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RESEARCH ARTICLE

NEW EDUCATION POLICY-2020: CHANGE FOR EDUCATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Education is a fundamental requirement for to achieve development with full human potential for an equitable and just society. It is required for social uplifting and promoting the national development. Education is the key for continued ascent of economic growth, social justice, equality, scientific advancement, national integration and cultural preservation. The high quality education is for maximizing rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the society, the country, and the world. India will be having highest population of younger generation in the world over new decade. The country has an ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them through education policy reforms and to determine the future of our country. The goal 4 of global education development agenda 2030 for sustainable development has been adopted by India in 2015 and prepared its New Education Policy 2020 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all its citizens. It focuses on the use of scientific and technological advances, machine learning, use of big data base, create skilled workforce, covering the major multidisciplinary areas of all subjects like mathematics, computer science, environmental science, biology, chemistry, physics, agriculture, atmospheric science, humanities and social sciences, food, energy, water and sanitation. It intends to promote research and development in all the fields of knowledge. The efforts have been made in the present paper to review the major provisions incorporated in India's New Education Policy 2020. It is expected to match the Indian abilities to the rapid changes in the world's knowledge landscape.

INTRODUCTION

The world is undergoing rapid progressive changes in the fields of science and technology. There are many dramatic and scientific advancements and technological innovations like the new machines, large data, use of artificial intelligence which are creating new jobs worldwide and calling for skilled workers. This requirement of skilled manpower is from different subjects, disciplines and areas of data science, covering multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary areas of research and development. The problems of unstable environment such as climate change, ozone depletion, global warming, natural disasters, acid rain, loss of biodiversity, diminishing and depleting natural resources, pollution of air, water, soil, vanishing forests and many more are threatening peaceful existence of human society on this hospitable planet Earth. The human society needs to be educated to protect the nature, conserve it's resources, enhance the hospitality with optimum use of resources to the needs of energy, fresh water, fresh air, healthy environment with sufficient food, shelter, sanitation and his other requirements in a sustainable way of life.

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There are many areas which call for joint and collaborative research for human health, hygiene and human social welfare like emergence of pandemics, epidemic and infectious disease control and many more including socioeconomic fields. These areas need a multidisciplinary approach which comes through education. Therefore, the education policy of any country needs to be reviewed and modified to meet the new needs of society and suit the scientific and technological advancement with increasing skills, knowledge and advancements. It is much needed for India to become a developed country, as it is one of the three largest growing economies in the world. The new education policy 2020 has replaced the old National Education Policy that was framed in 1986 and was subsequently modified in 1992 and is claimed as built on the pillars of Access, Equality, Quality and Affordability. India is modifying its education policy after a long period of three decades to make it more comprehensive giving emphases on multidisciplinary and broader approaches backed by technology. This modification is aimed at providing equitable access to the quality education to all students of the land irrespective of region, state, gender, physical abilities or other socio-economic backgrounds. The new education policy involves not only the student learning, but also changes in the administrative structure, management system, teaching modes and much more, focusing on the development of skills and characters of students.

It encourages the learner students to inculcate the skills of new digital era and explores, encourages and pursues their interests with multidisciplinary approaches. The major modifications incorporated in the new education policy 2020 are briefly renewed below.

School Education: India is one of the countries in the world having highest population of 40% of which is children. But most of these have been educationally remained neglected as merely about 4% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) goes for these children. Even the education budget of the country has not crossed 3.67% of its GDP for the past several years, as against 6% of GDP as it was targeted. The new education policy 2020 of India aims to ensure the successful access to the school education from early childhood stages right from preschool to the primary and secondary school levels. There are many provisions claiming inclusiveness and equity in education. India is one of the youngest countries in the world with around 40 per cent of its population being children. Despite such a huge proportion of child population, merely 4 per cent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) goes to children. Also India's education budget has remained stagnant at around 3.67 per cent of its GDP as against a targeted 6 per cent for the past several years.

