



NEP-2020: Key Observations and Projections over Teacher Education

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Abstract

A very much revolutionary step towards the education and making Indian students in level with the global platform, the Government of India has appointed a committee to give their dynamic suggestions and recommendations for the implementations, The Committee observed and gave the recommendations for the implementations to the Government. In view of above, this thematic paper discusses the various recommendations of the NEP, the silent features, supportive aspects, drawbacks and the challenges for its implementations. The discussion part of the paper also leads towards the recommendations and changes offered in Teacher Education. It also reflects the present scenario to be updates immediately for the effective implementation of NEP-2020 in Teacher Education areas.

Key Words: NEP, National Educational Policy-2020, Teacher Education

Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 is a policy formulated by the Government of India to promote education amongst India's people. The policy covers elementary education to colleges in both rural and urban India. The government of India has appointed a committee under K. Kasturirangan to prepare a Draft for the new National Education Policy in 2017. All education boards in India like CISCE and CBSE will be converted based on this policy. In 2019, the Ministry of Human Resource Development released a Draft New Education Policy 2020, which was followed by a number of public consultations, drawing inputs from the T.S.R. Subramanian Committee report and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), the K. Kasturirangan Committee has produced the policy document. National Cabinet has approved its updated version in 2020 and certified for its readiness for the implementation. The NEP discusses reducing curriculum content to enhance essential learning, critical thinking and more holistic experiential, discussion-based and analysis-based learning. It also talks about a revision of the curriculum and pedagogical structure from a 10+2 system to a 5+3+3+4 system design in an effort to optimize learning for students based on cognitive development of children. This Policy envisages creation, transmission, use and dissemination of knowledge as a part of this continuum.

Salient features of NEP 2020

- The policy aims to universalize the pre-primary education by 2025 and provide foundational literacy/numeracy for all by 2025.
- It proposes new Curricular and Pedagogical Structure, with 5+3+3+4 design covering the children in the age group 3-18 years. Under this, Pre-Primary & Grades 1-2 is considered as foundational Stage; Grades 3-5 as Preparatory Stage; Grades 6-8 as Middle Stage and Grades 9-12 as Secondary Stage. This is an academic restructuring only; there will be no physical restructuring of schools.
- It aims at equitable & inclusive education for every child in the country, with a special focus on under-represented groups (URGs).
- Universal Access & Retention with 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio for all school education by 2030.
- Children learn languages, most quickly between 2-8 years, and multilingualism has great cognitive benefits for students. Therefore a three-language formula has been proposed.
- It proposes the teaching of other classical languages and literature, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit in schools.
- A new independent State School Regulatory Authority (SSRA) to be created.

- It aims to consolidate 800 universities & 40,000 colleges into around 15,000 large, multidisciplinary institutions.
- The policy proposes three types of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs): Research Universities, Teaching Universities and Autonomous degree-granting colleges.
- It aims to provide autonomy to all higher education institutions. Higher education institutions to be governed by Independent Boards with complete academic and administrative autonomy.
- An autonomous body called the National Research Foundation (NRF) to be set up through an Act of Parliament.
- Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog or the National Education Commission - apex body - to be constituted. It will be chaired by the Prime Minister and will comprise eminent educationists, researchers, Union Ministers, representation of Chief Ministers of States, eminent professionals from various fields.
- MHRD to be re-designated as the Ministry of Education (MoE).
- Increase in public investment by the Central and State Governments to 20% of overall public expenditure over a 10 year period.

Committee Report Summary

- The Committee for National Education Policy submitted its report on May 31, 2019. The Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in June 2017. The report proposes an education policy, which seeks to address the challenges of: (i) access (ii) equity (iii) quality (iv) affordability and (v) accountability faced by the current education system.
- The Policy provides for reforms at all levels of education from school to higher education. It seeks to increase the focus on early childhood care, reform the current exam system, strengthen teacher training, and restructure the education regulatory framework. It also seeks to set up a National Education Commission, increase public investment in education, strengthen the use of technology and increase focus on vocational and adult education, among others.
- Key observations and recommendations of the Policy include following,

School Education

The recommendations for the school level education contains: Early Childhood Care and Education, The Right to Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act), Curriculum framework, School exam reforms, School infrastructure, Teacher management, Regulation of schools.

Higher Education

The higher education area covered the following: Regulatory structure and accreditation, Establishment of new higher educational institutions, Restructuring of higher education institutions, Establishing a National Research Foundation, Moving towards a liberal approach, Professional development of faculty, Optimal learning environment.

Education Governance

NEP advised for Creation of a National Education Commission or Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog and Ministry of Human Resources and Development must be renamed as the Ministry of Education in order to bring focus back on education.

