NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020:
THE ROAD AHEAD
(WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON NORTH-EAST INDIA)

Editors

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National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam

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FOREWORD

National Education Policy 2020 is a welcome change and a progressive step towards bringing a paradigm shift in higher education. The book by National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam on National Education Policy, entitled 'National Education Policy 2020: The Road Ahead (With Special Focus on North-East India)' is undoubtedly a positive development dispelling all negativities surrounding education. A subject of rightful entitlement, in liberal democratic governance, in India education is both an enabling and an empowering institution. National Education Policy, 2020 seeks to bring forth social transformation and conciliate the Indian educational ecosystem with developmental imperatives of the nation. In alignment with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), the NEP 2020 envisions an inclusive, equitable and quality education while accentuating the preservation and promulgation of Indian tradition and value systems in the education system. The NEP 2020 rightfully emphasizes on the fact that education ought not to focus on cognitive development of individuals alone, but on their social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions.

I am of the opinion that the book published by National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam would disseminate relevant information on the essence and implementation of NEP 2020, thereby generating public awareness on a very important subject. An array of senior authors and seasoned professors has contributed chapters on diversified issues and challenges with regard to the implementation of the NEP 2020, while denoting their qualitative inputs on the subject matter. Irrespective of choice involved therein, I find the chapters of the book well-articulated on their respective points of deliberation.

Contributors deserve appreciation for their efforts towards facilitating timely publication of this book, edited by Professor (Dr) V K. Ahuja, Professor (Dr) Debasis Poddar and their team, on the seventy-fifth anniversary year of lndia's independence- *Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav*- as it is being commemorated across the country.

These qualitatively competing chapters represent a wide range and diversified public perspective on the newly adopted policy. National Education Policy, 2020 is not a *de novo* venture: rather the same is an evolution of the preceding education policies of the country. The policy neither intends to radically depart from the legacy inherited from the educationists of the yore nor does it aspire for a tectonic shift in the education system prevalent in the country. In recent times, political economy across the world has undergone a visible shift, which has propelled India to recalibrate its policies, including education policy. In cognizance of the evolving global scenario, India has embraced New Economic Policy since 1991. Similarly, several policy regimes have undergone a metamorphosis in synergy with global trends. It is therefore, the opportune time for education policy regime to evolve in sync with the demands of the globalizing world, in order that India can keep pace with the global tenor in this regard. Some chapters of the book have been written with specific focus on the Northeast region, which I hope would provide requisite guidance to educationists engaged in early childhood care and education, school education, higher education as well as educational administrators of the region. I wish widest possible circulation of the book in order that all concerned stakeholder may gain an in-depth and nuanced understanding of the NEP, 2020 which is imperative for effective implementation of this espoused policy.

Prof. Jagdish Mukhi
Governor of Assam

PREFACE

In the contemporary chronicles of India, after New Economic Policy in 1991, no other public policy document has generated public debate to such extent; the way National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) did in recent times. Therefore, Centre for Law, Public Policy and Governance, an in-house think-tank under the umbrella of National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam, took this timely call, thereby driving for its maiden book published on NEP 2020; with emphasis upon post-adoption policy analysis vis-à-vis public education. This book project was undertaken in 2021 with default editorial intent to explore a holistic context of contemporary knowledge governance, including major reform experiments with public education as a societal institution and educational institutions- elementary, primary, secondary, higher education and, last yet not least, research, taken together- in the South-Asian subcontinent, e.g., colonial ambition of the foreign ruling regime, national aspiration of the public- of the gentry in particular- in British India, postcolonial imagination, neoliberal obligation, etc., thereby getting a fifth of the global population educated. With the given coverage of underlying history, politics, economics, sociology, pedagogy, and so on, behind hitherto public policy cycle, evolution of education policy in India depicts another grand narrative of India, the narrative of a revolution, to bring in societal transformation, towards epiphany of a newer civilization on its rise; thereby resembles *The Mahabharata*, albeit, vis-a-vis education. The series of education policy documents with a spectacular range from colonized India to globalized India, taken together, has composed a great grandeur of socialization by public education in modern India.

In this book, editors preferred objective issues of concern; not loaded with polemics of their own. A litmus test for academic research- while the same is spearheaded by public institutions in particular- lies in impartiality and integrity vis-a-vis research output; besides quality as a

non-negotiable criterion. A publication project of the Centre for Law, Public Policy and Governance, one major purpose of this book project is to collect and collate creative contributions from relevant stakeholders- engaged either in academics or in practice- for progressive development of myriad quarters of the education policy regime; from British India to date: access to education, equity in education, quality education, teleological ends of education (whether meant to generate employment, or enlightenment, or both, their permutation or combination, etc.), contents of public education, i.e., what to teach, also, at what level (curriculum, syllabus, etc.), methodology of public education (pedagogic praxis, i.e., how to teach), and the like. Besides, in NEP 2020, choice of genre available in public education earned the central focus. Accordingly, policy advocacy is extended for a paradigm shift towards cross-disciplinary methodology of education. Last but not the least, contemporary systemic issues of concern are floated in this book, i.e., simultaneous pursuit of multiple programmes in higher education, priority upon vocational education, mainstreaming online and distance education, spread of information and communication technology, early childhood care and education, to name a few among them. Taken together, little more than two-dozen chapters- included in this book- reflect major representative regions in the contemporary landscape of knowledge governance in India.

In a nutshell, through these chapters, authored by a vivid variety of contributors with a wide range, from veteran professors to vibrant professionals, what these editors extended is education policy advocacy vis-a-vis NEP 2020- new education policy document with previous legacy of a core public policy regime since 1882- in India. Beyond the discipline of education, besides technicality of the institution of education and educational institutions, with established linkages, few chapters explored international legal obligations of India to the World Trade Organization; the trade agency to keep international trade afloat for its states parties across the world. Also, contradiction between education as another entitlement under Sustainable Development Goals, 2015 (SDG-4) and education as another variant of services under General Agreement on Trade in

Services (GATS) resurfaced in several chapters of this book. With its stake in the GATT regime on one side and in the SDG regime on the other, India has reached critical crossroads of its tryst with destiny; so far as knowledge governance is concerned. Also, no less critical is the tension between Anglicist and Orientalist Schools of educational thought; something enough to put the given momentum of the reform movement to gross jeopardy.

We are privileged to present maiden book of the Centre, also, another piece of publication of the University, titled 'National Education Policy 2020: The Road Ahead (With Special Focus on North-East India)' with full confidence in good faith that these chapters- contributed by academicians and practitioners alike- earn widespread appreciation of the learned readership including those engaged in public policy cycle in general and in education policy implementation in particular. Besides, we welcome constructive feedback from the learned readership around to generate mutual exchange of ideas and opinions on all relevant issues and challenges vis-à-vis implementation of National Education Policy; followed by means and methods to address the same in time ahead. Last yet not least, public discussion on technical knowhow in the nitty-gritty-followed by application- to get implementation of the policy accelerated towards the making of a knowledge society for newer India in time ahead.

September 30, 2022   Prof. (Dr.) V. K. Ahuja
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DISCLAIMER

The authors carry whole and sole liability for statements written in their respective chapters. Editors and members of Editorial Committee remain indemnified and cannot be held jointly and severally liable anyway.

INTRODUCTION

The genesis of forthcoming edited book- a collation of essays by veterans in diverse domains of pedagogy and knowledge governance- was embedded in National Education Policy; adopted by Government of India on 29th July, 2020. Also, voices of relatively newer generation- engaged either in dissemination of existing knowledge or in production of newer knowledge- has received appreciation with due weightage. Since then, transformation was initiated by all sundry regulating agencies to bring in a paradigm shift- from the postcolonial to the globalized- across the board to get India graduated to poles-apart times; compared to that of education policy documents; adopted way back in 1968 and 1986 respectively. As a societal institution and all sundry educational institutions taken together, with the passage of time, education- higher education in particular- underwent the metamorphosis; more so since adoption of New Economic Policy towards liberalization-privatization-globalization. The replacement of liberalism by neoliberalism has left its lasting impact upon knowledge governance as well. A new policy, therefore, was imperative to reflect the roadmap in time ahead. Thus, National Education Policy of 2020 resembles a clarion call of the time in an increasingly globalized India.

The contemplation for a book was conceptualized by the authors while- even after a year from the date of adoption of National Education Policy- parochial public debate continued to keep the very issue vis-à-vis adoption afloat with a static inertia while the timeline for policy implementation suffered from want of drive; similar to populist politics played out earlier as speed-breaker toward implementation of National Policy of education in 1986. By coincidence, Centre for Law, Public Policy and Governance was established in 2021 as inhouse thinktank to add value toward cross-disciplinary potential of National Law University and Judicial Academy Assam; after the legacy of a state-sponsored resource centre: named Delhi School of Public Policy and Governance; under the aegis of University of Delhi. This edited book-

a collation of essays on National Education Policy 2020 in general and implementation of its building blocks in particular- was adopted as the maiden project of this Centre with immediate effect; something culminated in publication of the book two years after adoption of the education policy; a long-pending project to bring in reforms. More than policy, several authors unfolded myriad means and methods vis-à-vis implementation, in minute detail, with special focus on North-East India. At the same time, generic chapters contributed towards implementation of the policy in several spheres toward roadmap with national coverage. The editors thereby intended to serve two-fold purpose of the project. While generic chapters are meant to draw roadmap for the practitioners across the country, region-specific chapters are meant to focus on issues and challenges of the institution of education and educational institutions in and around North-East India.

In the age of globalization, education is subjected to a puzzling paradox. While education has had its roots to the indigenous knowledge system, education ought to merge with functional synergy of the global standards; so far as the technical nitty-gritty of institutional education is concerned. In NEP-2020, effort is on to strike optimal balance between these two trends; otherwise charged by reverse inertia. The concurrent quest for Indian Knowledge System and global standards, therefore, keep their presence felt time and again.

Thus, effort towards resurrection of local languages- including Sanskrit as original legacy of indigenous heritage- and revival of ancient literature including epics as original legacy of regional culture for the subcontinent demonstrates pledge of the policy towards localization. At the same time, however, minute enterprise is apparent towards globalization of education- higher education in particular- in the newer India on its rise; irrespective of politicized hyperbole against the policy regime. The following agenda, for instance, belong to no ideologue politics: Academic Bank of Credits, Multidisciplinary Institutions, Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit, Common University Entrance Test, Revision in Curriculum on Life Skills, Credit Framework by SWAYAM, Internationalization of Higher Education, Research and

Development Cells in HEIs, Accessibility Guidelines and Standards for HEIs, Revision on Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), Pursuit of two academic programmes simultaneously, National Higher Education Qualification Framework, Education with Online and Distance Learning, Unification of education under inclusive regulatory agency, Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign HEIs, Minimum Standards and Procedure for the Award of Ph.D. degree, Internship/ Apprenticeship-embedded Degree Programmes, Framework for Global Citizenship Education in Higher Education, last yet not least, Technology-enabled Enterprise Resource Planning towards solution for governance of HEIs, etc.; to name few among them. This inclusive reform inventory ought not to be mistaken as exclusive thought of Professor Kasturirangan and his team. On the contrary, the education policy document of 2020 is culmination of plenty of tributaries in specific context of developments around the world after adoption of the previous policy document of 1986. For instance, essence of National Knowledge Commission (2005-2014) is traceable in the new education policy document; so far as the wisdom for e-governance, skill development, inclusive growth, quality of Ph.D., political economy of education, and the like.

Indeed, reform initiatives- towards localization and globalization alike- are alleged with respective ideologue agenda of their own, they possess potential prudence to their credit. While localization has had its genesis to the Orientalist movement since British India, praxis of globalization was on with default aspiration for modernization (read Westernization) through legacy of the Anglicist movement since then. Even if localization may be politicized to trace right-wing agenda through sublime realpolitik toward revival of the ancient tradition, quest of the people of the Republic for default cultural heritage - irrespective of right-wing political innuendo- constitutes cultural rights; appurtenant to human rights. On the contrary, globalization was but a policy choice adopted by the mainstream centrist regime in India, way back in 1991, and accepted by successive governments afterwards; without estoppel anyway.

As an emerging economy, India is left with no other option but to march with the globalized world, more so while several states-similarly situated- preferred likewise and subsequently prospered with development goals. For instance, all others in the **BRICS** family, e.g., Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa, may be cited to this end. The reform agenda vis-à-vis structural adjustment carry potential benefit through the merger of native higher education institutions with all foreign higher education institutions worldwide; governed by globalized standard operating procedure. Earlier the prudence vis-à-vis knowledge governance percolates to the grassroots of the public appears better for the Republic. A challenge of the given moment for India, therefore, lies in getting its present population- the largest vis-à-vis global youth population- capitalized and thereby bringing in the momentum to build a knowledge society; thereby taking the people of India out of the perils of poverty syndrome.

To quote Tagore:
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.
<div align="right">(Gitanjali 35)</div>

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CONTENTS

Chapter - 1

NEP 2020 ON TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH LIBERALIZATION OF DISCIPLINARY DIVIDES

*Dilip Ukey**
*Adithya A. Variath***

I. Introduction

Government and policymakers often speculate that India is developing and restructuring its models of governance to be a global superpower. This ambition of a nation-state requires remodeling both its economic structure and knowledge capital. In the twenty-first century, this idea of holistic development depends on strengthening institutional frameworks.[1] In this context, the education and knowledge sector become an important point of governance. In 2019, the Government of India, Human Resource Development Ministry uploaded on its website the draft National Education Policy with a vision to improve education in the country. The draft received critical attention from all segments of society, predominantly because of the inclusion of the controversial language policy. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) prepared by the Dr. K Kasturirangan Committee is one of the most widely-consulted reports on education since 1986. The NEP is only a policy document and not a law. The implementation of the policy and its proposals depend on its

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[1] Adam Szirmai, *Education and development*, in THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIO - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: AN INTRODUCTION 213–254 (2005). *See* Caroline Sarojini Hart, *Education, Capabilities and Sustainable Development*, in NEW FRONTIERS OF THE CAPABILITY APPROACH 617–642 (Flavio Comim, Shailaja Fennell, & P. B. Anand eds., 2018).

enforcement by both States and the Centre as education falls under the concurrent list.

NEP 2020 as a policy document is of great significance in the present era as it calls for radical reforms in the present system of education. The last National Education Policy of India was formulated in 1986, which was further amended to keep its pace with recent developments in 1992.[2] NEP 2020 as a public policy instrument also influences universal access to quality education for the large youth population. NEP is also drafted to streamline our policy in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the United Nations Agenda 2030.[3] Goal 4 deals with "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". Papia Sengupta argues that "the NEP provides the ground on which the education structure, objective, and the future of the young minds of India is to be built. The government has remarked that the new education policy marks a notable shift from "what to think" to "how to think" in the digital age. Claiming that the NEP lays a foundation for a "new India," Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi opined that it will promote imagination by moving away from "herd mentality". The new policy underlines the need for online and digital platforms in teaching-learning and stresses a multidisciplinary and "forward-looking vision" with a "light but tight" approach under a single centralized regulator, that is, the National Higher Education Commission."[4] The global agenda to develop education in the context of sustainable development is an effort to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030.

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[2] *See also* Carey A. Watt, *Education for National Efficiency: Constructive Nationalism in North India, 1909–1916*, 31 MOD. ASIAN STUD. 339–374 (1997). *See also* Kenneth J. Meier & Anita Dhillon, *Gender and the State Politics of Policy Implementation in Education: The Interaction of Bureaucratic and Legislative Representation in India*, ST. POL. & POL'Y Q. 1–27 (2022); *See also* CHARLES EDWARD TREVELYAN, ON THE EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA (2011).

[3] UNGA, TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD: THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (2015), https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf.

[4] Papia Sengupta, *NEP 2020 and the Language-in-Education Policy in India: A Critical Assessment*, 56(43) ECON. & POL. WKLY. (2021).

Among other ideas that are discussed in the NEP, one of the most important points of discussion is the scheme to develop interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary models of education. In the early 2000s, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary education were characterized as a radical innovation in mainstream liberal education. The vision of NEP is to ensure that by 2040, all higher education institutions (hereinafter "HEIs") shall become multidisciplinary institutions. Part II of the present NEP specifically deals with 'Higher Education' and talks about 'Towards a More Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education'.

In this chapter, the authors study this specific aspect of NEP to analyze how an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary model can enhance the value of education in India. The chapter exposes the acute problems faced in Indian universities due to lack of an interdisciplinary approach wherein students are less exposed to holistic models of research and teaching. The chapter draws inference from the existing models of legal education and contextualizes upon the importance of developing interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary pedagogy in law schools in India.

II. NEP and Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Education: Objectives and Initiatives

In 1937, Einstein wrote, "All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree."[5] Knowledge of all humankind stems from common sources and the holistic education model requires reading some of these sources together. The NEP envisions an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary model predominantly to enhance larger student enrolments and for optimal use of infrastructure and resources. In innovation and research, greater emphasis is given to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary models of education across the world. Some universities are also developing both these models to enhance its term as "trans-disciplinary" which would be more comprehensive in nature.

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[5] ALBERT EINSTEIN, THE EINSTEIN READER 7 (2006).

These approaches are increasingly emphasized in research, education, and policy. Both these neologisms have to be interpreted and developed in a way that it could be contextual in the Indian system. Choic and Pak define interdisciplinarity as "interdisciplinarity analyses, synthesizes, and harmonizes links between disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole."[6]

They also used the terms "additive, interactive, and holistic to define multiple disciplines' collaborative efforts." In terms of academic research and teaching, "collaboration can be multi, inter-, and transdisciplinary, according to varying degrees and levels of collaboration. For example, multidisciplinarity draws on knowledge from different disciplines, it stays within their boundaries. Interdisciplinarity analyses, synthesizes and harmonizes links between disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole. On the other hand, trans-disciplinarity integrates the natural, social, and health sciences in a humanities context, and transcends their traditional boundaries."[7]

NEP 2020 in different parts of the document mandates to use of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary models for the creation of a vibrant academic community. However, this vision is a continuous long process. It would require training of teachers, developing infrastructure and investing in resources in this aspect. Another major challenge is to increase student strength to the desired levels. Historically, ancient India has had a significant tradition of developing holistic and multidisciplinary learning and teaching systems. NEP too draws references from universities in ancient India like Takshashila and Nalanda, famous for developing and combining subjects across fields.[8]

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[6] B.C. Choi & A.W. Pak, *Multidisciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity in Health Research, Services, Education and Policy: 1. Definitions, Objectives, and Evidence of Effectiveness*, 29(6) CLINICAL & INVESTIGATIVE MED. 351–364 (2006).

[7] *Ibid. See* M. H. Guimaraes et al., *Who is doing inter- and transdisciplinary research, and why? An empirical study of motivations, attitudes, skills, and behaviours*, FUTURES, 112 (2019). *See also* G. H. Hadorn et al., *The Emergence of Transdisciplinarity as a Form of Research*, *in* HANDBOOK OF TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH (G. H. Hadorn et al. eds., 2008).

[8] *See also* Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (2020), 36 https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf.:

A. Integrating Disciplines with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

The NEP under the broader theme of 'Towards a More Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education' also emphasizes on integration of multiple disciplines with core subjects like Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Part 11.2. of the NEP states: "Assessments of educational approaches in undergraduate education that integrate the humanities and arts with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) have consistently showed positive learning outcomes, including increased creativity and innovation, critical thinking and higher-order thinking capacities, problem-solving abilities, teamwork, communication skills, more in depth learning and mastery of curricula across fields, increases in social and moral awareness, etc., besides general engagement and enjoyment of learning. Research is also improved and enhanced through a holistic and multidisciplinary education approach."[9] This approach of integrated courses or integrated models for holistic education will be developed for all undergraduate programmes including professional, technical, and vocational disciplines.

Undergraduate courses integrating humanities with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics also make the curricular structures more flexible. It also enables creative combinations of

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11. Towards a More Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education Ancient Indian literary works such as Banabhatta's Kadambari described a good education as knowledge of the 64 Kalaas or arts; and among these 64 'arts' were not only subjects, such as singing and painting, but also 'scientific 'fields, such as chemistry and mathematics, 'vocational' fields such as carpentry and clothes-making, 'professional 'fields, such as medicine and engineering, as well as 'soft skills' such as communication, discussion, and debate. The very idea that all branches of creative human endeavour, including mathematics, science, vocational subjects, professional subjects, and soft skills should be considered 'arts', has distinctly Indian origins. This notion of a 'knowledge of many arts' or what in modern times is often called the 'liberal arts' (i.e., a liberal notion of the arts) must be brought back to Indian education, as it is exactly the kind of education that will be required for the 21st century.

See also Makarand Paranjape, *The Tale of an Indian Education: The Silver Pilgrimage*, *in* ANOTHER CANON: INDIAN TEXTS AND TRADITIONS IN ENGLISH 51–60 (2009).

[9] *Ibid.*

multiple disciplines. Effective implementation of this policy also mandates the universities to develop multiple entry and exit points. At the master's, doctoral or post-doctoral levels in multidisciplinary universities, the curriculum shall be evolved to provide opportunities for multidisciplinary work and research. It shall also trickle down to develop an efficient workforce in areas including academia, government, and industry. As the policy notes in Part 11.6, "Large multidisciplinary universities and colleges will facilitate the move towards high-quality holistic and multidisciplinary education. Flexibility in curriculum and novel and engaging course options will be on offer to students, in addition to rigorous specialization in a subject or subjects."[10] These broad themes envisioned in the policy to be a success requires the institutions to invest heavily in faculties. The policy also encourages institutional autonomy for universities to respond to timely needs in setting curricula. Part 11.6 also emphasizes on the aspect of pedagogy that is to be developed. It states "pedagogy will have an increased emphasis on communication, discussion, debate, research, and opportunities for cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking."[11]

B. Developing Value-based Training Models

Para 11.7 of the NEP 2020 provides that "Departments in Languages, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Indology, Art, Dance, Theatre, Education, Mathematics, Statistics, Pure and Applied Sciences, Sociology, Economics, Sports, Translation and Interpretation, and other such subjects needed for a multidisciplinary, stimulating Indian education and environment will be established and strengthened at all HEIs."[12] NEP envisions developing credit-based Bachelor's Degree programmes for these subjects. The curriculum shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education. For example, "environment education will

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[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] *Ibid.*

include areas such as climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, management of biological resources and biodiversity, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development and living."

NEP also emphasizes on value-based education. NEP in Part 11.8 lays down that "Value-based education will include the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal human values of truth (*satya*), righteous conduct (*dharma*), peace (*shanti*), love (*prem*), nonviolence (*ahimsa*), scientific temper, citizenship values, and also life-skills; lessons in seva/service and participation in community service programmes will be considered an integral part of a holistic education." NEP also focuses on Global Citizenship Education, a policy response to contemporary global challenges. Students at HEIs shall be provided opportunities for externship and internship opportunities with faculty and researchers. NEP also suggests "students should work at their own or other HEIs/research institutions, so that students may actively engage with the practical side of their learning and, as a by-product, further improve their employability."[13]

III. Integrating the Disciplines: Structuring Curricula and Developing Multidisciplinary Pedagogy

One of the most important structural changes that is needed is to work on the structure and length of degree programmes. Para 11.9 suggests that an "undergraduate degree will be of either 3-year or 4-year duration, with multiple exit options within this period, with appropriate certifications, e.g., a certificate after completing 1 year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas, or a diploma after 2 years of study, or a Bachelor's degree after a 3-year programme." This allows students to cross-work on any other areas of any discipline and then merges it after their regular degree/diploma programme. It would

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[13] *See also* V. Narain, *Value Education: A Humanist's View*, 22(1) INDIA INT'L CENTRE Q. 165–176 (1995).

also lead to the development of an inclusive knowledge system. In this context, NEP suggests that "pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable."

The report also suggests that "the 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme, however, shall be the preferred option since it allows the opportunity to experience the full range of holistic and multidisciplinary education in addition to a focus on the chosen major and minors as per the choices of the student. An 'Academic Bank of Credit' (ABC) shall be established which would digitally store the academic credits earned from various recognized HEIs so that the degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into account credits earned. The 4-year programme may also lead to a degree 'with Research' if the student completes a rigorous research project in their major area(s) of study as specified by the HEI." A major problem with respect to this idea is developing a digital 'Academic Bank of Credit' and how well it could be integrated into the system. Emphasis on research can also lead to the development of research components in universities.

NEP 2020 has also evolved a scheme for HEIs to offer the flexibility of Master's programmes.[14] The NEP also calls for establishing model public universities for holistic and multidisciplinary education. The idea is to develop these institutions at par with IITs, and IIMs to be in sync with global standards in quality education for multidisciplinary education across India. NEP has termed them as

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[14] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (2020), https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf.: The NEP suggests in Part 11.10 that "(a) there may be a 2-year programme with the second year devoted entirely to research for those who have completed the 3-year Bachelor 's programme; (b) for students completing a 4-year Bachelor 's programme with Research, there could be a 1-year Master's programme; and (c) there may be an integrated 5-year Bachelor's/Master's programme. Undertaking a Ph.D. shall require either a Master's degree or a 4-year Bachelor's degree with Research. The M.Phil. programme shall be discontinued."

MERUs, i.e., Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities. NEP in Para 11.12 suggests that "HEIs will focus on research and innovation by setting up start-up incubation centres; technology development centres; centres in frontier areas of research; greater industry-academic linkages; and interdisciplinary research including humanities and social sciences research."[15] These initiatives shall also help the Government's policies on innovation and entrepreneurship.

The NEP also makes pointed references to institutions of ancient India such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabhi to give historical references to support the vision of multidisciplinary teaching and research. NEP calls for "the need to bring back this great Indian tradition to create well-rounded and innovative individuals, and which is already transforming other countries educationally and economically."[16] NEP also specifically states that "A university will mean a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate programmes, with high-quality teaching, research, and community engagement." This makes it mandatory for universities to indulge in multi-disciplinary courses.

A. Teacher Education

Teacher preparation becomes an important component in multidisciplinary knowledge systems. Focus has to be given to faculty development initiatives that require multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge formation. In this context, NEP suggests that "teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions including tribal traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest advances in education and pedagogy." To improve the integrity and credibility of teachers, NEP has also formulated the Regulatory

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[15] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (2020), https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf.: In addition to that, "HEIs will develop specific hand holding mechanisms and competitions for promoting innovation among student communities. The NRF will function to help enable and support such a vibrant research and innovation culture across HEIs, research labs, and other research organizations."

[16] *See Supra* Note 8.

System. The system shall as per NEP be empowered to take strong action against teacher education institutions which offer substandard and dysfunctional teaching patterns.

The NEP in Para 5.30 'Approach to Teacher Education' mentions that, "by 2030, only educationally sound, multidisciplinary, and integrated teacher education programmes shall be in force. As teacher education requires multidisciplinary inputs, and education in high-quality content as well as pedagogy, all teacher education programmes must be conducted within composite multidisciplinary institutions. To this end, all multidisciplinary universities and colleges - will aim to establish, education departments which, besides carrying out cutting-edge research in various aspects of education, will also run B.Ed. programmes, in collaboration with other departments such as psychology, philosophy, sociology, neuroscience, Indian languages, arts, music, history, literature, physical education, science and mathematics."

B. Interdisciplinary Education

According to the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE 1995) "educational experiences are more authentic and of greater value to students when the curricula reflect real life, which is multi-faceted rather than being compartmentalized into neat subject-matter packages." This conclusion is based on the assumption that problems are mostly complex, so no single discipline alone can resolve these issues. There is a need to explore the interfaces of different disciplines that synergise research and analysis. For example, in India, the problems faced by marginalised students cannot be adequately addressed by a monodisciplinary approach. In cases relating to peculiar issues like this, interdisciplinary education can enhance solutions to social issues and helps students to study society and its externalities more holistically.

IV. Implementation Problems and Future Challenges

Critics have raised concerns about how the NEP has been drafted and many of these criticisms revolve around the aspect of the implementation of the many ambitious programmes. In this context, Gopal Guru argues "Many people have chosen to see the novelty in the new National Education Policy that has been recently announced by the Central Government, while others, understandably, have expressed their skepticism, about the lofty claims the policymakers have made about it. One point that should draw our attention in this debate is the retention of some concepts within and across disciplinary boundaries. One, however, is still left guessing about which concepts from the proposed syllabus have been retained and which have been dropped."[17]

In 2018, the Pratham - Annual Status of Education Report highlighted "India's dismal record on the quality of education that is available: 73% of class 8 children cannot read beyond class 2 level material, and only 44% of them are able to solve basic arithmetic."[18] Despite the Right to Education Act in force, educational infrastructure has been in a bad shape. Education has also largely remained outside the scope of political messaging during elections until recently.

Disha Nawani in her article "Right to Education: Are We on the Right Track?" argues "One of the primary reasons why the RtE Act has failed to achieve its goals is that there are no dedicated financial resources for its implementation. Even when the Act was passed, it was not accompanied by a financial memorandum to ensure the availability of the requisite financial resources for its implementation. Additionally, budgetary allocations to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the primary body for implementing the Act, have witnessed a gradual decline (from ₹23,873 crores in 2012–13 to ₹22,500 crores in 2015–16)."[19] It is also alarming to study the lack of data available on marginalised

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[17] Gopal Guru, *Can Concepts Cross Disciplinary Boundaries?*, 55 (32) ECON. & POL. WKLY. (2020).

[18] 13TH ANNUAL STATUS OF EDUCATION REPORT (ASER)- 2018, ASER CENTRE (2019).

[19] Disha Nawani, *Right to Education: Are We on the Right Track?,* 52(31) ECON. & POL. WKLY. (2017).

communities who have gained benefits under training scheme. Scholars have also noted that "even as the National Education Policy, 2020 talks of accessibility, there are too many visions in the document that would not allow that. It seeks to build skills for traditional vocations and for the global market. This is structured with a vision that deepens the inequalities of caste, class and gender by focusing on two types of citizens. With no vision to sustain the environment, tribal education is also weakened. Accessibility is deeply associated with the nature of knowledge."[20]

This issue becomes pivotal in the case of law schools and especially National Law Universities. National Law Universities are specialized law Universities set up to teach and train law. However, law schools are experimenting with ideas to develop interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary courses like M.A., M.B.A and integrated courses. Law is a field that is closed intertwingled with economics, history, sociology, etc.; law schools have a responsibility to set up different departments and develop new courses in this line.

V. Conclusion

All India Survey of Higher Education 2019-20 noted that "there are 1,043 universities in India, of which about half are general universities while the other half are universities across various specializations like technology, medicine, agriculture, law, and management."[21] According to reports there are around 45,000 colleges in India. Of this, around 40,000 colleges are affiliated colleges. There is a need to enhance multidisciplinarity in the context of single-domain universities and give autonomy to affiliated colleges. In 2022, the University Grants Commission (UGC) formulated 'Draft Guidelines for Transforming Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) into Multidisciplinary Institutions'.

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[20] Yemuna Sunny, *National Education Policy 2020: Realigning the Bhadralok,* 56(10) ECON. & POL. WKLY. (2021).

[21] ALL INDIA SURVEY ON HIGHER EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (2021).

The concept note of the Draft Guidelines also makes reference to NEP and notes that "by 2035 all affiliated colleges should become degree-awarding multidisciplinary autonomous institutions, it is necessary to develop a road map to transform all affiliated colleges to attain the status, either alone or through collaboration with nearby institutions in the form of clusters or to become a constituent part of a university."[22] The draft guidelines address issues relating to removing disciplinary boundaries, developing dual degree programmes and integrated programmes across departments. Stand-alone universities have to move to become multidisciplinary institutions to offer holistic education. This would require a significant investment of resources by Governments. The changes suggested are radical, however, the transformation would be slow and evolutionary in nature.

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[22] DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIS) INTO MULTIDISCIPLINARY INSTITUTIONS, UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION (2022).