Restructuring of school curriculum: The new education policy 2020 has restructured the school curriculum which was adopted in presiding education policy. The new structure of school education policy in new policy makes with redesigned structure of a new pattern of the 5+3+3+4 structural stages claiming it to be more relevant to the needs of students and replaces the current school curriculum structure, having 10+2 pattern of educational stages. The current structure of school curriculum will be changed as first five years of fundamental stage for the ages 3 to 8 as stage 5, followed by second stage of 3 years for the ages of 8 to 11, mostly covering the students of class three to five. It will be followed by third stage of 3 years covering the class sixth to eighth, for the ages 11 to 14 years and forth stage of 4 years will cover the students of ages 14 to 18 or classes 9 to 12.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE): The time frame of child from his birth to the age of eight has been given separate wattage in new education policy as Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). There was nothing provided for child education up-to the age of 5 in the current education policy. But the education from first class was mostly ensured by the State and now will be mostly in private educational institutions largely. Under new education policy, the early childhood care and education will consist of learning the alphabets, language, puzzles, drawing and painting, music etc emphasizing the with play based activities. It is based on the assumption that over 85% of child's brain development takes place prior to the age of 6. Therefore, ECCE has been recommended as the First stage in new pattern of the 5+3+3+4 structure. It will be delivered through the standalone 'Aanganwadis', Anganwadis located with the primary schools, pre primary sections of primary schools and the standalone pre schools. The National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) will develop a national curricular and pedagogical framework for early child care education and the Aanganwadi workers having senior secondary and above educational qualifications are expected to undergo a six months certification programme for shouldering the responsibility.

Achieving foundational literacy and numeracy: The current situation of enrolling of large proportion of students of about five crore seems to be not attaining the ability to read and understand the basic learning of text and attaining the foundational literacy as well as numeracy to carry out basic mathematics of additions and subtractions. The care is taken in new education policy make the students to attain foundational literacy and numeracy up to the grade three. The National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will set up under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. It is expected in the new education policy that the states are to prepare their implementation plans for achieving the expected goals by 2025. The Central Government will make the National Repository of high quality resources on these aspects of foundational literacy and numeracy on its e learning platform "DIKSHA".

Ensuring universal coverage and inclusivity: After the successful achievements of universal enrolment in elementary education in schools under the Right to Education Act, 2009, the challenge of retaining these enrolled students has remained a challenge for the current school systems. There is considerable decline of gross enrolment ratio indicating large dropouts with moving the students to higher grades in current school system. This dropout denotes enrolment as a proportion of population of relevant age groups. This dropout rate is higher in certain socio economically disadvantaged groups of society. It seems to be observed on the basis of gender identities, socio-cultural identities, geographical identities, socio-economic identities and disabilities. New education policy is targeted to these groups to strengthen them by setting up special zones in such areas to uplift these groups by raising a gender inclusion funds to assist the female and transgender students for getting the right and sufficient access to education.

Reforms in curriculum content: The new education policy has been designed to reduce the curriculum load in each subject to its essential core content for giving scope for critical thinking, discussions and analyses based on the learning of students. The students will be given more flexibility and their choices of subjects of their studies in secondary schools. The National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) will develop a new and comprehensive national curricular framework for such secondary education and it will be revisited after every 5 to 10 years.

Medium of instruction: The medium of instruction under new education policy 2020 emphasizes the use of local languages or the mother tongue till class 5 recommending its continuance till the class 8. At the same time, the Sanskrit and foreign languages have also been suggested and emphasized. However, no language will be imposed by any state. New education policy expects the medium of instruction of education in the local language, preferably in the mother tongue of the students, at least in the childhood education till the grade five and preferably till they attain grade eight irrespective of their school whether public or private. The formula of three-languages has been continued in new education policy with flexibility. No any languages are imposed on the students in any state. The new education policy recommends this three- language formula to implement on the basis of choices of states and the students. This three language formula can be adopted and implemented to study Hindi, English and one of the modern Indian language, preferable a southern language in the Hindi-speaking states.

This formula of three-languages may adopt Hindi, English and any one of the regional language in non Hindi-speaking states. However, preferentially two languages should be native to India and the third may be a foreign language as per the choice of the student and the option of Sanskrit has been offered as an option at all the levels of school education.

Assessment of students: The current nature of student assessments through examination patterns and entrance has resulted in the emergence of coaching culture. This culture is causing harm to the process of learning of school students. New education policy has recommended the major reforms in this current nature of assessment through examination patterns and entrance examinations. The Board of examinations will test only core concepts covering a range of subjects. The students will be free to choose their subjects and they will have option to take the examinations on up to two occasions during the academic year. The new education policy intends to conduct the examinations in grades 3, 5 and 8 to track the progress of the students in addition to their school experience. The basic foundational literacy and numeracy will be examined in grade 3. The results will be used to improve the school education system. The National Assessment Centre as a standard setting body for the assessment and evaluation of students will be setup under Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Teacher training and management: The school teachers will be trained with a four year integrated B.Ed. programme by replacing the currently existing B.Ed. programme. The new form of integrated B.Ed. will have high quality content, pedagogy and the practical training for making the teachers trained. Moreover, the teachers will be trained for a period of minimum of 50 hours of continuous professional development training every year which will be formulated by the National Council for Teacher Education in consultation with the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT). The new education policy promises the teachers that they will be not engaged in non teaching administrative activities as currently observed, The new policy assures that the teachers will not be transferred unless there are special circumstances as decided by the state governments.

