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A PERSPECTIVE OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020 FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION IN TAMIL NADU STATE

Sub theme: Multidisciplinary Education and Qualitative Improvement of Student

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ABSTRACT

Abstract: Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society and promoting national development. The first education policy was promulgated by the Government of India in 1968, the second is in 1986 and recently **New Education Policy (NEP)** in 2020 to enhance education. NEP 2020 is both visionary and ambitious. Much of its success will depend on its execution. The government had opened the draft for public feedback in 2019. At that time, it received stiff opposition from non-Hindi speaking States that saw it as an attempt to impose Hindi on them. Finally, it was approved by the union cabinet and was passed without discussion or debate in a parliament. It aims for national integration through education that enables our students to actualize their potentials and appears to be sufficiently open and flexible to embrace the journey of all. One of its strengths is its multi-disciplinary and availability of choice-based pursuits to the students at the level of the school. The present 10+2 system is replaced by 5+3+3+4 in school education. 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. States will have the freedom to choose the language of instruction in the democratic and decentralized process laid out in the National Education Policy, 2020. **Tamil Nadu**, a non-Hindi State opposes the NEP 2020. This paper highlights the provisions given in NEP 2020 which has been opposed by Tamil Nadu State Government and the issues related with that. Tamil Nadu are proposing their own **State Education Policy (SEP)**. Education is the corner stone for improving quality of citizens in India. The present education system must take the first step towards realizing this goal.

Key words: National Education Policy, State Education Policy, Language, Tamil Nadu

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society and promoting national development. The first education policy was promulgated by the Government of India in 1968, the second is in 1986. More than three decades have passed since previous Policy. There was a great need of a new education policy. The government had opened the draft of National Education Policy for public feedback in 2019. At that time, it received stiff opposition from non-Hindi speaking states that saw it as an attempt to impose Hindi on them. Finally, it was approved by the union cabinet and was passed without discussion or debate in a parliament. It aims for national integration through education that enables our students to actualize their potentials and appears to be sufficiently open and flexible to embrace the journey of all. It talks about the education system that lays emphasis on experiential learning along with a focus on 21st Century skills like critical thinking, problem solving, etc.

The present **10+2** system is replaced by **5+3+3+4** in school education. 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. This paper highlights the provisions given in NEP 2020 which has been opposed by Tamil Nadu State and the issues related with that. Tamil Nadu State are proposing their own State Education Policy (SEP).

The National Education Policy 2020 has '**emphasised**' on the use of **mother tongue** or **local language** as the medium of instruction till Class 5 while, recommending its continuance till Class 8 and beyond Sanskrit and foreign languages will also be given emphasis. The Policy recommends that all students will learn three languages in their school under the '**formula**'. At least two of the three languages should be native to India. It also states that no language will be imposed on the students.

Shortly after the release of the policy, the government clarified that the language policy in NEP is a broad guideline; and that it was up to the states, institutions and schools to decide the implementation. A more detailed language strategy would be released in the National Curriculum Framework in 2021. Note was also made that there were already institutions which had implemented this language policy 60 years ago such as Sardar Patel Vidyalaya. Both the Education Policy of 1986 and the Right to Education Act, 2009 promoted usage of the mother tongue too as an advisory guideline. In early August 2021, Karnataka became the first state to issue an order about implementing NEP.

II. VIEWS OF TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu set in motion the process of evolving its own education policy. The order for constituting a 13-member panel, set to draft the policy keeping in mind the state's youth. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Shri M K Stalin on 5th April, 2022 said that a 13-member panel headed by former chief justice of Delhi high court Justice D Murugesan would evolve the State's own Education Policy. The panel was given one year to submit its recommendations. States will have the freedom to choose the language of instruction in the democratic and decentralized process laid out in the National Education Policy, 2020.

Tamil Nadu making clear its opposition to **some key NEP features** including **three language formula**, common exams for Classes III, V and VIII and introduction of four-year degree courses, the panel will have its task cutout in framing a distinct policy. P Patric Raymond, General Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Graduate Teachers Federation, asked the government to expand the 13-member panel to come out with wider recommendations on various aspects of education including teaching methodology, infrastructure, funding from pre-primary to higher education level.

It may suggest retaining the existing 10+2 system against the 5+3+3+4 system proposed in the NEP. The 10+2 curriculum may continue as it retains most students in school till, they complete Class X. Restructuring school education and creating multiple levels in schools will lead to dropouts in each level. It may also recommend continuing 10+2 system with additional focus on early childhood care and education.

Conducting common exams for Classes III, V and VIII, as proposed in NEP, may lead to dropouts. Admission to degree programmes should be based on Class XII marks instead of entrance exams. Experts, however, wonder if the panel can make recommendations that could come in conflict with directions of national bodies such as University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). The state panel can review the National Education Policy 2020 and frame

guidelines for its implementation based on local needs. We cannot have two different policies. It will lead to isolation of Tamil Nadu students. Studying in different school curriculum system than the rest of the country will affect the employment and higher education opportunities of Tamil Nadu students. One of the experts says that there won't be a problem, **"If we set our standards higher than the NEP"**.

Professor Anil Sadgopal, former member of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) and former dean, faculty of education, Delhi University, welcomed formation of a panel to draft State Education Policy (SEP) of Tamil Nadu, saying, **"We cannot have one policy for an entire country"**. The panel which is headed by retired Chief justice Delhi high court Justice D Murugesan has a 1-year tenure.

"It should take inputs from educationists, subject experts and suggest reforms aimed at developing modern, technology driven and updated curriculum frameworks for early childhood care and education, school education, college education teacher education and adult education in an integrated manner in keeping with the fast-changing global education employment landscape," school education secretary Kakarla Usha said in the order.

