PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

GLIMPSES OF INDIA'S NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY, 2020

Dr. Suresh Chandra Pandey[1], Dr. Vinod Kumar Joshi[2]

[1]Assistant Professor, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Law Institute, Kumaun University Campus, Nainital.

[2]Institute of Professional Studies and Development Research, Kumaun University Campus, Nainital.

Abstract

A new NEP usually comes along every few decades. India has had three to date. The first came in 1968 and the second in 1986, which was revised in 1992. The third is the National Education Policy, 2020.

NEP, 2020 underlines the principle of creating an enabling framework that helps in doing away with "rote-learning" and facilitates acculturation of an inquiry-based, project-led ecosystem of education that not only enhances the learning outcomes but also helps in rendering a more rounded and holistic development of individuals.

The national education policy, 2020 is divided in 4 parts and 27 chapters. Part I deals with the school education i.e.Early Childhood Care and Education. The focus is on the foundation of learning, child care, pedagogy and teachers. Part II discusses about higher education and in this part, focus is on quality learning environment, capacity building, teaching, research, infrastructure, sanitation and vocational education. Part III discusses about professional education and focus is on adult education, Indian languages, Arts and culture and digital equity to minimise the digital divide. And part IV deals with implementation.©

1. The National Education Policy, 2020

The national education policy, 2020 is divided in 4 parts and 27 chapters. Part I deals with the school education i.e. Early Childhood Care and Education. The focus is onthe foundation of learning, child care, pedagogy and teachers. Part II discusses about higher education and in thispart, focus is on quality learning environment, capacity building, teaching, research,

infrastructure, sanitation and vocational education. Part III discusses about professional education and focus is on adult education, Indian languages, Arts and culture and digital equity to minimise the digital divide. And part IV deals with implementation. Implementation of any law and policy is the most important part.

2. Part I. School Education

Over 85% of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in the early years to ensure healthy brain development and growth. Currently, children in the age group of 3-6 are not covered in the 10+2 structure as Class 1 begins at age 6. The new 5+3+3+4 structure is a strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from age.ECCE ideally consists of flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity- based, and inquiry-based learning, comprising of alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colours, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles and logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting and other visual art, craft, drama and puppetry, music and movement. It also includes a focus on developing social capacities, sensitivity, good behaviour, courtesy, ethics, personal and public cleanliness, teamwork, and cooperation. The overall aim of ECCE will be to attain optimal outcomes in the domains of: physical and motor development, cognitive development, socio-emotional-ethical development, cultural/artistic development, and the development of communication and early language, literacy, and numeracy.

NCERT will develop a National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) for children up to the age of 8 in two parts, namely, a subframework for 0-3 year-olds, and a sub- framework for 3-8 year-olds, aligned with the above guidelines, the latest research on ECCE, and national and international best practices. In particular, India's numerous rich local traditions developed over millennia in ECCE involving art, stories, poetry, games, songs, and more, will also be suitably incorporated. The framework will serve as a guide both for parents and for early childhood care and education institutions.The overarching goal will be to ensure universal access to high-quality ECCE across the country in a phased manner. Special attention and priority will be given to districts and locations that are particularly socio-economically disadvantaged. ECCE shall be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of early-childhood education institutions consisting of (a) stand- alone Anganwadis; (b) Anganwadis co-located with primary schools; (c) pre-primary schools/sections covering at least age 5 to 6 years co-located with existing primary schools; and (d) stand-alone pre-schools - all of which would recruit workers/teachers specially trained in the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE.

For universal access to ECCE, Anganwadi Centres will be strengthened with high-quality infrastructure, play equipment, and well-trained Anganwadi workers/ teachers. Every Anganwadi will have a well-ventilated, well-designed, child- friendly and well-constructed building with an enriched learning environment. Children in Anganwadi Centres shall take activity-filled tours - and meet the teachers and students of their local primary schools, in order to make the transition from Anganwadi Centres to primary schools a smooth one. Anganwadis shall be fully integrated into school complexes/clusters, and Anganwadi6/29/2021 Early Childhood Care and Education: The Foundation of Learning (NEP 2020) https://www.shaanfoundation.org/blog/early-childhood-care-and-education-the-foundation-of-learning-nep-2020 4/5 children, parents, and teachers will be invited to attend and participate in school/school complex programmes and vice versa.