PERSPECTIVE VIEWS ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA AND NEP 2020

*Alak K Buragohain**

I. The Background

Policy debates on higher education in a country as diverse and large as India is a complex and formidable exercise. The multicultural societal fabric of the country with many different languages and dialects present challenges in formulating a uniform policy on education. India is an ancient civilization and is endowed with unique and a rich heritage built on an engagement in a deeper probe of life and the universe thousands of years ago. This is a heritage unique to the Indian knowledge system that cannot be consigned to the realm of history alone. While framing the national policy for the country the above aspects constitute an undeniable perspective. Also, the long colonial rule of India, marked by exploitation, deprivation and denials and persecution, spanning a few hundred years from the fifteenth century adds yet another dimension that influenced the aspiration of the Indians for education in an independent country soon after the country gained her freedom seventy-five years ago.

Juxtaposing the above perspective is the present scenario of what is often described as 'Knowledge Explosion', and the national and global efforts for creating a 'Knowledge-Based society' is unfolding yet another dimension in the way knowledge is generated, stored, delivered, and accessed in the education system. The rapid advancement and wider penetration of technology in higher education, greater aspiration for and affordance of higher education, emergence of innovative pedagogical technologies are bringing in paradigm shifts in

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the ecosystems of higher education institutions globally. Policy prescription for higher education is expected to address the issues of how the country's higher education system leverages on pedagogical innovation, educational technologies, and accreditation in molding our future citizens and in creating knowledge together with the other institutions and stakeholders.

As we transition into the fourth phase of the industrial revolution- the 'Industry 4.0', education as a whole and specifically higher education is confronted with both challenges and opportunities that are perhaps unprecedented in human history.

II. The Philosophy and the Vision of the NEP 2020

The acceptance of the NEP 2020, signals sweeping and radical changes in the realm of education across the broad spectrum ranging from the pre-primary to the tertiary level education in the country. The policy considers the tremendous explosion of knowledge, unprecedented development in technology, the infinite opportunities awaiting the youth of the country in the wake of the industry 4.0, the gross inequity with respect to access to education by vast proportion of the youth, the inadequacy of the present education system in extending dignified livelihood to the students, invaluable heritage of the ancient Indian knowledge system and the crisis of values in the society. These considerations of the NEP 2020 are reflected with illuminating clarity in the Vision Statement of the Kasturirangan Committee in the NEP 2020, which may be elaborated as follows:

> "This National Education Policy aims at building a global best education rooted in Indian ethos and aligned with the principles of flexibility, multidisciplinarity, understanding, critical and creative thinking, ethics, human and constitutional values, capacity building in teachers, good governance and autonomy, respect for diversity, equity and inclusivity and outstanding research- transforming India into a global knowledge superpower."

As a way forward for the effective implementation of the NEP 2020, an attempt is made on the analysis of the past, present and the future perspectives that constitute the broad canvas of the scenario of higher education in India.

III. Past Perspectives

The inauguration of higher education in modern India was through establishment of three universities, one in each Presidency, viz., University of Calcutta, University of Bombay and University of Madras in 1857. There is a general impression that education in British India through these universities were to create resources that would cater to the needs of the British in their governance and business. A comprehensive analysis of the state of higher education in early twentieth century India can be obtained from the five-volume report of the Calcutta University Commission. Professor Michael E. Sadler, the then Vice Chancellor of the University of Leeds, the UK was appointed as the Chairperson of the Commission in 1917 by the Government of India to study and report on the problems of Calcutta University. The other members of the commission were Sir Ashutosh Mukherji and Sir Ziauddin Ahamad. Mukherji was Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University and Ahamad, an eminent mathematician of international repute who served three terms as the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University. The 'Calcutta University Report', contained exhaustive analysis of higher education provided by University of Calcutta. The report evoked widespread interest in the global academic community so much so that the reputed scientific journal Nature published an extensive discussion on the report (Reports of the Calcutta University Commission, E. Denison Ross, Nature 104, 537-539, 1920). The Asiatic Review in its April issue of 1920 also published a comprehensive review of the Calcutta University Report. In this elaborate review, the author J.D. Anderson highlighted upon a number of issues relating to the contemporary higher education system. Especially pertinent even in today's context is the matriculation examination that was in place for selecting the vast number of students to university education. Anderson describes matriculation examination

as the "largest and probably the worst examination of its kind in the world". Twenty-two thousands of the 26,000 students who took admission into the colleges under Calcutta University "do not fit them for any but administrative, clerical, teaching and (indirectly) legal career." Very few students opted for studying subjects like Physics, Medicine, and such other professional courses. The most damning observation of the report is about the quality of teaching. The report describes the 700 odd schools of the Bengal Province, from where the students had come through the matriculation examination as "Cramming Shops". In the intermediate colleges that prepared students through lectures crammed for the university education "in subjects which demanded a retentive memory rather than an ingenious healthily developed intelligence." About the kind of teaching in the colleges, referring to the report, Anderson stated- "The lectures in Calcutta were, frankly, cram lectures, intended to enable students to pass examinations rather than to evoke their latent love of learning. That with the study of textbooks (largely by rote) was the sort of training the ordinary graduates got". Continuing further Anderson quoted- "Think of the admirable material that must have been wasted, where you consider their performances of these where natural talent and love of learning prompted them to supplement such arid nutriment by reading and the friendly aid of harassed and overworked teachers." What is remarkable is that even after more than one hundred years, we still find ourselves in the same scenario. The overarching emphasis in the NEP 2020 about getting rid of 'Rote Learning' by our students is so pathetically real and relevant. The other comment in the report about the university and college teachers as the 'harassed and overworked teachers' is also not to be dismissed in today's context as well. There was serious concern in the report about the conduct of the matriculation examination in English- a language alien to the Indian students. It expressed doubt about the effectiveness of measuring the learning outcome of the students being measured in English.

Regarding the special emphasis on the indigenous languages in the NEP-2020, reference may be drawn to the Calcutta University Commission's observation. Anderson in his review of the report in the

Asiatic Society remarked- "In matters of oriental learning and especially in the study of the modern Indian languages of India, the Indian universities have failed to supply means of study to their own children and especially to foreigners".

Another finding of the Calcutta University Report that is still prevalent today is that of inequity. The Sadler Commission states that "majority of the students were of the three great literary castes-Brahmans, Vaidyas and Kayasdthas. Not only were the lower the indigenous castes, Namasadras and other grievously lacking but the Mohammedans who in Bengal are more than half the population were present in small numbers."

The fact that NEP 2020 has a compelling urgency to focus on removing social inequalities and inequities in the sphere of education in today's India is a sad reflection on our socio-political and economic culture even after 100 years of the Calcutta University Report.

The perspectives of higher education in Bengal province decades before we became independent, as reflected in the Calcutta University Commission report, has a telling image of a perpetuating scenario. It tells us in no uncertain terms that 75 years on after independence, we can never afford to live on with the hundred-year-old legacy of the aforesaid maladies afflicting our higher education, when today we poised for leaping forward to industry 4.0. The NEP 2020 is a strong reiteration of this hard reality. There is no way today except for implementing the NEP-2020 in its letter and spirit such that we can free the nation from these debilitating limitations in our education system.

IV. Education in Post-Independent India

As soon as India gained independence from the colonial rules of the British, there was an imperative need to recast the education policy for the free nation. The Government of India constituted the first ever commission of independent India- named, the University

Education Commission in 1948 with Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan as Chairperson. Professor Radhakrishnan, an eminent scholar, philosopher, the Vice Chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University and the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics at the University of Oxford was the second President of India. The 10 member Commission had among others, Professor Meghnad Saha, D.Sc, F.R.S., Palit Professor of Physics and the Dean of Faculty of Science, University of Calcutta, Professor Laksmanaswami Mudaliar, D.Sc., LL.D., D.C.L, F.R.C/O.G, F.A.S.C., Vice Chancellor of the University of Madras and Professor Zakir Hussain, the former Vice Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University and the third President of India. There were two American and one British educationists on the commission. The Radhakrishnan Committee described universities as "*organs of civilization*". The commission made strong recommendations for the autonomy of the universities and for determining the center-state relation in education. In a way, the Radhakrishnan Committee laid down the philosophical foundation of higher education in India. The rote learning based examination centric education, devoid of wisdom and knowledge, love for higher values in life, had been a major concern of the Commission and it recommended studies on comparative religious education to highlight on the unity of all religions and on educating our students about our great spiritual heritage. Radhakrishnan Commission's emphasis on enabling the students to get adjusted to the Indian society and focus on social order in the curriculum had its pointer on the detached societal realities in our education system. In the NEP 2020 we witness the reiteration of both these critical aspects of higher education in today's context. The emphasis on general education, liberal education, and vocational education within a flexible educational system was recommended by the Commission. A major recommendation of the Radhakrishnan committee was an emphasis to be given on education in agriculture. As reflected in the NEP 2020, the emphasis on all these remains undiminished.

In 1964 the Government of India constituted the National Education Commission with Dr. D.S. Kothari as the Chairperson and

17 other members. The commission, known as the Kothari commission, recommended several major steps to the Government that included structural changes in governance, curriculum and syllabus, vocational education and finance for education. The Kothari Commission recommended a major prescription for vocational education in our education system and reemphasized agriculture education. The underpinning philosophy of the Kothari Commission recommendation was to direct the education system for national reconstruction and for instilling moral and spiritual values. The Kothari Commission recommended the 10+2+3 system in our education and stressed upon reducing the heavy academic content in the course curriculum. On finance, the commission recommended that 6% of the GDP should be allocated to education. Many of the recommendations of the two foundational commissions on national education could not be implemented till today leaving gaping holes in our education system.

In the subsequent decades of nineteen eighties and nineties we witnessed the committees on national education by the then Rajiv Gandhi Government and the Manmohan Singh Government bringing major reforms in our education system through the introduction of the semester system and the choice-based credit system as recommended by the committee in 1986. The committee emphasized on eliminating social inequities and focused on child education amongst several other critical aspects. Some of these recommendations, notably, the semester and the choice-based credit system had been introduced much in a hurry without the much-needed preparations at the institutional levels that robbed off the essence of the semester system.

The National Knowledge Commission in the nineties, there was a major and timely effort in enabling the education system to catch up with the massive advancing digital technology in education. While remarkable work has been done in the creation of the digital structure required for digitization of the education process in the national education, there is still a lot to be done in actualizing the process of digitization at every level of our education from the primary to the

tertiary levels, as learnt from the lessons during the recent disruptive pandemic COVID -19.

V. Present Realities

Independent India began with a dismal scenario with a literacy rate of just about 18 percent, only 0.4 million students in the higher education sector in the 30 universities and 695 colleges and a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 0.7 percent (1950-51). Post-independence, there was a spurt in higher education in the country in terms of all the above indicators. According to the All-India Survey of Higher Education 2019-2020 of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, the total number of students enrolled in the higher education institutions today is 38.5 million. The same survey puts the total number of universities at 1043, colleges 42,343 and 11,779 stand-alone institutions with the GNR of 27.1. There is a remarkable jump in the national literacy rate to 77 percent today (2022). Significant, if not outstanding, this massification of higher education in the country is, the situation may be more aptly described as *plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose* (the more things change, the more they stay the same). With a large proportion of our graduates being found unemployable, the rising unemployment and the deplorable and alarming decadence in public ethics and personal values, are clear indications that we have not been able to infuse reforms in our higher education system as recommended by so many commissions of great academic standings in the past. Professor Devesh Kapur, Madan Lal Sobti Professor for the Study of Contemporary India and Director, Centre for Advanced Study in India, University of Pennsylvania summed up the expansion of higher education in India as follows:

> "The expansion of higher education in India in this period (post nineties) has been the most rapid in human history after that of China's, suggesting that India has overinvested in higher education relative to its income. The biggest question concerning this explosive growth in Indian higher education is the quality of the millions of graduates. The core reason is the

absence of quality faculty. The university system in India is the collateral damage of Indian politics. A superstructure of higher education on weak foundations of schooling is bound to fail".

The success of NEP-2020 shall depend much more on our success in developing quality faculty. The challenge is a cultural transformation that the country badly needs in the higher education system. While embarking on the path of implementing the NEP 2020, the brief perspective views make it worthwhile to ponder on "planning for building universities and not for the university buildings".

Chapter - 3

ASSESSING THE CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF NEP 2020

Subhash Chandra Pandey*

I. Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) announced in July 2020 was a major statement of intent to reset the educational system of India, setting targets for 2030 and 2035 for over 50 crore school children and college students. Ours is a country having the highest population and proportion of students in the world.

NEP 2020 came after the first policy of 1968 and second policy of 1986/1992. All those born after 1986/1992 are the direct stakeholders in the education system and they are in majority now. They look forward to an education that prepares them for the life ahead in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world.

There is a strong link between the demography, economic development and human welfare, including access to education and quality of education.

II. Constitutional Framework

Bulk of our educational system is a colonial legacy dominated by the English language. While it undeniably has had its own material benefits, there is a growing realization about the imperative need of a decolonization project to purge its negative effects on indigenous language, culture and heritage.

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While being cognizant of the fact that the State had and would continue to have a predominant role in provision of education services, the Constitution of India did not envisage any special conservation and promotion of indigenous languages and culture except empowering religious/linguistic minorities having a distinct language, script or culture of their own to have the Constitutional right to conserve the same (Art. 29(1) of the Constitution).

The religious/linguistic minorities also have the Constitutional right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice (Art. 30(1) of the Constitution). Such Minority Educational Institutions are implicitly allowed to even practice exclusionary policies if they are not supported by government funds because no citizen can be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them (Art. 29(2) of the Constitution). It is a different matter that the number of Minority Educational Institutions receiving financial support from governments has been rising and there is lively public debate whether and to what extent the constitutional protection is merely confined to admissions in State supported educational institutions but also extends to control of other aspects their management like curriculum, examination pattern, pedagogy, uniform and practice of own religious/cultural practices. This is inevitable since education is all about moulding the young minds and ours is a multi-lingual, multi-religious, and multi-cultural country.

The question whether the determination of religious/linguistic minorities requires only national level population data or even State level population can be considered for invocation of this constitutional protection is presently pending for consideration of the Supreme Court.

Leaving aside for a moment the issue of the desirable content of education, we look at NEP's broad contours, its quantitative targets and the contemplating public financing of education.

Leaving aside for a moment the issue about the desirable content of education, it is noted that over the years, access and equity aspects of education have been well taken care of but learning outcomes are below expectations. As the job market laments a large number of unemployable graduates, primary school learning outcomes leave much to be desired. NEP does require introspection to remove unnecessary burden on students. It seeks to shift gears from 'memorizing without understanding' to 'whetting critical thinking, exploration, curiosity and learning how to learn'; from 'what to think' to 'how to think' in the time when there is a flood of information and content. It is important that we know which information is necessary and which is not? We need inquiry-based, discovery-based, and analysis-based modes of teaching.

III. Broad Contours of NEP 2020

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, NEP 2020 includes a strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education from age 3 for better overall learning, development, and well-being as over 85% of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of six. ECCE consists of play-based and activity-based learning consisting of alphabets, language, puzzles, painting, and music for children in early years of their life.

The medium of instruction would be in the local language/mother tongue of the child at least till grade five, and preferably till grade eight (in both public and private schools). The current three language formula will continue to be implemented without any language being imposed on any State.

The current 10+2 structure of school education will be redesigned into a 5-3-3-4 design comprising: (i) five years of foundational stage (ages 3 to 8), (ii) three years of preparatory stage (ages 8 to 11 or classes three to five), (iii) three years of middle stage

(ages 11 to 14 or classes six to eight), and (iv) four years of secondary stage (for ages 14 to 18 or classes 9 to 12).

NEP contemplates that every student should attain foundational literacy and numeracy by grade three. A large proportion of the students currently enrolled in elementary school (over five crore) have not attained foundational literacy and numeracy (the ability to read and understand basic text, and carry out basic addition and subtraction).[1]

Students would be given more flexibility in choice of subjects of study. Curriculum load in each subject would be reduced to its essential core content to allow for critical thinking; discussion and analysis based learning Board examinations would test only core concepts reducing scope of rote learning. Students will have the option to take the exams on up to two occasions during a given year.

Major takeaways for the higher education sector include multiple entry and exit points, replacement of UGC, AICTE, and NAAC with an autonomous body, setting-up of National Research Foundation, scrapping of M. Phil., among several other initiatives.

NEP 2020 rightly places high reliance on the use of digital technologies which are already playing a big role in the spread of

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[1] Amit Kapoor et al., STATE OF FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN INDIA INSTITUTE FOR COMPETITIVENESS (2021),
https://competitiveness.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Report_on_state_of_foundational_learning_and_numeracy_web_version.pdf.:
Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) refers to basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills that a child needs to develop in early years. A report jointly prepared by the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and Institute for Competitiveness in December 2021. The report uses an Index on State of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy to compare inter-State performance. Kerala with a score of 67.95 and West Bengal with a score of 58.95 are the top-scoring regions in small and large states, respectively. Lakshadweep (52.69) and Mizoram (51.64) are top-scoring regions in the Union Territory and Northeast state category.

education. Schools are investing in information and multimedia education technologies to provide better education to students. The screechy sound of chalk writing on blackboards is giving way to smart screens. Smart classrooms and online classes are being supplemented by newer apps coming in the market. Private Equity firms have become bullish on the fast-growing education sector including vocational and supplementary training. The EdTech's role is set to grow manifold and with that there is an opportunity to control marginal cost of covering student needs. EdTech Startups are expected to drive down the cost of education. Of course, content quality control is required.

Apart from use of digital technologies, a cluster approach to school infrastructure is contemplated in NEP 2020 to optimise the financing of education. A vast network of primary schools has come up under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The average number of students per grade in elementary education was about 14 in 2016-17. The small size of schools makes it operationally and economically challenging to deploy teachers and critical physical resources (such as library books, sports equipment, etc.). NEP recommends grouping schools together to form a school complex. A typical school complex will consist of one secondary school and other schools, Anganwadis in a 5-10 km radius. Use of school complexes/clusters will provide adequate availability of different types of teachers and physical resources.

IV. Access: Constitutional Framework and SDG

Providing fair and equal opportunity to attend school is considered a foundational attribute of the modern welfare State. Under the Directive Principles of State Policy contained in the original Article 45 of the Constitution, the framers of the Constitution expected free and compulsory education for age group 6 to 14 by 1960. The Constitution 86th Amendment 2002 introduced a new Fundamental Right under Article 21A. Right to free and compulsory elementary education upto age 14 became a fundamental right under Article 21A. The amendment was brought into force from 1-4-2010 and the original Article 45 was changed to a new mandate: provision for early

childhood care and education to children below the age of six years. The Right to Education Act, 2009 was rolled out to implement this constitutional guarantee.

The subject of education was brought into the Concurrent List in 1976 through the 42nd Constitution Amendment. So both the Centre and the States have legislative and executive responsibilities and implementing NEP 2020 is a shared responsibility of the Centre and the States.

United Nations Sustainable Developments Goals include 10 targets for education. SDG Goal 4 expects countries to achieve by 2030 free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. This implies 12 years of free, publicly-funded, inclusive, equitable, quality primary and secondary education – of which at least nine years are compulsory education.

The SDG target also includes at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education and equal access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and higher education. NEP 2020 goes beyond the minimum aspirations set in the Constitution of India and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals about expanding access to education.

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is an important metric of access to education. GER denotes enrolment as a percent of the population of corresponding age group. NEP 2020 targets 100% GER upto Class 12 by 2030 and 50% for higher education by 2035. So our target is that all children in the age group 6-17 years have minimum education upto Class 12 by 2030 and at least half in the age group 18-23 years have access to higher education by 2035.

V. Current Status

It is to be seen where we stand today in terms of baseline achievement. Here are some insights. There were 15.22 lakh schools

covering 26.06 crore children in classes 1-12 in 2015-16. There were 993 universities, 39931 colleges and 10725 stand-alone institutions in 2018-19 providing higher education to 3.74 crore students, which was 26.3% of the population in the 18-23 years age group. NEP aims to increase this 26.3% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher education to 50% by 2035.

As per the 75th round household survey by NSSO in 2017-18, there were 3.22 crore out of school children in the age group of 6 to 17 years.

Annexure-I brings out STATE-WISE GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO upto Class 8 in 2019-20. Summary data is given below[2]:

Primary (1 to 5)

Boys	Girls	Total
101.9	103.7	102.7

Upper Primary (6 to 8)

Boys	Girls	Total
88.9	90.5	88.9

Elementary (1 to 8)

Boys	Girls	Total
97.0	98.7	97.8

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[2] Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India, REPORT ON UNIFIED DISTRICT INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR EDUCATION PLUS (UDISE+) 2019-20 UDISE+ (2021), https://udiseplus.gov.in/#/page/publications.

Secondary (9-10)

Boys	Girls	Total
78.0	77.8	77.9

Higher Secondary (11-12)

Boys	Girls	Total
50.5	52.4	51.4

For school children, GER is targeted to be 100% by 2030. This is indeed a very ambitious goal. 100% children upto 18 years of age must have upto class 12 education by 2030 and 50% of those in the 18-23 years age group must be enrolled for higher education.

Therefore, NEP 2020 implementation is a major challenge on the access front alone. Quality and content are other important dimensions.

VI. Public Financing of Education

After the 42nd Constitution Amendment, education is a subject in the Concurrent List. Thus, both the Centre and the States have legislative and executive responsibilities and implementing NEP 2020 is a shared responsibility of the Centre and the States.

The goal of public spending on education to be 6% of GDP has been with us right from 1968 policy. It has been reiterated in NEP 2020 as well.

National Education Policy (NEP) 1968 had set a target of public expenditure on education to be raised to 6% of GDP. The same target was reiterated in 1986 Policy and 1992 Policy review. NEP 2020 commits that the Centre and the States will work together to increase the public investment in the education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest, as there is no better investment towards a society's future

than the high-quality education of our young people. Presently, it is less than 3% of GDP.

During 2018-19, total expenditure on general education was about Rs. 472,344 crores and on technical education it was about Rs. 26,896 crores, mainly by the Education Ministries/Departments in the Centre and the States. This combined expenditure of Rs. 499,240 crores was about 2.65% of GDP. Education spending was about 10% of total expenditure by the Central and State governments.

Since Central and State resources on education are 20% and 80%, bulk of the funding responsibility will be on States even with some increase in Central support to States for the education sector. About 80% of total expenditure on education is incurred by the State governments from their own resources and about 10% from Central government grants to States. Remaining 10% of educational expenditure is directly incurred by the Centre.

So Central and State budgetary resources spent on education are in the ratio of 20:80 and the bulk of the funding responsibility is likely to be on States even with some increase in Central support to States for the education sector.

At current GDP estimates for 2022-23, the target of 6% of GDP annual spending means more than Rs.15 lakh crores. Of course, with NEP 2020, public expenditure on the educational system will also include expenditure on nutritional support at pre-school level in Anganwadis and midday meal scheme upto class 8, the level of free and compulsory education. However, the 6% of GDP target cannot be met in the near future. It would require building up the fiscal capacity of the Central and State governments for which post-pandemic economic revival is a clearly visible prospect. In this context it may be apt to highlight the record collection of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in March 2022 – over Rs.142,000 crores.

The goal of 6% of GDP for education spending from public exchequer coupled with the goal of 5 trillion dollar economy means education spending increasing by 5 times from about Rs. 4.5 lakh crores in 2017-18 to 22.5 lakh crores. (6% of $5 t means USD300b which at Rs.75 per $ means Rs.22.5 lakh crores).

The governments get very small income from education. In 2017-18, total non-tax revenue of all governments was only Rs. 6,313 crores from 'Education, Sports, Art and Culture' against total expenditure of Rs. 4,71,407 crores, just about 1.3%.

The government-wise public expenditure on education, as extracted from the latest Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts for the financial year 2018-19 by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, is tabulated in Annexure II.

VII. Conclusion

NEP 2020 seeks a major overhaul of the education system to meet the aspirations of the youngest population in the world (65% population under 35 years of age). Largest population of about 50 crores in the age bracket of 5-24 years presents a large opportunity and challenge in the education and skilling space. Vocationalisation of education is important to fill a large and growing number of job opportunities in the Services Sector both in India and abroad.

Education is a public good, financed by taxpayers and nobody should lose the opportunity to study merely because of poverty. The government intends to universalise education upto Class 12 by 2030. With increase in economic growth and education spend, the expectation that those who can afford to pay should pay will increase.

The flexibility to choose subjects and shifting focus away from rote learning and weeding out outdated curriculum are in any case things that don't require plenty of money to implement.

Vocationalization of education would require investment but such investment can pay for itself in economic outcomes.

Therefore, purely looking from a financial perspective, it appears a lot easier to achieve access than quality that requires more structural reforms than finances.

For improving access to education to the desired levels, a lot more schools need to be constructed, equipped and operationalized. NEP 2020 contemplates liberal norms for opening new schools. We expect top-rated foreign universities to open their campuses here while our own school chains expand abroad wherever feasible.

In addition, NEP 2020 contemplates more efficient use of existing physical and digital infrastructure to augment access. For example, NEP contemplates convergence between Anganwadi centres and primary schools, provision of double shifts or evening classes. NEP proposes to expand the scope of existing narrow-band educational institutions to offer almost any new course.

A cluster approach to provision of amenities and infrastructure can promote more efficient pooled resources used by multiple schools.

To overcome the shortage of physical infrastructure for every subject everywhere that would create obvious redundancies – underutilized faculty and other resources –NEP seeks to promote open and distance learning; online certificate, diplomas/degrees; education credit system to allow exit and re-entry. This will open up newer possibilities of involvement of civil society, community, alumni in delivery of educational services. Core faculty devoted to whole careers in teaching can be gainfully supplemented by government officials and corporate executives in bringing their specialized knowledge and experience to enrich educational content by promoting multi-disciplinary intellectual inquiry on the one hand and creating a pool of industry-ready workforce on the other.

In terms of efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of public expenditure on education, digital education - digitally delivered through digital medium - offers a cost effective solution. However, it has the potential to affect the equity aspect unless more intense policy measures are taken to bridge the digital divide. For that purpose, enabling and supportive policies are required from outside the education sector as well, e.g. fiscal policies that support the manufacture and sale of low cost electronic devices and the availability of public Wi-Fi systems. In a bygone era, romanticised stories of struggle to achieve educational excellence talked about the strugglers' stories of studying under the lamp post and in candle light. Those images of struggle have now to change to not having affordable electronic devices, cheap data, public Wi-Fi systems and content locked behind paywalls.

It may be apt to highlight in conclusion that over the years, access and equity aspects of education have been well taken care of but learning outcomes are below expectations. As the job market laments a large number of unemployable graduates, primary school learning outcomes leave much to be desired. NEP does require introspection to remove unnecessary burden on students. It seeks to shift gears from 'memorizing without understanding' to 'whetting critical thinking, exploration, curiosity and learning how to learn'; from 'what to think' to 'how to think' when there is a flood of information and content. It is important that we know which information is necessary and which is not. We need inquiry-based, discovery-based, and analysis-based modes of teaching.

Chapter - 4

PURSUING TWO ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES SIMULTANEOUSLY: SOME REFLECTIONS IN THE LIGHT OF NEP 2020 AND UGC GUIDELINES 2022

V K Ahuja[*]

I. Introduction

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) seeks to introduce changes having far reaching consequences in the education system. It encourages the use of technology in imparting education. Providing multi-disciplinary and holistic education, multiple entry-exit system, flexible curricular, transfer of credits, etc. are some of the principles adopted in NEP. The NEP envisions that in coming times there will be an increasingly greater demand for "a skilled workforce, particularly involving mathematics, computer science, and data science, in conjunction with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities".[1]

Technology has changed the teaching pedagogy. The online mode of education has become one of the popular modes of imparting education today. This mode of teaching has been received well by the students in the contemporary times. The online teaching has saved the precious academic years of the students during the pandemic Covid-19

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[1] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVT OF INDIA (2020), 3,
https:// www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf.

period. Since 2020, online teaching and learning has become a new norm. Though the pandemic has subsided, the blended mode consisting of physical teaching-learning and online teaching-learning has got wider acceptability among teachers and students. The UGC also approves the blended mode of teaching-learning in the degree programmes.

The NEP is in the process of being implemented by universities and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The curriculum of various programmes are being drafted in the light of NEP. The UGC is also encouraging HEIs to implement NEP in teaching and learning to achieve its vision.

Keeping in line with NEP, the UGC has recently come out with new guidelines which answer the query of most of the students – Is it permissible to pursue two academic programmes, particularly two degrees simultaneously? The students remained misinformed for most of the time. They followed their peers who were pursuing two programmes without knowing the fact whether the university concerned, University Grants Commission (UGC) or any other statutory body such as Bar Council of India (BCI), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), etc. as the case may be, allowed the same or not. In my teaching career of around three decades, I found that students doing professional programmes such as LL.B. from University of Delhi were also doing Company Secretaryship programme or Chartered Accountant programme. Many of them were either aware that this was not permissible or they did not bother to know the permissibility of pursuing two programmes simultaneously. They just did it. Similarly, it has also been found that students doing a regular degree programme were also doing another degree programme through correspondence/ distance or open mode. Some of them were pursuing two academic degrees whereas the others were pursuing one regular degree and the other professional programmes. Many of them did it knowingly on the pretext that they had no aspiration to do the government job or if they would go for a government job, they would not disclose both the degrees.

Pursuing two degrees simultaneously was not allowed till recently. The same has now been allowed by UGC. In conformity with the objectives of NEP, the UGC has notified Guidelines for pursuing two academic programmes simultaneously in April 2022. These guidelines give a lot of academic freedom to the universities and other HEIs to offer two degrees simultaneously to the students. This paper will make a critical assessment of the UGC guidelines and also discuss its impact on students and the education system as a whole. The paper will also discuss the vision of NEP in this regard.

II. Background of UGC Guidelines

"Multidisciplinary and holistic education" is advocated by NEP so that education is not confined to "disciplinary boundaries" alone. The students should be provided an opportunity to "personalise and customize their education based on their abilities and aspirations".[2]

The UGC guidelines find its genesis in the NEP 2020. It states that NEP envisions "imaginative and flexible curricular structures to enable creative combinations of disciplines for study, that would offer multiple entry and exit points, thus, removing currently prevalent rigid boundaries and creating new possibilities for life-long learning and centrally involve critical and interdisciplinary thinking".[3] The guidelines state that according to the vision of NEP, pedagogy is required to evolve in such a manner as "to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable".[4]

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[2] Manash Pratim Gohain, *Two degrees step will give chance to students to customise their education: UGC chairperson M Jagadesh Kumar*, TIMES OF INDIA, April 18, 2022, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/two-degrees-step-will-give-chance-to-students-to-customise-their-education-ugc-chairperson-m-jagadesh-kumar/articleshow/90899864.cms (last visited May 1, 2022).

[3] *See* University Grants Commission, GUIDELINES FOR PURSUING TWO ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES SIMULTANEOUSLY UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION, https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5729348_Guidelines-for-pursuing-two-academic-programmes-simultaneously.pdf, 1-2, (last visited Apr 25, 2022).

[4] *Ibid.*

In line with the vision of NEP which also emphasizes "the need to facilitate multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes", the UGC examined the matter of enabling students to do two academic programs simultaneously and issued the necessary guidelines for the universities in this regard.

The UGC was also mindful of the fact that there were limited seats available in higher education in the regular stream whereas the demand for higher education had increased rapidly. In order to meet the "aspirations of students", several programmes in "Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode" were started by many HEIs. In addition to this, the HEIs also started online education programs for the students. The online programs became very popular as the same could be pursued by students in the comfort of their home. Not only that, in many cases, students could select a number of papers to be studied by them in a particular semester as per their conveniences. The UGC, therefore, considered the issue and gave validity to pursuing two academic programs simultaneously.

III. Objectives

Considering the six guiding principles as envisaged in NEP 2020 in following terms, the UGC Guidelines allowed two academic programmes to be pursued simultaneously by students:

(i)   "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;

(ii)   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;

(iii)   multidisciplinarity 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;

(iv)   enabling an individual to study one or more specialized areas of interest at a deep level, and also develop character, ethical and constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, spirit of service.

(v)   offering the students, a range of disciplines including sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, as well as professional, technical, and vocational subjects to make them thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals.

