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**THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2020 -
A COMPARATIVE, ANALYTICAL AND
CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE NEW
POLICY WHICH IS READY TO MAKES WAY
INTO THE INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATION is a process which involves facilitating learning or the procurement of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs etc. The main purpose of this article is to create awareness about the framework of the New Education Policy, 2020 in India. It further describes the meaning of education policy and its' implementation, But our objective is to, present and evaluate with a small area of suggestions/ solutions that can define and shape the NEP 2020. In order to perceive and understand the NEP, we have briefly mentioned a few elements which might bring in prospective changes to the country such as relaxed linguistic barrier, Vocational Education and Digitalization. Apart from the above-mentioned elements, there are certain other fundamental modifications which should be given paramount importance in the near future like the multiple entry/ exit points for the students, single regulator for colleges, a makeover of report cards and revamped board exams and finally, the fee structure of the education system. Thus, our approach towards the NEP is predominantly to uplift the quality of education and bring about improvements with the added elements for the betterment of the nation.

KEYWORDS:

- U.N.E.S.C.O
- Article 21A of the Indian Constitution
- Relaxed Linguistic Barrier
- Vocational Education
- Digitalization
- Multiple entry/ exit points
- Single regulator
- Makeover of report cards and re-vamped board exams
- Improvisation of teaching ability
- Promotion of Indigenous Linguistic, cultural and Art
- Fees

INTRODUCTION

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” Education since the beginning of time has been and will be the only way we can continue to exist, evolve and build ourselves to be the better version compared to what we were yesterday. To vaguely define what education is it would take an eternity to explain because the multiplicity of discipline is simply impossible even to compile. Such is the importance and vastness of this very word. Although, what we can do or more appropriately aim to present or detail about is the medium and mode through which education is made available o tender minds that are what we all can agree to are the future of this glorious nation. In Re: the New Education Policy 2020. We primarily need to address the immediate query that may erupt into one’s mind, what is an education policy of a country? And who exactly implements it? To which the answer is quite simple, they are a set of solid, coherent policies and plans which act as the bedrock on which a sustainable education system is built and educational development is achieved¹. Now we may generally believe that the education policy of a country is a product of minds inside the territory of a country. But education is one of the factors which are a global need. Today more than 262 million children and youth are out of school. Six out of ten are not acquiring basic literacy and numeracy after several years in school. 750 million adults are illiterate, fueling poverty and marginalization². Very clearly illiteracy is a common enemy that the world aims to eradicate in the time to come. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, a global entity aims to be a reliable means in this prospect. It, on a larger scale, presents a bundle of policies and guidelines which can be applied by countries across the globe with no hindrance whatsoever to its functioning & Cultural or religious beliefs.

U.N.E.S.C.O takes a number of measures to ensure education and its reach is not far – off from students. But, this big entity cannot all by itself provide for or change the course of the world all by itself at the end of the day. It is the country that has the ability to facilitate the progress of its subjects. We live in a highly civilized era. Although we started with something as crude as a stone wheel today we have Machines that can go beyond and above this planet! Education is paid so

¹ U.N.E.S.C.O: (see Para 1) Education policy and planning

² U.N.E.S.C.O: (See Para 2) Leading SDG 4 – Education 2030.

much importance in this country that its presence is clearly etched into what one may call this country's most important text that the citizens of this country owe allegiance to and abide by the 'Constitution of India'. Very clearly and explicitly Article 21- A, guarantees that “ The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such a manner as the state may, by law, determine.”³ The reader should pay attention to the words 'free' and 'compulsory'. For that are the intensity, prevalence and necessity of education. To simplify, 'A society without education is a cart with no wheels.' The society becomes stagnant, regressive and futile. To ensure such a situation never seeps into the path of progression. The country revises and presents before the nation 'National Educational Policy' from time to time. Now our aim is not to comment on how regularly this process has been carried out or is to present a report on the previous education policy which many scholars believed were flawed. But our objective is to, present and evaluate with a small area of suggestions/ solutions that can define and shape the NEP 2020. Such that the country benefits from these set of guidelines and takes a huge leap towards progression in the near future.” We can all agree to the fact that many issues/ policies/ factors which hold national importance are very much due for an upgrade! And as they say “Change is the only constant”. The National Educational Policy is something that requires meticulous analysis and fact-finding, any country or a state cannot simply propose, amend and bring into force a set of guidelines because this policy holds the key to unlock true potential or metaphorically speaking is in the right sense a speed – key in the path of progression. The codified and structured set of the policy was brought into effect back in 1968 by the then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi.

