

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020- SCHOOL EDUCATION

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Abstract

The NEP 2020 was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July, 2020. The Ministry of Education formed a committee headed by former ISRO Chairman Dr K Kasturirangan, who outlined the vision of India's new education system. The New Education Policy addresses challenges faced by current education system such as Quality, Affordability, Equity, Access and Accountability. NEP 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant society filled by knowledge and by providing high-quality education to all. This paper is mainly focus on principles and school education.

Keywords: equity, access, variant, school education



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Introduction

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, including SDG4, while building upon India's traditions

Previous Policies

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

Principles of this Policy

The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution.

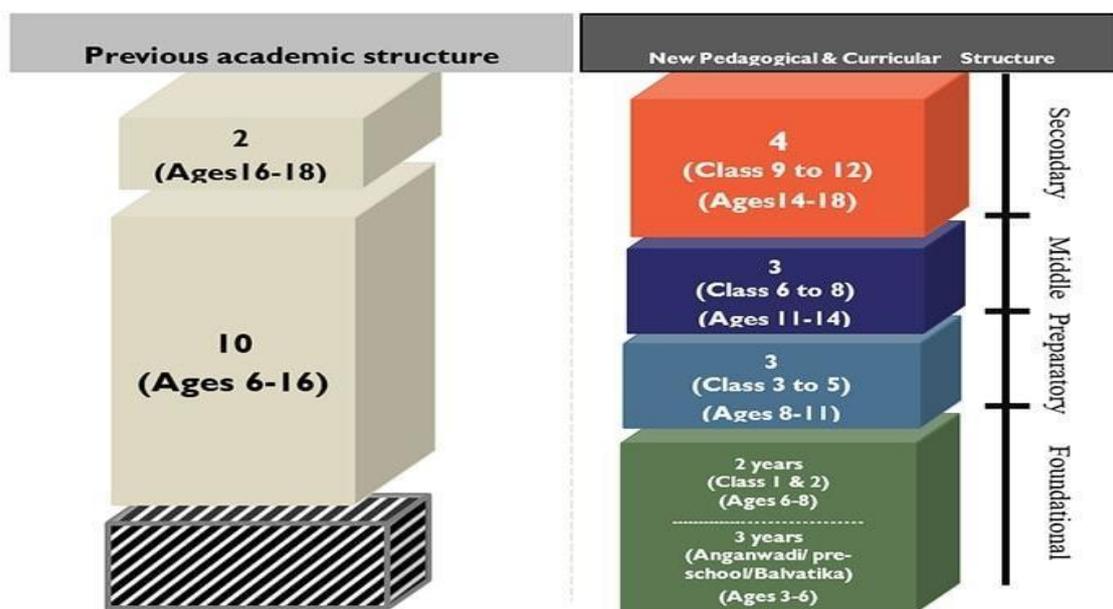
The fundamental principles that will guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions within it are:

- 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
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- 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;

The Vision of this Policy

Part I. SCHOOL EDUCATION This policy envisages that the extant 10+2 structure in school education will be modified with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18



Currently, children in the age group of 3-6 are not covered in the 10+2 structure as Class 1 begins at age 6. In the new 5+3+3+4 structure, a strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from age 3 is also included, which is aimed at promoting better overall learning, development, and well-being

1. Early Childhood Care and Education

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.

A National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) for children up to the age of 8 will be developed by NCERT in two parts, namely, a sub-framework 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, the numerous rich local traditions of India 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.

ECCE shall be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of early-childhood education institutions consisting of (a) standalone 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.

2. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: An Urgent & Necessary Prerequisite to Learning

Attaining foundational literacy and numeracy for all children will thus become an urgent national mission, with immediate measures to be taken on many fronts and with clear goals that will be attained in the short term (including that every student will attain foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3). The highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025. The rest of this Policy will become relevant for our students only if this most basic learning requirement (i.e., reading, writing, and arithmetic at the foundational level) is first achieved. To this end, a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) on priority. Accordingly, all State/UT governments will immediately prepare an implementation plan for attaining universal foundational literacy and numeracy in all primary schools, identifying stage-wise targets and goals to be achieved by 2025,

3. Curtailing Dropout Rates and Ensuring Universal Access to Education at All Levels

One of the primary goals of the schooling system must be to ensure that children are enrolled in and are attending school. Through initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (now the Samagra Shiksha) and the Right to Education Act, India has made remarkable strides in recent years in attaining near-universal enrolment in elementary education. However, the data for later grades indicates some serious issues in retaining children in the schooling system. The GER for Grades 6-8 was 90.9%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12 it was only 79.3% and 56.5%, respectively - indicating that a significant proportion of enrolled students drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8. As per the 75th round household survey by NSSO in 2017-18, the number of out of school children in the age group of 6 to 17 years is 3.22 crore. It will be a top priority to bring these children back into the educational fold as early as possible, and to prevent further students from dropping out, with a goal to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio in preschool to secondary level by 2030. A concerted national effort will be made to ensure universal access and afford opportunity to all children of the country to obtain quality holistic education—including vocational education - from pre-school to Grade 12.