Financing Education

The Policy reaffirmed the commitment of spending 6% of GDP as public investment in education.

Technology in Education

The Technology must be the part of education. National Mission on Education through information and communication technology and National Repository on Educational Data are recommended.

Vocational Education

Various Vocational courses will be designed and the National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education will be affirmed.

Adult Education

For Adult Education Establishment of an autonomous Central Institute of Adult Education which will be included within the proposed school complexes, Courses for youth and adults will be made available at the NIOS, A cadre of adult education instructors, managers, team of one-on-one tutors and National Adult Tutors Programme will be created.

Education and Indian Languages

The Languages Education is a separate part of NEP, which shows: Home language/mother tongue/local language upto Grade 8 will be the medium, Continuation of Three language formula be continued, Learning to other Indian Languages for the National Integration, Establishing the National Institutes for

Pali/Persian/Prakrit Languages, Recruitment in minimum three faculty of Indian languages in Higher education institutes, Scientific and Technical Terminology will be expanded.

Supportive Aspects of National Education Policy-2020

- The school education will cover children of 3-18 years, instead of the present 6-14 years under the RTE Act. It covers three years under early childhood care and education (ECCE) and four years under secondary education. ECCE would facilitate play and discovery-based learning for children of that age group
- Its emphasis on mother tongue-based education and oral language development for critical languages
- The policy focuses on online learning as an alternative to regular classroom interaction between teachers and students. It helps in achieving the twin objectives of cutting costs and increasing enrollment
- It aims to protect and promote our culture through the study of classical languages, mother tongues, and regional languages
- The teacher education system will be transformed, with rigorous preparation through a four-year integrated stage and subject-specific programs offered in multi-disciplinary institutions
- The policy shows the better engagement of the private sector and provisioning for government funding for R&D work through a proposed national research fund
- Professional education will become an integral part of the higher education system

Drawbacks in National Education Policy-2020

- The policy is silent on the Institutions of Eminence and agencies like the Higher Education Funding Agency
- The policy does not address with sufficient clarity curricular, pedagogical and teacher education-related issues that play the teaching and learning of early literacy in many Indian classrooms
- The policy proposes largely oral activities for the pre-primary grades, reading hours for Grades 1-3, with an additional hour for writing starting only in Grades 4 and 5. It contradicts evidence suggesting that young children be taught listening, speaking, reading and writing simultaneously and not sequentially
- It lacks discussion about what it takes to prepare teachers to successfully teach foundational literacy in a multilingual country. Instead, the document recommends recruiting volunteers and community members to support the acquisition of early literacy. Volunteers can be used, but cannot be a primary mechanism to deliver foundational literacy to students.
- It misdiagnoses the causes behind the severe learning crisis - namely poor school and teacher accountability. There is no fundamental reform proposed for revamping the accountability structures for schools. Instead, the NEP provides school management committees (SMCs). SMCs already mandated under the RTE Act are ineffectual.
- With the democratization of knowledge and availability of technology for easy access to information, the policy should have focused more on how to teach and not only on what to teach.
- The National Research Foundation (NRF) is tasked with "permeating the culture of research and innovation" and addressing societal challenges. But, there is no mechanism, such as innovative curricula or extension units, for tier II or tier III institutions to work on local problems. It has no access or accountability to people or their representatives
- The Constitution puts education in the Concurrent List, giving authority and responsibility to both the States and the Centre. However, the policy had robbed the States by creating an excessively centralized structure of authority and vesting overarching powers with the PM-led Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (RSA)
- In promoting the study of regional languages, the importance of English is neglected. Those who are fluent in the English language live in households with three times higher income than those without any knowledge of English. By ignoring this, the NEP has laid out a "language trap", which will create social inequality and impede economic growth due to loss of the demographic dividend
- The report does not emphasize enough the role and importance of state governments in imparting education to the masses

Challenges in implementation

- NEP recommended doubling of public funding to 6% of the GDP and increasing overall public expenditure on education to 20% from the current 10%. This is desirable but does not appear to be feasible in the near future, given that most of the additional funding has to come from the States.
- The report has appealed to philanthropists and companies to route their corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds to supplement government efforts, but it forgets that such funds will not be ideologically neutral.
- Expanding coverage under the RTE Act to include pre-school children is extremely important, but should perhaps be introduced gradually, keeping in mind the quality of infrastructure and teacher vacancies. Amendment of the Act can perhaps wait for a while.
- The idea of setting up the Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog is crucial in order to integrate the approaches and programs of multiple departments. However, bringing medical or agricultural or legal education under one umbrella is likely to be met with stiff opposition.
- Language issues have to be handled sensitively in view of their emotional overtones, as witnessed recently