The Kothari commission⁴ is credited to this act in organizing the educational set-up in the country. This was the point of inception with which the education system in the country took more definitive shape. This in turn ensured that the valuable assets of the nation found their path to achieve great milestones. We have tangible evidence about institutions being established, scholars put to work in order to find efficient methods to boost growth. Establishment of National Council of Educational Research and Training (N.C.E.R.T) by the union government in 1961⁵. Headed by

³ The Constitution of India: Article 21- A inserted by the Constitution (Eighty- sixth Amendment) Act, 2002

⁴ REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION, 1964-66; Vol 1 (see page 5)

⁵ <https://ncert.nic.in/about-us.php?ln=>

Shri. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru is clear indicators of the beginning of educational structuralism. But here the aim is to comprehend what an Educational Policy entails? And how they have made remarkable changes in 2020? From that of 1968 to 1986, any new change made to important government policy is often welcomed but with a room for doubts. The new educational policy 2020 does not force the common mind to struggle in order to understand the parlance in which it has been produced. Yet what it does offer is a white space for evolution to blend in with the changing times. This would mean that the country would make rapid strides towards progression and possibly, in the future lead b an example in reference to the ‘educational system’. Because there is no denying the fact that some of the greatest minds see their origin from India. If we can ensure this potential is routed efficiently. There is no visible threat/obstacle for the nation. The National Educational Policy 2020 primarily focuses on addressing issues which would rather inhibit progressive thinking connected to the educational system. There is a list of meaningful alterations and changes that the National Education Policy 2020 envelopes which range from learning interests such as multidisciplinary education and vocational educational training g to structural and fundamental alterations such as makeover of report cards, Re-vamped Board Exams and fees. It also has made efforts to re-furnish and enhances the existing educational system with technological usages.

In order to better comprehend and understand the functionality of National Educational Policy 2020, the critical points which will have a profound impact on the forthcoming years of education.

ELEMENTS WHICH WILL MAKE PROSPECTIVE CHANGES

Relaxed Linguistic Barrier: India is globally acclaimed for the diversity it exhibits, culturally, religiously, traditionally, etc. it is quiet fascinating that there are more than 19,500 languages or dialects spoken in India⁶. Although the constitution officially recognizes 22 Languages⁷ the National Educational Policy states that it will now lift the language barrier until the 5th grade. This means that the students can acquire the knowledge they require in the language that they desire.

⁶ PTI; Publisher: The Indian Express; Dated: July 1st , 2018.

⁷ The Constitution of India: See Schedule eight.

What the state and lawmakers have observed over the time is that the prominence and mandatory usage and learning of the English language have led to several young minds develop a stigmatic mindset towards education at a very primitive age and such fear has left many students incapacitated to attend schools and a lifetime trauma which has adversely affected their educational lives. The government aims to allow educating oneself by the means of preferred mother- tongue up to the 8th grade. And also it will make attempts in order to facilitate the procurement of texts in the same desired language avoiding and visible conflict in comprehending concepts. It has also made mentions on how a new language (English) is often found challenging by the students, in order to prevent such an event from recurring, the policy lays emphasis on adopting much creative and likeable means.⁸

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: Vocational education is an element or more appropriately a form of acquiring education which is more practical based. This is an element that a student felt was very much necessary in order to increase productivity and efficiency. For a long time now the Indian education systems have been infamous for its old and wear-out methods which it has adopted to impart education and many students felt the need for a practical approach. No doubt the educational policies before this had laid enough emphasis on practical outlooks. But the age group which was allowed to make a choice was rather not present with any facts, hands-on experience to make the correct choice.