It is envisaged that prior to the age of 5 every child will move to a "Preparatory Class" or "Balavatika" (that is, before Class 1), which has an ECCE-qualified teacher. The Preparatory Class's learning shall be based primarily on play-based learning with a focus on developing

cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities and early literacy and numeracy. The mid-day meal programme shall also be extended to the Preparatory Classes in primary schools. Health check-ups and growth monitoring available in the Anganwadi system shall also be made available to Preparatory Class students of Anganwadi and primary schools. ECCE will also be introduced in Ashramshalas in tribal-dominated areas and all formats of alternative schooling in a phased manner. The process for integration and implementation of ECCE in Ashramshalas and alternative schooling will be similar to that detailed above.

The responsibility for ECCE curriculum and pedagogy will lie with MHRD to ensure its continuity from pre-primary school through primary school, and to ensure due attention to the foundational aspects of education. The planning and implementation of early childhood care and education curriculum will be carried out jointly by the Ministries of HRD, Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW), and Tribal Affairs. A special joint task force will be constituted for continuous guidance of the smooth integration of early childhood care and education into school education.

3. Part II. Higher Education

NEP 2020 was a welcoming change and fresh news amid all the negativities surrounding the world in 2020. The announcement of NEP 2020 was purely unanticipated by many. The changes that NEP 2020 has suggested were something that many educationists never saw coming. The education policy has impacted school and college education equally, and this article will focus on NEP 2020 and its impact on Higher Education mainly. The effects will be surreal. Here are the top four major points that stand out with great level change for higher education:

The most significant highlight of NEP 2020 is the proposal to set up the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), a single overarching umbrella body for higher education, excluding medical and legal education. HECI has four independent verticals - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulation, General Education Council (GEC) for standard-setting, Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding, and National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation. In a country, to have uniformity in education standards, a single umbrella body was always a requirement. Multiple independent governing bodies led to many standardization issues across institutions, and along with that, any improvement plan to be implemented in this higher education domain took years. If the proposed plan is implemented, uniformity and coordination for all institutions in this country will be much easier. Process changes will be easily implemented and effective too.

The second highlight of the proposal is to introduce a single university entrance exam conducted by the National Testing Agency. Earlier, to seek admission across various universities, a student had to go through the burden of multiple examinations plus the varied difficulty level of question papers across many central universities. If this plan is implemented, a student can give one entrance exam and get saved from the burden of many. At the same time, the question paper's level will be standardized, error-free as NTA conducts it, and the admission process will be streamlined.

The policy also allows universities to set up offshore campuses as well as many foreign universities can now set up institutes in India. This move is welcoming indeed. It will lead to competition, talent flow, and key practices from the outside to India, which will ultimately lead to a great deal of improvement in the country's education standards. It will also provide real exposure to children, and probably there would come a day where students can afford global education in India, instead of spending lakhs in another country.The focus on having multi-disciplinary colleges in every district by 2030 is a promising idea as well. It will renew the countries' focus on arts, humanities, and a multi-disciplinary form of education to ensure

that our students are skilled well for the career ahead. Remote learning of concepts has kept our students very far behind in terms of skills so far. With this policy, I can foresee Gross Enrollment Ratio rising for the country as well as multiple entry and exit options at the undergraduate level have been proposed to be allowed. The academic bank of credit will help store credits, and the concept of credits will finally get more weightage in India. However, the students today will have the freedom to experiment with what they have to learn and have the flexibility in it.In the end, it is important to point out that these policies have all been proposed, and there is a long way to go before the implementation rolls out. The policies and the suggested changes look great on paper, and they would change the face of the Indian education system in the years to come, but that would depend on how they are approached and implemented.