Effective governance of schools: Currently, the primary schools have been established in every habitation across the country and increased the access to education, However, the there are less number of students in each primary school. Such small sizes of schools have made these operationally and economically challenging for the deployment of trained teachers along with the physical resources such as libraries and sports equipments. The new education policy insists on grouping the schools together and forming a school complex consisting of one secondary school and other schools with Aanganwadis in a 5 to 10 km radius to ensure adequate number of teachers for all subjects in school complex, adequate provision for physical infrastructure, sufficient resources and effective governance of the schools.

School regulation: Currently, the schools are regulated by the centralized power of Department of School Education for all functions of governance and regulations of school education which directly or indirectly leads to a conflict of interests. The new education policy provides for setting up of an independent State School Standards Authority (SSSA) in each state for regulating the schools.

The Department of School Education will be involved in policy making and overall school monitoring, not in regulating the schools. The proposed State School Standards Authority (SSSA) will prescribe the basic uniform standards for all the public and private schools in the concerned states. The new education policy also provides for the self regulation or accreditation system for schools.

Higher Education: The new education policy intends to dictate a solitary regulatory entity which shall oversee the status of higher education in the country. The higher education is currently decreasing. The new education policy aims at increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education at least to 50% till the year 2035, which was about 26.3% in year 2018. The higher education institutions have an option to take open distance learning programs and online courses for improving the access to higher education to increase the gross enrolment ratio in the country. It also aims to transform the higher education system by providing access for all with the promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion for preparing students to face the challenges of 21st century. The interdisciplinary studies are promoted with the induction of new subjects and freedom with flexibility in offering courses with fresh opportunities for students of higher education have been emphasized in new education policy.

Restructuring of institutions: New education policy provides for restructuring of all higher education institutions (HEIs) into three categories. The first category will be comprised of research universities which will be focusing equally on both, the research and teaching. Second category will be formed by the universities focusing mainly on teaching and the third category will be formed with the degree granting colleges which focus on teaching at undergraduate levels. These all three categories of higher education institutions will eventually move towards full autonomy in terms of academics, administration and financial status so that these all higher education institutions will turn into the large multidisciplinary universities and colleges with the strength of 3 thousand or more students. It is with the expectation that there will be at least one multidisciplinary higher education institutions in every district or its nearby districts.

Multidisciplinary education: Under the provisions of new education policy, 2020, the all higher education institutions are to prepare their curricula with multidisciplinary subjects by integrating humanities and social sciences with physical sciences, chemical sciences, biological sciences, engineering, technology, and mathematical sciences. There shall be more flexible multiple exit options during the undergraduate degree courses for the students which will provide appropriate certifications for such exits. The student studying in undergraduate course leaves the course after one year will be competent to receive a certificate, if is leaving after completing two years then he will be entitled to get a Diploma certificate, on completion of three years of his studies he will get a bachelor's degree and he will be awarded a bachelor's with research degree after completing his entire period of four years of his degree course. The central government will establish an academic bank of digital credits which will be deposited by the higher education learners on earning them from various higher education institutions for awarding them the degrees based on the credits then earn. Therefore, these institutions will be having flexibilities to offer different designs of masters'

programmes, but the M.Phil. programme will be discontinued from these academic institutions.

Regulatory structure of HE: The new education policy 2020 provides for two institutions for accreditation of all higher education institutions. There shall be a National Board of Accreditation (NBA) which will be established by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the other will be National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) which will be established by Union Grants Commission (UGC) as per the mandate of UGC Regulations, 2012 for the accreditation of all higher education institutions in the country. Through these two institutions as separate independent bodies, the regulatory structure of higher education in the country will be completely changed for the distinct functions of regulation, their accreditations, funding and the setting up of academic standards. This will insure to minimize the conflicts of interests and elimination of concentrating of power. The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) is going to setup four independent bodies. The National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) will be a single regulator for teacher education excluding the legal and medical education. The second body will be National Accreditation Council for the accreditation of higher education institutions. The Higher Education Grants Council will be a third body for financing of higher education institutions and the fourth will be General Education Council to specify the curriculum framework and learning levels for higher education. In case, if any dispute arises in these bodies, it will be resolved by the experts under the Higher Education Council of India (HECI).

