



NEP 2020 - A Realistic Approach to School Education

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Article Info

Volume 3 Issue 5

Page Number : 120-122

Publication Issue :

September-October-2020

Article History

Accepted : 15 Oct 2020

Published : 26 Oct 2020

Abstract - Education is an essential and indispensable element for the all-round development of any society and country and a comprehensive national education policy is formulated by a nation to fulfil this requirement. The New National Education Policy, 2020, is an important initiative in this direction. It extends the Right to Education eligibility window further from 6-14 years to 3-18 years. With a goal of having 100 percent of children 'school-ready' by 2030, the policy pushes for universalisation of ECCE. Thus, providing quality education and creating lifelong learning opportunities for all, leading to full and productive employment and decent work as enlisted in United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030, forms the thrust of NEP 2020. While reviewing this document, we find that it is based on the ground reality of the country's education scenario that puts more emphasis on the creativity and innovation as well as personality development of the students, rather than expecting them to score high percentage and memorizing the content without getting a basic grasp of concepts. NEP 2020 is said to transform the existing education system by 2030, while creating little or zero impact on the current school-going children.

Keywords - Nep, Realistic, Approach, School, Education.

The National Education Policy (NEP), announced by the Ministry of Education on July 29, 2020, had a much-designed goal of transforming the prevailing education system to equip institutions and learners to meet the needs of 21st century India. In the past few years, we have seen tremendous efforts from the ministry and stakeholders - the various boards and institutions working under them - to spread the message of NEP effectively. It has focused on bridging the gap and integrating it into the pedagogical system. Education is an essential and indispensable element for the all-round development of any society and country and a comprehensive national education policy is formulated by a nation to fulfil this requirement. The New National Education Policy, 2020, is an important initiative in this direction.

Change is the only constant thing in this world. As our young nation strides towards development and advancing our capabilities globally, it becomes imperative on our part to take inspiration from our ancient heritage and cultural values to transform the existing status quo with a modern and futuristic approach. This New Education Policy is a much-needed guiding light to nurture our demographic potential. The return of the Ministry of Human Resource Development to its earlier name, Ministry of Education, has provided a

more focused and fresh perspective to the education ecosystem. NEP 2020 has been well received and the then Education Minister Dr Ramesh Portrayal Nishank and his dedicated teams left no stone unturned to ensure its implementation in letter and spirit.

Realizing the importance of formative years, NEP 2020 advocates for 5+3+3+4 model for school education starting at age 3, recognising the primacy of the formative years from ages 3 to 8 in shaping the child's future. It extends the Right to Education eligibility window further from 6-14 years to 3-18 years. With a goal of having 100 percent of children 'school-ready' by 2030, the policy pushes for universalisation of ECCE. It further focuses on five pillars: Affordability, Accessibility, Quality, Equity, and Accountability – to ensure continual learning. It has been crafted consistent with the needs of the citizens as a demand for knowledge in society and economy called for a need to acquire new skills on a regular basis. Thus, providing quality education and creating lifelong learning opportunities for all, leading to full and productive employment and decent work as enlisted in United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030, forms the thrust of NEP 2020. In 2021, we have already shifted assessment gears to a diagnostic approach — from content-based assessment to competency-based, making Board exams “easier” in the sense that they test primarily core competencies rather than content memorisation. With the ongoing emphasis on transforming assessment for optimising learning and the holistic development of all students in tandem with the environment, the focus is on regular, formative and competency-based learning and development; focus on “assessment for learning”, testing of higher-order skills (analysis, critical thinking and conceptual clarity, etc.), multimodal assessment through multiple-choice questions to reach the top bracket of Bloom's Taxonomy, learning through reasoning, storytelling, podcasts, puppetry, etc. Report cards are becoming 360-degree holistic progress cards that will give comprehensive feedback on skills and capabilities, substituting the age-old system of marks.

NEP 2020's vision and commitment towards research and development of science & technology is reflected in terms of the provisions of the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF). The NEP suggests various changes, starting with the re-designation of the Ministry of Human Resource Development ("MHRD") as the Ministry of Education ("MoE"). The NRF and NETF will not only play important role in facilitating to carry out problem-solving research and developing digital resources of study materials but also look into innovative ways in which technology can be leveraged for the benefit of students and researchers.

The idea of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in primary school is not new to the Indian education system. Article 350A of the Constitution states that every state and local authority should endeavour to provide “adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups”. The report of the Kothari Commission on education and national development (1964-66) suggested that in tribal areas, for the first two years of school, the medium of instruction and books should be in the local tribal language. The Right to Education Act, 2009, also said that as far as possible, the medium of instruction in school should be the child's mother tongue. The regional language should be taught separately and should become the medium of instruction by the third year. However, some of the proposals require legal changes.

While reviewing this document, we find that it is based on the ground reality of the country's education scenario that puts more emphasis on the creativity and innovation as well as personality development of the students, rather than expecting them to score high percentage and memorizing the content without getting a

basic grasp of concepts. Investment in infrastructure such as play equipment and child-friendly buildings, as well as continuous professional development (CPD) of ECCE teachers and *Anganwadi* workers through a six-month certification programme, including some online components are some other aspects which can give new momentum to our education system.

In the final analysis, we can say that The National Education Policy -- 2020 aims at making the education system holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, aligned to the needs and challenges of the 21st century and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The intent of policy seems to be ideal in many ways but it is the implementation where lies the key to success. India is the country with the youngest population and India's future will depend on providing high-quality educational opportunities to these youth. It is indeed commendable that the NEP policy has laid focus on universalization of ECCE, while addressing some of the crucial developmental needs of the children; but the lack of a clear roadmap for implementation, silence about the budget allotments and political vagaries are a few areas that mainly makes us concerned about the successful implementation of NEP. Moreover, NEP 2020 is said to transform the existing education system by 2030, while creating little or zero impact on the current school-going children. This means the reforms or changes proposed by this policy is not expected to be included in the 'Early Childhood Care and Education' (ECCE) by the next decade, thus creating another generation of passive learners and knowledge muggers.

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