(vi)   preparing students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and enable economic independence".[5]

The above six principles envisaged by NEP and reiterated in Guidelines can be summarised in the following manner - Principle (i) focuses on students' holistic development on the basis of their "unique capabilities". Hierarchies among "arts and sciences", "curricular and extra-curricular activities", and "vocational and academic streams" are intended to be eliminated in principle (ii). Emphasis has been placed on "multidisciplinarity and a holistic education" across all disciplines "to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge" in principle (iii). According to NEP, such an education "would aim to develop all capacities of human beings - intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner." Further, it will help "develop well-rounded individuals that possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication, discussion and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields".[6]

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[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVT OF INDIA (2020), 36, https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf, (last visited Apr 25, 2022).

Principle (iv) above intends to enable a student to study several specialized areas of interest at a "*deep level*". Principle (v) in order to make the students "thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals", intends to offer them a range of several disciplines which include humanities, arts, languages, social sciences, sciences, technical, professional and vocational subjects. Lastly, principle (vi) focuses on preparing students not only for satisfying and meaningful lives but also for economic independence.

Making the aforesaid guiding principles as its basis, the UGC enabled students to pursue two academic programmes simultaneously through its guidelines which are to be adopted by universities and other HEIs.

IV. UGC Guidelines

Guidelines have been framed by UGC for students who want to pursue two academic programmes simultaneously either in physical, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) or Online mode or in a combination of two.

In physical mode, two full time academic programmes can be pursued by a student subject to the condition that class timings of the two programmes are different and do not overlap. For example, if a student pursues one programme in the morning, s/he can pursue the other programme in the evening, if the classes of the first programme get over by then. Alternatively, a university which runs a programme in the morning may have an MOU signed with another university which offers another programme in the evening. In this manner, both the universities may allow their students to pursue two programmes simultaneously in physical mode. According to Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar, UGC Chairperson, by having an MOU, the HEIs will be transformed into "multidisciplinary institutions". In addition to this, the

objective of "academic collaboration through HEI clusters to provide multidisciplinary education" will also be achieved.[7]

The guidelines further state that two academic programmes can also be pursued by a student in such a manner that s/he chooses one in physical mode and the other in ODL or online mode. In addition, s/he will have an option to pursue up to two programmes in ODL or online mode simultaneously. In other words, a student may pursue one programme in physical mode and the other in ODL mode; or one programme in physical mode and the other in online mode; or one programme in online mode and the other in ODL mode; or both the programmes in ODL mode; or both the programmes in online mode.

The Guidelines, however, make it mandatory that diploma or degree programmes under online or ODL mode have to be pursued only with recognized HEIs. These HEIs must have been recognized either by UGC or Statutory Council or Government of India for the purpose of running such programmes.

Further, the UGC Regulations as well as statutory or professional councils of concerned HEIs as the case may be, shall govern the diploma or degree programmes under these guidelines.

These guidelines are to be effective from the date of notification by UGC and there will be no retrospective effect of the same. Any student who had already pursued two academic programmes simultaneously prior to coming into effect of these guidelines will not be able to claim retrospective benefit.

These guidelines are not applicable to students pursuing Ph.D. programme. In other words, a student who is pursuing a Ph.D. programme shall not be allowed to pursue another academic

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[7] *See Supra* Note 1.

programme simultaneously. Ph.D. programme is the only exception in the guidelines in terms of academic programmes which may be pursued simultaneously.

These guidelines are broad in scope and provide liberty to universities to devise mechanisms through their statutory bodies to allow students to pursue two academic programmes simultaneously whether in physical, ODL or online mode or a combination of two, as discussed hereinabove.

V. Some Reflections

The initiative of UGC to allow students to pursue two academic programmes simultaneously may be termed as good with an exception. As already discussed, the students can pursue two academic programmes including two degrees simultaneously in physical, ODL or online mode either in a single mode or in a combination of two. As far as allowing students to pursue two degrees in two different modes is concerned, the initiative of UGC can be accepted as a welcome one. There may, however, be issues where students pursue two degrees in physical mode simultaneously.

We need to remember that self-study is extremely important for students. If a student pursues two degree programmes in physical mode, there will hardly be any time left for the student to do the self-study for any of the two programmes. After completing classes for one programme, the student will run for the classes of the other programme. In some of the cases, s/he may pursue both the programmes from the same university if such facilities are available there. In the other case, the student may pursue one regular programme from one university and the other one from another university/HEI if such facility is available in the same place. This will require him to travel from one place to another to attend classes. The students are human beings and not machines so as to study in two shifts without getting tired.

There are many other issues which are likely to come up with students who want to pursue two degree programmes simultaneously in physical mode. Apart from the fact that such students will not have time for self-study, they will also not be able to go for extra-curricular activities or other university programs, if the same are not compulsory. There will be no time for them to play sports which is extremely important for physical fitness.

The biggest disadvantage of the students pursuing two degrees in physical mode is that they will not be able to be involved in any community outreach programme. An education system should not only produce intelligent persons but also socially responsible persons. The students should be committed to serve the cause of society, as and when required. They should be part of several camps organised by the university, be it literacy or awareness camp, relief camp, blood donation camp, NSS camp, or any other camp. There will hardly be any time left for such students to be a part of these activities.

The students pursuing two regular programmes in physical mode may take more time to complete their main degree. Their performance may also affect badly in both the degree programmes.

One can very well argue here that this is just an opportunity made available to students to pursue two regular programmes simultaneously. There is no compulsion as such. If the students cannot take so much pressure, they can do one programme only. This is a valid argument. The UGC Chairperson Professor M. Jagadesh Kumar also stated that it is just a choice and not mandatory. He further stated that two programmes should be pursued simultaneously only by those students who are "highly motivated, able to take the additional work and who can do the time management".[8]

But the problem is that students follow their peers. There is also a peer competition among them. If some of them are pursuing two

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[8] *Ibid.*

degrees in physical mode, others will also be tempted to do the same as they do not want to be left out. Further, there may be parental pressure also for students to pursue two programmes simultaneously in the physical mode. The reason is that some parents have a lot of expectations from their children.

Getting employment after completing education is an important goal of every person. There will be a presumption that if other things remain equal between two students, the prospective employer may choose the student who has two degrees. This presumption will somehow make students pursue two programmes simultaneously in the physical mode in the hope of a better future. The students will try to come to the expectations of their prospective employers.

A pertinent question arises here that if a central or state university or a renowned private or deemed university in which all seats get filled in all the programmes, offers two regular degrees in physical mode, a student who qualifies in the merit of two programmes and takes admission in both, will be depriving other student of the opportunity of pursuing a programme. According to Professor M. Jagadesh Kumar, every HEI should avoid this kind of a situation and devise their admission policy in such a manner that only vacant seats may be offered to students for their second degree programme in physical mode.[9] It is noteworthy that in most of the government and the high ranked private universities no seat remains vacant.

Offering two degrees simultaneously in physical mode would mean that universities, particularly Central and State, would require to increase the number of seats in their programmes as no seat remains vacant as of now, as aforesaid. There will be requirements for additional teaching and non-teaching staff. The infrastructure of universities presently is hardly sufficient to meet the present demand of

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[9] *Ibid.*

seats, particularly after the expansion of seats in view of OBC reservation. Adding additional infrastructure would be quite challenging. Interestingly, even if the seats are increased, the seats will get filled with students who would be pursuing only one programme. The reason is that presently, there is a huge gap between the seats being offered by the government universities for every programme and the number of people seeking admission in those programmes.

Assuming that the system of pursuing two degrees in physical mode is good for students, it will make discrimination for those students who are interested to do two degrees and their universities do not offer programmes at different times. Further, in the remote areas, such as the North-East region of the country where barring a few places, many universities are not available, the students will be deprived of this opportunity. The students in places like Delhi-NCR, Pune or other metropolitan cities may be benefitted by this so called *opportunity*.

The guidelines, however, make it possible for every student to pursue two degree programmes in two different modes, irrespective of the fact whether his/her place has one university or even none. In far off areas where adequate educational facilities are not available, two online programmes may be pursued simultaneously by students, or one physical and the other one in ODL or online mode as the case may be. Students pursuing two programmes in different modes make a lot of sense. They can study at their comfort as there will be no attendance requirement in ODL or online mode. In ODL mode, in some cases, students may have to go to university on weekends to clear their doubts. Nevertheless, a lot of time will be available to students for their self-study.

Apart from that, they can choose a number of papers to be studied by them in online mode in a particular semester. They may focus more on their main degree which they may pursue in physical mode. For example, IIT Madras offers B.Sc. in Data Science in online mode. This programme has been received very well by the students.

IIT Madras encourages students to pursue one regular degree programme in physical mode along with their B.Sc. programme. The students have to choose the number of papers they would like to study in a particular year. This gives a lot of room to the students to plan their studies without the hassles of attendance.

VI. Conclusion

The UGC guidelines by enabling students to pursue two academic programmes simultaneously gives opportunity to students to pursue those courses or subjects also which they were not able to pursue due to their main degree. The problem lies only with allowing students to pursue two programmes in physical mode. This will bring enormous pressure on students as they will have to attend the classes physically and complete their attendance in both the programmes. This may affect their performance in totality, as a result of which they may not perform well in either of the programs. This will also be causing issues to universities which do not have adequate infrastructure.

Pursuing two programmes – one in physical mode and the other in ODL or online mode is a good initiative. The students will not be pressurised for attendance and will be able to pursue the second programme at their convenience. Their full focus will be on their main degree which they will be pursuing in physical mode. They will be able to take less papers in a semester in the degree programme which they will pursue in online mode if they feel a lot of pressure. This kind of flexibility is not available in a case where both the degree programmes will be pursued in physical mode.

The positive impact of these guidelines on central and state government universities will be that they will be able to start new programmes in online and ODL modes. This may not require additional infrastructure and bring in good revenue. The high ranked private universities will be highly benefited by these guidelines as they will start online courses at high fees.

To conclude, the policy makers need to ensure that in the name of "multidisciplinarity and a holistic education", they are not putting the students under undue pressure. As already discussed, the student may not be interested in pursuing two programmes simultaneously in physical mode, but may have to study under pressure from peers or parents. It is humbly submitted that UGC must review its decision of enabling students to do two degree programmes in *physical mode* as it is likely to cause more harm than good to the students as well as the education system as a whole. By no stretch of imagination, the NEP has intended such an outcome.

NEP 2020 AND VALUE INFLUX
IN EDUCATION SYSTEM

*Kamal Jeet Singh**
*Manu Sharma***

I. Introduction

India is known throughout the world for its rich culture, heritage and values. Education combined with ethical, spiritual and religious values create a perfect combination for the overall development of a person, society and the world at large. Value-oriented education system exist since ages in India, even when there were no organised gurukuls or schools. Even before a child was sent to a school or a gurukul, the education was instilled through the values and knowledge of ancestors, scriptures and stories. That is why the family has always been regarded as the first school of a child and the mother as the first teacher of the child.

In the present age of competition, research and technology, the education system is the centre for success and development of a person, society and a nation. The education system of any nation is a reflection of its past and decides its future. If the education system is primarily focussed upon the concept and information, it might create a good professional for an organization but not the best personality for the society at large. India got its first National Education Policy in 1968 to overcome the downsides in the education system which was being created by the Britishers. The second educational policy was adopted

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in 1986. The education policy of 1986 primarily focused on access and equity. By this time, a need was felt to have value-oriented education in India due to deteriorating values owing to a competitive economy and professional background created by business houses and service providers. The policy of 1986 introduces value education by introducing just one single paper on moral education at the school level. In 1992 again, the need was felt to have a value-oriented education system. In 2005, the Knowledge Commission also talked about value education. It is not so that previous education policy or system does not include values. The New Education Policy, 2020 provides a new framework for education at four levels: early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education. The new National Education Policy, 2020 has dealt with the concept of values with a new objective and inclination. The new framework provides for the overall development of personality with prime importance given to values. The new policy has taken into consideration the age old values and practices to move ahead towards a new system of society. It talks about cultural values, moral values, constitutional values, democratic values etc. The new National Education Policy, 2020 is a cluster of values.

II. Concept of Value Education

The term 'value education' is made up of two terms, 'value' and 'education'. The term 'value' signifies convictions, principles and standards which act as a guiding light in life to distinguish between right and wrong as well as good and bad. It reflects the decision- making ability, choices, judgement and vision. The Hindu vision of life gives four goals, ideals and core values for a better quality of human life. They are *artha* (economic values of wealth), *kama* (psychological values of pleasure), *dharma* (moral values) and *moksha* (liberation). These four goals embody the formulation of human values.[1]

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[1] M Hasan, EDUCATION-UG-6TH SEMESTER (EDNHDSE-4) RAIGANJ UNIVERSITY, https://ucanapplym.s3.ap-south-1.amazonaws.com/RGU/notifications/E_learning/study_online/study_material_online/UG-6th%20Semester%20%28EDNHDSE-4%29-Unit%201%20by%20BC.pdf (last visited May 12, 2022).

Value Education is a process of enhancing a student's overall character, which includes development of character, personality development as well as spiritual growth. It produces a responsible individual with strong character and values. The purpose of value-based education is to make the student work with the right attitude and standards to face the outside world.[2] There are primarily two approaches to value education. The first view favours transmitting a set of values which come from religious, moral and societal ethics and code of conduct. Whereas, the second approach is based on self-realization of what is good behaviour for a person and for the society at large. However in both approaches, one thing that is common is inculcating the sense of rightfulness and virtue. [3]

According to C. V. Good, value-education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of the positive values in the society in which he lives.[4]

As per John Dewey, "Value education means primarily to prize, to esteem, to appraise, holding it dear and also the act of passing judgment upon the nature and amount of its value as compared with something else."

According to Zaleznik and David, the values are the ideas in the mind of people compared to norms in that they specify how people should behave. Values also attach degrees of goodness to activities and relationships. [5]

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[2] Sherli et al., VALUE EDUCATION GUPSHUPS (2022), https://gupshups.org/value-education (last visited May 4, 2022).

[3] Puja Mondal, VALUE EDUCATION: DEFINITION AND THE CONCEPT OF VALUE EDUCATION (WITH EXAMPLE) YOUR ARTICLE LIBRARY (2014), https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/essay/value-education-definition-and-the-concept-of-value-education-with-example/30222 (last visited May 13, 2022).

[4] *Supra* Note 1

[5] *Ibid.*

III. Need of Values in Education System

As per Vedanta, there are two types of ignorance. One is *tulavidya* known as empirical ignorance and the other is *mulavidya,* known as intellectual ignorance. The learning cures the *tulavidya* and brings knowledge of empirical objects. The removal of causal ignorance opens the door to Self-knowledge, leading to the manifestation of our inherent divinity, or consciousness[6]. Such a type of education, which helps the pupils to realize the true goal of learning and knowledge – *'Self Realization'*, the realization of oneness with Brahman, was the very essence of Vedic Education.

It is a need of the hour to regenerate age-old practices and values with education, thereby inculcate time-tested values in public behaviour. Moral education has always been a part of education system. However, in practice, it has been a leisure period where teacher and students join to concentrate on value education. The outcome of such moral studies has been nil and it is clear from the conduct of students. The heightened criminality among students is a consequence. It is important to make it a continuous part of the education system. The values have to be infused with real stories based on the lives of legends from the past and should not be fictitious. By reading fictions, the students become imaginary and many times failed to co-relate the morality with real life. No wonder that it becomes important to teach them by fact simulations.

It is vital that a feeling of sympathy, empathy, courage, virtue be inculcated among the upcoming generation. They must know their origin, the sacrifice their ancestors had made in the name of humanity and uphold their culture and values. Thus, lifelong learning deserves due emphasis in education.

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[6] IGNOU, ADVAITA VEDANTA,
   https://www.egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/34674/1/Unit-1.pdf (last visited May 15, 2022).

IV. Value Incorporation under National Education Policy, 2020

The formal structure of education has been changed from 10+2 to 5+3+3+4 under the National Education Policy 2020. New Policy of 2020 has infused a lot of new things besides the formal education stages. The policy aims at depicting Indian culture, language, religious and spiritual values with the modern education system.

The Foundational Stage will consist of five years of flexible, multilevel, play/activity-based learning and the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE as mentioned in para 1.2 of the policy. The Preparatory Stage will consist of three years of education that will build on the Foundational Stage's play, discovery, and activity-based pedagogical and curricular style, as well as some light text books and aspects of more formal but interactive classroom learning, in order to lay a solid foundation across subjects such as reading, writing, speaking, physical education, art, languages, science, and mathematics. The Middle Stage will last three years and will build on the Preparatory Stage's pedagogical and curricular style, but with the addition of subject teachers for learning and discussion of the more abstract concepts in each subject that students will be ready for at this stage, including the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities. Despite the advent of more specialised subjects and subject teachers, experiential learning within each subject and investigations of relationships across subjects will be encouraged and highlighted. The Secondary Stage will consist of four years of multidisciplinary study, building on the Middle Stage's subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style but with increased depth, critical thinking, attention to life aspirations, and subject flexibility and student choice.[7]

The policy further focused on holistic development of students. Education will focus on not only cognitive growth but also character development and the creation of holistic and well-rounded

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[7] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVT OF INDIA (2020), Para 4.1 -4.2, https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf.

individuals with important Twenty-first century abilities. In the end, knowledge is a deep-seated treasure, and education aids in its expression as the perfection that already exists within a person. To achieve these vital aims, all areas of curriculum and pedagogy will be reoriented and rebuilt. From pre-school to higher education, specific sets of abilities and values will be identified for integration and absorption at each stage of learning. Curriculum frameworks and transaction mechanisms will be created to ensure that these abilities and values are instilled in students through engaging teaching and learning processes. NCERT will identify these required skill sets and include mechanisms for their transaction in the National Curriculum Framework for early childhood and school education[8].

India has a rich culture of languages. Sanskrit language that has been considered as the mother of all languages finds a special mention in the NEP 2020. Besides this, there are other classical languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia. In addition to these classical languages, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit and their works of literature too must be preserved for their richness and for the pleasure and enrichment of posterity. As India develops, the next generation will wish to participate in and be enhanced by the country's vast and exquisite classical literature. Other classical Indian languages and literature such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit, would be widely available in schools as options for students, maybe as online courses, through immersive and innovative techniques. All Indian languages with rich oral and written literatures, cultural traditions, and knowledge will receive similar attention. The new policy has made it mandatory for students to learn different languages of India. It does not provide for actual speaking and writing of language but its understanding. The policy provides that the curriculum include the origin of such languages and its similarity with the classical language which is Sanskrit. The teaching of all languages will be enhanced through innovative and experiential methods, including through gamification and apps, by weaving in the cultural

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[8] *Ibid.*

aspects of the languages - such as films, theatre, storytelling, poetry, and music - and by drawing connections with various relevant subjects and with real-life experiences. Thus, the teaching of languages will also be based on experiential-learning pedagogy.[9]

V. Conclusion

The New Education Policy has been introduced after a long gap of thirty four years. A lot of transformation has taken place during this period in terms of social transformation, political changes, value transformation and economic transformation. There is a shift from education to quality education which is possible with value incorporation. Hence, a lot of aspirations are there from this policy. The new education policy is a kind of cluster of values which are to be infused in the student through a continuous process instead of one single course to be cleared on an optional basis. The new policy talked of a variety of values at different stages.

However the most challenging task is to actually implement it. Values are unlike capsules to be consumed. The reflection of values in behavioural pattern of the students is the challenge for value education. Whether and how far the curriculum under NEP 2020 serves the purpose is left to behavioural pattern of the posterity in time ahead.

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[9] *Id.* at para 4.16-4.19

Chapter - 6

INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESS TO QUALITY LEGAL EDUCATION THROUGH VIRTUAL INNOVATION

*Yogesh Pratap Singh**

I. State of Affairs in Legal Education

Over the years, legal education in India has endured a deluge of challenges, criticisms and self-doubt over its value and purpose. Reports are aplenty[1] which generally stem from State appointed Commissions and Committees consisting largely only of judges or only of law academics. Despite some partial action on these,[2] there is serious

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[1] The Calcutta University Commission 1917; The University Education Commission 1948; The Bombay Legal Education Committee 1949; All India Bar Committee Recommendations 1951; The Fourteenth Law Commission 1954; The Report of the Curriculum Development Centre (Prof. Upendra Baxi Report) 1988-1990; The Fifteenth Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Subordinate Legislation 1993, Justice A. M. Ahmadi Committee Report; Curriculum Development Committee 2001, The UGC's Model Curriculum 2002, Recommendations of the First National Consultative Conference of Heads of Legal Education Institutions at NLSUI, Bangalore 2002, The Law Commission 184th Report; The National Knowledge Commission Report 2007, Report of the Committee constituted by the Supreme Court consisting of Solicitor General, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association and Chairman of BCI 2009 in *BCI v. Bonnie FoI Law Colleges* 22337 of 2008.

[2] Two-year LL.B, Two-year plus one year apprenticeship LL.B, Three-year without apprenticeship LL.B. Post 10+2 school LL.B, First National Law University at Bangalore with Five year course followed by several National Law Universities under Acts of State Legislatures. Section 7 Advocates Act, 1961, r/w S.24 empowered the BCI to inspect and give recognition to Universities and colleges whose LL.B. degrees are recognised for the purpose of enrolment as an advocate. Section 10 Advocates Act r/w Rule 2(xv) Education Rules 2008 provided for a Legal Education Committee of BCI under a retired Supreme Court judge to ensure Minimum Standards of Legal Education. Mandatory Courses stipulated under the BCI Education Rules 2008 on Standards of Legal Education & Recognition of Degrees. BCI resolution to have a body of experts to be associated with BCI's inspection teams, to constitute a Selection Commission for the purpose of identifying and appointing competent faculties in law colleges and provision of better salaries and facilities to law faculties Aug 23,2009. BCI Resolution to constitute a

anxiety at the present state of legal education in our country. This is not merely a raw gut feeling. It is a feeling of trained and experienced legal minds.[8] We need to respect this and ourselves. We can do this by analysing this feeling. This is what we are equipped to do by our training and experience. This is what will probably lead us to answers on legal education which are relevant culturally, relate to our lives to make legal education understandable and meaningful. Otherwise, the words socially relevant legal education is nice emotive words with no content.

The enactment of Advocates Act 1961 and the consequential coming into being of the Bar Council of India (BCI) introduced a scenario of an ambiguous, dichotomous responsibility in the field of legal education.[4] Bar Council of India[5] principally is responsible for the

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National Legal Knowledge Council and that all Centres of Legal Education should establish a legal aid clinic for final year students of LL.B 2009. BCI Resolution to conduct an All-India exam, the passing of which alone will entitle an advocate to get a license from BCI or State Bar Councils to practice law by students graduating from the academic year 2009-2010. Pursuant to the judgment in *V. Sudheer v. BCI,(1999)3 SCC 176* the BCI sanctioned (resolution 96.2009) Rs.50 lakh for its Directorate of Legal Education set up under Chapter IV of the BCI's 2008 Rules.

[3] *BCI v. Bonnie FOI Law College*, SLP 22337 of 2008: In its order of June 29, 2009, the Supreme Court noted with concern the diminishing standards of professional legal education.

[4] The Advocate Act, 1961 provided under Section 7 the functions of the Bar Council of India and one of the specific functions was incorporated under Section 7 (1) (h): "to promote legal education and to lay down standards of such education in consultation with the universities in India imparting such education and the Bar Councils of the States." Section 49 conferred General power on the Bar Council of India to make rules for discharging its functions under this Act.

[5] The Report of the Law Commission and concern expressed by academic lawyers and the Bar made Parliament take stock of the situation and as a result the Advocates Act, 1961 came to be enacted by Parliament by virtue of its powers under Entries 77 and 78 of List I of the Constitution of India. Section 4 of the Indian Advocates Act, 1961 provided for a regulatory institution called Bar Council of India. Under the Advocates Act, 1961, one of the functions of the Bar Council of India is to "promote legal education and to lay down standards of such education in consultation with the universities in India imparting such education and the Bar Councils of the States". Section 49(d) of the Act, enables Rules to be framed by the Bar Council of India in regard to the standards of legal education to be observed by the universities in India and the inspection of universities for the purpose. The Bar Council of India enacted its Rules in 1965 to deal with the standards of legal education and recognition of degrees in law for admission as

regulation of formal legal education endeavouring to produce so called professionally competent and socially relevant lawyers. It lays down the minimum standards of legal education required for students, minimum standards for establishing new law colleges and also performs numerous other functions related to inspection, recognition and accreditation.[6] The BCI's responsibility is encumbered as it is stipulated to be discharged strictly in consultation with universities.[7]

However, severe reservations have been made on the functioning of this institution which has made a general perception that BCI is nothing but an utter failure. The crisis in Indian legal education is the natural outcome of this failure. Today a widely shared view of legal scholars is in the favour of liberation of legal education from the clutches of BCI. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) went further and recommended the creation of a new regulatory mechanism under the independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education vested with powers to deal with all aspects of legal education and whose decisions are binding on the institutions teaching law. The NKC also recommended the creation of the Standing Committee for Legal Education.

In 1958 when the Law Commission voiced its concern there were hardly 43 institutions. The first explosion in the number of institutions of legal education happened in the next two decades. The total number of colleges increased from 23 in 1940 to 298 in 1980 a

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advocates. Rule 21 of the Bar Council of India Rules, 1965 provides that the Bar Council of India may issue directions from time to time for maintenance of standards of legal education and the university/college is required to follow the same. Schedule I to the Rules enumerates as many as 21 directions which the Bar Council of India is authorized to give to the universities/colleges.

[6] Rule 8 of Chapter III of the Bar Council Rules dealing with the Legal Education Committee, enables the Committee (a) to make its recommendations to the Council for laying down the standards of legal education for the universities, (b) to visit and inspect universities and report to the Council, and (c), to recommend to the Council for recognition of any degree in law of any university under Section 24(1)(c)(iii) of the Act. The Committee is also authorized to recommend the discontinuance of any recognition already granted by the Council.

[7] *See* Advocates Act, 1961, s 7(1) (h).

staggering 15-fold increase. By 2000 the number increased to 550. According to a recent estimate (2014), the total number of law colleges in India were around 1200 (it was 800 in 2012).[8] From 2001-2008, 586 new law colleges have been approved by the Bar Council of India. The rate of emergence of legal institutions has been increasing every year. In the year 2014 BCI has given approval to 92 colleges (approximately) which was double in number if we compare with 2012.

The reason for this exponential increase is due to the low threshold of standards of infrastructural requirements prescribed by the Bar Council of India.[9] However, the majority of law colleges do not meet even that much but in spite of that they manage to get approval from BCI. Getting approval from the Bar Council of India has become a mere formality. As an administrator, I have experienced various inspections where members of the inspection team prepared a report recommending recognition from the hotel room and did not even visit the location. Sometimes the college management arranges all the minimum mandatory requirements on rental basis for the purposes of inspection.[10] The deep-seated corruption and unethical practices in the affiliation and approval process have devastated legal education maximum. This is corroborated by a pejorative 107-page judgment delivered by Patiala House Court which found during a CBI trial that there was no reasonable doubt that three elected Bar Council of India (BCI) members had regularly conspired to extort money from

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[8] *See* Prachi Shrivastava, In two years, number of law schools increased from 800 to 1,200: Now BCI hopes to put brake on mushrooming epidemic Home - Legally India - Career Intelligence for Lawyers, Law Students (2014),
https://www.legallyindia.com/lawschools/in-two-years-number-of-law-schools-increased-from-800-to-1-200-now-bci-hopes-to-put-brake-on-mushrooming-epidemic-20141209-5408 (last visited Jul 13, 2022).

[9] *See* The Bar Council of India, http://www.barcouncilofindia.org/.

[10] Mandatory required books for the library are borrowed from the known distributors or book suppliers on payment of a sum amount. Once inspection is done, all the books are returned to the supplier. Minimum number of teachers as per BCI regulation are hired on a temporary basis (for a day or two) from other similar type of colleges.

law colleges for passing "factual" or "favourable" inspection reports.[11] The judge anguish remarked:

> "It is unfortunate that persons responsible for upholding law indulged into corrupt activities and violated the rule of law."

During the course of hearing a matter relating to the affiliation of a law college with the Bar Council of India,[12] the Supreme Court of India also recognized this menace:

> "This petition raises very serious questions regarding affiliation and recognition of Law Colleges by the Bar Council of India. It is a matter of common knowledge that before granting affiliation proper exercise is not carried out. No serious efforts have been made by the concerned authority to learn about the Infrastructure, Library, and faculty before granting affiliation or recognition."[13]

National Knowledge Commission in its report has bemoaned that legal institutions are far from standards with hardly any infrastructure and any regard to quality of legal education.[14] Bar Council has failed dejectedly to develop a mechanism to check all these malpractices involved in the affiliation process.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) envisions that regulation, accreditation, funding, and setting of academic standard will

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[11] All three were sentenced to five years in jail each under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988, in addition to a few Rs lakhs in fines. Mr. Yashpal Singh, Assistant Professor, NREC College Khurja who acted as Rana's go-between was also jailed for five years for abetting the bribes in a very hands-on manner.

[12] S.L.P. (C) No. 22337 of 2008, Bar Council of India vs. Bonnie FOI Law College & Ors.

[13] The Supreme Court also constituted a Committee to examine issues relating to affiliation and recognition of law colleges. The mandate of this Committee was, therefore, to examine issues concerning the manner of affiliation and recognition of Law Colleges by the Bar Council of India, identifying areas which require redressal, and also addressing factors impeding the implementation of the norms already in place.

[14] *See* Knowledge Commission Report. All India Council for Technical Education, 39, https://www.aicte-india.org/downloads/nkc.pdf.

be executed by four distinct, independent and empowered vertical bodies within one umbrella institution named the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).[15] But policy excludes medical and legal education from its purview in the name of removing the duplication and disjunction of regulatory efforts by the multiple regulatory agencies that exist at the current time.[16]

II. Paradigm Shift

Legal education in India witnessed a paradigm shift in 1986 when the first National Law University (NLU) – the National Law School of India University (NLSIU) Bangalore[17] was established with the help of the Bar Council of India. The Chief Justice of India consented to be the Chancellor of this University. In 2018, two young law schools came up in Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh) and Sonipat (Haryana) raising the number of NLUs. Few more are expected to be established. For instance, a foundation stone has already been laid by the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand for a NLU in the State of Uttarakhand. Statutes have already been passed in the States of Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir and Meghalaya for establishing the National Law Universities. State of Uttar Pradesh may get its second National Law University in Prayagraj in the year 2022.[18] It is often said that over the period of two decades, NLUs have emerged as the central axis of legal education. NLUs have in a way redefined legal education in the country by infusing a more disciplined approach in teaching, investing in appropriate teaching pedagogy and creating a vibrant job market for the law graduates beyond the traditional field of law practice and

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[15] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVT OF INDIA (2020), para 18.3
https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] The NLUs have misappropriated the word 'National' though they have all been constituted under the Statute of the Legislative Assemblies of the respective States.

[18] The Government of Uttar Pradesh in the 2021-2022 budget planned to set up a National Law University in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundations of the Uttar Pradesh National Law University in presence of Governor of UP, Chief Justice of India N V Ramana, and Chief Minister of the State Mr. Yogi Adityanath.

judicial services in the courts of law. However, whether such initiatives by default would make NLUs as the 'Centres of Excellence' or would fall short of establishing requisite norms that could determine the 'excellence' of an institution is analytically probed to develop a rational perspective. NLUs became a model for quality legal education and based on these models many private law schools were established but off late all these turned out to be an elite affair only. These elite institutions lacked diversity in terms of religion, caste, class, and gender which has been one of the biggest criticisms of the Indian Judicial System. Because, this starts at the very beginning — the legal education system.

III. Access and Inclusivity

These institutions of quality legal education were curved by multiple obstacles. Average fees ranging from Rs 2 lakh-2.5 lakh a year at national law universities and 3-5 lakh a year in private law schools leaving food and other personal expenses are the major obstacles. Starting from Rs 30,000 to 1 lakh for law school entrance coaching and emphasis on fluency in English further confined quality legal education to elite class. Elitism and Caste-based opportunity structure continue to shape access to, and participation in legal education. Although elite law schools claim to be casteless and classless, caste remains a hard reality both systemically and otherwise in these institutions impacting the eventual composition of the legal fraternity i.e. Bar, Bench and academia.