Projections over the TEIs

Education is a dynamic process. Teacher performance is the most crucial input in the field of education. The education gives a new shape to the individual and the nation as well. Education plays major role in bringing social change, economic and political development of any society. Education helps people to learn right actions at right time. Such an education requires efficient teachers. It is a well-known saying that teacher is the nation builder. A teacher is the central figure in the formal teaching learning process. The future of students depends upon the teachers. The place and importance of teacher in society can never be under estimated. The quality of teacher education programme needs to be up graded. Teacher education has not come up to the requisite standards. Teachers are not able to think critically and solve the issue related to teaching methods, content, organisation etc. Teacher education programme needs a comprehensive reform and restructuring curriculum of teacher-education programme needs to be revised according to changing needs of society.

- Teacher preparation programmes will be rigorous and will take place in vibrant, multidisciplinary higher education institutions. The 4-year integrated stage-specific, subject-specific Bachelor of Education offered at multidisciplinary institutions would be the predominant way of becoming a teacher.
- The 4-year integrated Bachelor of Education programme for teacher preparation will be offered at multi-disciplinary institutions as an undergraduate programme of study, including both disciplinary and teacher preparation courses. This will be a stage-specific, subject-specific programme that will prepare teachers from pre-school to the secondary stage (Class 12) for all subjects including the arts and sports and those with a vocational education or a special education focus.
- The 4-year B.Ed. degree will be on par with other undergraduate degrees and students with a 4-year B.Ed. will be eligible to take up a Master's' degree programme.
- The current two-year B.Ed. programme will continue till 2030. After 2030, only those institutions which offer a 4-year teacher education programme will run the 2-year programme as well. These programmes will be offered to those with a graduate degree.
- No other kind of pre-service teacher preparation programmes will be offered after 2030.
- Teacher education will be offered by multi-disciplinary institutions only. Good pre-service teacher preparation needs expertise across disciplines for rigorous theoretical understanding of educational perspectives, subject and pedagogy along with a strong theory-practice connect -this demands the availability of a range of experts in core areas of education and all other school subjects along with a network of schools.
- Substandard and dysfunctional teacher education institutes will be shutdown.

Present scenario of TEIs

Let us list out various problems faced by teacher education in our country. Faulty Curriculum, Problem of selection process for trainees, Less competent teacher educators, Lack of scientific attitude and use of Technology, Lack of control over teacher education institutions, Problem of Isolation from the university, daily life of the school and among the different training institutes, community and real life, Traditional methods of teaching, Lack of Creativity, Lack in developing Life Skills, Lack of Co-curricular activities, Quality Concern, Globalization and Erosion of Values, Social Issues, Problem of teaching practice, Lack of Supervision, Lack of proper Evaluation, Lack of proper facilities are the major challenges to the teacher education area concerned for the successful implementation.

Apart from that the following classroom challenges are also important to be sorted out at all the levels. Lack of Time for Planning, Lot of Paperwork, Performance Pressure from School Administrators, Balancing Diverse Learning Needs, Handle too many masters, Lack of proper funding, Limitations of standardized Testing, Lack of Parental Support, Changing Educational Trends, Limitations of Disciplining Students, Lack of Self-Time, Teachers Working too many roles at the same time, Teachers being made responsible for more than they should, Applying a prescribed curriculum to all types of students, Inspiring Students to be More Self-Directed, Differentiating and Personalizing Teaching, Getting Students to do Work Outside the Class, Textbook Exposure to learning, Redundant Teaching Techniques, Stagnant Tech Devices.

Suggestions

There are some suggestions here for improving the condition of teacher education which is given as:

- New and innovative techniques can be used for transaction of curriculum. The teacher education programme should be modified so that teachers are equipped for the different roles and functions imposed by new technologies.
- The socio-economic status of the teachers must be raised so as to attract talented people towards the profession.
- Teachers should train about stress management mechanism so that they could help students in managing the stress and sustaining themselves in this time of social isolation, parental pressure and cut throat competition. Teacher education programmes should enable the teachers to develop the relief skills among students.
- Teachers should be able to think critically make right decisions and maintain harmonious relations with others.
- Techniques used in teaching should develop habit of self learning and reduce dependence on teachers. It will help them to reflect on their own and doing something new.

Conclusion

Suggestions of the NEP will play a critical role in the transformation of the Indian education system. It is expected to help India in reaping its demographic dividend. However, the Policy has certain sore points that need to be relooked at for the benefit of pre-service and in-service teachers and students alike.

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