



NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 – AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract:

Education must build character, enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring, while at the same time prepare them for gainful, fulfilling employment. The gap between the current state of learning outcomes and what is required must be bridged through undertaking major reforms that bring the highest quality, equity, and integrity into the system, from early childhood care and education through higher education.

This National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, building upon India’s traditions and value systems. The National Education Policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities - both the ‘foundational capacities’ of literacy and numeracy and ‘higher-order’ cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions

The fundamental principles that will guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions within.

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Introduction:

The Indian Education System is one of the largest in the world with more than 15 lakh schools, 96 lakh teachers, and 26 crore students of pre-primary to higher secondary levels from varied socio-economic backgrounds. A uniform system of performance monitoring including indicators on learning outcomes, access outcomes, infrastructure outcomes, and governance process-related indicators was developed and finalized after further consultation with the education departments of the States/UTs.

The implementation of previous policies on education has focused largely on issues of access and equity. The unfinished agenda of the National Policy on Education 1986, modified in 1992 (NPE 1986/92), is appropriately dealt with in this Policy. A major development since the last Policy of 1986/92 has been the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 which laid down legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education. National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. This Policy proposes the revision and

revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education.

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation. Universal high-quality education is the best way forward for developing and maximizing our country's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the society, the country, and the world. India will have the highest population of young people in the world over the next decade, and our ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them will determine the future of our country. Education thus, must move towards less content, and more towards learning about how to think critically and solve problems, how to be creative and multidisciplinary, and how to innovate, adapt, and absorb new material in novel and changing fields. Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-center, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable.

The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge landscape. With various dramatic scientific and technological advances, such as the rise of big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, many unskilled jobs worldwide may be taken over by machines, while the need for a skilled workforce, particularly involving mathematics, computer science, and data science, in conjunction with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, will be increasingly in greater demand. With climate change, increasing pollution, and depleting natural resources, there will be a sizeable shift in how we meet the world's energy, water, food, and sanitation needs, again resulting in the need for new skilled labour, particularly in biology, chemistry, physics, agriculture, climate science, and social science.

The teacher must be at the Centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system. The new education policy must help re-establish teachers, at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly shape our next generation of citizens. It must do everything to empower teachers and help them to do their job as effectively as possible. The new education policy must help recruit the very best and brightest to enter the teaching profession at all levels, by ensuring livelihood, respect, dignity, and autonomy, while also instilling in the system basic methods of quality control and accountability. The new education policy must provide to all students, irrespective of their place of residence, a quality education system, with particular focus on historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. Education is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. Initiatives must be in place to ensure that all students from such groups, despite inherent obstacles, are provided various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system.

Teachers truly shape the future of our children - and, therefore, the future of our nation. It is because of this noblest role that the teacher in India was the most respected member of society. Only the very best and most learned became teachers. Society gave teachers, or gurus, what they needed to pass on their knowledge, skills,



and ethics optimally to students. The quality of teacher education, recruitment, deployment, service conditions, and empowerment of teachers is not where it should be, and consequently the quality and motivation of teachers does not reach the desired standards. The high respect for teachers and the high status of the teaching profession must be restored so as to inspire the best to enter the teaching profession. The motivation and empowerment of teachers is required to ensure the best possible future for our children and our nation.

While students must have a large amount of flexibility in choosing their individual curricula, certain subjects, skills, and capacities should be learned by all students to become good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings in today's rapidly changing world. In addition to proficiency in languages, these skills include: scientific temper and evidence-based thinking; creativity and innovativeness; sense of aesthetics and art; oral and written communication; health and nutrition; physical education, fitness, wellness, and sports; collaboration and teamwork; problem solving and logical reasoning; vocational exposure and skills; digital literacy, coding, and computational thinking; ethical and moral reasoning; knowledge and practice of human and Constitutional values; gender sensitivity; Fundamental Duties; citizenship skills and values; knowledge of India; environmental awareness including water and resource conservation, sanitation and hygiene; and current affairs and knowledge of critical issues facing local communities, States, the country, and the world.