This resulted in many students dropping out from the courses they had joined initially. Gladly, today the National Educational Policy 2020 addresses this issue where V.E.T (Vocational Educational Training) protects the interest and future of students. Is an alternative to the traditional education system which involves academic subjects that students tend to opt or take up at the A (Advanced) level or the Degree level. This system of education can be considered advantageous to the students as they are well trained and prepared for work in a specific trade, occupation or craft vocations such as making of ornaments or any other metalwork that the student would be interested in. It also includes professional vocations such as engineering, architecture, law etc. Basically, vocational education is not only theoretically based but is traditionally non-academic in

⁸ New Education Policy 2020: Multilingualism and power of language (see 4.11; 4.12; 4.13)

nature which provides a very good platform for the students to learn about manual or practical approaches of the particular area or field that they are passionate about. For example, A student desiring to become a skilled blacksmith will have to work with a blacksmith to develop the required skills. This system of Education is also referred to as career education or technical education because students are given the best training that would suffice to develop efficiency and technical skills in the required field. Vocation Education is a part of the apprenticeship program that can be opted at the secondary, post-secondary, further education and higher education level. Countries like the USA, UK have adopted this system of education⁹. In the USA, Vocational Education was first established in the private high schools in the second half of the 19th century and it varies from state to state. The students enroll themselves after graduating from high school or GEDs (General Education Development). The United Kingdom adopted this system in the year 1993 which again differs from state to state. This system of education has designed students proficiently for job opportunities and has reduced the burden for students. But, India did not adapt to this system of education. The structure of the schooling system was different in entirety when compared to that of the UK or the USA.¹⁰

But, in the year 2020, the government came up with a new system of education that is, New Education Policy (NEP) which brings in major alterations and changes. It mainly focuses upon vocational training and education which is very beneficial for the new generation students. This system not only focuses on the aspect of education but also introduces mental health and social benefits. Moreover, students are also given a wide range of options to choose their subject of interest and inculcate career skills. This is a major reform brought about in India after several years and is a great opportunity provided to all the students to shape and mould their future for the betterment of the country.

DIGITALIZED APPROACH: We are in an era that to a great extent relies on technology to excel. If we cannot appropriate a concept irrespective of its mode of evolution, presence from time to time or any other trait to the modern-day technology then we can agree that the efficiency of that concept is well under question. The recent living condition amidst a global health crisis of the

⁹ Mavoie pro Europe: Vocational education and training in Europe.

¹⁰ NCES (National Centre for Education Statistics): Report February 2000; (See page 3 onwards)

Corona Virus has posed a serious threat to the movement of worldly affairs. We can safely say that education has survived only through technology; we cannot deny this as it has become more and more evident with every passing hour. At times of darkness about the future, technology and digital mechanism have reinforced the faith in humankind's progression has. Digitalization provides for hassle-free outreach, global closeness, Comprehensibility of disciplines which are known for their complexity. Digitalization otherwise has been ignored till now where education has traditionally relied on offline (pen & paper) systems. But it is time that this system takes a leap of faith! Digitalization and its perks are numerous and un-matched. The accessibility, convenience and impact digital means have been clever and reliable. This strong presence of digitalization along with our everyday lives just ensures the countries growth. One might wonder how that can happen. This is possible as the state would be driven to provide internet, digital equipments to the most remote parts. This process makes the country technologically updated and taking a lead in modernity compared to the other countries.¹¹

The National Educational Policy 2020 lays immense strength on the implementation of digital presence in the education system. There are two visible advantages of digitalization which are accessibility and out-reach. But it would be wrong to think these are the only two components that ease over the process of acquiring the knowledge they are supported with most important factors such as unbiased education, affordability, personalized experience, accessibility for the physically challenged etc. Digitalization paves the path for equality in several areas such as opportunity, evaluation, and code of conduct. Students from a young age start adapting themselves to technological ways. As compared to today's generation the previous generation is a little held back in terms of technology but this new and improved educational policy which imbibes digitalization and its perks will result in a future with individuals of far more superior digital knowledge.