A survey conducted by student body in NLSIU Bangalore in 2015, showed that over 80% of the students were Hindu, while less than 1% were Muslim. Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access (IDIA)[19] found the same statistics when they surveyed students across several National Law Universities. It was found that 65% percent of the students at NLSIU are from upper-caste, with 27% being Brahmin.

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[19] Shamnad Basheer, IDIA DIVERSITY SURVEY REPORT 2018-19 IDIA, https://www.idialaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/diversity-survey-2018-19.pdf.

Similarly, a survey conducted in Jindal Global Law School in 2014 found that 61% of its student population is from upper-caste.

In the law schools, caste takes the form of class, manifesting as accent, fashion and attitude. IDIA's Diversity Survey also revealed that around 20 percent of students surveyed in various National Law Schools face harassment or bullying because of various factors, such as their family background, poor English language skills, dressing sense, knowledge of popular culture, caste, or ethnicity.[20] Thirty-five percent also reported that they had trouble fitting in with the student community in their college because of their background.[21] A survey of students conducted by two of its students in NLSIU in 2003 showed a strong correlation between the caste/class background of students and various activities, such as mooting and debating, which are important markers of social capital in the law school environment. The IDIA survey also found that students with poor English language skills tended to participate less in extracurricular activities.

NLUs only provide reservation to SC and ST communities in the admission process. However, due to the design of entrance examination which necessarily makes coaching essential along with a very high application fee it becomes an elite affair and only privileged classes from this community appear in Common Law Admission Test (CLAT). While recently the Supreme Court of India approved 27% reservation to Other Backward Classes (OBC) in undergraduate and postgraduate medical seats, NLUs are persistently evading this constitutional mandate.[22] The All India OBC Students' Association has demanded that the reservation scheme must be implemented at National Law Universities (NLUs).[23] Not all NLUs followed reservation

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[20] *Id.* at p.6.

[21] *Id.* at p.20.

[22] Only three NLUs namely Gujarat National Law University, National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi and Dr BR Ambedkar National Law University Sonipat have implemented 27% OBC reservations in all India quotas so far.

[23] CLAT 2022: AIOBCSA DEMAND 27% OBC QUOTA AT NLUS INDIA TODAY (2022), https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/news/story/clat-2022-aiobcsa-demand-27-obc-quota-at-nlus-1898372-2022-01-10.

policy, in spite of several reminders and notices issued by the National Commission of Backward Classes.[24] The grounds are more or less technical such as the state government does not have an OBC reservation policy in higher education or the matter is deferred by the governing bodies of the University, etc.

As a matter of fact, upper-castes have controlled the production of knowledge by limiting access to education to lower castes and this continues in the elite and so-called islands of legal education. 'Merit' is considered as the sole legitimate marker of ability, when in reality it cannot be distanced from the privilege of one's birth.

We understand that only granting reservations will not make law schools inclusive. We need to address the other challenges such as resentment from peer classmates who hold students coming from marginalized communities an inferior section and persistently question their competencies and calibre and this makes the college environment hostile for them.[25]

It has tangible repercussions. This perpetual dearth of representation of these marginalized sections affects diversity of bar, bench and legal academia. A homogenous bar, bench and academia in terms of caste and class backgrounds when become part of larger institutions eclipse the substance of justice itself with their limited understanding of intersectionality. Lack of diversity in the student body translates into the under-representation of marginalized communities in universities and college faculty composition. Faculty members are capable of shaping future legal minds and their opinions and worldviews can influence those of young lawyers. Institutions of legal education especially NLUs therefore must work as bulwark against these discriminations and try to ensure constitutional ethos not only in

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[24] NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES, http://www.ncbc.nic.in/Home.aspx.

[25] In 2019, a first-year student at NLU, Bhopal, committed suicide after being constantly "mocked" by his peers for his English language skills being "weak." *See* https://theswaddle.com/making-indian-legal-education-more-inclusive-is-key-to-building-a-more-equitable-judicial-system/.

readings but also in practice and behaviour. That is why Justice DY Chandrachud in one of his speeches observed that the most fundamental way of achieving greater diversity is by ensuring the legal education system more distributive, diverse and inclusive. Reference in the chapter is made with respect to one of two premier institutions of legal education but similar patterns and trends are present in all other such elite institutions.

IV. The National Education Policy *vis-à-vis* Accessibility and Inclusivity in Legal Education

We got a new National Education Policy (NEP) in 2020 but much discourse is not happening in the legal fraternity. The reason being policy's unprofessional approach towards problems and issues of professional legal education. Apart from other objectives, NEP lays emphasis on three significant reforms to be made in the field of legal education.

First, it discourages the practice of stand-alone institutions/ single discipline Universities. No new stand-alone institutes shall be permitted unless special circumstances arise. It further proposes that existing stand-alone universities shall become multi-disciplinary by 2030, either by creating new departments or through creating clusters. While this recommendation is not exclusively directed towards law institutes, NLUs are going to be vastly impacted due to their isolated existence. Limited infrastructure,[26] restricted grant from the state governments and working on self-financed models[27] to sustain themselves, NLUs will face difficulties in implementing NEP.

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[26] Most of the NLUs already have a space crunch and they are not able to house the existing batch of students within the campus. Opening new departments or faculties in order to make it a multidisciplinary University would pose a new challenge.

[27] NLUs are mostly functioning in a self-sufficient model with limited funding from the state governments. In such a case, forcing them to open up new departments could further drive up the cost of education which will further shrink the accessibility.

Second, it proposes a bilingual approach for law institutes. Though, policy prima facie addresses the problem of language barrier in NLU students but only up to a limited extent. While it can certainly help a student who is studying at NLU situated in her region, it fails to take into account people who could be taking admission in different states. Will it be possible for NLUs to ensure extra classes/ remedial classes for language and also de-emphasizing English in favour of regional language will be a big challenge especially when quality legal literature and resources are available in English language only.

Third, it seeks to make professional legal education globally competitive.[28] This is the most concerning issue pertaining to the recommendation: The NEP document states:

> 'It (legal education) must be informed and illuminated with Constitutional values of Justice – Social, Economic, and Political – and directed towards national reconstruction through instrumentation of democracy, rule of law, and human rights. The curricula for legal studies must reflect socio-cultural contexts along with, in an evidence-based manner, the history of legal thinking, principles of justice, the practice of jurisprudence, and other related content appropriately and adequately.'

This innocuously worded statement appears to reaffirm the Constitutional ethos in legal education. However, words viz. national reconstruction and socio-cultural contexts may require further deliberations. While neither the NEP nor its revised draft throw any light on the exact meaning of national reconstruction; the term socio-cultural context does find explanation in the revised NEP draft. The NEP revised draft elaborates upon curriculum to include socio-cultural contexts in the following words:

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[28] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVT OF INDIA (2020), para 22.4
https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf.

It is the function of legal education to transmit the foundational values of Indian democracy to learners in order to give legal studies the necessary social relevance and acceptability. In doing so, the law curriculum has to fall back upon the culture and traditions of people, the history of legal institutions and victory of "Dharma" over "Adharma" writ large in Indian literature and mythology. Further, there is growing consensus worldwide that the study and practice of law cannot be independent of the culture of society, including the study of classical law texts.'

Our values are already extracted and incorporated in the constitution's preamble. The purpose of referring to classical legal texts (which may also include *Manusmriti*) and mythology have generated a new apprehension. There is no doubt that the culture and tradition of a place are important for developing its legal principles, but cultures, traditions and the society too evolves with the time and we cannot freeze it with a specific time period. Culture and traditions are not homogenous but must be interpreted with great diversity in our country.

It is pertinent to note here that the policy while dealing with legal education makes no recommendation towards making law schools more inclusive. It remains silent on questions of caste and gender both at graduate and post-graduate studies. It vaguely mandates that legal education needs to be globally competitive by adopting best practices and embracing new technologies for wider access. The policy doesn't have anything new in the reflections of constitutional values of justice, rule of law and possible future reforms vis-à-vis legal education. It clearly shows the policy makers have not taken the pain to discuss with legal academia or the regulators of legal education in India to diagnose the real problem of legal education.

V. Emergence of Technology and Its Impact on Legal Education

As we arrived in the third millennium, the industrial revolution that commenced three centuries ago, has given way to the earth shaking Information Age. It has revolutionized our working culture in terms of how we work, transmit, store and retrieve information. The information age revolves around the developments so far made in Telecommunications and Information technology and consists of hardware, software, and media for collection, storage, processing, transmission, and presentation of information. We are talking of communication and computing equipment and programmes, which include satellites, switches (phone exchanges), transmission lines, computers, modems, operating systems and applications. But it still appears to be in its infancy when we assess and compare our work with the champions of information technology.

Of what relevance is this revolution to a legal education system? For many years, the question of how to use technology to teach law has been a least concern of the legal academy.[29] That era of general indifference to developments in learning technologies is now coming to an end. There are many reasons for the change. Law schools are facing such a host of difficulties— declining enrolments, declining job prospects for graduates, reduced public funding, and understandable concerns about cost and debt—that sometimes it seems the only debate is over whether the situation is best described as a "tsunami" or "a perfect storm." Closure of educational institutions due to COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges for education systems to respond to the needs of learners and ICT came to rescue the entire education system across the world. Against this backdrop, technology offers the attractive possibility of making legal education more efficient, effective and inclusive.

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[29] Tamar Lewin, LAW SCHOOL PLANS TO OFFER WEB COURSES FOR MASTER'S, N.Y. Times (May 8, 2012), http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/09/education/law-school-plans-to-offer-web-coursesfor-masters.html (noting that "[l]egal education has been slow to move to online classes.").

VI. Legal Pedagogy

Legal pedagogy ever since the inception of legal education carves for facilitating a better comprehension of law to the students. In India, a series of reformation was initiated after 1965 to ensure access to quality legal education to the students of law.[30] Subsequently, several National Law Schools and centres of academic excellence were increasingly established. More streamlined regulations were introduced to grant recognition to the law schools.[31] However, amongst these reformations which primarily focused on imparting quality on-campus education, some of them attained the desired result, while others failed to strike the target and enhance the quality of legal education. Though efforts to enhance the quality of legal education fostered on one side, technology started to play its role on the other. Over a period of two decades, its impact grew continuously in legal education in tune with the predictions of Prof. Mary Kay Kane, to become the dominant method, for the delivery of legal education[32]. The concept of virtual legal education, consequently developed and designed with constructively aligned open access, self-paced, personalised curriculum, incorporating diverse learning requirement of today's law learners, astonishingly, in a blink of an eye - through its efficiency, increased participation and the success of students, shattered the accepted traditional strategies of legal didactics, forcing legal academia to suggest the necessity for a new mode of teaching.[33] The nature of virtual education coupled with aspirations of the young generation for modernization of the learning environment, in fact, transformed it to become one amongst the unique instrumentalities shaping the professionals for tomorrow by imparting quality legal education and training, even thereby prompting universities to consider the options of hybrid education.

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[30] NR MADHAVA MENON, THE TRANSFORMATION OF INDIAN LEGAL EDUCATION 5 (Harvard Law School, 2012).

[31] B Ashok v. The Secretary, W.P (MD) No. 9533 of 2015 decided on 07.08.2015.

[32] Mary Kay Kane, *President's Address: Technology and Faculty Responsibilities*, ASS'N. OF AM. L. SCH. NEWS. 1–2 (Apr. 2001).

[33] Stephen Colbran & Anthony Gilding, *MOOCs and the Rise of Online Legal Education*, 63(3) J. OF LEGAL EDUC. 405–428 (2014).

VII. Access to Enhanced Learning

Virtual legal education independently and in blend with traditional education has brought about a paradigm shift in the perception of legal education, with learners being imparted with an enhanced understanding of law.[34] This change in the metamorphic cycle is attributable to the advancement of technology at multiple dimensions, especially, the development of digital databases and online delivery platforms. Creation of digital database such as Heinonline, Westlaw, Jstor, Manupatra, and so on, provides access to more than 28,000 law periodicals published and judicial pronouncements made across the globe, paving the way for legal fraternity to access to the most relevant materials from the most authoritative sources, in turn abridging a crucial research gap which existed in the past.[35] Secondly, the development of online delivery platforms and assisted applications enabled the dissemination of the information gathered by legal pedagogy fairly easier. These advancements in combination facilitated virtual legal education in initiating an overhaul in the didactic strategies. When, creation of databases enabled virtual legal education to come with revised and up-to-date curriculum in pace with the developments in the field whereas online delivery platforms facilitated the development of innovative multiple constructively aligned pedagogical strategies at all levels, with the help of supporting applications, incorporating diverse learning requirements. These personalized learning programs, developed with the involvement of the best faculty available, nurtures the formation of a cluster of like-minds across the globe, promoting student engagement, critical thinking, student motivation and student collaboration. Such an advantage is made realised through multiple means. When, virtual legal education is imparted by means of independent specialized programs through the

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[34] Jacqueline Deborah Lipton, *Distance Legal Education: Lessons from the *Virtual* Classroom*, 60 IDEA: The IP L. Rev. (forthcoming 2020).

[35] Shelley Ross Saxer, *One Professor's Approach to Increasing Technology Use in Legal Education*, 6 RICH. J.L. & TECH. 21 (Winter 1999-2000).

likes of Edx, Coursra, Udemy using asynchronous mode of tutorials,[36] many other platforms were designed which impart specialized virtual legal education by means of both synchronous and asynchronous mode, rendering learning more informative and interactive. On the other hand, a number of universities, especially for the post graduate programs, blend virtual education with traditional on-campus education, enhancing the quality of the program.[37] Studies in the past have also categorically proved improvement in the success and satisfaction of students when virtual education is so blended.[38] University of Pennsylvania and University of Arizona are some amongst them.[39]

Legal learning can be further enhanced through the effectual organising of webinars. Webinars, characteristically, have an advantage of rendering better availability of academia and professionals, not only from legal background, but from multiple disciplines, across the globe, compared to seminars. Such accessibility to the live lectures and interactions of pioneers opens wide probabilities of access to enhanced insights into the field. Likelihood of persistent interaction with students and professionals from a range of disciplines, in such a fashion may generate thoughts in new and translational ways, promoting a greater public good. Technology, in addition, fosters chances of research collaboration, funded or otherwise, with various national and international states or private entities, empowering students to have a better accordance with facts and materials allied to their research area, promoting a better legal education.

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[36] Zhang, Qing, Kyle L. Peck, et. al., *Exploring the Communication Preferences of MOOC Learners and the Value of Preference-based Groups: Is Grouping Enough?* 64(4) Educ. Tech. Res. and Dev., 809-37(2016).

[37] James B. Levy, *Teaching the Digital Caveman: Rethinking the Use of Classroom Technology in Law School*, 19 Chap. L. Rev. 241 (2016).

[38] Gerald F. Hess, *Blended Courses in Law School: The Best of Online and Face-to-Face Learning?*, 45 McGeorge L. Rev. 51 (2013).

[39] PENN LAW ANNOUNCES NEW 'FUTURE OF THE PROFESSION INITIATIVE' FOCUSED ON LEGAL EDUCATION INNOVATION, PROFESSION-WIDE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP PENN LAW (2019), https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/news/9455-penn-law-announces-new-future-of-the-profession.

VIII. Preparing for Tomorrow's World

Technological advancement has not only contributed to delivering access to quality academic support but also has a tremendous potential to the development of professional skills, through a variety of professional development programs, access to multidisciplinary programs, competitions, internships and network building. It is an accepted facticity that for a plethora of reasons there persists a gap between the academic support provided at the law schools and the practice of law in the courtrooms. However, virtual legal education attempts to bridge the gap, by providing specialised programs, befitting the same. Such programs, in synchronous and asynchronous mode, or in a blend of both, through specially designed curriculum running for a fairly short period, facilitate to inculcate skills, necessary for the profession which is otherwise arduous to be taught in law schools. These programs, endued for professional development, are often followed by grading and are accompanied by certificates upon successful completion, which are, mostly, verifiable by the employer. These skills may be specialised or interdisciplinary skills. Meanwhile, it is soothing that virtual education, through the cheap, self-paced and flexible structuring has also fostered interdisciplinary knowledge, especially in their area of practice, amongst the legal professionals, enabling the excellence of the professionals in their practice of law.[40] Competitions, like virtual mooting, debate and public speaking competitions, have also been instrumental in skill development, through the afforded opportunity to engage with national and international competitors. Competition specific customized virtual platforms have been developed.[41] Such competitions coupled with the involvement of emerging virtual legal aid clinics enable law students to handle the transition to e-courts with relative ease and confidence and to adapt in a better manner lawyers never required in the past. Studies

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[40] Lund, Kristine & Chen, et.al., *The Potential of Interdisciplinary in MOOC,* 10.1145/3231644.3231661.

[41] For instance, NLU Odisha like many other law schools, conducted three editions of its flagship International Maritime Arbitration Moot (IMAM) on the Moot Yaatly platform. We received path-breaking participation from institutions across the nation and hosted judges across the globe.

on such a line underlie the same proving that students, familiar with the technology are more confident in their approach towards employability.[42] Besides such benefits, these activities further facilitate network building amongst the professionals across the globe contributing to the overall development of them in their field of activity. Virtual research internships offered by leading law firms across various platforms are in addition, another avenue to accelerate skill development. Such an experience bestows students and professionals with an option to try and do something different and to get a primary comprehension of the functions of premier law firms across the globe. For instance, InsideSherpa, offers virtual internship opportunities with leading law firms such as White and Case LLP, Linklaters, Baker Mckenzie, Leo Cussen Centre for Law, Latham and Watkins and so on[43], where, open, self-paced programs demanding 5-6 hours, are specially designed in different modules, by the firms, to provide the interns a perception of real life internship, which would otherwise be inaccessible and unaffordable for many. LawyerUp, another platform promoting virtual internships, facilitates students to secure research internships with lawyers and law firms located within the United States. These programs, enduring students with better insights into legal practice, are made accessible at a free or minimal cost, ultimately, enhancing the quality of legal education and preparing students to face the challenges of future employability.

IX. A Step towards Addressing Educational Inequality

Despite intensive efforts to reform legal education, reports submitted by commissions, experts and investigation panels over the years unequivocally suggest that it has not been sufficient enough to ensure accessibility, quality and inclusivity in legal education across the country.[44] When National Law Schools[45] and a dozen or more of

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[42] Michele Pistone, *Law Schools and Technology: Where We Are and Where We Are Heading*, 64 J. Legal Educ. 586 (2015).

[43] *Virtual work experience program,* www.insideshepa.com.

[44] *See Supra* Note 30.

competitive state and private universities benefitted from second and third generation reforms and stand on top of the table and even some of them go on to become global, imparting quality legal education and producing highly skilled professionals; a large chunk from the rest of approximately 1500 law colleges remain lower in their ranking.[46] As uncloaked by a number of commission and investigative reports and judicial observations, the latter battle with a range of impediments particularly, dearth of qualified law teachers, unrevised curriculum, irregular academic calendar and examination patterns, political chaos, diverse malpractices, and so on[47] remaining detached from the substratum of quality legal education.

The inequality projected through these distinctions become more nagging with the realization of the fact that the premier institutions imparting quality legal education could cater the demand of only less than 10% of the law aspirants of the country.[48] Consequently, the enrolment to these seats become highly competitive, leaving behind, mostly, students burdened by structural inequalities, social exclusion and personal quagmires to opt for the others, depriving them of access to quality legal training, making legal education in India prone to educational inequality. Besides this stumble block, exorbitant expenses which is higher than the annual income of more than 70% of the population[49], despite the presence of a few grants and scholarships offered by State and private entities,[50] is likely to place a huge financial burden over most of the students, causing them to slide away from the quality legal education and to opt for law schools fairly lower in rankings.

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[45] Though National Law University (NLU) is "university" for all purposes but its intake of students every year is abysmally less in comparison to any faculty or department of state or central University.

[46] Mahipal Singh Rana v. State of UP 2016 (2) ILR 707.

[47] Pruthvi Educational Trust v. Bar Council of India, ILR 2000 KAR 1808.

[48] *See Supra* Note 30.

[49] Mila Versteeg, *Can Rights Combat Economic Inequality,*133 Harv. L. Rev. 2017 (2019-2020).

[50] SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCEMENTS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, https://mhrd.gov.in/scholarships.

It is where technology plays a vital role in bridging the gap caused by the predicament of educational inequality in legal training. The virtual law training, designed, mostly by leading law schools across the globe at par with the standards of their on-campus curriculum or by other entities combining great minds within and outside the country, is flexible, open and often comes free or within a nominal charge.[51] Such an approach brings about a revolutionary change in access to quality legal education. Particularly in a country like India, having accessibility to internet connectivity with a fairly good bandwidth at affordable rates, virtual legal education being open and cheap implies the accessibility to the programs, irrespective of social or educational status, potentially bringing a large portion of the excluded aspirants and socially marginalised learners to the substratum of quality legal education. Further, the flexibility provided by such programs affords access to many of those students tormented by personal quagmires. Didactics, designed multifaceted to incorporate diverse learning requirements paves way for the effective dissemination of legal erudition to the rest of the students, thus, abridging the gap induced by the educational inequality in legal training.

X. Fosters Continuing Legal Education

For many in India, legal education, for a long time, tarried lackadaisical, as a one-time affair, wrapping up with the obtaining of a bachelor degree.[52] However, mounting professional competence and ever developing legal systems, presently demands, continuing legal education for the survival as well as for the effective discharge of justice. When traditional programs require hours to spare out of the busy work schedule, with the involvement of technology, virtual legal education has brought about a paradigm shift, providing a flexible and better quality continuing legal education accessible for all, even from the remotest corner. Emerging virtual continuing legal education programs,

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[51] Kenneth R. Swift, *The Seven Principles for Good Practice in (Asynchronous Online) Legal Education*, 44 Mitchell Hamline L. Rev. 105 (2018).

[52] *Designing the Continuing Legal Education System in India for Advocates*, Ministry of Law and Justice 11(2017).

introduced individually and in combination with synchronous and asynchronous mode of didactics, are designed with a varied number of activities involving pioneers in respective fields to inculcate in the professionals the competencies and skills in substantive and procedural laws, professional ethics, management and lawyering skills. Self-paced, open programs launched by Virtual Law Schools and several national and private law schools, comes with free or nominal cost affordable to the professionals. Such programs, accompanied by certificates verifiable by employers, motivate professionals to remain updated in the field.

XI. Conclusion

Higher education not only means erudition of textbook knowledge, but is concerned with the acquisition of a number of skills including the ability to think critically and analytically, creatively and so on. However, advancement in technology made possible the facilitation of these skills in a diverse manner through virtual legal education both through quality theoretical and practical support. The open and self-paced virtual legal education and training were significant in the attainment of this objective, that learners irrespective of socio-economic status were afforded an equal opportunity to the acquisition of these skills, abridging the educational inequality, persisting for a long period. Feasibility and accessibility coupled with the efficiency of the programs designed, enwrapped greater student participation, opening up new horizons of development, with the digital platform now becoming a prime tool for carving out professionals for the future and also an instrumentality to shape the existing professionals. Admitting the same, several universities across the globe, shifted to a hybrid model leaving behind consideration of virtual education being mutually exclusive. Undisputedly, though the platform for next generation legal education is set, there lay a number of impediments, phasing down the transition. Prominent among them is the adaptability crisis of the faculty and learners to the digital revolution. The shifting role of tutors in digital education is likely to generate concerns for the faculty, which may hamper the designing of a constructively aligned didactic tactics by

them, ultimately affecting the quality of the education imparted, itself. Though the young generation stands on a better footing in understanding technology, changing patterns of learning styles and technological nuances may tend to be challenging at least for a few. Yet, these are not manacles devoid of any solution and the ability of virtual legal education to impart quality legal education to the mass in a personalised manner has rendered it indispensable in the future, paradigmatically shifting the traditional didactics of legal education. Time may come, when law schools and law faculties may be judged, not only for the quality of the on-campus program but also for the quality of virtual legal education imparted either by themselves or in collaboration with virtual law schools.

New technologies promise a wider range of teaching functions and a higher quality of learning with lower costs, greater student control, more interaction and feedback for students. How to make these wonderful promises come true remains a challenge to administrators of virtual legal education in India. Policy initiatives have been taken across OECD countries to support the educational, social and emotional needs of these students. Most common practices to foster equity and inclusion have been the distribution of electronic devices with an internet connection in poor or remote areas and the availability of multi-language educational resources. The Government of India is already stimulating the virtual learning process and therefore Bar Council of India must take this forward in consultation with other stakeholders especially the NLUs. Considering the goals of NEP 2020, NLUs being stand-alone universities must take a lead role in providing quality and continuing legal education which is inclusive and accessible to a larger number. It would not only justify the existence of NLUs but tremendously change the future of legal education in India.

Law schools serve as the gateway to the legal profession, and a lack of diversity and representation at law schools could only mean that the legal profession would also end up with an elitist and exclusive

workforce.[53] Awareness of the diversity of their student intake by institutions of legal education and ensuing institutional support will be vital and essential to lessen the impact of a student's background on her performance.[54] Similar such exercises will give insight for identifying structural and institutional problems that plague higher education institutions and universities. There is a dearth of diversity component in the hiring procedures in all NLUs and similar other elite institutions of legal education. Therefore, genuine efforts must be made to diversify the faculty group by appointing faculty from underrepresented groups such as SC/ST, OBC, women, transgender, minority, PwD etc. NAAC and other ranking agencies must include this as a specific parameter i.e. What efforts are institutions making to diversify their own faculty? The NLUs must step up and lead by example to address these concerns.[55]

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[53] *See Supra* Note 19 at p.46.

[54] Chirayu Jain, Sanjana Muraleedharan, Spadika Jayaraj, Harjas Singh, *Accessibility and Inclusivity in at National Law School*, 53 (1) Econ. & Pol. Wkly. (Jan, 2018).

[55] *See Supra* Note 19 at p.46.

Chapter - 7

INTERDISCIPLINARY, MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY CURRICULUM: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Nil Ratan Roy*

I. Framework of the Study

The present policy of education (NEP, 2020) in India has emphasised in its document that higher education of the country shall aim to develop holistic and multidisciplinary education across the nation. All round development of the learners is supposed to be the priority in all levels of education, which includes - intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral aspects. NEP 2020 has given the importance of the development of 21st century skills which includes- communication, life skills, career skills, discussion, debate, laborious specialization and many others across the fields of study such as-arts, humanities, social sciences, languages, technical, professional and vocational fields. The policy also recommended incorporating the same approach in the undergraduate level of education in the long run cutting across the disciplines.

Moreover, to explore the world and to discover better means of human life are the central objectives of higher education. Unceasing endeavours are being made by the academician and researcher in this direction by integrating different dimensions of knowledge and ideas. A tree is said to be stronger when its root goes deeper and in a different direction for better grip, similarly, any issue of the surrounding also remains connected with multiple aspects and dimensions. Hence, a holistic approach is desirable for better understanding and deracinating

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such issues. These circumstances provoke the academician and researcher to adopt a holistic approach in research and academics to understand the reality of the social problems that lie in human society. Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach in curriculum implies to make the learners understand the reality from different angles so that joint effort could be made to resolve such issues within a shorter period of time. These approaches also direct a person to look at things differently and how things might have some connection with some other aspects which might not be the area of the person under which he/she belongs. Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach is not only limited to the curriculum, rather it's the way of research approach now, by which some of the deep rooted social issues are being solved. Gibbons (1979) stated that integrating areas to develop interdisciplinary concepts may appear natural in subject-based programmes. The integrated curriculum is a method of arguing for the integration of real-life circumstances with other disciplines. An integrated curriculum emphasises the settings, needs, concerns, and individual or social problems, as well as developing a connection to the actual world and engaging in meaningful activities (Beane, 1995; Jacobs, 1989, 1991; Vars, 1991).

II. Interdisciplinary Curriculum Approach (IDCA)

There is a need for interdisciplinary knowledge to tackle the multiple challenges in the present day society. But to define the concept of interdisciplinary subjects and knowledge is a big challenge, as the dimensions of a particular knowledge or concepts are being changed by the changing time. However, the importance of disciplinary knowledge is not diminishing, rather acknowledges that knowledge is unbounded and potential discoveries lie outside compartmentalized structures (Holley, Karri. (2017). Interdisciplinary is a buzzword amongst the academicians in the present day time, and it is being interpreted in different ways depending on the context specific. This is an approach where two disciplines are merged and develop a new discipline and the context is being looked in from different dimensions. This approach is found to be one of the innovative

approaches to understand the different issues of the society. Through this approach the root of any social problem could be looked into and appropriate solutions for the same could be easily found out. Interdisciplinary studies are when two or more academic disciplines are combined into one activity. It incorporates knowledge from a variety of domains, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, and economics. It's about making something by thinking outside the box. There are two approaches we can observe when we try to link knowledge from different disciplines, they are Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary approaches of Learning. When a new field of study or ideas emerges or is produced by the combination of discipline or when any two disciplines intersect in one point and give birth, some new areas of study are called interdisciplinary fields. The focus of an interdisciplinary curriculum is on commonalities between disciplines, hence it focuses on themes or problems, for example, disciplines like biochemistry come out by intersecting two separate disciplines such as-biology and chemistry, subject like bio-technology come outs from biology and technology, similarly, biogeography, environmental geography, educational technology, educational psychology etc.

Figure No. 1: Intersecting point shows the emerging point of interdisciplinary areas of any discipline.
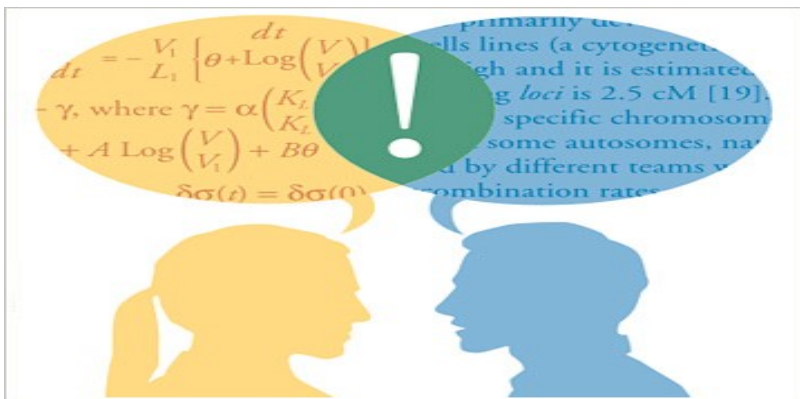
Source: https://d32ogoqmya1dw8.cloudfront.net/images/integrate/teaching_materials/hhmi_interdisciplanary_crossta.jpg

Interdisciplinary curriculum encompasses examining a central subject, issue, problem, topic, or experience using a knowledge view and curricular approach that purposefully applies methods and language from more than one discipline.

III. Benefits of Interdisciplinary Curriculum Approach (IDCA)

1. Deeper understanding about the world around.
2. Improves higher order thinking skills and promotes liberal arts skills.
3. Develops a spirit of mutual respect that developed between faculty and students.
4. Improves learner's mastery of content
5. It helps in acquiring different perspectives and develops the capacity to understand multiple viewpoints on a given topic.
6. Improves their motivation to learn.
7. Allow students to have a more relevant, less fragmented and stimulating experience.
8. Enable the learner to see all sides of the story.
9. Develop more receptivity to new ideas.

