

NEW EDUCATION POLICY, 2020 : IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES



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Education facilitates actualising full human potential and is the foundation of any prosperous society. It is necessary for character building, nation development and economic growth. For aspiring India, with a significant youth population providing affordable and quality education is very important. Educating and skilling our young generation is key to our economic growth. We can overcome our long outstanding challenges of inequality, social injustice, national integration, environmental protection, poverty, superstitiousness, communalism, casteism and gender bias forever.

Education can provide India a rightful place in the emerging globalized world and civilized society. Education can resolve our problem of unemployment and underemployment. Universalisation of quality higher education in India can unlock immense opportunities for our youth at global level. We can optimize use of our talent, entrepreneurship and natural resources for human resource development and economic growth. India is internationally well known as a young country due to the high ratio of youth population. Often it is stated that the 21st Century belongs to India in the international arena, due to the size of our young population. India's future and destiny therefore significantly depends upon the universal access to quality and affordable higher education for its youth.

The Cabinet approved New Education Policy 2020 on 29th July, 2020, which brings in the much desired changes in the education system in our country. Right from changing the name of Ministry of Human Resource Development to Ministry of Education, the policy has attempted to address the significant number of issues ailing education system in India.

It has attempted to bring parity between private and public institutions, replace rote learning with knowledge enhancement and introduced flexibility in terms subject options. It has emphasized skill development as an integral part of the education



INDIA'S NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

system. It aims to bring uniformity in quality and standards of education across the country.

Uniformity in Higher Education across India and Institutions:

The NEP 2020 provides for one National Regulator for Higher Education in the entire country. It replaced the University Grants Commission with a new regulator in the name of the Higher Education Commission of India.

The commission will have verticals for regulation, standard-setting, grants and accreditation. The norms for Deemed Universities, Central Universities, standalone Institutions will be the same for reasons of quality. The system of college affiliations with universities has been dispensed with and the colleges will award degrees themselves. Now the norms will not be different on the basis of ownership, i.e. for public or private ownership institutions.

A National Testing Agency is proposed to be set up to conduct the Common Entrance Exam for admissions in higher education courses. There will be no requirement of MPhil prior to a PhD. It will conduct examinations twice a year for this purpose. It proposes to cap fees for private

institutions engaged in higher education. Top rated global universities will be facilitated to come to India and similarly Indian universities will be encouraged to go global. On the patterns of education system in the developed countries, the policy proposes flexibility to choose from subjects across streams. There will be no rigid separation between arts and sciences, the students will have flexibility in designing their courses.

A 4-years multi disciplinary bachelor's degree program is proposed with options to complete a degree after a break. The new university entrance test will be implemented from the 2022 academic session.

School Education with emphasis on Skill Development:

The NEP aims at an Inclusive and Equitable Education System by 2030. Up to 5th Grade, the medium of instruction will be in mother tongue. Till 8th Grade, the 3 language policy will continue with preference for local language as medium of instruction. Common Standards of learning will be applicable to public and private schools.

The importance of board exams has been reduced. Only the core concepts

and application of knowledge will be tested and the rote learning will be replaced by actual knowledge. The report cards will have a comprehensive report on the skills and capabilities of students instead of just marks. It dispenses with rigid separation between academic, vocational, curricular and extracurricular courses. Every child will develop one skill before coming out of school.

NEP 2020 and role of Technology in Education:

The CoronaVirus pandemic had a long lasting impact on our education system. We had to shut the educational institutions for a long time. In the developed countries, the classroom based teaching was replaced with online or virtual classes. In India only rich and few private educational institutions adapted to online education, that too only partially. Now the transition from classroom to online education has become permanent in nature. Our Prime Minister's Vision on NEP,2020

Our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi also addressed the national youth through his popular broadcast 'Man Ki Baat' about the importance of National Education

Police, 2020. He highlighted how the NEP addresses the education needs of 21st Century India. He emphasized that the NEP 2020 is also going to be a great tool in the fight against poverty. It will change the way students learn. NEP's biggest impact will be on how students learn. The policy places a focus on ensuring students to learn and advocates moving away from rote learning to a more activity-based, experiential learning approach, with increased emphasis on choice for students in the secondary grades. This will allow the education system to shift to a more personalized, student-centric model and adopt new curriculum and technology solutions that will enhance this process.

Our PM Modi said the NEP has a commendable vision, but its influence will depend on whether it is able to effectively merge with the government's other policy initiatives like Digital India, Skill India and the New Industrial Policy etc. to effect a coherent reconstruction.

The policy linkages can ensure that education policy speaks to and learns from Skill India's experience in engaging more dynamically with the private sector to shape vocational education curricula in order to make it a success. There is also a need for more evidence-based decision-making, to adapt to rapidly evolving shifts and disruption. NEP has provisioned for real-time evaluation systems and a consultative monitoring framework. This shall enable the education system to constantly reform itself, instead of waiting for a new education policy every decade for an upgrading curriculum. This, in itself, will be a remarkable achievement.

Major Challenges in the Implementation

Opening universities every week is a strenuous task: 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 definitely a massive challenge.

The numbers are no less scary 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 view 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 which will be extremely challenging.

Funding is a big problem : From a funding standpoint, this is not a challenge for the timorous. The NEP 2020 predicts 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.

Need to create a large group of trained teachers: In school education, the policy predicts a full structural reformulation of the curriculum, a very welcome step.

Many of the curricular changes require considerable mindset shifts on the part of teachers, as well as parents.

Interdisciplinary higher education demands for a cultural shift: In higher education, the NEP 2020's focus on interdisciplinary learning is a very welcoming step. In India, education has for decades been very isolated and monotonous. For the entire higher education system to be composed of "exceptions" professors who are curious about, respect and lean into other disciplines while being experts on their own is not an easy task. This requires a cultural shift in the entire higher education ecosystem, over the next 15-20 years.

The National Education Policy, 2020 aims to shift towards a more scientific approach to education. It will help to cater the ability of the child in different stages of development. This includes cognitive development, social and physical development. When implemented, the policy will bring India at par with leading countries of the world.

It is an exemplary policy as it targets at making the education system flexible, multidisciplinary, aggregate and aligned to the needs of the 21st century and the 2030 sustainable development goals. The intent of the policy seems to be ideal in many ways but it is the implementation process where the key to success ultimately lies.