Every student in the country will participate in a fun project/activity on 'The Languages of India', sometime in Grades 6-8, such as, under the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' initiative. In this project/activity, students will learn about the remarkable unity of most of the major Indian languages, starting with their common phonetic and scientifically-arranged alphabets and scripts, their common grammatical structures, their origins and sources of vocabularies from Sanskrit and other classical languages, as well as their rich inter-influences and differences. They will also learn what geographical areas speak which languages, get a sense of the nature and structure of tribal languages, and learn to say commonly spoken phrases and sentences in every major language of India and also learn a bit about the rich and uplifting literature of each (through suitable translations as necessary). Such an activity would give them both a sense of the unity and the beautiful cultural heritage and diversity of India and would be a wonderful icebreaker their whole lives as they meet people from other parts of India. This project/activity would be a joyful activity and would not involve any form of assessment.

Fundamental Principles:

The fundamental principles that will guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions within it are:

- Recognizing, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres.
- According the highest priority to achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by all students by Grade 3.
- Flexibility, so that learners have the ability to choose their learning trajectories and programmes, and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests.

- No hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc. in order to eliminate harmful hierarchies among, and silos between different areas of learning.
- Multidisciplinary and a holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world in order to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge.
- Emphasis on conceptual understanding rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams.
- Creativity and critical thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation.
- Ethics and human & Constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice.
- Promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning.
- Life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience.
- Focus on regular formative assessment for learning rather than the summative assessment that encourages today's 'coaching culture'
- Extensive use of technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for Divyang students, and educational planning and management.
- Respect for diversity and respect for the local context in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject.
- Full equity and inclusion as the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system.
- Synergy in curriculum across all levels of education from early childhood care and education to school education to higher education.
- Teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process – their recruitment, continuous professional development, positive working environments and service conditions.
- A 'light but tight' regulatory framework to ensure integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system through audit and public disclosure while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment.
- Outstanding research as a requisite for outstanding education and development.
- Continuous review of progress based on sustained research and regular assessment by educational experts a rootedness and pride in India, and its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions.
- Education is a public service; access to quality education must be considered a basic right of every child.
- Substantial investment in a strong, vibrant public education system as well as the encouragement and facilitation of true philanthropic private and community participation.

Vision National Education Policy 2020: This National Education Policy envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and



vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The Policy envisages that the curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must develop among the students a deep sense of respect towards the Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values, bonding with one's country, and a conscious awareness of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world. The vision of the Policy is to instill among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen.

“Knowledge of India” will include knowledge from ancient India and its contributions to modern India and its successes and challenges, and a clear sense of India's future aspirations with regard to education, health, environment, etc. These elements will be incorporated in an accurate and scientific manner throughout the school curriculum wherever relevant; in particular, Indian Knowledge Systems, including tribal knowledge and indigenous and traditional ways of learning, will be covered and included in mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, yoga, architecture, medicine, agriculture, engineering, linguistics, literature, sports, games, as well as in governance, polity, conservation. Specific courses in tribal ethno-medicinal practices, forest management, traditional (organic) crop cultivation, natural farming, etc. will also be made available. An engaging course on Indian Knowledge Systems will also be available to students in secondary school as an elective. Competitions may be held in schools for learning various topics and subjects through fun and indigenous games. Video documentaries on inspirational luminaries of India, ancient and modern, in science and beyond, will be shown at appropriate points throughout the school curriculum. Students will be encouraged to visit different States as part of cultural exchange programmes.

