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## National Education Policy 2020: A Landmark in Indian Education

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*The National Education policy is a visionary document for the fulfilment of the dreams of crores of Indians and will re-establish the golden era of ancient Indian education along with the needs and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century education. This policy is focussed on preparing human beings capable of building the nation with moral values, empathy, compassion and will prove to be global citizen rooted in the rich constitutional values of our nation. The policy envisions a progressive, creative and rational society. The policy will be a milestone in making an inclusive, flexible and equitable education system. This chapter is an attempt to describe the aims and visions of the National Education Policy 2020.*

**Keywords:** The National Education Policy 2020, NEP 2020

The National Education Policy 2020, can be seen as a new dawn in the Indian education system. It is an ambitious undertaking aligned to the needs presented by the current education situation of the nation and shall endeavour to bring forth significant changes in education. This policy will surely end up being a momentous milestone in the education arrangement of India, a nation that invests heavily and takes pride in its rich and magnificent history of education.

The policy is extensive, all encompassing, far sighted and will unquestionably assume an incredible role in the country's future development. It aims at making the instruction framework comprehensive, adaptable, multidisciplinary, and adjusted to the requirements of the 21st century and the 2030 sustainable development goals.

The policy is guided by the rich heritage inherited by the nation in the form of the ancient and eternal knowledge and thoughts. The policy seeks to re-establish the glory of Nalanda, Takshashila and Vallabhi by bring before its learners a critical appreciation of the rich Indian culture, values and traditions. The policy not only aims to bring forth the latent talent of the learners but also prepare human beings with sound ethical values capable of rational thought, scientific temper with a creative imagination. It believes in producing citizens that would aid in building an unprejudiced, inclusive and plural society as envisioned by our constitution.

It was very aptly demonstrated by Lord Macaulay that if we want to break the very backbone of a country like India, it can be easily done by shattering its rich cultural heritage and education system. They were the ones who made us Indians feel inferior of our then prevalent system and reduced its magnificent glory to something irrelevant. The policy now aims to restore the past glory of our ancient education system by giving ample importance to our rich and diverse cultural background and align it with the new contemporary need of a global society.

The NEP 2020 focuses on providing an unbiased and equitable access to education of utmost quality to its learners in all forms regardless of their social or economic background or any other factor that ties them to the narrow boundaries of shallow education. The policy lays significant emphasis on including the historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups in the education system and giving them equal opportunities. The policy believes that Education plays a significant role in accomplishing inclusion and equality and balancing monetary and social mobility in the society. The National Education Policy envisages a sustainable and equitable education system aimed at providing quality education that is deeply rooted in the Indian ethos and contributes to the goal of transforming India to a global knowledge superpower.

The policy stresses on the role of the nation's educational institutions in formulating curriculum and pedagogies that would give rise to a sense of respect and regard among its learners towards their Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values and their role in a developing and changing nation. The Policy envisions instilling among the learners a deep-seated pride in being an Indian, in thought, yet additionally in soul, spirit, and deeds, and equitable development of the skills, knowledge, values sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen.

The policy focuses on preparing its citizens with the skills required for individual development that would in turn aid in the development of the country at the national level. The policy aims at bringing forth the full human potential and development of an upright and conscientious society. It seeks to enrich the country's human resource pool by promoting critical and analytical discussion among its learners.

The NEP is focused on the recruitment of qualitative individuals in the teaching fraternity at all levels, and empowering them by ensuring them with sources of livelihood while maintaining accountability and individual responsibility. Teachers are the one who shape our next generation of citizens in the true sense. It is therefore essential to the development of the country to harbour teachers who can mould the tender minds in the right direction with the right approach.

Inculcating knowledge about the country and its varied social, cultural, and technological needs and backgrounds, its artistic, language, and knowledge traditions, and its essence in India's young people is considered critical for nurturing national pride, self-confidence, cooperation, and integration. These ideas must be included in the education system while keeping in mind the rich diversity in culture and traditions of the country.

With the rapid changes in the global landscape, it is important for the learners to not only learn but also know how to learn. In the present scenario it is essential that the education should be less content oriented and inclined towards developing critical thinking in the learners along with a multidisciplinary problem-solving approach. The teaching pedagogies should be developed in such a way that would promote a more learner-centred, integrated and holistic system of education.

The curriculum should be designed in such a manner that would integrate both arts and sciences, that would cater to the needs and capabilities of the learner. The education should prepare the learners for the challenges ahead in life while at the same time equip them with ethics, rationality and compassion. The gap between what is needed and the present outcomes of education should be bridged by nurturing the system with both equity and integrity right from early preschools to higher educational institutions.

At present, it is a matter of great concern that an enormous group of young children, particularly from the socially and monetary disadvantaged backgrounds, lack access to quality ECCE. A sound investment in this respect would enable these children to not only participate but also flourish in the educational system and bring to the surface their innate potential. It is essential to meet such goals that a global provision of quality early childhood development and education must be attained at the earliest. The overarching comprehensive aim of ECCE shall be to achieve optimal outcomes in all domains of education ranging from cognitive development to the development of early language in its learners. The success of such aims lies in strengthening the Anganwadi centres not only with well-trained faculty

but also with high-quality infrastructure and facilities for the holistic development of the learner. To realise the goals of providing quality education to all it will be essential to give primary importance to the far reached locations that are particularly socially disadvantaged and to bring them under the umbrella of ECCE.

