

NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020: A REVISIONIST APPROACH TOWARDS HOLISTIC LEARNING

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Abstract

There is no hidden fact that Education and development are the two sides of the same coin and with various advancements in different genres of studies, the role of quality Education cannot be underestimated. It indeed can be considered as an essential ingredient for a better understanding of life and opportunities, as it paves the way for a holistic development of the individual, society and of course the nation at large. There have been several initiatives taken by the concerned authorities in the past to improve the methodology of Education, where some approaches proved to be effective while in some, few changes were required, according to the overall development of students and the teachers of the concerned departments. This year in the month of July, the Indian government announced a new Education policy (NEP 2020), after a huge gap of thirty-four years. The paper intends to introduce the currently proposed policy and highlight the important changes done for the effective working of the Education sector. Also, it offers a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of the policies in the past and predicted implications of the newly proposed policy.

Keywords: *New Education Policy 2020, Higher Education, Effective implementation, Choice based courses, Four-year undergraduate program, experimental learning and critical thinking.*



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There has been a lot of discourse on the successful implementation of the new Education policy, which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on the 28th of July, 2020. The key aspects of the new Education policy were decided by a committee of highly intellectual minds, headed by Dr. Kasturirangan, the former chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). A lot many changes can be witnessed in the New Education policy such as making Indian Higher Education accessible to foreign universities, dismantling bodies like The University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), focusing on a multidisciplinary approach by introducing a four year undergraduate programme with choice based exits on various stages and discontinuation of the M.Phil programme. Also, several changes have been introduced in the School Education system to reduce pressure on students and make Education accessible to everyone, irrespective of their social and economic status. The policy has proposed a reduction on the annual syllabus, where more focus will be on the core essentials and the committee has also

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decided to make board exams easy to reduce exam phobia. Another important significant shift from the previous policy is change in the overall structure of School Education. As the previous policy followed 10 +2 structure of School Education but the New Education policy divides the system into stages and pitches for a “5+3+3+4” structure, corresponding to the age groups of the students. According to this structure, the first stage is the foundation stage, which includes children belonging to the age groups of three to eight years. This five-year stage aims to provide basic education to children, without any burden of exams. The main objective of this stage is to inculcate a liking for schools, by introducing games, playful activities and providing a healthy flexible environment. The second stage is called, the preparatory stage, which will take the playful, activity based learning a step ahead towards basic studies. This three-year based stage gradually introduces formal classroom learning with textbooks. The students are made familiar with the different subjects offered in the academia.

The third stage is the middle school education stage, which provides an in-depth knowledge of the basic subjects, which were introduced in the previous stage. The students are taught to focus on abstract concepts in each and every subject, be it sciences, mathematics, social sciences, humanities or arts. They are also introduced to experimental learning mode of Education in some subjects to understand the concepts better. A change in the conduct of examination can be witnessed in this stage. According to the previous policy, there were three terminal exams, conducted in a year, however, the revised policy of 2020 proposes semester system and yearly two class level examinations. The fourth stage is the secondary education stage which intends to encourage a multidisciplinary approach towards learning. This four-year stage, focuses on the subject oriented pedagogical and curricular style with attention to life aspirations, keeping in mind the importance of flexibility and critical thinking. The students belonging to this stage will have to study five to six subjects in each semester and for evaluation, a board exam will be conducted after tenth and twelfth standards.

The twelfth standard results will mark the end of school and welcome students for the under graduation. Education stage. The under-graduation courses will be of three or four years with multiple exit options. As in a student who successfully finishes the first year of under graduation course will be awarded a certificate, a diploma will be awarded to students who complete their second year of the course and a bachelor’s degree, after completing three

years of the course, successfully. The fourth year of the under-graduate programme is offered to students with research-oriented studies and also for major and minor in particular subjects. The next stage is the post-graduation stage, which is ideally a two years course but according to the New Education policy, students who enrolled themselves in four-year under-graduation programme will only have to study for one year to get their master's degree but those who completed their bachelors in three years, will have to dedicate two years for masters in any course. This post-graduation programme will be research oriented to strengthen student's competence in professional genres of studies.

The last but not the least stage is the research stage, which consists of research-oriented students, pursuing high quality research in the disciplines of their interests, be it a single core subject, a multidisciplinary subject or an interdisciplinary subject. The duration of this programme is three years with an extension of another year, if required by the student. During this course, the students will have to undergo eight credits coursework in teaching, education, pedagogy, related to their chosen subject for research. Also, the New Education policy dismantles the M.Phil degree, which saves a lot of time for students dedicated to research. Thus, a lot many changes can be witnessed in the newly formulated policy from that of 1986 policy, which is still in the run. As, the previous policy focused on the modernisation of Education sector, using information and technology. More attention was paid to teacher education, women's empowerment and adult literacy. The 1986 policy also believed that the autonomy of universities and institutes will improve the quality of education in academic space.

It was more or less successful in creating graduates with employability skills, however it failed to produce good quality research but there is always room for improvements by improvising the structure of Education system to yield maximum output. Thus, the New Education Policy takes progressive steps towards a holistic learning by encouraging a multidisciplinary approach towards Education which bursts the myth of considering few subjects superior to others, for instance Humanities and liberal Arts which were often looked down, when compared with sciences. It also proposes phasing out of all institutions, offering single streams and urging universities to become multidisciplinary by 2040. Although, the revised policy consists of a lot many favourable ideas for the overall development of an individual, society and the nation but Rome was not built in a day. The successful implementation of NEP 2020 would require few years, therefore there are no strict rules

regarding the implementation of policy. Flexibility is another good thing in the policy and the government has set a target of 2040 to ensure the success of the proposed policy. It has also been decided to appoint subject wise committee members from relevant ministries at both central and state level to develop implementation plans for each aspect of NEP 2020.

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