IV. Multidisciplinary Curriculum Approach (MDCA)

Multidisciplinary is an approach where more than two disciplines are combined to understand a particular concept or theme. As it is mentioned earlier that, social complexities across the world are increasing day by day and to cope up with these situations individuals are expected to respond to the situation in a very smart manner; and this requires the individual to develop a holistic approach to look into the matter for better view and responses. In the school, the learners are exposed to different disciplines and are expected to develop a holistic view to understand the whole society and surrounding, this approach may be considered as the multidisciplinary approach. This approach can broaden the mind-set of the learners towards society and nature. This approach may be compared with a bowl of mixed fruit, each fruit

representing a single discipline. On the other hand, interdisciplinary learning is more like a 'smoothie' which is a blend of fruits so well blended into one another that the original distinctive flavour of each fruit is no longer recognizable. The multidisciplinary approach in curriculum development is that where two or more disciplines are connected under a single problem or theme (Meeth, 1978; Grady, 1994). For example, to study climate change one must have to know about its root causes from environmental sciences, its impacts in different aspects of our life from social sciences, political ideology to resolve it, scientific solutions from sciences, the ideas of investment cost required from economics etc. This kind of inter and multi connection amongst the discipline knowledge requires when need arises in the society. Multidisciplinary refers to the placing side by side of insights from two or more disciplines. Here different disciplines help to develop a detailed understanding of the topic being studied. These disciplines however make separate contributions unlike interdisciplinary learning where an interdependent relationship is emphasized. No integration between these disciplines is expected in a multidisciplinary approach. When a particular problem is perceived from different angles and attempts to give the solution then it is called a multidisciplinary approach. Generally, any problem in the society is rooted through some multiple areas and requires a holistic approach to understand it and explore solutions. In this approach, all the disciplines get connected to resolve some common issues without changing the basic nature of the concerned discipline. The figure-2 shows how a single problem, the farming crisis, is being looked from different angle and possible solutions are being given from different subject background to resolve the farming crisis; but no attempts are being made to integrate one discipline with other.

Figure No: 2 Understanding farming crises from different angles or disciplines

V. Benefits of a Multidisciplinary Curriculum Approach (MDCA)

a) One of the benefits of a multidisciplinary approach in education is more holistic.

b) New perspectives will make a student more well-rounded (and professional).

c) Multidisciplinary learning is a tangible way of comprehending the world, not just an educational ideology.

d) Hopefully, any education route you take emphasizes the importance of collaboration.

e) The benefits of a multidisciplinary approach in education are clear. By melding together subjects, you're connecting the brightest minds.

f) Collaborating with people across disciplines results in a more harmonious, integrated approach to learning.

g) Multidisciplinary learning programs may not be very common, but that's part of what makes them special.

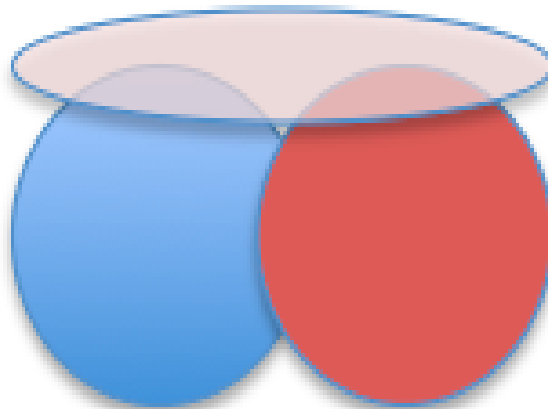### VI. Transdisciplinary Curriculum Approach (TDCA)

The prefix 'trans'- is used with a meaning 'across, beyond, crossing, on the other side, completely transforming, transcending' (dictionary.com). Several possibilities have been proposed for interconnections between disciplines through that explanation.

Trans-disciplinary is a holistic approach to curriculum integration, where disciplinary distinctions are not obvious, transdisciplinary techniques are used. It is the vehicle towards the solution of a complex problem in our society. It is that collaborative process where both specialise and synthesise approaches are combined to reach an appropriate solution which develops a new branch of knowledge to see the problem from its real perspectives. It is a developing step of research to find out the solution of a problem. Generally, to find an ultimate solution to a problem we must depend on this approach. In discipline, as we work within a single framework or we work on the root discipline it focuses the aspects of the problem from the disciplinary point of view only. Disciplinary approach provides information in a specific field developed by the professionals of that particular discipline. Members of a discipline always communicate within their own community. But, when we apply the multidisciplinary approach then the problem is seen from many or multiple perspectives and thus, many disciplines are involved. Here, the root discipline is involved with other disciplines to solve a particular problem. All the multidisciplinary researches work within their own disciplinary boundaries, but at the end of the research it synthesises results from the other disciplinary perspectives. In the interdisciplinary approach where different kinds of knowledge and methodological approaches are combined and synthesised, and on the basis of it new discipline or a new body of knowledge emerged. It relates two or more disciplines to a new level by recognising that each discipline has an effect on the research output. And, by exceeding all these, trans-disciplinary is an approach where a new discipline is revealed transcending the boundaries of disciplinary perspectives. Rather than discipline-specific knowledge transdisciplinary education is based on

real-world experiences. The barriers between traditional disciplines are dissolved with this method of curriculum integration that organizes teaching and learning around the construction of meaning in the context of real-world issues or themes. Beyond just teaching across disciplines using common themes, topics, or issues, transdisciplinary teaching method threads through different courses. Transdisciplinary necessitates collaboration between disciplines in order to produce a holistic curriculum in which students collaborate to overcome diverse challenges. For providing a holistic experience for students' cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development a transdisciplinary approach is used (Amaliyah, Sapriya & Maryani, 2017).

Figure-3: Visual structure of transdisciplinary curriculum approach

Source: https://www.magellanschool.org/wp-content/uploads /2018/03/Transciplinary-Learning-Image.png

VII. Benefits of Trans-disciplinary Curriculum Approach (TDCA)

- Transdisciplinary approach enables the students to develop divergent thinking and creativity.
- More meaning and understanding is seen among students in what they learn.

- High level of motivation is attained by students in this approach.
- It aids in the formation of these linkages by bringing together ideas from many areas and describing them in a practical, easy-to-understand manner.
- A variety of teaching strategies, such as those described in the pyramid, to assist pupils retain their teachings, can be used by teachers with transdisciplinary learning.

VIII. Conclusion

Increasingly demanding application-oriented information and the utility of scientific knowledge in general is important in modern society which necessitates the integration and combining of knowledge from many scientific disciplines. So a transdisciplinary approach is important. Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary and Trans-disciplinary approaches in education are found to be the best ways to fulfil the diverse needs of the learners in the modern era. Knowledge base of different disciplines helps to develop a detailed understanding of the topic being studied. It is the vehicle towards the solution of a complex problem in our society. It is that collaborative processes where both specialise and synthesise approaches are combined to reach an appropriate solution which develops a new branch of knowledge to see the problem from its real perspectives.

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Chapter - 8

NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION: TOWARDS OUTCOME-BASED RESEARCH

*Vijay Kumar Singh**

"National Research Foundation is being built for the first time in the country. Fifty thousand crore rupees have been allocated for this. This will strengthen the governance structure of the research related institutions and will improve linkages between R&D, academia and industry"

Shri Narendra Modi [1]

On Global Innovation Rankings (GII) 2021, India ranks 46th with a score of 36.4, ranking 1st in the regional score (central and southern Asia) and 2nd in the income group score (lower middle income group)[2]. GII rankings are released by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). It is heartening to note that in spite of COVID-19, worldwide the research has increased as well as the investment in Research and Development (R&D)[3].

India has been at the fulcrum of civilization of research and innovation. The excavations of Indus Valley civilization demonstrate the innovations in planned settlements, technical standardisation and metallurgy. The religious texts of Vedic period highlight the use of large numbers. *Aryabhata*, the inventor of 'zero', is considered as first of the great astronomers of the classical age of India (476 AD)[4]. Ancient world class institutions like *Takshashila*, *Nalanda*, and *Vikramshila* set the highest standards of multidisciplinary teaching and research and hosted scholars and students from across backgrounds and countries[5]. However, various invasions and the British Rule subdued the traditional research and innovation mindset of people of India. During East India Company Rule, primacy was given to English as a language[6], which systematically destroyed the local languages and brought forward a sense of inferiority among people studying in the local language. Also, a mind-set developed over a period that prosperity only lies in studying foreign languages. NEP 2020 attacks this position with an aim to promote and sustain diversity of languages in India.

India's Research and Innovation (R&I) investment as a percentage of GDP, vis-a-vis other countries of the world, is currently extremely low and in fact has shown a steady decline over the last

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[4] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVT OF INDIA (2020),
https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
The Indian education system produced great scholars such as *Charaka, Susruta, Aryabhata, Varahamihira, Bhaskaracharya, Brahmagupta, Chanakya, Chakrapani Datta, Madhava, Panini, Patanjali, Nagarjuna, Gautama, Pingala, Sankardev, Maitreyi, Gargi* and *Thiruvalluvar*, among numerous others, who made seminal contributions to world knowledge in diverse fields such as mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical science and surgery, civil engineering, architecture, shipbuilding and navigation, yoga, fine arts, chess, and more. Indian culture and philosophy have had a strong influence on the world.

[5] *Id.* at 34.

[6] See *Macaulay's Minute on Education*, (Feb. 2, 1835),
https://home.iitk.ac.in/~hcverma/Article/Macaulay-Minutes.pdf.

decade, reducing from 0.84% (2008) to around 0.69% (2018)[7]. India's Research output in terms of number of patents filed, number of publications and quality of research has seen some improvement; however, it is yet to come close to its counterparts like USA, China, and Europe at the world stage.

Another important challenge about research in India is measuring its impact on social welfare and benefit to the funders of research (which normally are tax payers in case of publicly funded institutions). A study[8] conducted to find out effectiveness of publicly funded R&D organisations, shows that only 50% (just 17% in case of international policies) of the R&D labs have contributed towards "national policies, regulations or standards, either by the participation of their scientists in various committees or their work having direct contribution to a policy or regulation etc." Establishing effective linkages with societal outcomes and development indicators is critical for a robust research and innovation ecosystem[9].

A summary of the Research and Development Statistics published by DST[10] highlights the need for an outcome-based research ecosystem in India. It may be noted that in an R&D environment, it is generally easier to measure input than output, as outputs are partly intangible in nature and cannot be quantified readily. Devising appropriate metrics and indicators for measuring research output is indeed a difficult task. However, an attempt is made to collect data on output parameters such as "patents and know-how developed and

[7] The Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC), *National Research Foundation Detailed Project Report*, MHRD (Dec., 2019), https://www.psa.gov.in/psa-prod/2020-11/English%20NRF.pdf.

[8] Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Centre for Technology, Innovation and Economic Research (CTIER), *Evaluation of Innovation Excellence Indicators: Report on Public Funded R&D Organisations* (2022), https://static.psa.gov.in/psa-prod/publication/R%26D%20Report%20Vol%201.pdf.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India, *Research and Development Statistics (2019-20)*, https://dst.gov.in/sites/default/files/Research%20and%20Deveopment%20Statistics%202019-20_0.pdf.

utilized, royalties and fees received from the processes sold out, research papers and other publications which might directly or indirectly measure the outcome of R&D"[11]. Though India's researchers per million people have increased from 157 in 2011 to 253 in 2018, it still remains significantly low when compared to other countries like Germany (5,212) and USA (4,412)[12].

I. R&D Ecosystem in India

Due to its battered past of colonialism, the R&D Ecosystem in India followed a more conservative route from the beginning, wherein the Government played a central role in shaping up the R&D ecosystem. This was different than the western approach which adopted the free-market economic model wherein the baton was in the hands of the private sector[13]. Prior to Independence, very little attention was paid to the problem of scientific and industrial research[14]. In 1942, CSIR came into existence as a registered society which worked for promotion, guidance and coordination of scientific and industrial research. After independence, a system of five-year plans decided the priorities sector for investment and accordingly the research and development efforts were also directed.

The Indian Research and Development (R&D) System can be grouped by way of a variety of performers and funding sources. The performers include the national laboratories, universities, in-house R&D laboratories and non-profit organisations. The funding sources include the Central Government, State Governments and the industry including private enterprises and charities/foundations[15].

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[11] *Ibid.*

[12] PRS, *Demand for Grants 2022-23 Analysis: Science and Technology*, https://prsindia.org/budgets/parliament/demand-for-grants-2022-23-analysis-science-and-technology.

[13] Amit Kapoor and Prashant Singh, *R&D ecosystem of OECD countries: Lessons for the Indian economy*, Economic Times, Oct. 27, 2021.

[14] Archana Gupta, *The Five Year Plans and the Role of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in the Development of the Country*, 62 J. SCI. INDUS. RES. 428(2003).

[15] *Supra* Note 10.

Table 1: Funding Sources for Research in India - 2017-18

Entity	R&D Expenditure %
Central Government	45.4
Private Sector Industry	36.8
State Sector	6.4
Public Sector Industry	4.6
Higher Education Sector	6.8

Over the years, R&D investment by the private sector increased, however, the State Sector accounted for only 6.4% of National R&D expenditure and 0.04% of Gross Domestic Product during 2017–18.

Table 2: Percentage share of National Research and Development expenditure by objectives for 2017-18

Objective	Percentage
Health	18.6
Defence	17.1
Development of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	12.6
Industrial Production and Technology	9.8
Exploration and Exploitation of Space	8.8
Transport, Telecommunication and other Infrastructure	8.7
Energy	7.3
General Advancement of Knowledge	7.2
Other Aims	5.5
Education	2.0
Exploration and Exploitation of the Earth	1.8
Environment	0.5
Political & Social Systems, Structures & Processes (including socio-economic services)	0.04
Total	100.0

As is evident from the aforesaid numbers, health and defence account for the largest share of R&D expenditure. The areas requiring attention would be education and environment in particular which has got a meagre percentage of R&D investment. This is more so important now when India has made "Net Zero" commitments to the world[16] at COP26. Budget and expenses on social research are also very poor. The Economic Survey 2021-22 has laid emphasis on agricultural research and education as it would play "a key role in the development of an environmentally sustainable global food system, ensuring food and nutritional security and increasing farm income by cost minimization and yield maximization"[17]. This is again a very important area when India is being questioned as to its subsidies to the agricultural sector at WTO. India's R&D expenditure come from various central government scientific agencies and some of the prominent ones are as follows:

Table 3: Central Scientific Agencies Percentage Share in R&D Expenses

Scientific Agency	Percentage share
Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)	31.6
Department of Space (DOS)	19.0
Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)	11.1
Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)	10.8
Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)	9.5
Department of Science & Technology (DST)	7.3
Department of Biotechnology (DBT)	3.7
Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)	3.1
Ministry of Earth Sciences (MES) +	2.3

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[16] Narendra Modi, Prime Minister, National statement at COP26 Summit in Glasgow (Nov. 2, 2021), https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/national-statement-by-pm-at-cop26-summit-in-glasgow.

[17] Ministry of Finance, Government of India, *Economic Survey* (2021-22), 254.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) ++	0.8
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)	0.5
Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)	0.1
Total	100.0

The DPR document on National Research Foundation (NRF) highlights three major issues with the R&D Ecosystem in India, i.e. (i) lack of integrated planning and coordination; (ii) lack of research culture; and (iii) lack of emphasis on creativity and critical thinking in educational institutions. These three challenges result in lesser number of patents, lesser number of publications and poor research quality. National Research Foundation (NRF) intends to bridge this gap through its dedicated approach to drive research culture and innovation.

A. The Constitutional Mandate to focus on Research

It is the duty of every citizen in India 'to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of enquiry and reform'[18] and also 'to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement'[19]. Education including technical education, medical education and universities, and vocational and technical training of labour are listed in the concurrent list[20] which essentially means that both Central and State Governments may come up with laws to regulate these areas, unless the Central Government exclusively decides to regulate. Central Government further retains its jurisdiction in the matters of education and training in the area of maritime shipping and navigation and airways, aircraft and air navigation[21]. Coordination and determination of standards in institutions of higher education or

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[18] INDIA CONST. art. 51A(h).
[19] INDIA CONST. art. 51A(j).
[20] INDIA CONST. 7th Schedule, List III, Entry 25.
[21] INDIA CONST. 7th Schedule, List I, Entry 25 and 26.

research and scientific and technical institutions also rests with the Central Government.[22] The State Government is empowered to make laws relating to "Agriculture, including agricultural education and research, protection against pests and prevention of plant diseases".[23] The aforesaid provisions of the Constitution of India provide the legislative competence both to the States and the Center for enabling legislations which promote R&D. However, it may be observed that primarily it has been a subject looked upon by the Central Government. Developing a culture of R&D is not only the responsibility of the Government, but it is also a fundamental duty of every citizen for the progress of the country. The constitutional goal of social welfare and justice for all can only be achieved fully when the country addresses societal problems through its R&D efforts.

B. Planning Commission to NITI Aayog

National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) is the new *avatar* of the erstwhile Planning Commission (*Yojana Aayog*)[24]. The Planning Commission was set up on the 15th of March, 1950 through a Cabinet Resolution. Nearly 65 years later, the country has metamorphosed from an under-developed economy to an emergent global nation with one of the world's largest economies. Reflecting the changed dynamics of the new India, NITI has been brought into existence to foster cooperative federalism through structured support

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[22] INDIA CONST. 7th Schedule, List I, Entry 63, 64 and 65.

63.The institutions known at the commencement of this Constitution as the Benares Hindu University, the Aligarh Muslim University and the 1 [Delhi University; the University established in pursuance of article 371E;] any other institution declared by Parliament by law to be an institution of national importance

64.Institutions for scientific or technical education financed by the Government of India wholly or in part and declared by Parliament by law to be institutions of national importance.

65.Union agencies and institutions for— (a) professional, vocational or technical training, including the training of police officers; or (b) the promotion of special studies or research; or (c) scientific or technical assistance in the investigation or detection of crime.

[23] INDIA CONST. 7th Schedule, List II, Entry 14.

[24] On 1st January 2015, the National Institution for Transforming India or NITI Aayog came into existence as the government's premier think tank.

initiatives and mechanisms with the States on a continuous basis, recognizing that strong States make a strong nation[25]. India witnessed a total of 12 five-year plans, the last one being for the year 2012-2017.

To promote *cooperative federalism*, NITI works through a Governing Council Chaired by the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers of all State Governments are members. They are together referred to as *Team India*. At the core of NITI Aayog's creation are two hubs – *Team India Hub* and the *Knowledge and Innovation Hub*. The Team India Hub leads the engagement of states with the Central government, while the Knowledge and Innovation Hub builds NITI's think-tank capabilities. These hubs reflect the two key tasks of the Aayog. There are further sub-group of Chief Ministers and Task Forces constituted to look into different focus areas[26]. The New India Vision 2022 by the Central Government required a very active cooperation from State Governments and a true spirit of Team India was being displayed so as to make development a mass movement[27]. Six important resolve for the Vision 2022 were poverty free, dirt and squalor free, corruption free, terrorism free, casteism free, and communalism free India. The focus for industry has been on encouraging the adoption of Industry 4.0 in MSMEs. Small businesses conduct research programmes for encouraging R&D in MSMEs. It was contemplated that the support to micro innovations will create a culture of innovation across the workforce[28].

One of the major functions of NITI Aayog is to undertake research on various policy and governance issues. These researches concern the policies and programmes of central sector and centrally sponsored schemes, their implementation and monitoring with respect

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[25] Cabinet Secretariat. *Cabinet Secretariat Resolution* (Jan. 1, 2015) http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/cabinet-resolution_EN.pdf.

[26] NITI Aayog, COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM, http://niti.gov.in/content/cooperativefederalism.

[27] NITI Aayog, http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/new_initiatives/NITI%20VC%20Presentation%20Governors %20Conference_Oct12_En.pdf.

[28] Vision for New India@75, NITI Aayog, https://www.niti.gov.in/vision-new-india75.

to nine central ministries and departments[29]. NITI Aayog also supports the State Governments through its various development support services. It also undertakes research and publishes various comparative indexes[30] to promote competitive federalism.

II. Education Policy and Research

Immediately after independence, the focus of policy makers was to provide access to education to everyone, quality came next. In terms of research, it was the five IITs which came on the model of MITs on the recommendations of the *Sarkar Committee* (1945)[31]. All India Council for Technical Education was set up in 1945 to oversee all technical education. University Education Commission (UEC) was set up under the Chairmanship of *Dr. S. Radhakrishnan* in 1948. On the basis of the recommendations of the UEC, University Grants Commission (UGC) came into existence in 1953 which got a statutory status by UGC Act in 1956. Simultaneously several other research organizations like DRDO, ICAR, DST etc. emerged under various ministries and departments to undertake research.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) is a statutory body which is mandated to determine and maintain the standards of teaching, examination and research[32]. Focus on research has been one of the important agenda points for UGC, however, most of the time it has been concentrated upon academic research leading to Ph.D. degree. In 1984, ideas around having entrance test for Ph.D. examination, rationalizing the load of Ph.D. supervisors and ensuring outcome based research by inculcating critical thinking based research projects at the post-graduate level were introduced[33]. Over the years,

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[29] *See* NITI Aayog, https://www.niti.gov.in/documents/research-papers.

[30] For example, ease of Doing Business ranking for States, State Energy and Climate Index, SDG Index, etc.

[31] Evolution of higher learning and research in post-Independence India, SCHOLARIFY.IN (2022), https://www.scholarify.in/evolution-higher-learning-research-india/.

[32] UGC Act, 1956, No. 12, Functions of the Commission.

[33] UGC, UGC'S POLICY AND PROGRAMME FOR IMPROVEMENT OF RESEARCH IN THE UNIVERSITIES UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION,

regulation on Ph.D. has seen transformation towards meeting outcome-based objectives[34]. Quality of higher education definitely hinges upon sustained efforts for promoting research[35]. UGC's Quality Mandate for higher educational institutions has 11 initiatives, out of which one of the initiatives focuses upon Trans-Disciplinary Research[36].

A. National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986

In the year 1964, based on the recommendations of the *Kothari Commission*, the NPE 1968 came into existence. NPE became the basis of reforms that helped strengthen the higher education system in India. *National Policy on Education* (NPE, 1986)[37] emphasized on the linkage of higher education and research. As a mission statement, primarily it was aimed to produce quality manpower capable of taking up R&D functions, promoting an attitude of innovation and improvement in research capabilities with cooperation, collaboration and networking[38]. Soon after declaration of NPE in Budget Session, the Government came up with the Program of Action on NPE in the Monsoon Session[39]. To systematically examine various

https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/pub/report/3.pdf (last visited May 1, 2022).

[34] *See* University Grants Commission, (MINIMUM STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR AWARD OF M.PHIL/PH.D. DEGREE) REGULATIONS 2016; UGC REGULATIONS ON MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS AND OTHER ACADEMIC STAFF IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND MEASURES FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 2018.

[35] UGC, INCLUSIVE AND QUALITATIVE EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION 12TH FIVE-YEAR PLAN 2012-17 UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION, https://www.ugc.ac.in/ugcpdf/740315_12fyp.pdf. (last visited May 1, 2022).

[36] UGC, OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES SCHEME FOR TRANS-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH FOR INDIA'S DEVELOPING ECONOMY, https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/2089255_STRIDE_FINAL_BOOK.pdf.

[37] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVT OF INDIA (2020), https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf, (last visited April. 10, 2022).

[38] *Id.* Para 6.13 and 6.14
"5. Thrust areas of research: proposed area of research is socially relevant/locally need-based/ nationally important/globally significant/create value to the society or in cutting edge areas or contribute to new/additional knowledge in the areas of emerging concerns worldwide".

[39] MHRD, GOI, PROGRAM OF ACTION: NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION 1986. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/npe.pdf

subjects of **NPE**, 23 task forces were constituted, of which the XV Task Force was dedicated to Research and Development[40].

The National Research Foundation (NRF) was first proposed by the Task Force on R&D in 1986 (supplemented by *Janardhan Reddy* action plan of 1992) as follows:

> "20. Several agencies are funding research projects at present. While the multiplicity of funding may continue for sponsored research or goal-oriented projects, a National Research Foundation is proposed to be set up to bring about better coordination, overview and quality control. This Foundation will fund all research programmes presently supported by the Central Government except those directly related to the missions of the existing agencies. The National Research Foundation will be an independent body set up by pooling together, and subsequently augmenting, the resources now being utilised by various agencies. A Working Group will be set up to formulate details of its structure and functioning."

It is ironical to note that this goal to have **NRF** could not be realised until now when the **NEP** 2020 re-envisioned 'establishment of NRF to fund outstanding peer-reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges'[41].

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[40] *Id*. Pp. 79-103. The other areas of the task force were I. Making the System Work II. Content and Processes of School Education III. Education for Women's Equality IV. Education of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other backward sections V. Minorities' Education VI. Education of the Handicapped VII. Adult & Continuing Education VIII. Early Childhood Care and Education IX. Elementary Education (including NFE and Operation Blackboard) X. Secondary Education and Navodaya Vidyalayas XI. Vocationalisation XII. Higher Education XIII. Open University and Distance Learning XIV. Technical and Management Education XVI. Media and Educational Technology (including use of Computers in Education) XVII. De-linking degrees from jobs and Manpower Planning 5 XVIII. The Cultural Perspective and Implementation of Language Policy XIX. Sports, Physical Education & Youth XX. Evaluation Process and Examination Reform XXI. Teachers and their Training XXII. Management of Education XXIII. Rural Universities/Institutes.

[41] *Supra* Note 37.

B. National Education Policy (NEP, 2020)

NEP envisions a comprehensive approach for transforming quality and quantity of research in India. Beginning with the shifts in school education to a more play and discovery-based style of learning and with emphasis on the scientific method and critical thinking, "outstanding research as a co-requisite for outstanding education and development" forms the core philosophy. NEP uses the term 'Research' 141 times from two different perspectives, one refers to the various researches basing its recommendations and the other one is for preparing action agenda on 'research'. Emphasis is laid upon interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary university settings along with exploring the rich traditions and roots of ancient India. This includes the focus on enriching the existing local languages.

NEP in its recommendations for Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) outlines the establishment of National Research Foundation (NRF) for catalysing quality academic research as follows:

> "17.11. The primary activities of the NRF will be to: (a) fund competitive, peer-reviewed grant proposals of all types and across all disciplines; (b) seed, grow, and facilitate research at academic institutions, particularly at universities and colleges where research is currently in a nascent stage, through mentoring of such institutions; (c) act as a liaison between researchers and relevant branches of government as well as industry, so that research scholars are constantly made aware of the most urgent national research issues, and so that policymakers are constantly made aware of the latest research breakthroughs; so as to allow breakthroughs to be optimally brought into policy and/or implementation; and (d) recognise outstanding research and progress".[42]

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[42] *Id.* at Para 17.

Thus, NRF will inculcate a culture of research in universities driving collaborations with industry and private sector. Competitive funding of research proposals and recognition of outcome based research would be one of the focus areas of NRF. While the existing R&D ecosystem in the country would continue, NRF would bring in more synergy by coordinating with other funding agencies.

C. Industry-Academia Interface

Action agenda for the 12th Five year Plan has already moved UGC towards the industry-academia interface[43]. The Scheme for establishing University-Industry interlinkage Centers in Universities[44] aims at bridging the industry-academia gap, which has also been emphasised under NEP 2020. Universities and schools in India are now focusing on the need to promote a culture of entrepreneurship by creating a climate of teaching and learning, introducing courses on entrepreneurship, opening up incubation facilities, providing scholarships and means of seed funding, internships, break years, early release, and so on (DIPP 2018)[45]. Draft Ph.D. regulations by UGC encourage the Ph.D. scholar to participate in active research environment like industry[46]. Pursuant to NEP, UGC has promulgated the Guidelines for establishment of R&D Cell in HEIs with the following missions: (a) to create a conducive environment for enhanced research productivity; (b) to encourage collaboration across industry, government, community- based organizations, and agencies at the local, national, and international levels; and (c) to facilitate greater access to

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[43] UGC, XII PLAN GUIDELINES, https://www.ugc.ac.in/page/XII-Plan-Guidelines.aspx.

[44] UGC, GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY INTER-LINKAGE CENTRES IN UNIVERSITIES, https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/0971667_English.pdf.

[45] Singh, V. K. 2020. Policy and Regulatory Changes for a Successful Start-up Revolution: Experiences from the Start-up Action Plan in India. ADBI Working Paper 1146. Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute. https://www.adb.org/publications/policy-regulatorychanges-successful-startup-revolution-india.

[46] Draft University Grants Commission (MINIMUM STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR AWARD OF PH.D. DEGREE) REGULATIONS 2022, https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/4405511_Draft-UGC-PhD-regulations-2022.pdf.

research through mobilization of resources and funding[47]. The integration of Research, Innovation and Technology Development is considered the foundation of *Atma-Nirbhar Bharat* (Self-reliant India)[48] and '*Vocal for Local*'[49].

D. Research Ethics

In India, while researchers do plenty of research, 'quality of research' has always been a concern. Due to the requirement of a Ph.D. degree being linked to the academic promotion, the quality had suffered. A rush to publish and the threat of 'publish or perish', gave way to compromising academic integrity, which ultimately sacrificed the 'outcome-based research'. Increased incidence of compromised publication ethics and deteriorating academic integrity is a growing problem contaminating all domains of research. It has been observed that unethical and/or deceptive practices in publishing are leading to an increased number of dubious, predatory journals worldwide.

In India, the higher education regulator, UGC had to ultimately come up with a regulation[50] to tackle the menace of plagiarism. Anti-plagiarism regulation mandates the universities to set up a mechanism to deal with the situations of plagiarism and academic integrity very seriously. Increased incidences of compromised publication

[47] University Grants Commission (UGC), GUIDELINES FOE ESTABLISHMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CELL IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (March 2022), https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/6347789_RDC-Guideline.pdf.

[48] *Id.*
The UGC launched an initiative to establish a RDC in HEIs with the mandate for promoting quality research that contributes meaningfully towards the goal of a self-reliant India ("Atma-Nirbhar Bharat"), aligned with the provisions of NEP-2020. The RDC would help creating a research ecosystem for reliable, impactful, and sustained research output. The essential elements of such an ecosystem, viz., generation of knowledge and facilitation of research, innovation and technology development for industrial & societal benefits, are addressed by human resource (researcher & faculty), intellectual capital (knowledge & skills), governance (regulation & policies) and financial resources (funding & grants).

[49] https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1672710.

[50] University Grants Commission (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2018.

ethics and deteriorating academic integrity led to setting up the Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE)[51], referred to as UGC-CARE. The empowered committee under UGC-CARE maintains a list of research journals in all disciplines meeting its quality mandate[52]. Towards its effort to maintain standards of research, UGC has also introduced a mandatory course on Research and Publication Ethics for the Ph.D. Scholars[53]. UGC has also published a guidance document[54] for good research practices, which emphasises upon 'outcome-based research':

> "Good research practice begins with problem selection and research design. The proposed research should address questions, the answers to which will contribute new knowledge, solve challenges, correct errors in the existing literature, or develop new methods for conducting such research".[55]

III. Research in Institutional Ranking Frameworks

DPR on NRF highlights:
"The quality of publications from India has also been substantially lower than global standards. Though in terms of the total number of publications India stands at the 5th position in the World, in terms of the citation impact, India is much lower at the 11th position. Only 15.8% of the total publications are in top 10 journals, compared with 27.6% in China and 36.2% in the U.S. The overall quality of our R&I is currently not up to current global standards. Moreover, none of our institutions are amongst the top 100 R&I institutions of

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[51] UGC, PUBLIC NOTICE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (June 14, 2019), https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/6315352_UGC-Public-Notice-CARE.pdf.

[52] https://www.ugc.ac.in/e-book/CARE%20ENGLISH.pdf.

[53] 2 credit courses introduced by UGC in 2019 covering the topics like philosophy and ethics, scientific conduct, publication ethics, open access publishing, publication misconduct and databases and research metrics.

[54] Patwardhan B., Desai A., Chourasia A, Nag S., Bhatnagar R. 2020. Gu*idan*ce Document: Good Academic Research Practices. New Delhi: University Grants Commission.

[55] *Ibid.*

the world. The quality of the research workforce produced by our institutions is thus currently not amongst the best in the world, barring a few exceptions[56]."

Thus, undertaking qualitative and outcome-based research is important for the country as a whole. There is no single factor more important to the intellectual, social, and economic progress of a nation, and to the enhanced well-being of its citizens, than the continuous creation and acquisition of new knowledge[57]. Accordingly, various ranking frameworks for HEIs nationally and internationally recognize 'research' as a major metric in methodology of ranking. This becomes evident by some of these ranking frameworks.