¹¹ Author: T.V Ramachandran, Publisher: Financial express; Dated: September 29th, 2018.

FUNDAMENTAL MODIFICATIONS MADE TO BE FUTURE- READY, CHANGES MADE TO THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2020.

Apart from the key elements which promise advancement in the way, we will acquire knowledge post the National Educational Policy 2020. There are a few aspects which clearly indicate that the country and education system have turned their focus from the archaic practice of absorbing or more appropriately mugging/ memorizing concepts to a much qualitative mode of understanding disciplines irrespective of their nature and vastness. The National Educational Policy 2020 has made some remarkable changes at grass- root level these changes will have a pleasant effect in the days to come. It will clearly point out the contrast between the previous generations and today's generation. These elements won't just affect the students who are conventional in their approach to grasping education but also the ones who due to uncommon reasons fail to follow the regular pattern of education, which will be detailed out. There are multiple such aspects that are worth paying keen attention to.

Multiple entry/ exit points: It was and is a commonly observed that often a few percentages of students fail to complete education due to multiple reasons such as lack of financial strength, personal hindrances, a diversion into a different stream of life, etc. Such students can now press pause on their academics only to return on a future date and complete the same. This will increase the interest, faith and likelihood of individuals to complete their education the National educational policy also makes a mention about a possibility where an academic bank will be opened to ensure such events are recorded and the students wouldn't have to start all over again in case they plan to enter into the previously halted academic lives.

Single Regulator: Different academic universities are affiliated and regulated by a number of regulatory bodies. This has been a format for a long time now but it has been proven from time and again that this has jeopardized the feature of efficiency when it comes to the working process, considering this as an important issue the National educational policy proposes to have a

Single regulator for colleges that propose knowledge on different disciplines the H.E.C.I ^[12], the higher education commission of India will act as a single regulator to all colleges apart from medical and Law colleges.

Makeover of Report Cards & Re-Vamped board exams: Exams with reference to India have been a time that leaves any student weak in the knee. For that is the importance given to it, it is also paid much attention to by parents, relatives and everyone in a close circle that one simply doesn't find a way to escape it. But with the New changes being made the concept of exams and various components attached to it are being revised. Like before, the focus does not lie on quantitative subject knowledge but on skills, it is also possible that the policymakers might think of a new pattern of exams all- together. This primarily would include the reduction of exam portions from a year to merely a semester. Report cards might see a new and improved alteration being made to them as they have always laid huge emphasis on marks now; there is a fair chance that the focus is on the skills and capabilities of any individual.

Expansion of Education: the policymakers aim to achieve a goal which is, by 2040 most of the institutions need to be multidisciplinary. Which means that an institute will not only impart education on one set subject but many such disciplines ensuring a vast variety from which students can choose as per their discretion, this will also modernize the outlook of the society all together when it comes to choosing a profession.

Improvisation of teaching ability: we cannot complete any discussion related to the education system without detailing on the highly creative and disciplined individuals 'teachers' they complete and education system and without paying appropriate attention to their caliber we cannot conclude that the country will produce a brighter future just by its pleasant policies, in order to ensure that the teachers themselves are competent enough the National Education policy, 2020. Lays emphasis on how the teachers themselves should be strongly familiar with the Indian values, culture, tradition, history and for the first time specially makes mention of knowledge on tribal traditions and values.