4. Part III. Other Key Areas of Focus

Preparation of professionals must involve an education in the ethic and importance of public purpose, an education in the discipline, and an education for practice. It must centrally involve critical and interdisciplinary thinking, discussion, debate, research, and innovation. For this to be achieved, professional education should not take place in the isolation of one's specialty. Professional education becomes an integral part of the overall higher education system.

Stand-alone agricultural universities, legal universities, health science universities, technical universities, and stand-alone institutions in other fields, shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions offering holistic and multidisciplinary education. All institutions offering either professional or general education will aim to organically evolve into institutions/clusters offering both seamlessly, and in an integrated manner by 2030. Legal education needs to be competitive globally, adopting best practices and embracing new technologies for wider access to and timely delivery of justice. At the same time, it must be informed and illuminated with Constitutional values of Justice – Social, Economic, and Political – and directed towards national reconstruction through instrumentation of democracy, rule of law, and human rights.

The curricula for legal studies must reflect socio-cultural contexts along with, in an evidence-based manner, the history of legal thinking, principles of justice, the practice of jurisprudence, and other related content appropriately and adequately. State institutions offering law education must consider offering bilingual education for future lawyers and judges – in English and in the language of the State in which the institution is situated.

It is important to document the evolution of India as a country, and it is equally important to to pass on the knowledge to the next generation in order to keep the civilization alive. India, being one of the most diverse entities, carries a world within itself. This is the most important component of India's unity and strength. The edifice of India's integrity rests on the bulwark of its refined erudition. This progressive intellectualism stems from its cultural moorings and civilizational roots. There is so much to study, explore and admire about the Indian Civilization that it would take an entire generation of researchers and committed individualsto prepare a well positioned disquisition about it. In this pursuit, it becomes all the more important to delve deeper into the Indian languages, art and culture, scholastically.

India has been a blue-ribbon education provider in the past. It was home to the most advanced educational institutions like Nalanda, Takshila, Vikramshila, etc. These institutions were not just mediums providing education, they were the embodiment of Indian ethos and philosophy. These places were the abode of knowledge and dealt in formalised methods of Buddhist teaching. They were residential universities and did not taper around the mundane educational curriculum. In fact, these centers nurtured the inner capabilities of the students

and developed a way of life among them. The National Education Policy as the first such document of the 21st century aims to reconfigure the education system of India on this framework. With its emphasis on the rejuvenation of Indian languages, arts and culture, the NEP 2020 is a propitious policy structure.

Languages are a medium of articulation for any culture. They mirror our lifestyle and traditions. It would be wise on our part to be thoughtful in discerning the importance of languages in the contrivance of our fraternal spirit that happened to shape our society since times immemorial. A plethora of measures have been taken in this direction. The promotion of multilingualism is a welcome step that would be concertized by the three language formula. The government reiterates the vitality of indigenous languages by prescribing mother tongue as the medium of instruction wherever possible without making it mandatory for any particular language to be employed across the country. It is true that Indian languages have undergone the perils of extinction. We have lost as many as 200 languages owing to our constant adherence to majoritarianism. As much as the Indian languages beautify our discourse and add to our cultural heritage, they are also the indispensable threads of the fabric that constitutes the Indian identity at large. In order to preserve and procreate the Indian identity, it is of primary importance to preserve the Indian languages. The provision of prescribing the mother tongue as the medium of education runs contrary to the one-size-fits-all system of the erstwhile frameworks. For a country as dynamic as India, we need to construct on our particularities that would eventually lead to our individual development.

New circumstances and realities require new initiatives. The recent rise in epidemics and pandemics necessitates that we are ready with alternative modes of quality education whenever and wherever traditional and in-person modes of education are not possible. In this regard, the National Education Policy 2020 recognizes the importance of leveraging the advantages of technology while acknowledging its potential risks and dangers. It calls for carefully designed and appropriately scaled pilot studies to determine how the benefits of online/digital education can be reaped while addressing or mitigating the downsides. In the meantime, the existing digital platforms and ongoing ICT-based educational initiatives must be optimized and expanded to meet the current and future challenges in providing quality education for all.