Apart from textbooks, we also need to prepare teachers to be bilingual. Then, there is a need to ensure employment opportunities, and not just teaching jobs for language students. We have held discussions with the Chairman of the National Skill Development Corporation on incorporating languages as a qualification. However, there is resistance from certain non-Hindi States, which say the NEP, 2020 imposes Hindi.

Until now, none of the education policies had such a strong emphasis on ensuring education in Indian languages. It is the first time in NEP that we are seeing a strong push for Indian languages. The term Indian languages has been used 30 times. There is also flexibility given to States to choose the languages for the 3-language formula. No language has been prescribed. States will decide, they have the freedom to choose. It will be a democratic and decentralized process. There is no imposition.

Under the NEP, the mother tongue will be the medium of instruction till Class 5 or preferably till Class 8. How will it be implemented, say, in Delhi, where there is a plurality of languages? Before English, was there ever any conflict over languages? Borders of the States kept expanding or contracting, and there were new kings, but was there a dispute over language?

There are many commonalities in Indian languages - their phonology is similar, 50%-60% of the vocabulary is common, sentence structure is common, subject-object-verb pattern is common, there is a common literary source, and similar aspiration, because of which people were able to understand different languages. There was no wall between languages. Since the NEP says either mother tongue or regional language can be medium of instruction, does that mean Tamil will be the medium of instruction in Tamil Nadu as the dominant mother tongue?

This is the image created about Tamil. Weavers in Sivakasi speak Saurashtri, Gounder community in Coimbatore speaks Telugu. There are also Malayalam and Kannada speaking populations. The State's population is 6 crore and 30-35% of them speak other languages. Even Tamil has 12-13 different dialects. But for some special reasons, Tamil Nadu has only promoted Tamil. Now they will face problems [in implementing NEP] for only learning Tamil. Tamil is also on the wane in the State. In 2010, there were 75% Tamil medium students in Class 12, and in 2020, this figure is down to 55%. Tamil is also on the decline because of their policy.

III. NEP 2020 VERSUS NPE 1986 & ITS OBSERVATIONS VIZ. a VIZ. STATE EDUCATION POLICY (SEP) PROPOSED BY TAMILNADU STATE

Sr. No.	Basis of Difference	New Education Policy 2020	National Policy on Education 1986	Observation	Proposed State Education Policy by Tamil Nadu
1	Ministry	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Human Resource Development	More focus on education.	Tamil Nadu State Government
2	Format with respect to year	5+3+3+4 format	10+2 format	15 years of schooling instead of 12 year. The vocational skill education will start early at class 6.	10+2 system may be continued
3	Language	3 Language Formula	2 Language	Non-Hindi state opposes this.	2 Language may be continued
4	Degree Program	4-year degree	3year degree	For graduation	3-year degree, as 4 year degree programmes lead to two types of degrees & degree holders
5	Entrance Exam for Degree Course	Entrance Exam for all degree courses including BA, BSc. etc.	Based on Class XII marks	Competition will be increased.	Admissions are likely to be based on Class XII marks
6	GER (Gross Enrollment Ratio) in Higher education	To achieve 50% GER in higher education	27.1 % for 2019-20 which is an improvement from previous year 26.3 %	All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) determine this report.	Having achieved 51.4% GER in higher education, SEP may focus on providing equitable access to quality education
7	Common Exam	In class III, V and VIII	School level exam	This may lead to rise in dropouts.	Opposes common exams. School level exams are likely to continue for these classes
8	Multiple entry & exit in degree programmes	Offer multiple entry and exit in degree programmes	No multiple entry & Exit	For wider education	It wants to ensure all school pass out students enroll in some stream of higher education

IV. POINTS TO PONDER

Will SEP be an alternative to NEP or include important features of NEP? What will be the powers of the state when it comes to professional education like B.E., B Tech. which are governed by separate regulatory authorities?

Can State Universities which are autonomous bodies with separate academic councils decide against UGC regulations?

Will having a separate Education Policy or Curriculum system lead to isolation of Tamil Nadu students?

Will SEP accept an academic bank of credits (ABC)? Can the state retain the affiliation system of colleges when the NEP proposes to abolish it in 15 years?

What are the steps to be taken to make Tamil Nadu graduates employable when they pass out of colleges?

V. CONCLUSION

The NEP 2020 aims at making “**India a global knowledge superpower**”. Much of its success will depend on its execution. A panel chaired by former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan had submitted its first draft in 2018 to the government. The government then opened the draft for public feedback. At that time it received stiff opposition from non-Hindi speaking states that saw it as an attempt to impose Hindi on them. The NEP 2020 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.

The NEP 2020 has bravely kept the medium of instruction to the choice of the student. English has become a language of social mobility and becomes a link language to a multilingual India that refuses to be linked under Hindi. 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**. States will have the freedom to choose the language of instruction in the democratic and decentralized process laid out in the National Education Policy, 2020.

These ambiguities do cause anxieties in places like Goa, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka. This may not apply to places where languages have single scripts. But places like Goa where mother has more than one script; does have possibilities of destruction of mother tongue in the scripts of the minorities. In my opinion also, there should be two languages instead of three languages. The first one should be the **mother tongue** or the **local language** and the other should be English.

Although, NEP is largely open, it remains centralized. This can suffocate creativity and local autonomy and will produce mediocrity.

Thus, what is required is a systematic, accountable and transparent approach without piecemeal inputs. This would help to meet the challenges of universal access to quality in education and betterment of our downtrodden still existing in our education system.

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