quality education during such difficult times.

### III. WEAKNESS OF NEP-2020

The NEP in 1968 envisaged investing 6% of GDP in education. However, public expenditure on education in India was just around 2.7% in 2017-18, falling far short of expectations. In contrast, Bhutan, Zimbabwe, Sweden, Costa Rica and Finland spent around 7%, while the U.K., Netherlands, Palestine, Malaysia, Kenya, Mongolia, Korea and USA spent around 5% (OECD & UNESCO, 2017). It is universally agreed that India, with a huge youth population, needs a substantially larger expenditure on education. In spite of this, the NEP has not put forward any critical analysis as to why public education has not been provided with adequate funding even after years of political commitments.

The new education policy does have several strengths but being a visionary document, it remains vague and has several ambiguities and loose ends that are confusing if not disturbing. It offers the schools to choose any medium of instruction but also proposes that it is to be mother tongue or any other regional language alongside its three-language formula which consists of any two regional languages. Such politics takes us away from the student-centric focus of education and is often led by language imperialism that attempts to develop only one script of a language on the backs of our children in the name of education. The NEP is open and the execution of all the provisions of NEP will require a huge budget. It is estimated to be 6 percent of our GDP. When the present education budget is less than 1 percent of our GDP and our economy going doldrums for the present, it is difficult to see how it will find its finances.

Alongside the Government initiative, it leaves education to philanthropy and stays silent over education for sale and does not offer any means to check corruption and privation of education.

The new system will require improved and expanded infrastructure in the schools to run its choice-based modules as well as make room for vocational courses like carpentry, electric work, gardening, and pottery. Besides, the training and skilling of the teachers will be an uphill task and there is no clear road map towards it.

The Covid-19 pandemic has heavily exposed the weaknesses of the financial model promoted by the NEP. With philanthropic contributions negligible and fee collections grinding to a halt, many institutions are now in a crisis and are unable to pay their faculty, service their loans or meet the routine day-to-day expenses. This again illustrates the need to allow educational institutions to create a liquid corpus fund that can be invested and saved, and one that can be used during difficult times.

Moreover, the choice-based system will put enormous stress on the parents and students who will need guidance and counselling to make wise choices so that the learning outcomes of the student have a place in the job market that is already shrinking because of the growth in Artificial Intelligence, Machine learning and Big Data Analytics.

The choices in the three-language formula may or may not provide for one link language for Indians. We at least need to build a diglossia (a situation in which two dialects or languages are used by a single language community competence). Thus, language seems to be a negative factor in the National Education Policy 2020. India has the problem of a disturbing teacher and student ratio. So, introducing mother languages in academic institutions for each subject is a problem. This is simply because finding a competent teacher is a challenge at times. And now the challenge is to bring study material in mother languages. The Indian Government wanted to follow in the steps of other countries like China, Germany, France where the foreign student needs to learn the language of the country to understand the country better. And India

has 22 active languages and not one national language like in the other countries.

This means we need competence in two languages, one of which may be the local. The other has to be a link-language that will link us all Indians. Given our diversities, Indian English is the only suitable candidate to link us all. Besides, it can make room for our global aspirations.

However, going forward there is a strong commitment from the NEP to increase expenditure as a percentage of GDP on both education and research. There is also the promise of establishing a National Research Foundation (NRF) with sufficient funding that will provide research grants to institutions. Both of these will be excellent reforms if implemented in letter and spirit. It is also essential that entities such as the NRF treat both private and public institutions on par with each other.

However, the private educational institutions / colleges have not been able to raise sufficient funds via philanthropy nor increase their tuition fees to improve the quality of education. Even in the best of times, philanthropic contributions are unreliable and cannot be the main source of funding for any educational institution. According to the 2015-16 survey of higher education, 78% of colleges are privately managed, and 68% do not receive any aid from the government. This means that a vast majority of Indian students are educated in private colleges that are entirely funded by their tuition fees. The NEP further suggests that admission to all higher education programmes should be based on standardised test scores conducted by the National Testing Authority. This again encourages coaching classes and rote memorisation, further eroding the value of examinations and assessments conducted by the schools, colleges and universities.

Instead of acknowledging this fact, the NEP doubles down on a strategy that has failed and continues to say that private educational institutions should only raise their funds via philanthropy. The NEP cites western private universities that are able to raise vast amounts of funds via philanthropic contributions as a reason for why this model can work in India.

Another important issue not addressed by the NEP is the obsolete way in which India taxes its educational institutions. To give some context, institutions in the US are permitted to maintain large endowment funds that can be used to further their educational mission. Elite institutions such as Harvard and MIT hold stakes in large multinational corporations directly and indirectly through their endowments, all the while retaining their nonprofit status. Endowment funds support research, infrastructure, teaching, and community service missions of these colleges and universities, and they have a lot of flexibility in how they raise, invest and save these funds.

In contrast, private educational trusts and societies in India simply cannot build up a corpus or an endowment without attracting the attention of tax officials. They risk losing their tax-exempt status if they have such holdings. This discourages institutions from investing in or holding stakes in startups, or from actively promoting innovations that may spin out of their institutions. In addition, tax laws incentivize institutions to spend the majority of their income within the same financial year it was earned, or else they would be accused of “commercialising education” or “profiteering”. This leaves institutions with little or no savings that can be used for improving infrastructure, conducting research or managing various crises or natural disasters.

The NEP is not a law rather, it is a framework for creating laws. The government will need to pass legislation to enable various aspects of the NEP, and lawmakers will need to strongly consider how private funding of education can be improved. They can either allow for much greater flexibility for institutions to raise, invest and create a corpus fund that can be used for research and educational purposes, or they should consider allowing private for-profit investment in education. Only then we can be closer to realizing our goals of better-quality education for all.

The new education policy will further increase the differences between the sections of the society. While the students in the government schools will be taught in their respective regional language, the students in private institutions will be introduced to English from the early classes. This will further increase students who will not be comfortable with English as they will

be introduced to the subject about seven years later than the students in private schools.

Under the new system, one has to study for four years to complete their graduation. However, the question arises as to why the student will continue with the program if he/she can get the diploma in two years? If he/she left the program mid-way after two years, then he/she could easily have two years of experience of work which will be valuable in the long run.

The National Education Policy 2020 has more positives than negatives. However, it is only after the execution that the people will finally be able to judge its effectiveness. I would say the NEP 2020 has a few merits but it also has its share of demerits which I would like to list in this answer. I'm skipping the merits section since the question clearly focuses on the demerits.

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