However, the benefits of online/digital education cannot be leveraged unless the digital divide is eliminated through concerted efforts, such as the Digital India campaign and the availability of affordable computing devices. It is important that the use of technology for online and digital education adequately addresses concerns of equity.

Teachers require suitable training and development to be effective online educators. It cannot be assumed that a good teacher in a traditional classroom will automatically be a good teacher in an online classroom. Aside from changes required in pedagogy, online assessments also require a different approach. There are numerous challenges to conducting online examinations at scale, including limitations on the types of questions that can be asked in an online environment, handling network and power disruptions, and preventing unethical practices. Certain types of courses/subjects, such as performing arts and science practical have limitations in the online/digital education space, which can be overcome to a partial extent with innovative measures. Further, unless online education is blended with experiential and activity-based learning, it will tend to become a screen-based education with limited focus on the social, affective and psychomotor dimensions of learning.Given the emergence of digital technologies and the emerging importance of leveraging technology for teaching-learning at all levels from school to higher education, this Policy recommends the following key initiatives:

(a) Pilot studies for online education: Appropriate agencies, such as the NETF, CIET, NIOS, IGNOU, IITs, NITs, etc. will be identified to conduct a series of pilot studies, in parallel, to evaluate the benefits of integrating education with online education while mitigating the downsides and also to study related areas, such as, student device addiction, most preferred formats of e-content, etc. The results of these pilot studies will be publicly communicated and used for continuous improvement. (b) Digital infrastructure: There is a need to invest in creation of open, interoperable, evolvable, public digital infrastructure in the education sector that can be used by multiple platforms and point solutions, to solve for India's scale, diversity, complexity and device penetration. This will ensure that the technology-based solutions do not become outdated with the rapid advances in technology. (c) Online teaching platform and tools: Appropriate existing e-learning platforms such as SWAYAM, DIKSHA, will be extended to provide teachers with a structured, user-friendly, rich set of assistive tools for monitoring progress of learners. Tools, such as, two-way video and two way audio interface for holding online classes are a real necessity as the present pandemic has shown.

(d) Content creation, digital repository, and dissemination: A digital repository of content including creation of coursework, Learning Games & Simulations, Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality will be developed, with a clear public system for ratings by users on effectiveness and quality. For fun based learning student-appropriate tools like apps, gamification of Indian art and culture, in multiple languages, with clear operating instructions, will also be created. A reliable backup mechanism for disseminating e-content to students will be provided.

(e) Addressing the digital divide: Given the fact that there still persists a substantial section of the population whose digital access is highly limited, the existing mass media, such as television, radio, and community radio will be extensively used for telecast and broadcasts. Such educational programmes will be made available 24/7 in different languages to cater to the varying needs of the student population. A special focus on content in all Indian languages will be emphasized and required; digital content will need to reach the teachers and students in their medium of instruction as far as possible.

(f) Virtual Labs: Existing e-learning platforms such as DIKSHA, SWAYAM and SWAYAMPRABHA will also be leveraged for creating virtual labs so that all students have equal access to quality practical and hands-on experiment-based learning experiences. The possibility of providing adequate access to SEDG students and teachers through suitable digital devices, such as tablets with pre-loaded content, will be considered and developed.

(g) Training and incentives for teachers: Teachers will undergo rigorous training in learner-centric pedagogy and on how to become high-quality online content creators themselves using online teaching platforms and tools. There will be emphasis on the teacher's role in facilitating active student engagement with the content and with each other.

(h) Online assessment and examinations: Appropriate bodies, such as the proposed National Assessment Centre or PARAKH, School Boards, NTA, and other identified bodies will design and implement assessment frameworks encompassing design of competencies, portfolio, rubrics, standardized assessments, and assessment analytics. Studies will be undertaken to pilot new ways of assessment using education technologies focusing on 21st century skills.

(i) Blended models of learning: While promoting digital learning and education, the importance of face-to-face in-person learning is fully recognized. Accordingly, different effective models of blended learning will be identified for appropriate replication for different subjects.