The highest priority of the education system shall be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary education by the year 2025. In order to attain such goals, it is proposed that a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be established by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and at the state level, the governments will prepare plans for implementing the policies in all primary schools, keeping in mind the necessary targets and monitoring the rate of implementation.

One of the essential objectives of the schooling framework must be to make sure that children are not only enrolled in schools but are also attending them in order to limit the number of dropouts, with an objective to accomplish 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio in preschool to secondary level by 2030. A coordinated public exertion will be made to guarantee widespread access of quality education to the learners and provide them with the opportunity to experience holistic education that would include all aspects of academic education ranging from the sciences to vocational training.

Learning should be comprehensive, coordinated, enjoyable, as knowledge is a deep-seated treasure and the role of education is to help in its manifestation. For the accomplishment of these goals, curriculum and pedagogy in their entirety will have to be reoriented and revamped. Specific sets of aptitudes and skills across realms will be distinguished for reconciliation and consolidation at each phase of learning, from pre-school to higher education. The content of the curriculum will have to be reduced to its core essence so as to make space for the development of critical thinking, reasoning that does not centre around rote memorization, but encourages analysis and discussion-based learning.

In all stages of education, experiential learning that includes integrated pedagogies like story-telling, arts integrated, will be implemented, which would help the learner to appreciate the relation of one subject with the other and adopt a multidisciplinary approach. To overcome any barrier in the fulfilment of learning results, the classroom pedagogies will shift, towards competency-based learning and methodology. One such cross-curricular academic methodology is art interaction that uses different aspects of art and culture as the reason for learning of ideas across subjects. coordinated methodology will reinforce the linkages among training and culture. There is an impending need to integrate sports with education under the banner of holistic development that would enhance the physical and psychological well-being along with the cognitive abilities.

The National Education Policy 2020 can be seen as a benchmark that would provide multidisciplinary and flexible higher education to the students and the generations to come by including in its system multidisciplinary universities and colleges, multiple entries and exit points in a degree program, national academic credit bank, autonomous institutions, common entrance test, establishment of higher education commission of India (HECI), professional standard-setting bodies (PSSBS), establishment of national research foundation (NRF) etc.

With the NEP 2020, there would be no hard-core separation between what we today term as 'vocational' or 'academic' streams, among 'arts', 'humanities', and 'sciences', as the holistic approach would offer a wide range of courses and subjects with no demarcation between what is 'curricular' or 'extracurricular'.

India's languages are among the richest, most scientific, and most expressive in the world, with an immense collection of historical as well as modern literature. It is therefore essential for the young citizens to be aware of the rich and varied languages of their country to appreciate the thoughts prevalent in the diverse cultures and the treasure they hold in the form of values and traditions. Mother tongue should be used as a medium of instruction as it would lay a strong foundation for creative thought. Every possible attempt shall be made at an early stage to ensure that there is no gap between the mother tongue of the learner and the medium of instruction. Even the local or native sign

languages shall be taken into consideration. Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized across the country, and National and State curriculum materials shall be developed, for students with hearing impairment.

Along with proficiency in languages, it will be essential to make room for developing skills a scientific temper, creativity and innovativeness, physical education, logical reasoning; and vocational exposure.

The values slated in our moral constitution such as ahimsa, satya, diversity, respect for all people and their inherent capabilities irrespective of their background, respect for environment, helpfulness shall be respected and adequately developed in the learners to help them be better humans for life.

New challenges and circumstances can only be accomplished with new initiatives. The recent rise in pandemics brings to the surface the necessity of being ready with alternate ways of dealing with the situation. Keeping this into consideration, the National Education Policy 2020 recognizes the importance of technology while acknowledging its potential risks and dangers at the same time. It calls for carefully designed studies that could exhibit how we can reap the maximum advantage by using technology as a vehicle of 21<sup>st</sup> century education while minimizing its drawbacks. At present, the existing digital platforms and ongoing ICT-based educational initiatives must be expanded to meet the current and future challenges in providing quality education to all. The policy incorporates ideas such as pilot studies for online education, digital infrastructure, online teaching platform and tools, addressing the digital divide, virtual labs, training and incentives for teachers, blended models of learning that would help in making India a global superpower in the field of technology by addressing to the needs in these fields and preparing its learners with the right technological approach.

The Policy is committed towards significantly raising the educational investment, as investment in the education of the young citizens can be the most fruitful form of investment for the future of the country. The Centre and the States will have to work together as a team to increase the public investment in Education domain to 6% of the GDP. This will be extremely crucial for achieving the goals proposed in the policy.

The NEP 2020 has ample provisions for fulfilling the dreams of many aspiring Indians and restoring the glory and prestige of education system. However, an effective implementation in the end plays the crucial role in the success of any policy that is set forth. It is in the hands of the centre and state governments to join hands and work together for its efficient and effective implementation not only on paper but also it in classroom. Such an effective implementation will require a long-term vision, multiple initiatives and actions, which will have to be taken by multiple bodies at both national and individual levels in a synchronized way.

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