A. National Institution Ranking Framework (NIRF)

NIRF is approved framework by the Ministry of Education (MOE)[58], Government of India to rank higher educational institutions annually. Research and Professional Practice form 30% weightage of the raking parameters[59]. Other parameters are (i) Teaching, Learning & Resources (30%), (ii) Graduation Outcomes (20%) (iii) Outreach and Inclusivity (10%) and Perception (10%). Research and professional practice parameter further measures the following:

1. Combined metric for Publications (PU): 30 marks
2. Combined metric for Quality of Publications (QP): 40 marks
3. IPR and Patents: Filed, Published, Granted and Licensed (IPR): 15 marks
4. Footprint of Projects, Professional Practice and Executive Development Programs (FPPP): 15 marks

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[56] *See Supra* Note 7.
[57] Para 1.6 of DPR by PMSTIAC, *see Supra* Note 7.
[58] Formed in 1985 it was known as the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) before the NEP 2020.
[59] *See* NIRF, ᴇꜱᴇᴀMᴇᴛʜᴏᴅᴏʟᴏɢʏ ꜰᴏʀ Rᴀɴᴋɪɴɢ ᴏꜰ Aᴄᴀᴅᴇᴍɪᴄ Iɴꜱᴛɪᴛᴜᴛɪᴏɴꜱ ɪɴ Iɴᴅɪᴀ (2017), https://www.nirfindia.org/Docs/Ranking_Methodology_And_Metrics_2017.pdf.

The micro-metrics on research essentially focuses upon the outcome-based research.

B. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

NAAC is an autonomous institution of the UGC established in 1994 with a mandate to accredit HEIs based on the five core values of (i) contributing to national development; (ii) fostering global competencies among students; (iii) inculcating a value system among students; (iv) promoting the use of technology; and (v) quest for excellence. NAAC's ranking framework has seven Quality Indicator Framework criteria[60]. Criterion 3 deals with 'research, innovations and extensions' which has a maximum 250 points of the total 1000 points, i.e. 25% of the accreditation points. It deals with the facilities provided and efforts made by the institution to promote a 'research culture'. The institution has the responsibility to enable faculty to undertake research projects useful to the society.

C. QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) Ranking

QS Ranking is one of the prestigious world university rankings[61]. Ranking methodology has six parameters in which 20% weightage is directly for 'citations per faculty'. Further, research influences other parameters like academic reputation, employer reputation etc. Indian HEIs have been persistently found to be lagging far behind as compared to other world universities in this ranking. Quality of research forms a major dampener.

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[60] Criterion 1: Curricular Aspects; Criterion2: Teaching-Learning and Evaluation; Criterion3: Research, Innovations and Extension; Criterion4: Infrastructure and Learning Resources; Criterion5: Student Support and Progression; Criterion6: Governance, Leadership and Management; Criterion7: Institutional Values and Best Practices, see NAAC Institutional Accreditation: Manual for Self-study Report, Universities, http://naac.gov.in/images/docs/Manuals/NEP_docs/University-Manual-6-4-2021.pdf.

[61] Craig O, QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKING METHODOLOGY, https://www.topuniversities.com/qs-world-university-rankings/methodology.

D. The SCImago Institutions Rankings (SIR)

SIR ranking methodology is based upon "three different sets of indicators based on research performance, innovation outputs and societal impact measured by their web visibility[62]." Research performance includes the indicator of citation score, excellence with leadership, number of documents published, owner journals, high quality publications, international collaborations, open access, and scientific talent pool. For the year 2022, CSIR ranks 186th in the world followed by AIIMS at 293rd rank. Indian institutions not even making into the top 150 is a reflection for introspection by the research community at large in India.

E. Times Higher Education (THE) Ranking

The world university ranking methodology[63] has 13 calibrated performance indicators grouped into five major areas of teaching (30%) research (30%), citations (30%), international outlook (7.5%) and industry income (2.5%). Thus effectively, 62.5% of the weightage focuses upon research which includes the volume, income and reputation of research, influence of research shown by citation score and also industry income through knowledge transfer.

For the world university rankings, THE ranking framework also recognises low and high volume subject areas of publication providing additional thresholds as follows:

1. Computer science (500 publications)
2. Engineering (500 publications)
3. Clinical & health (500 publications)
4. Life sciences (500 publications)
5. Physical sciences (500 publications)

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[62] SIR, RANKING METHODOLOGY, https://www.scimagoir.com/methodology.php.
[63] THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION RANKING 2022,
https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/world-university-rankings-2022-methodology.

6. Arts & humanities (250 publications)
7. Business & economics (200 publications)
8. Social sciences (200 publications)
9. Psychology (150 publications)
10. Education (100 publications)
11. Law (100 publications)

The above categorization highlights the major research areas and a clear differentiation is evident between the scientific research and research in social sciences and humanities. Further a brief overview of the ranking frameworks puts squarely in place the requirement of emphasis on the outcome based research. For India to establish itself on the global map of innovation ecosystem and knowledge economy, it is crucial to implement the project National Research Foundation.

IV. National Research Foundation (NRF)

Pursuant to the Prime Minister's call for establishing NRF under the NEP, Finance Minister in her Budget Speech (2019-20)[64], announced the establishment of NRF to fund, coordinate and promote research in the country[65]. The Union Budget 2021 announced Rs. 50,000 crore for the NRF for a period of five years. Government's approach has been guided by the supportive policies, light-touch regulations, facilitative actions to build domestic capacities, and promotion of R&D[66]. The NRF's structure is yet to come into force, the only guidance is available through a Detailed Project Report (DPR)

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[64] Budget 2019-20 (July 5, 2019)
https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/budget2019-20/doc/Budget_Speech.

[65] *Id*. (para 61 ...NRF will assimilate the research grants being given by various Ministries independent of each other. NRF will ensure that the overall research ecosystem in the country is strengthened with focus on identified thrust areas relevant to our national priorities and towards basic science without duplication of effort and expenditure. We would work out a very progressive and research oriented structure for NRF. The funds available with all Ministries will be integrated in NRF. This would be adequately supplemented with additional funds).

[66] Budget Speech (2022-23) of *Nirmala Sitharaman* Minister of Finance (February 1, 202), para 90.

prepared by PM-STIAC[67] which outlines the project of establishing NRF as follows:

A. Objectives and Scope of NRF

One of the primary objectives of NRF is to provide a platform for coordination between various funding agencies of research and align the human and material resources towards well-coordinated research for societal good. Majority of HEIs are rooted in different states and there is a need to bring synergies between the central funding agencies and the universities in States[68]. NRF has been conceptualised with the overarching goal of enabling a culture of research and innovation across disciplines to permeate through India's universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories[69]." DPR for NRF lays down the following primary objectives of the NRF:

1. Fund competitive peer-reviewed grant proposals for research across institutions and languages.
2. Seed, grow and facilitate research at academic institutions
3. Fund research infrastructure at institutions for captive and shared use by multiple institutions
4. Increase India's role and participation in key areas of national and global importance, and in major national and international collaborations, through large-scale mission projects[70] and megaprojects
5. Act as a platform or coordination point for researchers, government and industry
6. Introduce innovative initiatives in education to promote research culture

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[67] *See Supra* Note 7.

[68] According to the DST, the contribution to research spending by State governments has been negligible so far, just 7% of the budget for 2015-16.

[69] *See Supra* Note 7; Para 5.6 of DPR on NRF by PMSTIAC.

[70] For example, Technology Mission Program on Water and Clean Energy, https://dst.gov.in/technology-mission-programme-water-and-clean-energy.

7. Recommend and support various activities and initiatives for increasing the participation of women and other underrepresented groups in research
8. Become central portal for all kinds of data and information on various researches, ensuring equitable access
9. Drive recognition of star researchers
10. Serve as a high-level think tank for the coordination and short and long-term planning of research in the country and also provide recommendations on key policy initiatives to parliament regarding research, innovation and education.

While carrying out the aforesaid objectives, NRF would leverage and build upon the existing strengths. NITI Aayog, in partnership with the PSA's Office[71], DST (*Department of Science and Technology*) and DHE (*Department of Higher Education*), has been entrusted the responsibility to set up the foundation[72].

B. Governance Structure

The NRF is proposed to be registered as a Society initially and will function as per the memorandum of association, regulations and bylaws. In the next three years, it is contemplated to transform into an autonomous body by an Act of Parliament. The NRF will be governed, independently of the government, by a rotating Board of Governors[73] consisting of the very best researchers and innovators across fields. Up to one third of the NRF Board is proposed to come from industry and

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[71] Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India was established in Nov. 1999 which aims to provide pragmatic and objective advice to the Prime Minister and cabinet on matters related to science, technology and innovation with a focus on application of science and technology in critical infrastructure, economic and social sectors in partnership with Government departments, institutions and industry. See https://www.psa.gov.in/about-us.

[72] NITI Aayog, ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20, https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-02/Annual_Report_2019-20.pdf.

[73] An 18-member NRF Governing Board consisting of eminent researchers and professionals in their respective fields. Experts may be drawn from within the country and internationally, and it is expected that about a third of the Board member are women.

the philanthropic sector. NRF Board members will typically serve six-year terms, with one third of its members rotating off the Board every two years. The NRF Board would set the policies and priorities for the organization to function. The Board would have a Chair selected amongst themselves.

The executive body of the NRF shall comprise a President (*level of Secretary to Govt. of India*), Vice-President and a Chief Operating Officer (COO) (*level of Additional Secretary to Govt. of India*) to be searched and selected by the NRF Board. President and Vice-President would be ex-officio members of the NRF Board. COO would be responsible for running the day to day affairs of the Board. These three officials would form the core of the management of NRF and would be in office for six years' term. Administrative structure would include offices to handle budgeting, accounting etc.

The NRF shall consists of ten major Directorates in the areas of Natural Sciences; Mathematical Sciences; Engineering; Environmental and Earth Sciences; Social Sciences; Arts and Humanities; Indian Languages and Knowledge Systems; Health; Agriculture; and Innovation and Entrepreneurship[74]. Each Directorate would further have Divisions. The aforesaid structure is mentioned in the DPR, however, the exact structure of NRF is yet to be released. Given the objective of NRF to coordinate with multiple stakeholders a matrix structure may not be very useful. Lean and empowered organisational structure would serve better. No one wants another rigid bureaucratic structure to drive research culture in India, which has already suffered a lot.

C. Funding and Accountability for Outcomes

NRF would receive initial grants from the Government with autonomy to set its own finances, governance, and statutes. NRF would

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[74] The Directorates will be directly allocated 2/3 of the total research funds of the NRF, in the initially suggested ratios of 8 : 4 : 8 : 4 : 2 : 1 : 1 : 8 : 4 : 4.

fund research in various disciplines, seed centres of research and mentor research through doctoral and post-doctoral fellows. Institutions that currently fund research, such as DST, DAE, DBT, ICAR, ICMR, ICSSR, ICPR, CIIL, UGC, etc., as well as various private and philanthropic organisations, will continue to independently fund research according to their priorities and needs. However, NRF would help maintain a consolidated database on research for evaluation and assessing of outcomes. For the NRF funded research, assessment of outcomes of research annually will be carried out on quality metrics that will be pre-specified and agreed upon (suitably taking into account the risks inherent in research). NRF will attain further accountability by ensuring that only investigators who handle their initial funding well and with integrity will receive new funds in the future[75].

D. Research in Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

One of the significant attempts made in the NEP 2020 is towards its focus on research in social sciences, languages, and local traditions and culture as is evident from the following statement in NEP:

> "17.7. India has a long historical tradition of research and knowledge creation, in disciplines ranging from science and mathematics to art and literature to phonetics and languages to medicine and agriculture. This needs to be further strengthened to make India lead research and innovation in the 21st century, as a strong and enlightened knowledge society and one of the three largest economies in the world.
> 17.5. Furthermore, in addition to their value in solutions to societal problems, any country's identity, upliftment, spiritual/intellectual satisfaction and creativity is also attained in a major way through its history, art, language, and culture. Research in the arts and humanities, along with innovations in

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[75] *See Supra* Note 7, at Para 7.8, 7.9, 7.15.

the sciences and social sciences are, therefore, extremely important for the progress and enlightened nature of a nation".

NRF has a mandate to focus on developing sustainable solutions to key societal challenges[76] through high-quality interdisciplinary research, conducted in India and not just relying upon the solutions originating in other countries. Thus, research has not only to be informed by "top-notch science and technology but also rooted in a deep understanding of the social sciences and humanities and the various socio-cultural dimensions of the nation."

V. Institutional Research Governance: Best Practices Worldwide

National Research Foundation is a governance model toward improvement of quality in research skill; implemented around the world to provide a consolidated single platform for ensuring funding for research in strategic areas, ensure outcome-based funding, and also to recognize and celebrate research undertaken by institutions and researchers. While India is working on its NRF, it would be worthwhile to discuss some examples of NRF in some jurisdictions of the world.

A. National Research Foundation, South Africa

NRF in South Africa is an independent statutory body established through the National Research Foundation Act (1998)[77]. NRF (SA) consolidates the function of several research funding agencies like the Centre for Science Development (CSD) of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the former

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[76] Some of the key societal challenges that India needs to address today, such as access for all its citizens to clean drinking water and sanitation, quality education and healthcare, social equity, improved transportation, sustainable infrastructure, elimination of poverty, air quality, clean energy, and reversing climate change and its negative impact (NEP, 2020).

[77] Following a system-wide review conducted for the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), see HISTORY OF NRF, South Africa, https://www.nrf.ac.za/about-us/.

Foundation for Research Development (FRD). The goal of NRF (SA) is to fund research, develop high-end human capacity and critical research infrastructure across all disciplinary fields. Building synergy between research institutions, business, industry and international partners to build national and international competitiveness is being promoted by NRF. Incidentally, India is part of the multilateral joint science and technology research collaboration under NRF, South Africa[78] under the **BRICS** collaboration framework[79].

B. National Research Foundation, Singapore

NRF in Singapore was set up as a department within the Prime Minister's office in 2006. The NRF-Singapore sets the national direction for research and development (R&D) by developing policies, plans and strategies for research, innovation and enterprise. It also funds strategic initiatives and builds up R&D capabilities by nurturing research talent and aims towards making Singapore a R&D hub[80]. NRF-Singapore supports the Research Innovation and Enterprise Council (RIEC) chaired by the Prime Minister of Singapore. The RIEC comprises of Cabinet Ministers and distinguished local and foreign members from the business, science and technology communities[81]. The NRF Board and the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) further supports the governance of NRF-Singapore through its national and internationally acclaimed experts.

Research Innovation and Enterprise plan 2025 of Singapore focuses upon four strategic domains – (i) Manufacturing, Trade and Connectivity (MTC); (ii) Human Health and Potential (HHP); (iii) Urban Solutions and Sustainability (USS); and (iv) Smart Nation and Digital Economy (SNDE)[82]. The Research, Innovation and Enterprise

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[78] NRF BRICS CALL FOR RESEARCH, https://www.nrf.ac.za/nrf-brics-call-guideline/.

[79] *See* BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) STI Framework Document, http://brics-sti.org/files/NRF_National_Annex_BRICS_2021.pdf.

[80] https://www.nrf.gov.sg/about-nrf/national-research-foundation-singapore.

[81] https://www.nrf.gov.sg/about-nrf/governance.

[82] RIE 2025 PLAN, https://www.nrf.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/rie_booklet_fa2021_pages.pdf.

(RIE) ecosystem in Singapore comprises of various ministries, R&D funding bodies and R&D performers[83]. The Office of Principal Scientific Adviser in India comes closer to this model.

C. UK Research and Innovation

UKRI is a non-departmental public body[84] sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), United Kingdom. It brings together the seven disciplinary research councils, Research England[85], which is responsible for supporting research and knowledge exchange at higher education institutions in England, and the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK[86]. There are nine councils[87] (similar to proposed Research Directorates in India) which work together as per their respective research priorities.

Research Excellence Framework (REF) – This is a system of assessing the quality of research in UK higher educational institutions. It took place for the first time in 2014 and the next exercise is being conducted in 2021-22. The funding bodies' shared policy aim for research assessment is to secure the continuation of a world-class, dynamic and responsive research base across the full academic spectrum within UK higher education[88]. The REF outcomes are used to calculate about £2 billion per year of public funding for universities'

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[83] https://www.nrf.gov.sg/about-nrf/rie-ecosystem.

[84] https://www.ukri.org/about-us/who-we-are/.

[85] Responsible for funding, engaging with and understanding English higher education providers (HEPs). *See* https://www.ukri.org/about-us/research-england/who-we-are/.

[86] This is the UK's innovation agency with an objective to fulfill the Government's vision to be a global hub for innovation by 2035. See https://www.ukri.org/about-us/innovate-uk/who-we-are/.

[87] Arts and Humanities Research Council, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, Economic and Social Research Council, Medical Research Council, Natural Environment Research Council, Science and Technology Facilities Council, Innovate UK and Research England.

[88] The REF is undertaken by the four UK higher education funding bodies: Research England, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE). See RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK, 2021, UK, https://www.ref.ac.uk/about/what-is-the-ref/.

research, and affect their international reputation. The results also inform strategic decisions about national research priorities. REF exercise in UK serves the following three purposes:

1. provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment;
2. provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information; and
3. inform the selective allocation of funding for research.

D. National Science Foundation, USA

In the USA, an independent federal agency constituted in the year 1950 acts as a funding source for approximately 27% of the total federal budget for basic research conducted in US colleges and universities[89]. R&D in USA is funded and performed by a number of sectors other than federal government[90]; 70% of the research funding comes from businesses, the federal government contributes only 21.2%. Thus the model of the USA may not be highly relevant for India at present where the private sector's contribution in R&D is wanting. However, going forward the USA model of research funding has to be accepted to do quality outcome-based research in India.

E. National Research Foundation, Korea

The National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) was launched in 2009 as a representative organization[91] specialized in research management in Korea by integrating Korea Science and Engineering Foundation, Korea Research Foundation and Korea Foundation for International Cooperation of Science and Technology.

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[89] At a glance, NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION: WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN, https://www.nsf.gov/about/glance.jsp.

[90] U.S. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDING AND PERFORMANCE: FACT SHEET INNOVATION BLOG (October 4, 2021), https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R44307.pdf.

[91] National Research Foundation of Korea Act enacted in 2009, No. 9518.

The NRF plans, evaluates and manages all projects related to academic and R&D activities of universities, research institutes and industries covering all areas of humanities, social sciences and engineering[92].

The above examples of National Research Foundations from different countries provides for different models of working of research foundations. However, at the centre of these foundations is the philosophy to inculcate the culture of outcome-based research, which helps the country to emerge as a R & D hub for the world.

VI. Towards Global Standards

The above discussion on NRF brings forward an ambitious goal of uplifting research which should necessarily be outcome-based and impactful both in terms of numbers and quality. Doing research shall not only be about publishing academic papers but for creating a societal impact with innovation. In a recent review by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on the progress of implementation of NEP 2020, though report on status of NRF is not reported specifically, action on research in the category of 'innovation and start-ups' is mentioned as follows:

> "In order to encourage an ecosystem of Start-up and Innovation, 2,774 Institution's Innovation Councils have been set up in HEIs in 28 States and 6 UTs. Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievement (ARIIA) aligned with NEP has been launched in December, 2021 for creating a culture of research, incubation and start-ups. 1438 institutions participated in ARIIA. 100 Institutions have been funded by AICTE with industry participation for Idea Development, Evaluation and Application (IDEA) Labs for Experiential learning rather than rote learning[93]".

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[92] https://www.nrf.re.kr/eng/main/.

[93] https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/pm-chairs-a-high-level-meeting-to-review-the-progress-in-the-implementation-of-national-education-policy-nep-2020/.

One of the focus areas of NEP is towards commercializing research outcomes for betterment of society by solving their day-to-day problems with research & innovation. It also believes in the philosophy of starting early at the school level and thus in the school education section, NEP speaks about nurturing critical thinking and analytical skills among school students. The objective of initiatives like *Atal Tinkering Labs*[94] is to "foster curiosity, creativity, and imagination in young minds; and inculcate skills such as design mindset, computational thinking, adaptive learning, physical computing etc." Similar kinds of initiatives are also being promoted at the Higher Education level as well.

India is known for its '*Jugaad*' approach of innovation and there are several small-time innovations done by local people across the country[95]. It is important to tap these innovations as well from two perspectives; one, it would bring forward the genuine grassroots innovations to limelight and greater use, secondly, it would weed out any conflicting claims of Intellectual Property later. In March 2020, Government had set up the National Innovation Foundation (NIF) under DST to facilitate and strengthen the grassroots technological innovations and outstanding traditional knowledge[96].

Dashboard on NRF – It may be noted that the Government of India has created several dashboards for its key initiatives which provide real-time information on progress of implementation of these initiatives. For example the *Start-up India* website[97] provides for a host of information for new start-ups as well as other stakeholders. This

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[94] ATL OVERVIEW, https://aim.gov.in/atl-overview.php.

[95] Oana-Maria Pop, THE JUGAAD APPROACH TO INNOVATION INNOVATION BLOG, https://blog.hypeinnovation.com/the-jugaad-approach-to-innovation.

[96] National Innovation Foundation India, ABOUT NIF NATIONAL INNOVATION FOUNDATION INDIA, https://nif.org.in/aboutnif (last visited Jul 13, 2022). (NIF has pooled a database of over 3,25,000 technological ideas, innovations and traditional knowledge practices (not all unique, not all distinct) from over 625 districts of the country).

[97] Govt of India, STARTUPINDIA, https://www.startupindia.gov.in/.

includes several resources, connected with the mentors, angel funders, Departments and Ministries, etc. Similar kind of a dashboard for implementation of NRF would help accelerate its setting up and researchers would have access to key information on this portal. Subsequently, initiatives like ranking the State Governments on their research initiatives and contributions, institution of Research Awards at the national level for various stakeholders may also be implemented.

Not another Bureaucratic set up – The constitution of NRF mentions about a large board with multiple stakeholders, usage of the term like 'equivalent to the designation of Secretary' reflects a bureaucratic mind-set. The governance model of NRF shall be on a public-private partnership (PPP) model, like the initial Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN). Going back to the same model of hierarchies would promote nepotism and suppression of true talent ultimately leading to brain drain. A thorough examination of organizational structure needs to be done for a model which promotes open debates and discussion on projects as to its potential and real outcomes. The DPR on the constitution of NRF provides for a roadmap for next 5 years, however, it requires visualization now as to how the organization shall be funded after 5 years. The seeds of a self-sustainable model shall be laid down now so that NRF becomes a self-sustaining body after 5 years.

Building Synergies – There is already a lot happening on research under several initiatives by the Central Government, State Government and private sectors. The need of the hour is to build synergies amongst these efforts and channelize the energy towards focused outcomes. There are several funding agencies including the private sector which needs to be brought on one platform so that relevant projects could get the requisite funding. Focus on commercialization of research is also important. Just doing research for the sake of doing research may not help in the long run. One of the areas from where the money may come for research is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund, which remains poorly tapped, as is evident from the investment done by companies under the head technology incubators when compared to the total amount spent by companies on other developmental

sectors[98]. Governments may also think about giving tax incentives to private players making a commitment into research and development for national priorities areas.

Table: 4: CSR Expenditure under the head Technology Incubators

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Amount in *Lakhs*	474	2634	2308	1694	3208	5349	5055

Source: csr.gov.in

Table: 5: CSR Expenditure total (in Crores)

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Amount in *Crores*	10065	14516	14343	17094	20150	24860	20358

Source: csr.gov.in

Ph.Ds. with outcome – There has always been debates happening on two sides as to deciding the outcome of research. A circular by **MHRD** requiring universities to undertake Ph.D. in the areas of national importance was criticized by some[99]. However, on the other side, the question is whether there is a need to just do Ph.D. without any significant contribution or outcome, for example, it has been questioned about what is the fun in doing research on the topic like "*Hindi sahitya me lote ka mahatva*"[100] or for that matter hundreds of

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[98] *See CSR Expenditure Summary,*
https://www.csr.gov.in/content/csr/global/master/home/home.html.

[99] Kashish Azeem, *PhD on 'National Priorities': MHRD circular is a dent on critical thinking*, THE COMPANION, Mar. 26, 2019, https://thecompanion.in/phd-on-national-priorities-mhrd-circular-is-a-dent-on-critical-thinking.

[100] *See* Kritika Sharma & Soniya Agrawal, *What is 'lota' doing in PhDs? Why UGC is worried about Indian research*, THE PRINT, July 1, 2019,

scientific papers without an increase in the number of qualitative patents. In fact, UGC constituted a Committee to examine the quality of research by faculty and the report[101] suggested several actions, many of which have already been taken. The rise in Ph.D. numbers, especially in social sciences, in India has been a concern raised by UGC in its report as well, which is quite evident by the following numbers:

Number of PhD enrolments between 2011 to 2018:	SCIENCE	SOCIAL SCIENCE	COMMERCE	TOTAL	PhDs awarded
2011-12	20,811	11,753	3,257	81,430	21,544
2012-13	26,384	13,812	2,956	95,425	23,630
2013-14	28,339	14,317	3,075	1,07,890	23,861
2014-15	30,357	14,226	3,630	1,00,762	21,830
2015-16	33,197	15,885	3,471	1,26,451	24,171
2016-17	37,363	14,700	4,146	1,41,037	28,779
2017-18	19,085	18,366	4,493	1,61,412	34,400

SOURCE : ALL INDIA SURVEY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, MHRD   ThePrint

How much of these researches contributes to development and nation-building is a question. Further, how many of these researches get dovetailed into the teaching and learning into classrooms is another dimension to look at[102]. NRF may provide the necessary motivation towards outcome-based research to the scholars and

https://theprint.in/india/education/what-is-lota-doing-in-phds-why-ugcs-worried-about-indian-research/255625/.

[101] UGC, IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF RESEARCH BY FACULTY AND CREATION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING RESEARCH CULTURE IN COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION, https://ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5816125_Promoting-and-Improving.pdf.

[102] *See* Gautam I. Menon, *Research Has to Be Nudged Into 'National Interest' Areas – Not Sledgehammered*, The WIRE, https://thewire.in/the-sciences/research-has-to-be-nudged-into-national-interest-areas-not-sledgehammered.

motivate them to do research in frontier areas (areas which are having future potential like artificial intelligence, blockchain, etc.)

From the above analysis and discussion, it can safely be said that importance of outcome-based research and role of National Research Foundation (NRF) would be crucial and would prove a game-changer, especially when we are set to be a 5-trillion economy at the same time with our SDG and Net Zero Commitments. A focused outcome based research can only lead us to that destination.

Chapter - 9

NEP 2020: A PARADIGM SHIFT IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

Dulumoni Goswami[*]

I. Introduction

It is more than six decades ago that the Indian education system has been transformed from an elite system to a mass system. Through Article 45, the Constitution of India has issued a directive to provide free and compulsory primary education for all children until they complete 14 years of age within 10 years from the date on which the constitution came into force. But the dream is yet to be realized. The 86th amendment of the Constitution- that made education of children of the age of six to fourteen years as a fundamental right- was passed in the year 2002. But the State still struggles to meet this obligation issued by the Constitution. One of the most defining moments in the journey of universal education is this constitutional amendment, making education a fundamental right and adopting the corresponding Right to Education Act by the Indian Parliament in 2009. The Right to Education Act is now being implemented all over India with effect from April 1, 2010 including Assam. The country has already launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to make quality primary education for all. The country has also embarked on the ambitious path of making secondary education universal and ensuring equitable access to all. For this purpose, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) has already been launched all over the country. These achievements and policy measures have raised new expectations for the future. The number of schools across the state has grown, enrolment rates have also raised significantly over the years, dropout rates have also reduced considerably, but still we are far from the goal

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of universal elementary education in real sense. School education is plagued by poor infrastructure, shortage of teachers and their low level of training and motivation, regional and gender disparities and low learning achievement etc. We are now in the 2nd decade of the 21st century, a new century of challenges and opportunities. The world has seen more changes than ever before. The 21st century ushers in the concept of globalization in all its manifestations. Under these circumstances, quality of education is also becoming an important issue in recent years. It is an urgent need that the government must take appropriate strategies to accelerate the progress of school education not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. Quality school education must be assured for all children.

II. National Education Policies in India

Since the formation of government in India after the nation's Independence in 1947, the Government of India initiated a number of programmes and policies to remove the illiteracy, to increase the access to education, as well as quality education for all. The nation's first Education Minister, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, envisaged strong central government control over education throughout the country, with a uniform education system. The Government of India constituted University Education Commission in 1948-49, Secondary Education Commission in 1952-53 and National Education Commission in 1964-66 to recommend for the modernization of Indian education system. On the basis of the recommendations of the National Education Commission 1964-66 (Kothari Commission), the Government of India announced the first National Education Policy in 1968, which called for a 'radical restructuring' and equalization of educational opportunities in order to achieve national integration, social and economic development of the nation. The policy statement also stated that it would be advantageous to have a broadly uniform educational structure in all parts of the country. The ultimate objective was to adopt a 10+2+3 structural pattern of education for the whole country. Since the adoption of National Education Policy 1968, although considerable expansion of educational opportunities was

taking place, the general formulation incorporated in the 1968 policy did not get translated into detailed study of implementation. Consequently, a number of problems like access, equity, quality, quantity and finance accumulated over the years assumed such massive proportions that needed to be tackled with utmost urgency.

Considering the urgency to reform in the education system, the then Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi initiated action for formulation of a new National Education Policy to meet the present and future needs of the country. A Status Paper "Challenges of Education- A Policy Perspective" was issued by the Ministry of Education, Government of India in 1985 in which a comprehensive appraisal of the existing system of education was made. There was a countrywide debate and discussion on the issue of a new National Education Policy for the country. Accordingly, in 1986 the final National Policy on Education was introduced and got final approval from the Parliament. According to this policy, the Ministry of Education was renamed as Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). Many important provisions were made in the National Policy on Education 1986 like National System of Education, Education for Equality, Operation Blackboard, Jawahar Navadoya Vidyalaya, Teachers training at all levels, delinking degrees from job, decentralization of educational planning and management etc. According to the Janardhana Committee report, certain changes were announced in the Parliament in the Month of May 1992.

III. Need and Initiative for a New National Education Policy

The important landmark of educational reformations in the country was adoption of National Policy on Education in 1986 and its revised form in 1992. Significant changes were taking place in the education sector in India since the formulation of National Policy on Education in 1986. A major development relating to the education sector in India has been the establishment of Constitutional and legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education. The 86th amendment of the Constitution that made education of children of the

age of six to fourteen years as a fundamental right was passed in the year 2002. But the State has failed miserably in fulfilling this obligation imposed upon them by the Constitution. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act was passed by the Parliament in August 2009 and received Presidential assent on 26th August 2009. In spite of various policies and programmes, India's education system is far from the international standards. Access, equity and quality are still major challenges of Indian education. Moreover, during the last few years the world environment has totally changed due to the wave of globalization, internationalization and development of Information and Communication Technology. The new technologies are transforming the way in which people live, work and communicate. The new technologies have brought about easy to new pools of information and learning resources and new learning opportunities for learners. It indicates that the education policies today must evolve with changing time and needs. The education processes need renewal keeping in view the experience gained in the past and the concerns and imperatives that have emerged in the light of changing national development goals, social needs and learning needs of children and youths of the 21st century. With this background the nation looked forward with great interest to the formulation of a new education policy. The Government of India likes to bring out a National Policy on Education to meet the changing dynamics of the population's requirements with regards to quality education, innovations and research, aiming to make India a knowledge superpower by equipping its students with necessary skills and knowledge and to eliminate manpower shortage in science, technology, academic and industry.

The Government of India appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Shri T.S.R. Subramanian to formulate Draft National Education Policy with 'Framework for Action'. The Committee was initially called "Drafting Committee for New Education Policy" which was not acceptable to Chairman and renamed as "Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy". It submitted its 230 pages report as National Policy on Education -2016 (Report of the Committee for the Evolution of New Education Policy) on 27th May

2016. However, this 230-page report was not uploaded in the MHRD website instead the Ministry has uploaded a report with only 43 pages "Some inputs for Draft National Policy on Education 2016" for public opinion. There are countrywide debates on this draft report and both satisfaction and dissatisfaction are observed on the part of the academician. The TSR committee has mainly focused on improving the quality of education, restoring credibility, promoting transparency in management, to foster an interest in India's history, culture and traditions, respect to all religions and acceptance for diversity that exists in Indian society. Some of the significant recommendations of the committee included – establishment of a standing Committee to advise the Ministry of Human Resource Development, special support to be given to the children from weaker sections of the society, to create All India Education Service, and to create Educational Tribunals. Apart from these, the Committee has recommended to achieve six percent of GDP so far educational finance is concerned.