(j) Laying down standards: As research on online/digital education emerges, NETF and other appropriate bodies shall set up standards of content, technology, and pedagogy for online/digital teaching-learning. These standards will help to formulate guidelines for e-learning by States, Boards, schools and school complexes, HEIs, etc.

5. Part IV. Making it Happen or Implementation

Education must not only develop the cognitive skills in learners - both 'foundational skills' of literacy and numeracy and the 'high-order' cognitive skills like critical thinking - but also 'social and emotional skills' known as the soft skills like empathy, grit, perseverance, leadership and teamwork. The NEP calls for such value-based learning along with significant curriculum and pedagogical changes. Implementing such bold objectives will require training teachers, educators and official staff appropriately along with preparing a pool of excellent, motivating guides. Learning has to be an enjoyable and engaging task rather than an arduous exercise which ultimately churns out unemployable youth. The policy will have to design a learning ecosystem which takes into account the geographical and cultural diversity of our country as well as the varied learning pace of each student. We need to hire the very best and brightest to enter the teaching profession at all levels. Also, teachers need to be reinstated as the most respected and essential members of our society, as they are the ones who truly shape our next generation of citizens. Work also needs to be done on removing personal and professional barriers of working in remote, inaccessible locations which is crucial for preparing this workforce and also for making the NEP successful.

Though flexibility in the higher education model through the concept of multiple exits is an important step for reducing the number of dropouts, many would still raise a question about the value of such certifications and diplomas. The Indian psyche closely associates jobs with the degrees acquired. Hence, to implement the new system, we first have to dismantle the archaic thinking that only with a degree can one successfully secure a job. This is a dangerous paradigm which undermines and discourages other innate talents of an individual. The policy seeks to establish multi-disciplinary institutions for higher education replacing the single-disciplinary ones. The road to attain this goal has been paved with good intentions. However, it will be a feat to achieve given the limited resources at hand. It requires private institutions to offer more scholarships to make admissions possible for students from low-income strata as well, but NEP fails to discuss how this can be achieved.

This indicates a need for greater public funding in higher education, which in reality does not sit well within the current scenario. Also, we require internet penetration in remote areas because e-learning is the way forward, as witnessed during the pandemic. Digital infrastructure for this purpose will include digital classrooms, expertise-driven online teaching models, AR/VR technologies to overcome gaps in physical teaching and lab infrastructure, uniform assessment schemes across schools, career counselling sessions and teacher training to become adept at new age technologies.

6. Conclusion

The new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a revolutionary policy. The object of this policy is to make the education system holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary and aligned with the needs of the 21st century. The policy seems to be ideal in many ways, but it is the implementation where the key to success lies.

The reform of National Education Policy was a long-awaited decision. It has filled the students, teachers and parents with new hope and aspirations. It is praiseworthy that the new education policy is introduced according to the much needed 21st century standards and

socio-economic changes. There are high hopes that it will be implemented as it is promised and India will rise as a superpower in education sector in the coming years.

References

1. https://www.shaanfou/ndation.org/blog/early-childhood-care-and-education-the-foundation-of-learning-nep-2020 3/5 accessed on 25/05/2021.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Id.*
4. https://www.education.gov.in/shikshakparv/docs/background_note_ECCE.pdfretrieved on 27-05-2021.
5. bweducation.businessworld.in/article/NEP-2020-Impact-On-Higher-Education-/07-08-2020-305999/ accessed on 21/05/2021.
6. https://www.lawctopus.com/nep-2020-for-legal-education/ accessed on 22/05/2021.
7. https://www.academics4nation.org/post/nep-2020-makes-room-for-indian-languages-arts-culture-in-education-curriculumaccessed on 02/06/2021.
8. https://mgmu.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/NEP-Indias-New-Education-Policy_2020-final.pdfaccessed on 05/06/2021.
9. https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/featurephilia/story/how-to-implement-national-education-policy-2020-1751335-2020-12-20accessed on 15/06/2021.