4. Curriculum and Pedagogy in Schools

Learning should be Holistic, Integrated, Enjoyable, and Engaging Restructuring school curriculum and pedagogy in a new 5+3+3+4 design

1. The curricular and pedagogical structure of school education will be reconfigured to make it responsive and relevant to the developmental needs and interests of learners at different stages of their development, corresponding to the age ranges of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years, respectively. The curricular and pedagogical structure and the curricular framework for school education will therefore be guided by a 5+3+3+4 design, consisting of the Foundational Stage (in two parts, that is, 3 years of Anganwadi/pre-school + 2 years in primary school in Grades 1-2; both together covering ages 3-8), Preparatory Stage (Grades 3-5, covering ages 8-11), Middle Stage (Grades 6-8, covering ages 11-14), and Secondary Stage (Grades 9-12 in two phases, i.e., 9 and 10 in the first and 11 and 12 in the second, covering ages 14-18).
2. Holistic development of learners
3. Reduce curriculum content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking
4. Experiential learning

5. Empower students through flexibility in course choices
6. Multilingualism and the power of language
7. Transforming Assessment for Student Development

The progress card of all students for school-based assessment, which is communicated by schools to parents, will be completely redesigned by States/UTs under guidance from the proposed National Assessment Centre, NCERT, and SCERTs. The progress card will be a holistic, 360-degree, multidimensional report that reflects in great detail the progress as well as the uniqueness of each cognitive, affective, psychomotor domain

It is proposed to set up a National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), as a standard-setting body under MHRD that fulfils the basic objectives of setting norms, standards, and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognized school boards of India, guiding the State Achievement Survey (SAS) and undertaking the National Achievement Survey (NAS), monitoring achievement of learning outcomes in the country, and encouraging and helping school boards to shift their assessment patterns towards meeting the skill requirements of the 21st century in consonance with the stated objectives of this Policy

The principles for university entrance exams will be similar. The National Testing Agency (NTA) will work to offer a high-quality common aptitude test, as well as specialized common subject exams in the sciences, humanities, languages, arts, and vocational subjects, at least twice every year. These exams shall test conceptual understanding and the ability to apply knowledge and shall aim to eliminate the need for taking coaching for these exams.

8. Support for Gifted Students/Students with Special Talents

There are innate talents in every student, which must be discovered, nurtured, fostered, and developed. These talents may express themselves in the form of varying interests, dispositions, and capacities. Those students that show particularly strong interests and capacities in a given realm must be encouraged to pursue that realm beyond the general school curriculum. Teacher education will include methods for the recognition and fostering of such student talents and interests. The NCERT and NCTE will develop guidelines for the education of gifted children. B.Ed. programmes may also allow a specialization in the education of gifted children.

5. Teachers

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 of optimally to students.

Recruitment and Deployment

To ensure that outstanding students enter the teaching profession - especially from rural areas - a large number of merit-based scholarships shall be instituted across the country for studying quality 4- year integrated B.Ed. programmes.

Teacher Eligibility Tests (TETs) will be strengthened to inculcate better test material, both in terms of content and pedagogy. The TETs will also be extended to cover teachers across all stages (Foundational, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary) of school education.

Special educators

There is an urgent need for additional special educators for certain areas of school education. Some examples of such specialist requirements include subject teaching for children with disabilities/Divyang children at the Middle and Secondary school level, including teaching for specific learning disabilities.

6. Equitable and Inclusive Education: Learning for All:

Tribal communities and children from Scheduled Tribes also face disadvantages at multiple levels due to various historical and geographical factors. Children from tribal communities often find their school education irrelevant and foreign to their lives, both culturally and academically. While several programmatic interventions to uplift children from tribal communities are currently in place, and will continue to be pursued, special mechanisms need to be made to ensure that children belonging to tribal communities receive the benefits of these interventions.

Minorities are also relatively underrepresented in school and higher education. The Policy acknowledges the importance of interventions to promote education of children belonging to all minority communities, and particularly those communities that are educationally underrepresented.

7. Efficient Resourcing and Effective Governance through School Complexes/Clusters

While the establishment of primary schools in every habitation across the country- driven by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), now subsumed under the Samagra Shiksha Scheme and other important efforts across the States - has helped to ensure near-universal access to primary schools, it has also led to the development of numerous very small schools.

According to U-DISE 2016–17 data, nearly 28% of India’s public primary schools and 14.8% of India’s upper primary schools have less than 30 students. The average number of students per grade in the elementary schooling system (primary and upper primary, i.e., Grades 1–8) is about 14, with a notable proportion having below 6; during the year 2016–17, there were 1,08,017 single-teacher schools, the majority of them (85743) being primary schools serving Grades 1–5.

8. Standard-setting and Accreditation for School Education

The goal of the school education regulatory system must be to continually improve educational outcomes; it must not overly restrict schools, prevent innovation, or demoralize teachers, principals, and students. All in all, regulation must aim to empower schools and teachers with trust, enabling them to strive for excellence and perform at their very best, while ensuring the integrity of the system through the enforcement of complete transparency and full public disclosure of all finances, procedures, and educational outcomes.

Conclusion

NEP, which is designed to ease the burden of classroom teaching and examination on students, will play an important role in creating the future of the country. Its success, however, lies in uniform and transparent implementation at all levels, with an equitable distribution of resources. This mammoth task can be realized only when there is 100% co-operation and collaboration between all the stakeholders backed by institutional mechanisms.

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