The BJP party has assured in their election manifesto 2014 for a National Education Policy for the country to meet the global challenges. Accordingly, a TSR Subramanian committee was constituted in 2015. ON the basis of the TSR Committee report a new Committee for Draft National Education Policy was constituted with 11 members under the leadership of prominent scientist and educationist, the former Chairman of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) K. Karturirangan. The Committee submitted its 477 pages report to the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) on 31st May 2019. The Ministry had asked for public opinion within 30th June 2019 and about 2.25 lakh opinions were received as informed by the HRD Minister. The draft faced stiff opposition from various quarters over its three-language formula, four-year B.Ed. programme, regulatory bodies among others. Sh. Narendra Modi led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government approved the new National Education Policy (NEP) on 29th July 2020 which indicates a revolutionary change in the Indian education system after a long gap of 34 years. Approval of NEP by the Union cabinet has created a mixed reaction among the stakeholders. When many academicians opined

that it will rebuild a strong education system for the country, others have criticized that the new policy will collapse the public education system in the country encouraging the privatization and commercialization of the education system.

IV. Basic Principles of the Policy in School Education

The main vision of the New National Education Policy has been crafted to ensure that it touches the life of each and every citizen, consistent with their ability to contribute to many growing developmental imperatives of this country on the one hand, and towards creating a just and equitable society on the other. Access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability are the foundational pillars on which the new National Education Policy is based. The main purpose of education will therefore be developing good human beings-capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. The vision of the policy as stated in the report, "This National Education Policy envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The Policy envisages that the curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must develop among the students a deep sense of respect towards the Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values, bonding with one's country, and a conscious awareness of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world. The vision of the Policy is to instil among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen."

V. Transformation in School Education

The Kasturirangan committee for Draft NEP has mentioned that the proposed National Education Policy will change the educational landscape so that we can prepare our youth to meet the variety of present and future challenges. According to them the policy is founded on the guiding goals of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. The National Education Policy 2020 includes some long-awaited shifts in the education sector like the inclusion of both early childhood education and secondary education in the Right to Education Act, doubling the budget allocation for education, strengthening decentralized mechanisms of teacher management and support, expansion of school nutrition programme to include provision of school breakfast, and a possible return of the no-detention policy. It has suggested modifying the Right to Education Act to include from the age group of 3 to 18 years. It will definitely assure more students' enrolment in the school education system and will reduce the dropout rate. It is appreciable that the Early Childhood Education which has been a neglected area in our education system will now be compulsory and will come under the purview of the Ministry of Education. Kasturirangan Committee for Draft NEP has also suggested that every child in the age range of 3-6 years has access to free, safe, high quality, developmentally appropriate care and education by 2025. Long negligence on Early Childhood Care and Education is one of the major factors of children's low level learning achievement, high dropout rate, low attendance rate etc. The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has conducted a study on "The Impact of Preschool Education on Retention in Primary Grades" which revealed that there are strong and direct correlations between exposure to preschool education and retention rates, attendance rates, and most significantly learning outcomes in primary schools and beyond. It is suggested that the Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Education (CPFECE) will be prepared by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). This is for the first time in Indian Education Policy that a national Curricular Framework will be prepared for Early Childhood

Education. There will be two parts of the Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Education. The first Part will be 0-3 years for cognitive stimulation of infants and young children. The second part will be 3-8 years emphasizing on activity based, play based, discovery based flexible learning system. For this purpose, NCERT has already started the preparation. The State Curriculum Framework has already been prepared on the basis of which National Curriculum Framework will be constructed. ECCE shall be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of early childhood educational institutions consisting of (a) stand-alone 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 preschools - all of which would employ workers/teachers specially trained in the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE.

There will be major changes in the structure of school education, as the earlier 10+2 structure of school education will be changed to a 5+3+3+4 system. The first five years will be foundation stage (3-8 years), next 3 years will be Preparatory Stage (9-11 years), then three years Middle Stage (12 to 14 years). It is to be followed by four years High Stage or Secondary Education Stage which will be totally multidisciplinary study, and emphasis will be on greater depth, critical thinking, greater attention to life aspiration, and greater flexibility in students' choice. The concept of higher secondary and junior college will be eliminated. There will be no separation between 'Arts' and 'Science', 'co-curricular', 'extra-curricular' and 'curricular' activities. It will give greater flexibility to the students in the choice of subjects.

"The Foundational Stage will consist of play/activity-based learning and the aforementioned curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE. It will also include a focus on good behaviour, courtesy, ethics, personal and public hygiene/cleanliness, teamwork and cooperation, etc. The Preparatory Stage will transition gradually from play-based learning to more formal but interactive classroom learning, with the

introduction of some (light) textbooks, in order to lay a solid groundwork across subjects, including reading, writing, speaking, physical education, art, languages, science, and mathematics. The Middle Stage will see the introduction of subject teachers for learning/discussion of the more abstract concepts in each subject that students will be ready for at this stage, across the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities. The High School (or Secondary) Stage will comprise four years of multidisciplinary study, building on the subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style of the Middle Stage, but with greater depth, greater critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations, and greater flexibility and student choice. The High School Stage may also allow exposure to more subjects and enable greater flexibility and more frequent assessment of modules". (National Education Policy 2020)

The new structure of school education is welcome; the earlier structure of education did not include the education before 6 years of age which is also absolutely important. Although in the Draft National Education Policy 2019 report, semesterization of the 4 years secondary education stage was suggested, semesterization of secondary education is now optional in the final NEP 2020 report. The system which is not successful in our undergraduate education, how will it effectively work in the secondary stage? Moreover, it will overburden the students with academic load. Internal evaluation is appreciable, but can be done in an annual system without semesterization. Some flexibility is allowed in the final report of NEP as it is mentioned "All four stages, in accordance with what may be possible in different regions, may also consider moving towards a semester system, or a system that allows the inclusion of shorter modules - or courses (such as arts or sports) that are taught on alternate days - in order to allow an exposure to more subjects and enable greater flexibility with more frequent formative assessment for learning. States may look into innovative methods to achieve these aims of greater flexibility and exposure to and enjoyment of a wider range of subjects, including across the arts, sciences, humanities, languages, sports, and vocational subjects". The NEP

2020, also aims to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) from pre-school to secondary levels by 2030.

VI. Towards a Holistic Education

Education is a process to facilitate children to acquire knowledge, experience, skills, attitude and values which makes an individual civilized, refined and cultured. Education is the only means towards a civilized and socialized society. Every society gives importance to education because it is a panacea for all evils. It is the key to solving various problems in life. But there is a burning question as to how much our today's Indian education system could achieve the real purpose of life. Do the people have adequate confidence in our education system that may build efficient and desired citizens? In the current scenario, we find students and society lack empathy and respect. The growing crime rate, indiscipline behaviour among the young people is a great concern to every conscious citizen. It means somewhere our education system fails to build real human beings. One of the major shortcomings of our education system is that it is focused on only academic achievement of the student with high scoring through academic instruction. Education is not merely for scoring marks, getting degrees or jobs or earning a livelihood but it is about building a good human being, a responsible citizen and a person who can handle the challenges of life in healthy, acceptable and responsible ways.

Many of the prominent educational thinkers of the world today have rightly pointed out that the education of young human beings should involve much more than simply moulding them into future workers. The educationist Pestalozzi, John Dewey, Madam Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, etc. have insisted that education should be understood as the art of cultivating the moral, emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the developing child. During the 1970s, an emerging body of literature in science, philosophy and cultural history provided an overarching concept to describe this way of understanding education – a perspective known

as *holism*. A holistic way of thinking seeks to encompass and integrate multiple layers of meaning and experience rather than defining human possibilities narrowly. Every child is more than a future employee; every person's intelligence and abilities are far more complex than his or her scores on examination.

Maria Montessori said that "education cannot be effective unless it helps a child open up himself to life". What Montessori said in the early-20th century is more relevant today in the early-21st Century because academic excellence alone can no longer assure success and happiness in course of life and career. Holistic development through education from the early stage of a child's life has become more important today than in the last century. Every child is unique. He or she has unique personality traits, interests, preferences, values, attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses. The educational curriculum must be able to help every child find his or her unique place in the world in alignment with the uniqueness that he or she has. In order to achieve this, the holistic development of a child is of utmost importance. Mahatma Gandhi said about education, that it should focus on all–round education and not just literacy. 'Education is the systematic process of training of the head, hand and heart. He said education is needed to make better human beings and that allows them to meet basic needs of an individual. However, to ensure holistic education is imparted, the teachers must be properly trained, curriculum must be properly designed and an environment is provided that promotes balanced relationships between children and with people and the environment.

Holistic Education is an approach to teaching that focuses on the academics and social needs of students. The educators seek to fulfil the academic requirements of the students and teach them the right methods by which they can face the challenges of life. They try to engage all aspects of the learner that includes the mind, spirit, and body. In Holistic education, the focus is on the transformative approach. It means education is not a process of transmission. The students learn through different experimental ways. They work in groups and enhance their abilities and skills through various practical projects. This means that the

students are allowed to learn at their own paces. So, the teachers try to teach students in their best possible ways. Also, they help them to increase their self-confidence. And they plan lessons that are for learning and not just academics. Holistic education is a welcome alternative to the mechanized mode of education that is primarily instruction based.

In May 2018, 'Samagra Shiksha' an integrated scheme for school education extending support to states from preschool to senior secondary levels was launched in India. The scheme marked a huge shift from the existing mode of education and treats school holistically as a 'continuum starting from pre-school'. Speaking at the occasion, the then HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar said "The scheme focuses on improving quality of education at all levels by integrating the two T's – Teachers and Technology. 'Samagra' means a holistic approach to treat education as a whole and the scheme is very aptly named as it sees school education holistically without segmenting it into various levels of education."

The National Education Policy 2020 has reconfigured the curriculum and pedagogy of school education to 5+3+3+4 design with an aim to make them responsive and relevant to the developmental needs and interests of learners at different stages of their development. Holistic development and a wide choice of subjects and courses year to year will be the new distinguishing feature of secondary school education. There will be no hard separation among 'curricular', 'extra-curricular', or 'co-curricular' areas, among 'arts', 'humanities', and 'sciences', or between 'vocational' or 'academic' streams. Curriculum content will be reduced in each subject to its core essentials, to make space for critical thinking and more holistic, discovery-based, discussion-based, and analysis-based learning. Even at higher education too, emphasis will be given on holistic and multidisciplinary education.

Education for holistic development is the need of hour, through which only society will get efficient manpower in every aspect with strong morality. For holistic development, we should train children on responsible behaviour, health and hygiene, food and nutrition, gender

equality, values, discipline, safety issues, etc. We need to challenge their abilities to think creatively and critically. Promoting sports and cultural activities add value to learning. Education must also train one for quick, resolute and effective thinking. As Einstein once remarked that 'education is not learning of facts, but training of the mind to think'. This is what we are yet to realize in our education system.

VII. School Education and Language Policy

With the NEP 2020 being approved by the Union Cabinet on 29th July 2020, there is a growing debate on how this will affect the language policy and the medium of instruction in different regions. On the question of medium of instruction, the NEP policy document states "wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother-tongue/local language". It indicates that this policy provides greater flexibility which allows states and institutions to decide on the implementation according to the needs of the children in that region. This would be a major shift away from the use of English or Hindi as medium of instruction. This was welcomed by many education experts who believe that using the regional language or home-language as medium of instruction in early years is more effective. The idea of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in primary school is not new to the Indian education system. Article 350A of the Constitution states that every state and local authority should endeavour to provide "adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups". The report of the Kothari Commission on Education and National Development (1964-66) suggested that in tribal areas, for the first two years of school, the medium of instruction and books should be in the local tribal language. The regional language should be taught separately and should become the medium of instruction by the third year. The Right to Education Act, 2009, also said that as far as possible, the medium of instruction in school should be the child's mother tongue.

However, considering the diversity of languages and dialects in India, opting for mother-tongue as the medium of instruction may not be as simple as it sounds. India has several languages- the 2011 Census listed 270 mother tongues; of these, as per a 2017 study, 47 languages were used as mediums of instruction in Indian classrooms. It might not be possible for all languages to become the medium of instruction and it might not be possible for large parts of the country to implement this. Sometimes, a school class may have students with 5/6 mother tongues. In such a situation it is essential to train the teachers to deal with multilingual classes. Here the suggestions given by Jhingran are quite useful where he said that the child's language would not be the medium of instruction but the government would formally mandate that the mother tongue be used in the classroom by teachers and students. This would allow children to talk debate and express themselves in their language while also learning the regional language or English. Despite the language of the policy document being ambiguous and rather directional, it is also a fact that Central schools and schools that get government funding would have to subscribe to their advice. But the Private schools without government funding on the other hand will have the freedom to choose as they wish, and are not obliged to follow the instructions in the NEP. Under such circumstances, it will not be possible for the state government to compel the existing English medium private schools to change their medium of instruction. As the present National Education Policy has given flexibility to the states, the state government must take wise decisions in consultation with experts in the concerned field.

The NEP 2020 shall continue the three-language formula which was first introduced in the country in 1968, with a major change. The three-language formula is a policy that was formulated by the Education Ministry of the Indian government in the 1968 National Policy Resolution. It provides that in all government schools across India, there shall be three languages to be taught: English, as a mandate; Hindi, too, is compulsory, both in Hindi-speaking states and non-Hindi-speaking states; and finally, the third language is the local language of the region where the school is located. In the earlier policy, Hindi and English were heavily stressed upon in Central schools in most parts of the country,

and were considered mandatory among the three languages to be taught. The third language would either be a regional language, a foreign language or a classical language like Sanskrit. The new three-language formula is meant to be flexible, without imposing a specific language that the state does not want. Unlike the National Education Policy 1968 which mandated teaching of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking States, the latest NEP does not explicitly mention the 'third' language shall be Hindi. Instead, the policy noted that three languages learned by children will be the choices of States and the students, provided two languages must be native of India. This means that in Assam, apart from Assamese and English, students must learn any one of the Indian languages. The policy also calls for a greater effort in investing in a large number of language teachers in all regional languages around the country. Teachers will be encouraged to use a bilingual approach, including bilingual teaching-learning materials, with those students whose home language may be different.

Implementation of language policy as envisaged in NEP 2020 will need rigorous preparation and proper strategy plan on the part of the state government. In Assam, a high level committee has already been constituted for implementation of NEP in the state. Hope the committee will be able to take proper strategy in this regard. The policy also recommends high-quality textbooks, including in science, will be made available in home languages and mother tongue.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

The need for a new National Education Policy was a long pending demand in Indian education. Now the demand is going to be fulfilled. So many new provisions have been suggested in the NEP 2020. There is an urgent need for transformation of the Indian education system and to make it broader, flexible and multidisciplinary which will only help the students for their holistic development. It is now greatly felt that only professional or technical education will not bring desired results without a liberal approach. It is expected that the National Education Policy 2020 will bring a revolutionary change in the Indian education

system and will be able to build an India centric education based on Indian heritage, culture and language. Teachers will be a crucial player in policy implementation, therefore it is equally essential to build the professional competency of teachers along with accountability. Governments both central and state must especially focus on removing the threats and weakness of our education system and enhancing the opportunities for implementation of NEP 2020 in a time bound manner. However, too much hurry in the implementation of the NEP provision may not be fruitful. Proper strategies and planning are must.

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Chapter - 10

EDUCATION POLICY ADVOCACY: RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

*Debasis Poddar**

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

Lao Tzu[1]

I. Introduction: Colonial Education Policy

Besides entitlement,[2] public education is an enabling institution in itself and the same appears axiomatic in the course of democratic governance across the world. In the non-Western settings, however, institutional education is often than not ridden with enigma of its own since diversified geographical regions across the world are governed by respective cultural trajectories after regional heritage; poles-apart from one other by default. The cult of institutional education in India went spread over, by means of colonial expansionism in South Asia, since long back. In India, one among these non-Western settings, institutional education of the Occident has left more harm than help since the West hardly went customized to the East and vice versa; despite the education policy regime out of colonial governmentality since the seed of public education discourse with its Occidental origin

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[1] REMEZ SASSON (COMP.), THE AMAZING QUOTES OF LAO TZU ACADEMIA.EDU 16 (online edition ed. 2012), https://www.academia.edu/9762485/The_Amazing_Quotes_of_Lao_Tzu_Compiled_by_The_Amazing_Quotes_of_Lao_Tzu.

[2] Rakhi Roy Halder, APPLYING THE 'ENTITLEMENT APPROACH' OF AMARTYA SEN TO EDUCATION (A PLAN FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION FOR THE MILLENNIUM ACADEMIA.EDU (2017), https://www.academia.edu/35252662/APPLYING_THE_ENTITLEMENT_APPROACH_OF_AMARTYA_SEN_TO_EDUCATION_A_plan_for_effective_education_for_the_millennium.

could not grow well into foreign soil of the subcontinent. At bottom, education reflects political culture of the given time and space. Thus spoke Rudyard Kipling:[3]

> Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
> Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat.

Since time immemorial, individual education has been in practice in India. Public education, if at all, went initiated by benevolent individual entrepreneurship; for experimentation upon newer schools of thought. For instance, saints (read scholars) have preached respective schools of thought to their disciples across the subcontinent since ancient antiquity. Likewise, in the early-twentieth century, *Visva-Bharati* was conceptualized by Tagore to engage his own pedagogy of informal education in the midst of natural rural habitat. Unlike the Orientalist praxis, the East India Company put emphasis on education with mercantile reasoning of its own. Accordingly, expenditure of one lakh rupees went allocated toward public education with the intent of getting local workforce prepared:[4]

> In 1813 the territorial authority of the East India Company and its monopoly of trade with China were again renewed for twenty years; but the right of trade in India was thrown open to all British subjects. The Act (Charter Act of 1813) passed on this occasion established a bishop for India and an archdeacon for each of three Presidencies. It also authorized the expenditure of one lac of rupees on education and the encouragement of learning.

Unlike postcolonial perception, however, the colonial education policy in British India cared for welfare of the colonized as

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[3] Rudyard Kipling, THE BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST (*The Pioneer* Dec. 2, 1889). THE KIPLING SOCIETY (2021), https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poem/poems_eastwest.htm.

[4] INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS: 1773-1915, xxviii INTERNET ARCHIVE (Panchanandas Mukherji ed., 1915), https://ia600901.us.archive.org/21/items/indianconstituti0 0mukeuoft/indianconstituti00mukeuoft.pdf.

well; after Kipling, "*The White Man's Burden*".[5] For instance, thus spoke Lord Ripon, the Governor-General of India, in his statement:[6]

> It is not primarily with a view to the improvement of administration, that this measure is put forward; it is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education.

Also, during his speech in Jodhpur, Lord Minto sounded similar wisdom to this end:[7]

> Steps are being continuously taken towards obliterating distinctions of race as the test for access to posts of public authority and power. In this path, I confidently expect and intend the progress henceforward to be steadfast and sure, as education spreads, experience ripens and the lessons of responsibility are well learned by the keen intelligence and apt capabilities of India.

These official statements apart, a series of official documents generated in British India corroborated the proactive enterprise of an otherwise colonial regime to get the colonized educated. For instance, the report of Indian Education Commission- perhaps the maiden forum constituted for comprehensive contemplation on public education in India- was meant to attain a functional balance between continuation of the indigenous knowledge system schooling the vernacular as medium of instruction in respective regions and introduction of the mainstream system schooling the English language as a medium of instruction across the subcontinent.[8] Afterwards, another education Policy of India was adopted by Lord Curzon in 1904, followed by the Calcutta University Commission

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[5] RUDYARD KIPLING, THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN (1899).

[6] *Supra* Note 4 at p. 281.

[7] *Supra* Note 4 at p. xxxix.

[8] Government of India, REPORT OF THE INDIAN EDUCATION COMMISSION: APPOINTED BY THE RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA DATED 3RD FEBRUARY, 1882 INTERNET ARCHIVE (1883), https://ia904503.us.archive.org/.

(1917-19), Hartog Committee (1929). All of them insisted upon getting the educator educated; thereby getting the newly-introduced public education fortified by capacity-building these educators employed in public institutions. While the mission of Tagore resembled, his means and methods intended to bring in revival of the ancient legacy:[9]

> The school was a conscious repudiation of the system introduced in India by the British rulers and Rabindranath initially sought to realize the intrinsic values of the ancient education in India. The school and its curriculum, therefore, signified a departure from the way the rest of the country viewed education and teaching. Simplicity was a cardinal principle. Classes were held in open air in the shade of trees where man and nature entered into an immediate harmonious relationship. Teachers and students shared the single integral socio-cultural life. The curriculum had music, painting, dramatic performances and other performative practices.

Tagore experimented with education in *Shantiniketan*. Besides, Vivekananda extended his idea of education,[10] something experimented by Ramakrishna Mission institutions:

> The present system of English education is entirely literary. The student must be made to think for himself and work for himself. Suppose there is a fire. He is the first to come forward and put out the fire who is accustomed to use his eyes and hands. ... The education that is given is one-sided, weakening, it is killing by inches. The children are made to cram too much of useless matter, and are incarcerated in school rooms fifty or seventy in each, five hours together.

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[9] HISTORY OF VISVA-BHARATI, A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY AND AN INSTITUTION OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE VISVA-BHARATI,
https://visvabharati.ac.in/History.html.

[10] SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, MY IDEA OF EDUCATION (Kiran Walia, comp.) 94, Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata (2008), https://estudantedavedanta.net/My-Idea-of-Education.pdf.

What Vivekananda strived was a synergy between the ancient Indian cult on one side and the medieval Jesuit praxis on the other. Vivekananda could transcend the threshold of Jesuit mission through his call for women education in the late nineteenth century; somewhat radical enough to the given parochialism out of the then patriarchy in India:[11]

> I ask you all so earnestly to do likewise and open girls' schools in every village and try to uplift them. If the women are raised, then their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country—then will culture, knowledge, power, and devotion awaken in the land.

Immediately after the partition of Bengal, perhaps in its knee jerk effect, nationalist intellectuals founded the National Council of Education in the then Calcutta to establish Bengal National College and Bengal Technical Institute. Afterwards, these two premier higher education institutions merged together and thereby formed Jadavpur University as a seat of modern education; something to confirm autonomy in higher education. A similar legacy was followed toward establishment of Jawaharlal Nehru University. Back to mainstream public education enterprise, with government-aided institutions, state-patronage toward public education was subjected to several crossroads in India:[12]

> The interest taken by the Government of India in educational matters has varied from time to time. It was not very extensive in the first period, extremely keen in the second period, and almost non-existent in the third.

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[11] *Id.* at p. 77.

[12] Syed Nururllah & J. P. Naik, HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN INDIA DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD 616 (1943) INTERNET ARCHIVE, https://ia600209.us.archive.org/32/items/HistoryOfEducationInIndiaDuringTheBritishRule/5.Jp-HistoryOfEducationInIndiaDuringTheBritishRule.pdf.

The reasoning behind the rise and fall of patronage lies manifold. First, as mercantile Inc., East India Company neither intended nor extended comprehensive care towards education. Second, in British India, the government paid due heed towards getting the colonized educated; primarily to impart public education and partially to get the workforce prepared. Third, policy U-turn vis-à-vis patronage for education in India may be read as response to radical extremism. Consequently, the Shakespearean comedy went replayed in India:[13]

CALIBAN:

> You taught me language, and my profit on 't
> Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
> For learning me your language!

PROSPERO:

> Hagseed, hence!
> Fetch us in fuel; and be quick, thou'rt best,
> To answer other business. Shrugg'st thou, malice?
> If thou neglect'st or dost unwillingly
> What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,
> Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar
> That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

Since the very early-twentieth century, rise of radical extremism across the country- more so in the undivided Bengal province- took-off lips and bounds to leave relations between the colonizer and the colonized spoilt. With the shift of political headquarters of British India from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911, functional relations between the ruler and the ruled underwent a

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[13] WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, THE TEMPEST (Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine ed.) Act 1, Scene 2, 39. (1610),
https://shakespeare.folger.edu/downloads/pdf/the-tempest_PDF_FolgerShakespeare.pdf.

paradigm shift. A benevolent despotic statecraft thereby deteriorated to police statecraft; followed by more radical anticolonial movements getting fomented throughout British India. Besides, the spell of consecutive wars worldwide, e.g., the World War I (1914-1919) and the World War II (1939-1945) contributed to the consequent cost-cutting upon education. Consequently, basic public utility services in India- both education and health- lost priority by default. The author hereby strives to trace back discursive hyperlinks between the basic utility services- like education and health- since almost identical reasoning got so-called Bengal Famine of 1943 contextualized; despite education and health (read nutrition) reflect two sovereign domains. While nutrition contributes to physical health, education contributes to mental health; among diversified variables.

Even in the wake of divorce between the ruler and the ruled, however, effort was on toward improvement of public education; higher education in particular. Thus, for instance, Calcutta University Commission (so-called Sadler Commission) undertook minute survey and prepared its report (1917-1919); published in 1919. Despite its apparent institution-specific nomenclature, what the Commission prepared was a statistical database vis-à-vis all other major higher education institutions across the country; besides database vis-à-vis University of Calcutta. Accordingly, in its generic report, due emphasis was placed upon the following: (i) number of institutions, (ii) number of students, (iii) rejected or 'failed' candidates, (iv) Muslim students, (v) residence of students, and the like.[14] With objective institutional analysis of the education system, radicalism voiced its concern well within education policy discourse in the colonial India; by courtesy, Michel Ernest Sadler, a historian by default, and his team. To quote Sadler report verbatim:

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[14] Calcutta University, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY COMMISSION (1917-1919), REPORT Vol. vi, 1920, 301-305
https://ia802902.us.archive.org/30/items/dli.csl.2189/2189.pdf

"... the present system of university education in Bengal is wholly inadequate to the modern needs of the (Bengal) Presidency. They (Members of Calcutta University Commission) have ascertained that experienced opinion, both Indian and European, is almost unanimous in criticising unfavourably the quality of the training which is usually given, and in deploring its failure adequately to develop the intelligence and practical capacity of the students. The constitution of the University is obsolete. It hampers academic freedom and impede reform. ... If the present state of things is allowed to continue, the results will be unhappy, for the social welfare, the political development and the material interests of Bengal".[15]

Long before emergence of the postcolonial narrative vis-à-vis public education in India, Sadler documented progressive public policy analysis through his report; way back in 1919. The Sadler report is a classic illustration to contest an otherwise unproblematic argumentation vis-à-vis character of colonial governmentality upon the-then education policy to gross detriment of the colonized public interest by default.

II. Postcolonial Policy of Education

Before adoption of the recent National Education Policy on July 29 of 2020, the chronicles of postcolonial education regime may be divided into three times, albeit, with overlap; e.g., 1950-1968, 1968-1986 and 1986-2020. Immediately after independence of India, the University Education Commission initiated its work with Radhakrishnan as Chairman and its report on higher education was published in 1949. Also, the school education in India underwent minute scrutiny by the Secondary Education Commission afterwards; with Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar as Chairman and its report was published in 1953. Taken together, the tryst with destiny of India vis-

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[15]   *Id* at p. 1.

à-vis public education went initiated with these two official documents and continued until Education Policy of India 1968 was published with Kothari as Chairman of the Commission and architect of sixth, yet upheld as the maiden, report on education initiated after independence; by courtesy, comprehensive character of its coverage of the institution of education in its entirety; something iconic of the postcolonial India until replaced by present education policy. In the chronicles of purposive pedagogy for the Republic of India, the value of his report ought to be perpetuated to reflect postcolonial public education with state patronage. To understand the postcolonial education landscape, appreciation of preceding years ought to leave readership conversant to the narrative behind the Kothari Commission.

A. 1949-1967: Pre-Kothari Era

From the colonial regime to the postcolonial, a single largest shift, among others, turned from generic to specific. While the spread of public education and extent of the spread attracted attention of the colonial regime, the postcolonial regime advanced its reach toward the nitty-gritty of public education; thereby reached minute issues of concern through a series of educational research questions engineered by premier pedagogues of the then times in India, e.g., why to teach, what to teach, how to teach, and the like. Thus, instrumentation for socialization, nothing is more appropriate than education to get social engineering accomplished to satisfaction of the statecraft. After independence, time was ripe to get the national reconstruction enterprise calibrated with the postcolonial regime toward a paradigm shift in education with reformulation of the education policy regime functional since 1904; something reduced to a naught with the passage of time. Accordingly, a quest for purposive pedagogy is on till date. With two commissions, chaired by Radhakrishnan and Mudaliar respectively, a quest went initiated towards purposive pedagogy; thereby serving the people of India.

The report of the University Education Commission was drafted from December 1948 to August 1949 and published in 1950. The Republic thereby initiated its trial-and-error with education since the very year of its inception. Besides specific recommendations for special attention to be paid to the development of higher education in rural areas, Radhakrishnan Commission stressed upon the need to broaden and equalize opportunity for higher education, to assist able but financially handicapped students, and proposed for the improvement of quality and status of teachers. To quote from the report itself:[16]

> Many of these proposals will mean increased expenditure but this increase, we are convinced, is an investment for the democratic future of a free people. There is no freedom without knowledge. ... We solicit the Government of India which charged us with this important task, the Provincial Governments, who have the responsibility for maintaining most of our universities, and the people of India to give their very earnest and sympathetic consideration to the financial needs of the universities, and assure them the funds without which no improvement is possible.

After a few years, the Secondary Education Commission- with Mudaliar as its Chairman- drafted its report from October 1952 to June 1953 and published the same in 1953 itself. Since then, in the last seventy years (1952-2022), too few reports could reach the precision of Mudaliar vis-à-vis appraisal of the existing situation, followed by the reorientation of aims and objectives in the postcolonial education; so far as schooling is concerned. In particular, the Commission documented its vision for secondary school likewise:[17] provision of a proper environment, promotion of

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[16] Ministry of Education Government of India, THE REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMISSION (DECEMBER 1948 – AUGUST 1949) VOLUME I, 511 (1962), http://www.academics-india.com/Radhakrishnan%20Commission%20Report%20of%201948-49.pdf.

[17] Ministry of Education Government of India, REPORT OF THE SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION MUDALIAR COMMISSION REPORT (OCTOBER 1952- JUNE 1953), Chapter XV, 181-188 (1953),

extracurricular activities, provision of craft and productive work, school library service, school as a centre of community, reorientation of teachers, freedom of school, to name a few among them.

The most fundamental point of emphasis in the report lies in educating the educators, something *sine qua non* for education as another enabling institution across the world, through improvement of the teaching personnel. Through training teachers, effort went apparent to fast-forward systematic education. To quote from the relevant paragraph:[18]

> There should be only two types of institutions for (school) teacher-training: (i) for those who have taken the School Leaving Certificate or Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate, for whom the period of training should be two years; and (ii) for graduates for whom the training may, for the present, be of one academic year, but extended as a long-term programme to two academic years.

Few more recommendations deserve mention since they were implemented afterwards. (i) three-language formula. In linguistic states, reorganized on the basis of language, vernacular as a regional language, Hindi as the official language of India and English as an international language in an anglo-phone country like India, were recommended to be taught in school education. (ii) higher secondary education with three-year duration was recommended after the elementary education of eight-year duration. (iii) basic school infrastructure with tools and techniques required for public education were put to emphasis by the report.

With the recommendations of Radhakrishnan Commission and Mudaliar Commission, taken together, the Republic initiated its

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https://www.educationforallinindia.com/1953%20Secondary_Education_Commission_Report.pdf

[18] *Id.* at Chapter XII, para. 19, p. 201.

maiden effort to get its population educated. Few features- common to both these reports- reflect character of the education regime during the Nehruvian India: (i) spread of school education to the maximum population, (ii) percolation of access to higher education to the common population at grassroots, (iii) patronage by Union of India to a subject otherwise belonged to List II (State List).[19] Emphasis was put on getting the hardware of education fortified, e.g., basic infrastructure, teaching instruments, access to elementary education for the maximum number, access to higher education for those with merit yet without means, and so on. The software of education, concerning epistemological questions, e.g., how to teach, what to teach, why to teach, whom to teach, when to teach, etc., were taken to minute contemplation by the next regime, after the report of Indian Education Commission (1964-1966), with Daulat Singh Kothari- one among premier pedagogues of his time- as Chairman, went accommodated by the maiden education policy of India; with effect from 1968; a turning point in hitherto history of public education across the country. A scientist turned top bureaucrat for a regulatory regime meant for higher education institutions,[20] Kothari put no less emphasis upon pedagogy before the university and brought in a radical shift for the next-generation citizenry with realignment of education to 10+2+3; something commonplace till date.