Promotion of Indigenous Linguistic, cultural and Art: India is undeniably abundant in its cultural and historical aspects. The Indian history is influenced by almost each and every civilization, religion and culture mankind has known. Be it the early Indian rulers which included Hindu rulers, Muslim rulers or the invaders such as the Portuguese, British, and Mongolians etc. all these historical aspects left something behind when they left the country. We witness a multitude of monuments, eating habits, dressing sense, languages so on and so forth. But, what is

unfortunate is that students from other countries visit us to study our vivid culture but the students of this country are rather theoretically than practical approach. The National Educational Policy 2020 aims at eradicating this old and impractical approach towards understanding and appreciating our culture. It plans to replace the entire system with a new and improved methodology where any individual wouldn't feel obligated to adore the richness of Indian culture and heritage but would actually take pride in the process of learning. This can be made possible with much experience-based learning such as Field trips- these trips should be made more frequent and also should focus on actual educative sessions rather than some fun-filled event. Also, such constant interactions with the outside world would make the students future-ready who would otherwise be cooped up in a classroom. The implementation of such change would also ensure the knowledge any student has about his common environment. This would also instill a sense of possessiveness within the student mentality which would, in turn, result in the young generation being much more respectful and caring of their surroundings, monuments and their country at large. Leaders of global importance from time and again have been quoting about how the country's future lies in the hands of the students and youth of any nation they have the ability to put a country on the path to success. India is fortunate to be one of the primary countries which have a superior youth power this makes the path for New Education Policy 2020, even more, reliable as this policy bends and moulds young minds to become more self-reliant, sufficient and patriotic towards the nation on the whole. The country would benefit to a great extent due to presence of such intricate and important elements, but the most important question that we are yet to answer is the fact to what extent will the implementation be successful? If the government plans to adopt methods which are not only suggested by a board of members sitting in a room but also consider suggestions from various other sources such as scholars, research papers, students, parents and students who are usually deprived of education due to poor facilities. The changes brought will be splendid and above all meaningful.

Fees: Education is often connected with a tag of being expensive where as education is not an element to be looked at for its expense. Education is not a business but in recent times it has become infamous for becoming a business. Multiple incidents of money- laundering, immoral fee collection have come to light which has led the policy to become more vigilant and stringent in its approach to the factor of fees altogether. The policy strictly implements the notion of not for profit and plans to establish an audit in order to have close observance on collection, payment and investment of fees in totality. This should aim only at ensuring good for the students and their welfare moving on further, when we take into consideration the fee structure of the education system, India differs completely when compared to of UK or the USA. The fee structure in India is highly considerate to all the Indian students. When we bring in a comparative analysis, the fee structure of private institutions in the UK or the USA is higher when compared to those private institutions in that of India. For example: An Indian student wanting to pursue his or her medical degree in India can complete the degree course within 10Lakhs (if we take in the approximate value). But if the same Indian student wants to pursue the medical degree course abroad, the fee value would rise to a greater extent due to extra additions to the tuition fee. The question is here is: What is the necessity for Indians to pursue their education abroad when the government is working for the benefit of its' people and providing all the necessary requirements? The lack of affiliation of Indian origin students presents the country globally, on a comparatively inferior position but Nevertheless, the National educational policy, 2020. This has put many things into place including this factor. Because the effects of financial changes can be either adverse or reinforcing this reels in many components such as the extent to which students are willing to go just so they educate themselves to their hearts fullest.

CONCLUSION

“Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think”

- Albert Einstein.

This quote clearly summarizes the intention with which the National Education Policy, 2020 sees its beginning. The education system has been before this adequate in terms of knowledge and

medium through which it was imparted but now with the added elements of digitalization, skill-based education and vocational education the system upgrades itself to a much efficient one with very minimal or no chance of error if followed perfectly. What one can be thankful about is the fact that this new system doesn't topple the lives of students due to very little human error which would happen otherwise. The new policy makes sure that education does not become a game at the hands of ill- intentional individuals in society. Also the quality of education will see immense improvement if the implementation goes right. India is a country with a massive population of 135 crore and a constantly increasing individuals but what is common is the need for education. Education decides the lifestyle, position in the society and impact of future generation. We cannot just have perfect policies and then ignore the fact that implementation is equally important as well. The state in coordination with the other agencies which would implement the policies made in the right manner, matter a lot as without the right medium to implement the policies would be good only on the papers. We as citizens should also extend our support towards ensuring smooth functioning of the educational policy for it is our fight against illiteracy. The allied efforts of the country and its citizens can result in only one out come, a glorious, progressive and powerful country.