Improvement in research and its funding: Currently, the investment on research and innovation in the country is only about 0.69% of its GDP and needs to increase. Comparatively, the same in USA is 2.8%, in South Korea is 4.2% and in Israel it is 4.3% of their GDPs respectively. Considering the need to increase the investment on research and innovation in India, the new education policy 2020 has recommended for setting up of an independent National Research Foundation (NRF) for the funding and facilitation of quality research in the country. The specialized institution like Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) which are specialized institutions for research funding will continue to provide funds for independent research projects. But, the National Research Foundation (NRF) will collaborate with them to avoid duplications.

Entry of Foreign universities: The new education policy will encourage the high performing Indian universities to set up their campuses in other countries and selective top global foreign universities will be permitted to set up and operate their campuses in the country. The suitable legislative framework will be prepared to facilitate such entry of global foreign universities. These global foreign universities will be granted exemptions from the regulatory and governance norms on par with the autonomous institutions in the country to promote them for higher education in India.

Promotion of Vocational Education: Currently, there is less attention on vocational education in the country. About only 5% of the workforce with the age-group of 19 to 24 years received the vocational education during 2012 to 2017. On the other hand, it was 52% in USA, 75% in Germany and 96% in South Korea which is much higher as compared to the vocational education in India.

In order to reduce this contrast, the new education policy 2020 has recommended for integrating the vocational education in the country in all the schools and higher education institutions phase-wise over the period of next 10 years. The Ministry of Human Resource Development will set up a National Committee for such integration of vocational education. This committee will prepare the details for national skills qualifications framework for each discipline, vocation and profession. With these efforts, new education policy aims to raise the student exposure and insure that at-least 50% of the learners get vocational education by the year 2025.

Other recommendations

- (A) **Financing of education:** The new education policy assures with the commitment of investment about 6% of Gross Domestic Products (GDP) in education and exploration of additional sources of funding. The first National Education Policy had assured for public investment of 6% of GDP for education in 1968. But the assured public expenditure never attained 6% of the GDP during the entire tenure. Comparatively, higher were in many countries like 7.5% in Bhutan, Zimbabwe and Sweden, 7.0% in Costa Rica and Finland, 6.0% in Kyrgyzstan, South Africa and Brazil, 5.5% in UK, Netherlands and Palestine and 5% in Malaysia, Kenya and Mongolia. The investment in the country remained less than the assured level in during the first National Education Policy of the Country. The same of 6% public investment of total GDP of India was reiterated by National Education Policy in 1986 as that of the earlier National Education Policy of 1968, but was unfulfilled. The public expenditure on Education in the county in year 2017 18 was 4.4% of its GDP.
- (B) **Adult education:** Adult education plays important role in creating suitable workforce. The nation gets benefitted by the trained workforce that can be created by educating and giving training to the adult and mature students. Imparting the training to these adult and mature students enriches the skills and expands their knowledge which supports the development of the country. Therefore, the new education policy supports the Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. New education policy under the national scheme provides for the preparing a national curriculum framework to give opportunities for attaining foundational literacy, for obtaining education and pursuing the livelihoods, through the adult education though five broad areas requiring workforce. It includes, the curricula framework for foundational literacy and numeracy, critical life skills such as financial and digital literacy including health care and family awareness, development of vocational skills, basic education skills for middle and secondary education and the continuing education though the courses in arts, technology, sports and culture as these are training platforms for volunteerism, community involvement and mobilization and play their roles as key factors in adult education. These are in conjunction with the political will, planning processes, financial support, best capacity building of educators, organizational structures and creation of volunteers under the provisions of new education policy.
- (C) **Technology induction in education:** The processes related decision making like induction of technology,

development, deployment and use of technology will be made through the National Education Technology Forum (NETF). The National Education Technology Forum (NETF) will be setup very soon to facilitate such decision making.

- (D) This Forum will also provide evidence-based advice to central government and state-governments on technology-based interventions.
- (E) **Digital education:** Realizing the need of alternative modes of education in the circumstances such as the case of pandemic, where in person education is impossible, then the alternative modes need to be developed. The new education policy is promoting several such alternative modes of quality education through inclusive digital education like development of two way audio and video interfaces to conduct online classes, creation of digital repository for coursework, virtual learning of games and simulations, multiple platforms and digital sources with the use of public mass media like television, radio and other knowledge propagation platforms for digital contents in multiple languages, provisions for extensions of virtual digital laboratories on e learning platforms, trainings to the teachers and incentives to make them online high quality creators are the notable steps. The new education policy insists for online and in person blended modes of education for effective education for different subjects.

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