



National Education Policy – Overview and Impact

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Abstract : Well defined and futuristic education policy is essential for a country at school and college levels due to the reason that education leads to economic and social progress. Different countries adopt different education system by considering the tradition and culture and adopt different stages during their life cycle at school and college education levels to make it effective. Recently Government of India announced its new Education Policy which is based on the recommendations by an expert committee headed by Dr. Kasturirangan, Former chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). This paper highlights on National Education Policies announced in the higher education system and compare them with the currently adopted system.

IndexTerms - Indian education, National Education Policy 2020, Overview, Implementation strategies.

I. INTRODUCTION

The word 'Education' – such a simple looking word with a deep and complete meaning. What is Education? Education is a systematic process of waking up to life through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude. It makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured and educated. For a civilized and socialized society, education is the only means. Its goal is to make an individual perfect. Every society gives importance to education because it is a panacea for all evils. Basically it is the key to solve the various problems of life.

Education plays a significant and remedial role in improving and balancing the country's Socio-economic framework.

II. EDUCATION IN INDIA

Since the early days of Independence⁴ in 1945, the Indian Government has always focused on improving the literacy rate. India holds a prominent position in the global education industry and has many accomplishments to celebrate. The Right to Education Act has played a crucial role in reducing the number of Out of School Children (OOSC) aged 6 to 14 years, from 13.46 million in 2006 to 6 million in 2014.

Moreover, India has one of the largest networks of higher education institutions. There were around 37.4 million students enrolled in higher education with Gross Enrolment Ratio of 26.3%.

According to UNESCO's latest report, the literacy rate among the population aged 15-24 years is 91.6%; among 15 years and older, it is 74.37%; and among 65 years and older, it is 45.38%.

The achievements and progress in education being enjoyed today can be attributed to the vision of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Minister of Education in India.

In 1961, the Government of Jawaharlal Nehru formed the NCERT, as an autonomous organization to formulate and implement education policies.

However, the urgency for an education policy was first felt in 1964 when Congress MP Siddheshwar Prasad criticized the then government for lacking a vision and philosophy for education.

Subsequently based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-1966), the Government of PM Indira Gandhi announced the first National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1968. The policy was prepared to improve the quality of education in the country and provide education to all the citizens.

III. NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION – 1968

- Proposed equal educational opportunities.
- Free and compulsory education for all children till the age of 14.
- Specialized qualification of teachers.
- Three-language formula in secondary education, English, Hindi and regional language.
- Increasing education spending to 6% of the national income.
- Uniform education structure : 10+2 Pattern.

IV. National Policy on Education – 1986

- High emphasis on the removal of disparities and equalize educational opportunity.
- “Child-centered Approach” in primary education.
- “Operation Blackboard” to improve primary schools nationwide.
- Creating of the “rural university” model.
- Budget allocated to be 6% of GDP.

The 1986 NPE was revised in 1992 by the Government of PM PV Narasimha Rao. The Programme of Action (POA) 1992 has called for a common entrance examination across India for admission to professional and technical programs. In 2005, former PM Manmohan Singh adopted a new policy based on the “Common Minimum Programme” of his United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government.

After the 1986 NPE, significant socio-economic changes have taken place in India, emphasizing the need for the education sector to gear itself towards the demands of the 21st century.

In a bid to prepare a new National Education Policy, the MHRD released the Draft New Education Policy (DNEP) in 2019, followed by several public consultations

In July 2020, the Union Cabinet of India has approved the third National Education Policy 2020, replacing the previous one (NPE-1986).

On 29th July, 2020, the Government of PM Narendra Modi approved the NEP-2020, with an aim to transform India’s education system by 2040.

The NEP, after a gap of 34 years, has put in place a slew of education reforms in both the higher education and school sector. It intends to bring a systematic reform in the education sector rather than an incremental reform.

The NEP-2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address our country’s current developmental imperatives.

The Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the current education structure, including its regulation and governance, to forge a new education system that is on par with the aspirational objectives of 21st century education.

The New Policy also renamed the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) as the Ministry of Education In a bid to bring the focus back on education and learning.

If implemented as per the plan, the new norms will reduce regulatory hassles, promote autonomy and benefit students, education providers and the labor market.

V. Principles of NEP-2020

The foundational principles of NEP 2020 are **Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability**. The policy believes that the education system should develop good human beings with rational thinking, compassion, empathy, courage, resilience, scientific temper, creative imagination and critical values.

The Fundamental principles of the Policy are :-

- **Recognising, identifying and Strengthening** the unique capabilities of each student.
- **Promoting** each student’s holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres.
- Achieving **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy** in all students by Grade 3.
- Flexibility for learners to choose their learning trajectories and programs and thereby choose their paths as per their talents and interests.
- **No hard separations** between arts sciences, curricular and extra-curricular activities, Vocational and academic streams, among others to eliminate harmful hierarchies and silos in areas of learning.
- **Multi-disciplinary** and a **holistic** education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge.
- Promotion of **Multilingualism** and the **Power of Language** in learning and teaching.
- **Life Skills** such as communication, teamwork, cooperation and resilience.
- **Regular Formative Assistance** for learning instead of summative assessment.
- **Full Equity and Inclusion** as the basis of all educational decisions.
- **Teachers and Faculty** as the heart of the learning process.
- **‘Light but Tight’** regulatory framework to promote integrity, transparency and resource efficiency of the educational system.
- Encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through **Autonomy, Good Governance and Empowerment**.

