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A Critical Evaluation of National Education Policy 2020

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Abstract :

In today's era, education plays a deciding role in the development of society. Therefore, the framework of this reform is the revised National Education Policy 2020, has the potential to strengthen economic and social indicators while also laying the groundwork for a new education system in the country. There is still room for development here. Multidisciplinary universities and independent colleges are provided for under NEP 2020 to ensure excellent standards in higher education. The year 2020 was a remarkable one for nations all across the world. The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is one of the most significant developments in India after Covid19. Researchers have become increasingly interested in this issue since recommendations from a variety of committees have repeatedly called for increasing spending on education to 6 percent of GDP. The purpose of this study is to provide a detailed critique of National Education Policy 2020 and its core goals and priorities. It analyses the policy in depth and make recommendations to improve it and make it consistent with its predecessor, which in turn increases the policy's significance

Keywords : NEP 2020, Goals, Priorities,

The government's 66-page policy paper on education launched on July 29, 2020, covers all angle of the field. The document's stated goal is to turn India into a global knowledge power, and it makes several promises toward that end, including the dissemination of financial literacy and numeracy, the expansion of access to education at all levels, the recognition of teachers as the central figures in the educational process, the development of curricular coherence, and the guarantee of autonomy, good governance, and empowerment. These grand assertions are replete with Sanskrit terminology and allusions to India's sadly neglected scholarly heritage.

Anyone who skims the policy will be impressed by its attractive titles and phrases. As a collection of educational concepts, it is without a doubt an outstanding text, with many new ideas and restatements of ideas from previous policy papers. At first, I was encouraged by it, but then I realized that I had been taken away from the real educational world of students, faculties, and limitations to a realm of letters, acronyms, and prosaic imagination. After giving the policy my full attention, I noticed a number of discrepancies between the policy ideas and the actual state of education in India. In this short piece, we'll examine and demonstrate a few of the gaps in the NEP 2020. It doesn't take away from the many helpful suggestions that are made. Instead, it stresses the perils of writing such a large and ambitious paper.

There is limited space to destroy the system and start over when formulating policy ideas for a system that has been in existence for almost seven decades, despite its defects and inefficiencies. The older a system is, the less space for innovation there is because of the deep roots of various institutions and organizational structures and entrenched bureaucracy.

We shouldn't be afraid to shake things up in the name of progress, but we should be selective about what we try to change and what we want to fix or strengthen. As a result, a significant chunk of policymaking will include a reconstruction agenda that places a premium on improving, revamping, and reinventing the current system, in addition to setting realistic targets and outlining practical steps to get there. Naturally, this is harder than creating a whole new country with no preexisting basis. However, we can benefit from the lessons of the past by incorporating them into our reforms and innovations.

Our proposals can't be as useful or feasible as they might be without these lessons. They would also help us prioritize our efforts and resources. The current policy's authors, on the other hand, appear to have let their imaginations run wild in a world where money is no object, where highly motivated people are supported by a well-oiled administrative machine, and where cutting-edge technological devices and artificial intelligence algorithms are freely available to all. It is typical for a policy to set ambitious goals and imagine a brighter future. This may be seen as a good thing since it makes room for new ideas and approaches to enter the system. The existing educational system in India is too precarious to allow us to accomplish such lofty goals. Progress calls for both fixing the present and envisioning the future. Elegantly stated policy suggestions are unlikely to be implemented if the proposed policy does not effectively address the present situation, as has often been the case in the past.

The NEP 2020 paper begins off with a flashy illustration showing a complete overhaul of the current educational system. On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that this restructuring is purely theoretical, functioning as a pedagogical roadmap while the redesigned curricular framework is being created; as a result, the actual delivery mechanisms have not altered. The Constitution guarantees all citizens the right to a minimum duration of compulsory education, however the current framework of primary education has been weakened due to the focus put on the modified framework for curriculum development. After being called "the statutory linchpin for school regulation and governance" in the draft policy document, the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 has been completely pushed to the side.

Starting on page 3, the policy guarantees that all children will have access to high-quality, egalitarian childcare and schooling until the 12th grade. It's hard to take such promises seriously when the nation is struggling to offer even eight years of free and required education of adequate quality. I commend the efforts made to provide quality care and education to young children. Can we hope to launch a pedagogical revolution with the existing setup of under-resourced Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) centers, as the policy proposes? Forcing the replacement of anganawadi workers and volunteers with professionally trained and competent child educators who are rewarded correspondingly is impractical. The strategy may have been more helpful if it had prioritized and adequately funded efforts to modify the ICDS program's educational component. Similarly, the growing awareness of the problem of low levels of learning is encouraging. The problem's recommended remedies, however, seem a little strange.