Higher Education: Increase GER in higher education to reach at least 50% by 2035. The aim will be to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. **Holistic Multidisciplinary Education** The policy envisages a broad-based multi-disciplinary holistic education at the undergraduate level for integrated, rigorous exposure to science, arts, humanities, mathematics and professional fields having imaginative and flexible curricular structures, creative combinations of study, integration of vocational education and multiple entry/exit points. A holistic and multidisciplinary education will help develop well-rounded individuals who possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication, discussion and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. Such a holistic education shall be, in the long term, the approach of all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines. Teacher education is vital in creating a pool of schoolteachers that will shape the next generation. Teacher preparation is an activity that requires multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge, formation of dispositions and values, and development of practice under the best mentors. Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions including tribal traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest advances in education and



pedagogy. The undergraduate degree will be of either 3 or 4-year duration, with multiple exit options within this period, with appropriate certifications- a certificate after completing 1 year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas, or a diploma after 2 years of study, or a Bachelor's degree after a 3-year programme. The 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme shall be the preferred option since it allows the opportunity to experience the full range of holistic and multidisciplinary education in addition to a focus on the chosen major and minors as per the choices of the student. An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) shall be established which would digitally store the academic credits earned from various recognized HEIs so that the degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into account credits earned. Model public universities for holistic and multidisciplinary education, Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) will be set up and will aim to attain the highest standards for multidisciplinary education across India. A number of initiatives will be taken to ensure optimal learning environments are created that are engaging and supportive, and enable all students to succeed. All institutions and faculty will have the autonomy to innovate on matters of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment within a broad framework of higher education qualifications that ensures consistency across institutions and programmes and across the ODL, online, and the traditional 'in-class' modes. HEIs shall move to a criterion-based grading system that assesses student achievement based on the learning goals for each programme, and also move away from high-stakes examinations towards more continuous and comprehensive evaluation. Universities and colleges will set up high-quality support centers and will be given adequate funds and academic resources to encourage and support students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Professional academic and career counselling will be available to all students, as well as counsellors to ensure physical, psychological and emotional well-being.

Teacher Education: The 4-year integrated stage-specific, subject-specific Bachelor of Education offered at multidisciplinary institutions would be the way forward. A new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021, will be formulated by the NCTE in consultation with NCERT. By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree that teaches a range of knowledge content and pedagogy and includes strong practicum training in the form of student-teaching at local schools. Stringent action will be taken against substandard stand-alone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs)

Conclusion: India is a treasure trove of culture, developed over thousands of years and manifested in the form of arts, works of literature, customs, traditions, linguistic expressions, artefacts, heritage sites, and more. Crores of people from around the world partake in, enjoy, and benefit from this cultural wealth daily, in the form of visiting India for tourism, experiencing Indian hospitality, purchasing India's handicrafts and handmade textiles, reading the classical literature of India, practicing yoga and meditation, being inspired by Indian philosophy, participating in India's unique festivals, appreciating India's diverse music and art, and watching Indian films, amongst many other aspects. It is this cultural and natural wealth that truly makes India, "Incredible India", as per India's tourism slogan. The preservation and promotion of India's cultural wealth must be considered a high priority for the country, as it is truly important for the nation's identity as well as for its economy

India will be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs thereby helping to restore its role as a Vishwa Guru. An International Students Office at each HEI hosting foreign students will be set up to coordinate all matters relating to welcoming and supporting students arriving from abroad. Research/teaching collaborations and faculty/student exchanges with high-quality foreign institutions will be facilitated, and relevant mutually beneficial MOUs with foreign countries will be signed. High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and similarly, selected universities e.g., those from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India. Effective learning requires a comprehensive approach that involves appropriate curriculum, engaging pedagogy, continuous formative assessment, and adequate student support. The curriculum must be interesting and relevant, and updated regularly to align with the latest knowledge requirements and to meet specified learning outcomes. High-quality pedagogy is then necessary to successfully impart the curricular material to students; pedagogical practices determine the learning experiences that are provided to students, thus directly influencing learning outcomes. The assessment methods must be scientific, designed to continuously improve learning and test the application of knowledge. Last but not least, the development of capacities that promote student wellness such as fitness, good health, psycho-social well-being, and sound ethical grounding are also critical for high-quality learning. Thus, curriculum, pedagogy, continuous assessment, and student support are the cornerstones for quality learning. Along with providing suitable resources and infrastructure, such as quality libraries, classrooms, labs, technology, sports/recreation areas, student discussion spaces, and dining areas, a number of initiatives will be required to ensure that learning environments are engaging and supportive, and enable all students to succeed.

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