VI. New Education Policy 2020 – Major Changes

Some of the major changes introduced in the New Education Policy are as followed:

- By 2030, all higher education institutions will become multidisciplinary institutions and each of them will at least have an enrollment of 300 students. By 2030, be at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district. The aim is to increase the GER in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.
- Music, arts and literature to be taught in all higher education institutions.
- M.Phil will be discontinued.
- It is time that Sanskrit will be mainstreamed with a strong offering in schools and three language formula will be adopted in higher education.

- Every student will be taught a vocational skill of his/her choice by the same time they complete their schooling. Students will also be taught coding from class VI.
- From 6th grade, candidates will have to do internships of 10 days with local trades or crafts.
- IITs will have to follow a more holistic approach and multidisciplinary education with more arts and humanities as per the New Education Policy.
- An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) will be set up which will digitally store the academic credits earned. The 4-year course may also lead to a degree 'with Research' if the student completes a rigorous research project within the respective time frame.
- The 10+2 system will be divided into 5+3+3+4 format. It means the first five years of the school will comprise of the foundation stage including three years of pre-primary school and classes 1 and 2. The next three years will be divided into a preparatory stage (classes 3 to 5), three years of middle stage (classes 6 to 8), and four years of secondary stage (classes 9 to 12). Schools will not have any rigid formation of streams of arts, commerce, science, students can take up whichever courses they want.
- To ramp up Digital Learning a National Education Technology Forum (NETF) will be created and e-courses in 8 regional languages will be uploaded on the same.
- With the help of the academic bank of credit, multiple entries and exit system will be introduced in the higher education sector. This will allow students to take a sabbatical and then join back their studies after a period of time, without losing any credits. Students will also be free to choose major and minor subjects for their degree.
- Every institution will have an International Students Office to host foreign students. Colleges will be promoted to provide premium education at affordable costs.
- Top 100 Foreign Colleges will be allowed to set up their campuses in India as per NEP. They will be given special dispensation and regulations to set up the campuses.
- The expenditure on education will be changed to 6% of the total GDP, as opposed to earlier, which was 4% of the GDP. Both State as well as Central Government, will be working together on the expenditure.

Basically the new NEP-2020 is a historic effort and first omnibus policy after 34 years, under Modi regime. The purpose of NEP is –

- a framework to guide the development of education in the country.
- It will give importance to students' practical knowledge instead of just pushing them towards rote learning.
- It will help students to develop scientific temper from a young age.
- It aims to make it easier to set up new quality of higher educational institutes which will be at par with the global standards.
- It will make it easier for foreign colleges to set up their campuses here many students who are unable to go abroad due to multiple reasons will be able to experience it and get global exposure.

It is formulated after having considered over 2 lakh suggestions from different levels of local self-bodies, 2.5 lakh gram panchayats, 6600 blocks, 6000 ULBs and 676 districts with the aim of holistic productivity and contributing citizens for building an equitable, Inclusive and plural society with an increased Gross Enrollment Ratio of 50% by 2035.

The NEP 2020 has conveyed the structural changes in the education system which aims to make India the global knowledge superpower ensuring equity and inclusion.

Beyond all, equal respect for all religions with the idea to develop or bring back creative human endeavour, required for the 21st century education system, has been the main focus of NEP 2020.

NEP 2020 is an attempt to balance local and global human resource needs of growing India economy. Given the introduction of NEP 2020, it is important to undertake the changes introduced by NEP 2020 vis-à-vis NEP 1986.

At a strategic level, the differences in both the policies are primarily around three major dimensions, namely, vision of the society, social purpose and purpose of education. Both the education policies were developed, keeping in mind the structure of society. In a way, the policies of 1986 and 2020 have a vividly distinct idea of Indian society. In the 1980s, world economies today are operating as complex global entities. In view of the same, the 1986 NPE focused on standardized and equal opportunities to all.

Given that in 2020, most the organisation have reached maturity and have critical inertia, NEP 2020 focused on augmenting individual capacity and achieving excellence in the field of your choice by providing customisable options for education while hoping to reduce regulation via provision of moral internal autonomy to institutions. This is evident from reducing number of educational regulators to one and from the fact that the new NEP 2020 will facilitate subject selection, software training in schools, transfer of credits, multiple entries, and exit system.

The second point of difference is with respect to social purpose. The NEP 1986 was geared towards providing standard educational opportunities to various social groups therefore, its primary purpose was largely centered on the inclusion of disadvantaged groups. Additionally, NEP 2020 focuses on the economic value arising out of educational learning and training. The NEP 2020 has a significant focus on skill-based learning and employability arising out of it. This is evident from an increased focus on providing technical skills at various levels to those seeking secondary and post secondary education.

Thirdly, the difference lies in their understanding of the aims of education. The earlier policy stressed more about understanding the world and human life. According to NPE 1986, the aim of education is threefold, namely the overall development of the human resource, international co-operation, and peaceful co-existing, development of socialism, secularism and democracy. The present policy focused more on national development by creating citizens with knowledge, skills and individual development. Specifically, the aim of education as defined by NEP 2020 is to achieve full human potential, development of a just and equitable society, and promoting national development. The curriculum in the new policy is more inclined to allow for critical thinking, discussion, and analytical learning, which aims to enrich India's talent and human resource pool.

Overall, the NPE 1986 created a pool of education and trained human resources who contributed to the value chain but NEP 2020 dreams of creating human resources who will create value propositions. With the implementation of the new NEP 2020, the Indian education system is poised to become closer to international standards. Basically it is a big revolution replacing the 34-year-old policy idea and envisioning to bring about the much-needed modification in the Indian Education System. The Policy has maintained a

delicate balance between the traditions and the interdisciplinary approach, which is the need of the 21st century. Needless to say, the New Education Policy is undoubtedly a progressive and ambitious policy that India is waiting for.

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