Primary schools with learning problems are to blame for poor achievement, and this conclusion does not need specialist study. The answer, therefore, lies in improving primary schools by increasing access to learning materials and bolstering teaching and learning methods. Countless studies in India show that creative approaches to education implemented at the level of individual schools and classrooms can produce the desired results. It's not easy to see how establishing a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy or a national digital archive will help teachers successfully teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to their students in their native tongues. Instead, the strategy should concentrate on providing each primary school with the facilities, academic resources, and sufficient numbers of competent teachers that are mandated by the RTE Act. Regular primary school operations combined with good teacher assistance and oversight at the local level are the key, not national missions or digital repositories. The simple and basic nature of reading, writing, and arithmetic makes them impossible to teach and learn in the context of a national purpose centred on projects. In reality, this is something that should be routine for all classrooms and teachers.

The NEP has brought back several old ideas with minimal tweaks. One such suggestion is to emphasize vocational training from an early age. The 1950s suggestion along these lines was made by the Secondary Education Commission. Although it was intended that local work contexts and professionals would be utilized without schools having to rely solely on recruiting them, this experiment was abandoned after only a few years.

Since then, several committees have discussed the problem and offered solutions, but none has gained widespread support. Recent years have seen an uptick in efforts to revamp secondary schools to include more vocational training. Insufficient physical facilities and human resources have been consistently cited as the reason for the program's failure in the field. No one disputes the relevance and importance of combining the two, but there has to be much more reflection on the topic before it is formally introduced into classrooms. There has been a wide range of success in the creation of multi-school campuses around the country during the last half century. Due to the NEP's lack of self-reflection on the basis of past experience, the idea of reviving such plans is met with suspicion.

One distinguishing feature of NEP 2020 is its inclination to treat education in India as if it were a monolithic, statewide phenomenon. Neither does it effectively convey the complexity of the operating system in different states, nor do the plans take into account the varying levels of development of education among states. The educational system in India is fragmented. The inclusion of education on the concurrent list does not, however, eliminate the historical fact that has resulted in significant regional variations since there is no national system of education in India. Since there is no single, pan-Indian prescription, we need a national policy that can be adapted to different situations. Understanding the variety of contexts and expressing a pluralist approach are more important than focusing on details. The NEP looks to have serious flaws in this area. Proposals to restructure State Boards of Education and create enormous national organizations for higher education are examples of this move towards centralization and a narrow understanding of the role of education in the country as a whole. Many mistakes have been made in the past, and this includes the failure of many regulatory bodies.

In order to better plan, execute, and finance educational development efforts, the policy should analyze center-state interactions and lay forth the principles of cooperative action and cooperation. The NEP

proposes a beneficial change by severing ties between the Department of Education (Secretariat) and the Directorate of Education. However, this is not sufficient. There is an urgent need for a complete overhaul of the mostly colonial-era administrative structure, as well as the reformulation of various state-level laws and regulations. The NEP should have taken a broader stance on the matter, consulting with officials at all levels, from the ministry to the field and from the institution. In the final analysis, the administrative structure will be the deciding factor in whether or not implementation techniques succeed. Surprisingly, the policy merely makes passing mention of the need to revamp monitoring and administration. The planned evaluation and certification structures and regulatory agencies, such as the State School Standards Authority, seem to be exclusively responsible for improving the system's quality of operation. We must admit that these superstructures are useless without effective foundational administration and monitoring processes. In addition, it is well-established that excessive political influence in decision-making is closely linked to undesirable and unethical activities in school administration.

Despite the NEP's emphasis on individual agency, it remains silent on the place of government or governmental authorities in educational governance, especially at the university level. There are many far-out ideas for a better educational system for the next generation in the policy paper. There's good reason for this optimism about the future of education. However, the current situation calls for some moderation. In closing, two points should be stated. To begin, a national policy paper clearly states the state's position and informs the public of the goals of the present government. Establishing the agenda for reforming the public school system is a top priority. This agenda should contain a number of concrete measures.

The government takes a hands-on approach. Given India's unequal social structure and widening economic gap, where the poor and the marginalized continue to rely heavily on public assistance, this issue is of critical importance there as well. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to assume that the NEP gave proposals and actions related to these groups of people top priority, while still considering the country's overall development. Unfortunately, this perspective is severely lacking in the current policy. Second, in order to envision the future of education in India, policymakers must be creative and idealistic, and they cannot be constrained by the status quo. This, however, does not provide us the freedom to be idealistic and oblivious to the limits set by the social environment and economic capacities. Indian education needs a strategy that looks both far into the future and at the here and now, promising a new system with international standards. Do we have the right to assume that the policy will only make realistic promises? The idea to make India a worldwide knowledge giant by creating a top-tier educational system may seem fantastic and fully feasible to a certain subset of the Indian population. They probably have access to private resources that allow them to get there, leaving people at the bottom of the pyramid who depend on public assistance to try to climb a splintered ladder.

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