(i) 1968-1985: Kothari Era

The Kothari Commission reigned India till 1985. Irrespective of formal endorsement of New Education Policy in 1986, Kothari-effect continued to leave long-lasting impact upon the educational landscape, upon the ethnography of pedagogic discourse in particular, until the adoption of National Education policy in 2020;

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[19] Education was shifted from List II (State List) to List III (Concurrent List) of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976.

[20] Professor Daulat Singh Kothari graced the seat of Chairman of University Grants Commission: 1961-1973. LIST OF FORMER CHAIRPERSONS UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION, https://ugc.ac.in/subpage/Former-Commission-Members.aspx.

with Krishnaswami Kasturirangan as Chairman of the Commission preceding the present policy regime. A minute study of 1968 report ought to facilitate readership appreciate National Education Policy 2020 in the context of liberalization-privatization-Globalization and legal obligation of the Republic vis-à-vis compliance to neoliberal international trade regime under the GATT-WTO; something applicable to India since its accession to the regime in 1991 (something more articulated in the subsequent subchapter). Both Kothari and Kasturirangan engaged their enterprise with similar intent to find the best purposive pedagogy; albeit, applicable to their respective times. With a paradigm shift in their times, Kasturirangan preferred a paradigm shift from Kothari; without prejudice to his predecessor anyway. While postcolonial politics went played out by Kothari toward percolation of education to grassroots, neoliberal economics went played out by Kasturirangan to convert the countrymen to workmen; attain the best preparedness as a transition economy; thereby meet the challenges of corporate globalization ahead. Both of them responded to the respective calls of their given times. In a way or other, Kothari fortified the foundation for Kasturirangan to take the tryst of education ahead. Rather than competition, they complement one another.

Kothari explored major challenges of education as an enabler of national development. Representative chapters- followed by recommendations- showcase issues of concern in postcolonial India with pragmatic means and methods to win the same in time ahead. In particular, the Commission insisted upon the following areas of public education:[21] education for social and national integration, reorganization of school education and higher education, teacher status, teacher education, enrolment in school education, inclusive education, school education, school curriculum, teaching method, school administration, establishment and improvement of

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[21] Ministry of Education Government of India, REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION 1964-66 (EDUCATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT) 613-673 INTERNET ARCHIVE https://ia800206.us.archive.org/26/items/ReportOfTheEducationCommission1964-66D.S.KothariReport/48.Jp-ReportOfTheEducationCommission1964-66d.s.kothari.pdf.

higher education institutions, enrolment in higher education, university governance, education for agriculture, vocational, technical and engineering education, science education and research, adult education, educational planning and implementation, educational finance, and the like. The report resembles the constitution of education as a social institution of his time. The report earned appreciation as a revolution in itself since the same thereby brought in progressive development; as appurtenant to national reconstruction in the Republic. In the mid-nineteenth century, while critiquing Feuerbach, Marx advocated activism:[22]

> The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.

More than describing the given state of affairs in then India, Kothari extended a prescription for lawmen and policymakers to proceed with the roadmap in time ahead. Himself a premier scientist, Kothari placed specific emphasis upon science education; thereby get education elevated to an icon of social transformation; something critical to keep pace with the fast-changing world. With proactive participation of all with stake in education, for instance, lawman, policy-practitioner, institutionalized administrator, teacher, learner, among others, taken together, what Kothari Commission ascertained is regimentation of those on board; followed by clarion call to get united for a cause:[23]

> The most important and urgent reform needed in education is to transform it, to endeavour to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the people and thereby make it a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of the national goals. For this purpose, education should be developed so

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[22] Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach* (W. Lough tr., 1845), *in* ENGEL'S LUDWIG FEUERBACH AND THE END OF CLASSICAL GERMAN PHILOSOPHY (1886), https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.pdf.

[23] Report of Kothari Commission, para. 1.20; as summarized by the Commission, p. 613.

as to increase productivity, achieve social and national integration, accelerate the progress of modernization and cultivate social, moral and spiritual values.

Interestingly enough, Union of India endured the enterprise of getting national policy on education despite the same belonging to the states; entry in State List, i.e., List II, under Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India until education went transferred to Concurrent List, i.e., List III, by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act of 1976. The centripetal activism of the Union- toward formulation of national policy on education keeping the same state subject under the Constitution- went uncontested by states on several counts. First, the leadership skill of Nehru, and then of Mrs. Gandhi, left the public spellbound with the Union; until she resorted to the Proclamation of Emergency in 1975. Second, exceptions apart, states were yet to vote for the non-Congress parties to power. Last yet not the least, the personality of Kothari proved too charismatic to the then academics to raise a dissent voice against the sitting Chairman of the University Grants Commission. Taken together, report of the Kothari Commission was adopted; with effect from 1968. Subsequently, while the third national emergency went operative, among all others, issues were unearthed by the opposition about activism of the centre with education; despite the same being a state subject. Transfer of education from List II to List III took place by a constitutional amendment[24] in response to the cynicism; thereby setting reasoning *ex-post-facto* long after formulation and adoption of the national policy on education- despite education remaining a state subject until the constitutional amendment in 1976. The readership needs to be notified of the residual part of the narrative.

An unwritten objective behind the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment Act), 1978 was nullification of odious provisions in the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment Act), 1976. Accordingly,

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[24] INDIA CONST. sec. 57(c)(iv), (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976
https://legislative.gov.in/constitution-forty-second-amendment-act-1976.

several sections of the forty-second amendment were omitted by the next amendment while section 57(c)(iv) survived.[25] The reasoning lies manifold. First, report of Kothari Commission, followed by application in its letter-n-spirit, initiated desired developmental dividends; brought into fruition meanwhile. Second, political consensus was built upon the need for a national policy regime on public education. Third, in the absence of national standards, growth of education ought to stand uneven. While there are corollary challenges behind public education getting held as concurrent subject, those are debated on case-to-case basis; hardly with heed to juridical reasoning behind the transfer of education from State List to Concurrent List by constitutional amendment with so-called "transient majority"; as contested by Statement of Objects and Reasons under the forty-fourth amendment.[26] The transfer of education from State List to Concurrent List, therefore, hardly surfaces in the course of mainstream federalist discourse across the Republic; sporadic cases apart. The credit is due to Kothari, among others, behind the paradigm shift in the education regime. Since independence, education went usurped by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of India, despite the same belonging to List II of Seventh Schedule. With centripetal leadership, Kothari added legitimacy to such an extra-legal hierarchy; followed by the legality; brought in by the forty-second amendment to the Constitution. Thus, from the University Education Commission- with Radhakrishnan as Chairman- to the forty-second amendment to the Constitution (1947-1976), within three decades, the clock completed 360-degree circle: commonplace practice to legitimacy to legality; thereby got the state subject elevated to a subject of national development.

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[25] INDIA CONST. sec. 45, (Forty-fourth Amendment) Act, 1978 https://legislative.gov.in/constitution-forty-fourth-amendment.

[26] *Ibid*. Statement of Objects and Reasons in the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Act, 1978.

(ii) 1986-2019: Post-Kothari Era

After a landslide advantage to get education into functional fold, effort went initiated to get India educated; better than earlier. Also, the world witnessed the turning points one after another. For instance, in the mid-1980s, neoliberal economy initiated its ordeal with the Reagan and the Mrs. Thatcher governments in the USA and the UK respectively; with consequent impact upon the rest of the world. With the decline of erstwhile USSR, followed by collapse of left-run East-European states one after another in early-1990s, neoliberal economy knew no bounds. Back in India, in the mid-1980s, objective reality improved in its response to state-sponsored policy patronage toward rise in education. after Smt. Gandhi, Shri Rajiv Gandhi introduced the next education policy regime- named National Policy of Education 1986- to carry forward the harvest of live lessons learnt in course of the maiden education policy period (1968-1985). Another intended object behind NPE lies in making the system work; thereby sync to international standards. Himself a science-n-technology enthusiast, Shri Rajiv Gandhi insisted on innovation:[27]

> When viewed in the context of the pace of development in Science and Technology in other parts of the world, the nature and dimensions of the problems of national development confronting us and the immense potential of S&T to help solve current problems, it is found that, despite significant advances the gap between India and advanced countries has significantly widened in terms of scientific and technological capabilities. There is, therefore, a greater urgency for promoting Science and Technology, both for internal development and for international competitiveness.

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[27] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION (1986), RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, para. 4, p. 80. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/npe.pdf

This second education policy period may get divided by three following sub-periods; initiated by the patronage of Shri Rajiv Gandhi and extended by two succeeding Prime Ministers in different times, e.g., Shri Narasimha Rao and Dr. Manmohan Singh respectively, afterwards:

(1) 1986: New Policy of Education

The readers ought to understand the historical background behind the introduction of NPE 1986 by Shri Gandhi. The new policy was required to avoid the void the NEP 1968 suffered from. Himself a scientist-turned-bureaucrat, Kothari was known for his talent in laboratory, classroom and executive assignments. Besides Kothari, four professors were foreigners (London, Tokyo, Moscow and Paris), another belonged to India with his service career abroad, all other members represented their respective institutions with a stake in education.[28] None of them had optimal lived experience about challenges at the grassroots. Subsequently, while the great grandeur fell short to deliver, otherwise honest wisdom of Smt. Gandhi went in vain for no fault of her own. Shri Rajiv Gandhi filled in the void with lived experience of those engaged in grassroots by profession; no wonder that the policy was not preceded by a forum manned by otherwise wise men. For the first time in recent history, perhaps, a head of government proactively engaged his energy toward the making of education policy; albeit, with plenty others on board. In the anxiety of getting the report drafted, the Kothari Commission ignored pragmatism. The naïve assumption of the Commission- that want of access to public education alone is the cause of illiteracy and dropout- proved otiose immediately after implementation. Accordingly, education went budgeted, classrooms went constructed, teachers went recruited, while learners could not reach school premises to learn since hand-to-mouth parents engage wards earn breads on their own, at times, for younger siblings as well; something

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[28] *Supra* Note 19. List of members are placed just before page 1.

unnoticed by the Commission despite the same was manned by otherwise learned men of letters. The popular apathy to public education lies in lived experience that the curriculum of school education is relevant to the prospect of the gentry; something hardly relevant to the struggle for survival of the subaltern population at grassroots. Also, earlier regimes could not address other allied predicaments, like that of dropout- signifier of high alert- since the dropout may be reduced to a victim of inhuman trade (read trafficking in persons); since South Asia is mapped as a source region.[29] No less commonplace is intra-national human trafficking for exploitation of myriad variants, e.g., slavery (forced labour), beggary, marriage (prostitution), organ removal, etc., to name few of them.[30] The dropout poses a potential insignia vis-à-vis child mortality, child malnutrition, post-menstruation syndrome for girl child, or, archaic rituals, like child marriage, genital mutilation, etc.; something inimical to national development. At the least, reasoning behind dropout may be lived experience of the school itself. For instance, want of empathetic approach of otherwise qualified teachers from urban gentry toward the first-generation learners from rural peasantry, social discrimination experienced from own peer group learners out of gender, caste, religion, etc. reasoning may and does rest in social discrimination out of plenty other issues, e.g., differential learning-ability, publicity-shy personality, poverty, etc., want of washroom often than not proves a learning barrier, for girl child in particular, thereby discourages her join school or encourage her dropout the school. Too less headcount in school turns to learning barrier since

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[29] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNDOC RESEARCH: GLOBAL REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS 2020, United Nations Publication, New York, South Asia, 148. UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (2021), https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and analysis/tip/2021/GLOTiP_2020_15jan_web.pdf.

[30] *Ibid*. The information on the forms of exploitation for trafficking cases detected in South Asia were reported by India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Based on information, it appears that the detected victims of trafficking for forced labour make up more than half the share of victims in this subregion. Notably, trafficking for the purpose of forced marriage is recorded as a main form of exploitation after sexual exploitation and forced labour. Trafficking for the purposes of exploitative begging and forced criminal activity were also reported in the region.

the count ought to prevent their parents school them; thereby protect them from potential sexual offences; either in school premises or *en-route* to the school and back. A paradigmatic shift took place in the education policy regime from idealism to realism, from theory to practice to ground otherwise great grandeur of 1968 to the changing political economy in mid-1980s, by courtesy, strategic synergy of lived experience from all engaged in knowledge governance; taken all with stake in the policy regime together.

Shri Rajiv Gandhi paid due heed to the lived experience of civil service cadre engaged in the grassroots and imported social justice to achieve the access to public education through special drive for the enrolment of learners who belong to vulnerable groups, e.g., Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and other backward classes across the country. School education became more incentivized, with a supply of fresh food to those present, investigation into the cases of dropout, followed by the procedure to bring them back, among others, to push all potential learners to join public education. Effort was initiated to ascertain the availability of educational accessories by means of his dream project: known as "Operation Blackboard". Corollary to child education, adult education was initiated by the establishment of Indira Gandhi National Open University in 1985 and its national network extended to all sundry nooks and corners of the country; followed by the progressive development of distance education around. Not distance education alone, establishment of public schools in the remote hamlets received policy priority. As per the need of its times, NPE 1986 placed emphasis upon the following subjects:[31] early Childhood Care & Education, elementary education, non-formal education & Operation Blackboard, secondary education & Navodaya Vidyalaya, vocational education, higher education, open universities & distance education, rural universities & institutes, technical & management education, delinking degrees from jobs & manpower planning, research and development, education for women's equality, education of SC/ST and Other Backward Classes,

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[31] *Supra* Note 25. Revised by Programme on Action 1992, p. 3.

minority education, education of handicapped, adult education, content & process of school education, evaluation process and examination reforms, youth and sports, language development, cultural perspectives, media & educational technology (Use of Computer, etc., in Education), teachers' training, management education, etc.

First four heads were meant to bring in the social revolution pledged to the people of India from preparatory works for the Republic; in the floor of the Constituent Assembly itself. Even before getting schooled, the nascent citizenry is entitled to early childhood care; something acknowledged by NPE 1986; followed by a programme of action to this end. With intent to extend elementary education for all, the operation blackboard was initiated to get India educated. Navodaya Vidyalaya scheme is meant to facilitate achievers-with social justice ratio- by advanced educators and education infrastructure available; thereby carry forward the long march of education toward progressive development:[32]

> Under the scheme of Navodaya Vidyalayas for catering to the category of high achievers one such Vidyalaya will be set up in each district during the 7th Five Year Plan period. These schools will make available good quality education irrespective of the parents' capacity to pay and their socio-economic background. In these schools there will be 75% reservation for children from rural areas. There will be reservation for SC and ST as per their actual population in the district subject to a minimum of nationally prescribed figure of 15 and 71/2 for SC & ST respectively. An effort will be made to cover girls to the extent of 1/3 in a school. Education will be free including boarding and lodging in these schools. These schools will be affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education.

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[32] *Id.* at p. 31.

Last yet not least, emphasis on vocational education- followed by dissociation between degrees and livelihood- was another welcome plan; though, could not be implemented. Shri Gandhi intended youth not to rush for university degree for the sake of it alone; something sure to get higher education institutions burdened with unemployable youth without purpose on one side and set vocational institutions underpopulated on the other. Instead, he called for delinking degrees from job prospects; thereby getting education goal-oriented. After NPE 1986, engineer was expected to learn engine in vivid details- along with composition and function- followed by capacity to run and repair the same:[33]

> Being aware of the importance and need for diversification of secondary education- its vocationalisation, the Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India and NCERT have initiated many actions and made many proposals. Evaluation studies of vocational programmes in most of the States were conducted to provide the findings to the States for improving implementation.

In a way or other, the author finds reflection of the livelihood concern of NPE 1986 vis-a-vis vocationalization in the NEP 2020 while the latter places priority upon the organic growth of vocational education including the clarion call for mainstreaming vocational education system, followed by the formal commitment to constitute National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE)[34] in collaboration with industry to oversee this effort; thereby ascertain mass employment:[35]

> Vocational education is perceived to be inferior to mainstream education and meant largely for students who are unable to cope with the latter. This is a perception that

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[33] *Ibid.*

[34] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (2020), para. 16.6, 44, https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf.

[35] *Id.* at para. 16.3.

affects the choices students make. It is a serious concern that can only be dealt with by a complete re-imagination of how vocational education is offered to students in the future.

Year	Literacy Rate			
	Total	Male	Female	Differential
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.95	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	65.38	75.85	54.16	21.69
Comparison of male and female literacy rates since 1951				

Each in the series of education policy documents- reports on Education and National Development 1968 to National Policy on Education 1986 to National Education Policy 2020- resembles a block for progressive human resource development from the postcolonial to the neoliberal India with the passage of time; thereby orchestrated by the symphony of aspiration floated by a fifth the present global population since its decolonization.

So far as comparative study of the consecutive education policy periods is concerned, public record cited above speaks for itself; including the rise in proportional sex ratio.[36] The range of census records from 1951 to 2011, taken together, the literacy rate in India has galloped from 18.33 to 74.04 in sixty years.[37] In other words, one in every five was literate then while three in every four are literate now; a spectacular speed, indeed. More spectacular is the growth of literacy in India from 5.4 in 1901 to 74.04 in 2011. By and large, one in every twenty then turned to fifteen in every twenty now.

[36] Ministry of HRD, Government of India, (Sep. 6, 2003), https://archive.pib.gov.in/archive/releases98/lyr2003/rsep2003/06092003/r060920031.html.

[37] LITERACY RATE OF INDIA CENSUS OF INDIA (2021), https://censusofindia2021.com/literacy-rate-of-india-2021/#:~:text=Literacy%20rate%20of%20India%202021%20is%2074.04%25,65.46%25%20acc ording%20to%20Census%202021.

Whether or how far literacy reflects education poses a point apart; another moot point vis-à-vis knowledge polemics and to be inquired elsewhere.

The three-language policy directive of the education regime attracted public attention since its inception; more so in the non-Hindi states, also, in four South-Indian states; somewhat political than essential. Here lies the commonality between two documents; something inevitable to the regime while policymaking for a multilingual Republic:[38]

> It is clear in the policy directive that Hindi, as the designated lingua franca of the country, should become the primary mode of instruction and that the use of Hindi should be encouraged across the nation at all levels of education. What is not clear is why English is included in the three-language recommendation when the supposed eventual goal is of building a unified Hindi speaking nation. In addition, designating Hindi as the national language does not come bereft of political baggage. Of the 28 states and 7 Union Territories, residents in 4 states have been traditionally speaking Hindi. Therefore, mandating that educational institutions, especially universities, use Hindi as their medium of instruction, places a lot of people at a disadvantage, both in terms of skill and comfort level with language as well as inducing a feeling of cultural disenfranchisement.

At bottom, "making the system work" was a major challenge before Shri Rajiv Gandhi; followed by the policy directive, "All teachers should teach and all students should study."[39] The policy consisted of (a) teachers' accountability, (b) learners' responsibility,

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[38] Pratima Dutta, THE INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM, KOTHARI COMMISSION 1964, AND THE NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION 1968—A HISTORICAL EVALUATION 18 (2008), http://jacobenfield.com/dossier/IndianEducationSystem_HystoricalAnalysis_Dutta_Barry_Bull.pdf.

[39] *Supra* Note 25 at para. 7.2, p. 20.

(c) institutional facility, and (d) performance appraisal,[40] toward making the system work for national development.

(2) 1992: First Addendum to New Policy

After Shri Rajiv Gandhi, as per policy directive for five-yearly review, Shri Narasimha Rao intended to carry forward the policy regime. The five-yearly review report, known as National Programme of Action 1992 was tabled in the Parliament and was adopted. In continuation with NPE 1986, the following areas received priority for NPA 1992:[41] education for women's equality, education of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward sections, minorities' education, education of the handicapped, adult and continuing education, early childhood care and education, elementary education, secondary education, Navodaya Vidyalaya, vocational education, higher education, open education, delinking degrees from jobs and manpower planning, rural universities and institutes, technical and management education, research and development, the cultural perspective, development of languages, media and educational technology, sports, physical education and youth, evaluation process and examination reforms, teachers and their training, management of education, and so on. Accordingly, with policy intent to get education decentralized by NPA 1992, Entry 13, several entries were inserted to two new schedules (XI and XII) by amendments to the Constitution.[42] So far as jurisdiction of subject is concerned, what went initiated with commencement of the Constitution of India turned a full circle. In the original Constitution, education belonged to list II (State List). With its forty-second amendment, subjected to strong centripetal politics, education was taken to List III (Concurrent List); with hierarchy of the Union over

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[40] *Id.* at para. 7.3.

[41] Department of Education, Government of India, PROGRAMME OF ACTION (1992), https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/POA_1992.pdf.

[42] INDIA CONST. 11th Schedule, Entries 17-19 (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992 and INDIA CONST. 12th Schedule, Entry 13 (Seventy-fourth Amendment) Act, 1992.

and above the State(s). With its seventy-third amendment, education was placed in the Eleventh Schedule. List III, however, retained education as it was placed in 1976. Since the panchayat maintains governance at the grassroots, it is entrusted with executive functions; as listed by Eleventh Schedule to the Constitution. Therefore, devoid of plenary powers vis-à-vis legislation and adjudication, the panchayat was meant to ascertain standards of school education; set by Entry 25 of List III. Consequently, the seventy-third amendment continued the status *quo*; functional since 1976.

Last yet not least, one common entrance examination was envisaged across the country to secure due standard for professional education and technical education respectively. Accordingly, entrance examinations were introduced in engineering and polytechnic; subsequently, in management, medical, and legal education as well.

(3) 2002: Constitutional Amendments

After a decade, in a major constitutional development, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee inserted a fundamental right to the Constitution to provide free and compulsory education to a child of the age of six to fourteen years.[43] Besides, another directive principle of state policy was inserted to drive the State to endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.[44] Besides, he put a parent to a juridical obligation toward performance of fundamental duty to provide opportunities for education of a child or ward between the age of six and fourteen years.[45] Taken together, amendments to the Constitution with specific focus crafted a comprehensive scheme vis-à-vis education as a priority under the Constitution- thereby subject to another fundamental right, state policy, and fundamental duty respectively. In minute scrutiny, veteran readership ought to read fundamental right to education as

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[43] INDIA CONST. sec. 2 (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002,
https://legislative.gov.in/constitution-eighty-sixth-amendment-act-2002.

[44] *Id.* at sec. 3.

[45] *Id.* at sec. 4.

"compulsory"; something similar to duty-in-disguise for all sundry learners. Likewise, state policy resembles an implicit duty for the State. Last yet not least, the fundamental duty of parents speaks for itself. The contribution of Shri Vajpayee is put to oblivion with little mention- if at all- in mundane textbooks while the same left a far-reaching impact upon knowledge governance of the Republic.

(4) 2005: Second Addendum to New Policy

In the last and final innings of the NPE 1986 policy period, 2005 onward, the central focus was curriculum for those getting schooled across the country. The software of formal public education was taken into count, to sync hitherto school education to the global standards; thereby coping with liberalization-privatization-globalization on the rise. At the same time, due diligence was taken not to delink school education with the default regional character of India. National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF) was meant to serve the given purpose:[46]

> There is much analysis and a lot of advice. All this is accompanied by frequent reminders that specificities matter, that the mother tongue is a critical conduit, that social, economic and ethnic backgrounds are important for enabling children to construct their own knowledge. Media and educational technologies are recognised as significant, but the teacher remains central. Diversities are emphasised but never viewed as problems. There is a continuing recognition that societal learning is an asset and that the formal curriculum will be greatly enriched by integrating with that. There is a celebration of plurality and an understanding that within a broad framework plural approach would lead to enhanced creativity.

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[46] Yash Pal, FOREWORD TO NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK iii. NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & TRAINING (2005), https://www.ncert.nic.in/pdf/nc-framework/nf2005-english.pdf.

Besides three amendments to the Constitution, Shri Vajpayee initiated contemplation on curriculum; something matured while Dr. Manmohan Singh became Prime Minister. The Steering Committee, with Professor Yash Pal as Chairman, did domain-specific scrutiny of curricula vis-à-vis major disciplines, e.g., language, mathematics, science, social sciences, work, art, peace, health and physical education, habitat and learning, and the like; thereby recommended significant changes to keep pace with the world:[47]

> Significant changes are recommended with a view to making education more relevant to the present day and future needs, and in order to alleviate the stress with which children are coping today. This NCF recommends the softening of subject boundaries so that children can get a taste of integrated knowledge and the joy of understanding. In addition, plurality of textbooks and other material, which could incorporate local knowledge and traditional skills, and a stimulating school environment that responds to the child's home and community environment, are also suggested. ... Reading and writing, listening and speech, contribute to the child's progress in all curricular areas and must be the basis for curriculum planning. Emphasis on reading throughout the primary classes is necessary to give every child a solid foundation for school learning.

A social transformation to the credit of Dr. Singh was National Policy on Information and Communication Technology in School Education; since 2012. Lineage of the NPE of 1986 thereby went acknowledged with due emphasis upon educational technology;

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[47] EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK ix. NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & TRAINING (2005), https://www.ncert.nic.in/pdf/nc-framework/nf2005-english.pdf.

followed by other documents with emphasis upon ICT. To quote from its Preamble:[48]

> The National Policy on Education 1986, as modified in 1992, stressed the need to employ educational technology to improve the quality of education. The policy statement led to two major centrally sponsored schemes, namely, Educational Technology (ET) and Computer Literacy and Studies in Schools (CLASS) paving the way for a more comprehensive centrally sponsored scheme – Information and Communication Technology @ Schools in 2004. Educational technology also found a significant place in another scheme on upgradation of science education. The significant role ICT can play in school education has also been highlighted in the National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF) 2005.

After the policy goals, ICT Policy in School Education will endeavour to create- among others- an environment to develop a community knowledge about ICT, to promote open and free access to a state-of-the-art ICT and ICT enabled tools and resources to all students and teachers, motivate and enable wider participation of all sections of society in strengthening the school education process through appropriate utilization of ICT.[49] With lived experience of two-decade since New Economic Policy 1991, the ICT Policy in School Education was initiated to bring in another social transformation by the pupil (next-generation people) of India during so-called 'tryst with destiny' in time ahead. The ICT Policy 2012 went comprehensive in its coverage of the schooling lifeworld:[50] ICT in school education, ICT for school management, ICT infrastructure,

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[48] Department of School Education and Literacy Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL POLICY ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN SCHOOL EDUCATION Para 1, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (2012), https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/revised_policy%20document%20ofICT.pdf.

[49] *Ibid.*, Policy Goals.

[50] *Id.*, Chapters 4-11.

digital resources, capacity building, implementing and managing the policy, financing and sustainability, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

Consequently, the youth proved worthy enough to cope with contemporary challenges of the digital lifeworld with better ease; more so under the ICT Policy 2012. Also, ICT services get exported with steady income-generation for the youth in foreign currency; something lubricated by means of the cross-border supply of technical services abroad under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Thus, populist perception vis-à-vis adversity of the GATT-WTO regime upon India proved falsified.

III. From Kothari to Kasturirangan

Unlike commonplace cynicism, NEP 2020 is no replacement for earlier regimes, e.g., 1968 and 1986. In other words, Kasturirangan did not intend to set aside either Kothari or his successors anyway. On the contrary, the series of national educational thoughts shares discursive synergy in its sequence. Whatever departure took place from Kothari to Shri Gandhi to Shri Vajpayee to Kasturirangan did to get the educational regime customized to fast-changing time; thereby keep pace with the Republic engaged in its 'tryst with destiny'- from the postcolonial to the neoliberal- from political freedom to economic freedom of the people. Let us look at the respective rhetoric of 1968 and 2020 in retrospect.

As per Daulat Singh Kothari:[51]
The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms. This, we believe, is no more rhetoric. In a world based on science and technology, it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people. On the quality and number of persons coming out of our schools and colleges will depend our success in the great enterprise

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[51] *Supra* Note 19 at p. 1.

of national reconstruction whose principal objective is to raise the standard of living of our people.

As per Krishnaswami Kasturirangan:[52]
Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation. Universal high-quality education is the best way forward for developing and maximizing our country's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the society, the country, and the world. India will have the highest population of young people in the world over the next decade, and our ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them will determine the future of our country.

Besides gross similarity in their respective vision statements, there lies another similarity in the systemic choice of these two scientists as chairmen of two educational policy documents adopted in 1968 and 2020 respectively. Both placed emphasis on science education. Also, both were engaged in the pursuit of purposive pedagogy toward national development in their respective times.

As per Daulat Singh Kothari:[53]
If the pace of national development is to be accelerated, there is a need for well-defined, bold and imaginative educational policy and for determined and vigorous action to vitalize, improve and expand education.

As per Krishnaswami Kasturirangan:[54]

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[52] *Supra* Note 32 at p. 3.
[53] *Supra* Note 19 at p. 1.

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development.

Shri Rajiv Gandhi bridged these two otherwise poles-apart trajectories of Kothari and Kasturirangan; thereby ascertained seamless spell for a fifth of the global population getting educated, enabled, empowered and worthy enough to engage skilled workforce for national development. The baton of education was shifted from one to another, e.g., from Radhakrishnan to Mudaliar, to Kothari, to Shri Rajiv Gandhi, to Shri Rao, to Dr. Singh, to Kasturirangan, so far. Besides, Shri Vajpayee added juridical value to this series with engagement of his constitutional discourse into the given educational policy regime. Taken together, the policy regime went by and large uninterrupted irrespective of shift in the national leadership throughout seven decades; albeit, politicized pinnacles apart, something limited to the purposive pedagogy of social science discipline. For instance, the role of Indian National Congress and its liberal leadership in colonial India received primacy in the centrist regime while the role of regional cultural genre in ancient India received primacy in the rightist regime. Both observed stoic silence upon potential of the narratives competing and- at times- conflicting with narrative dominant out of political patronage from the ruling regime. Purposive pedagogy for reading social science discipline apart, successive governments- run by all sundry political outfits- went responsible enough to follow and carry forward the original legacy of the education policy regime with an agenda to get their countrymen educated for national development.

The continuity of policy regime- from Kothari to Shri Rajiv Gandhi to Kasturirangan- may be proved by plenty of matters; subjected to evolution with the passage of time. For instance, Kothari put emphasis upon enrolment in school education. Subsequently, besides enrolment, Shri Gandhi added emphasis upon the dropout

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[54] *Supra* Note 32 at p. 3.

as a corollary matter not to let those enrolled get lost. Kothari insisted upon the need for teacher education while Shri Gandhi implemented the same in letter and spirit. Teacher education was undertaken in all sundry spheres of education: school education, higher education, and technical education. Besides, the National Council for Teacher Education Act of 1993 turned the National Council for Teacher Education, established in 1973 as an advisory body, to a statutory institution afterwards; during the tenure of Shri Rao.

Kasturirangan followed the legacy of Shri Rajiv Gandhi vis-à-vis early childhood care and education, vocationalization of education, educational technology, and the like; getting them subjected to sync to liberalization-privatization-globalization on the rise. Earlier limited to schemes with state-patronage, early childhood care and education has turned institutionalized with minute policy directives on the pedagogy in its nitty-gritty. Kasturirangan continued emphasis upon vocational education with a policy statement against commonplace misperception about vocational education as inferior to regular higher education. Last yet not least, Kasturirangan continued earlier legacy vis-à-vis educational technology, once initiated by Shri Rajiv Gandhi since 1986 and recalibrated by Dr. Singh since 2012; thereby maintained synergy irrespective of subsequent shift in the seat of power. Taken together, the great grandeur to get the Republic educated is by all sundry governments with default patriotic pledge for national development; irrespective of partisan rivalry on ideology.

IV. Administrative Policy Advocacy

More than intellectual maturity of the political leadership in successive governments, reasoning behind the seamless stream of the policy regime also lies in systemic maturity of the polity. With so-called 'transfer of power' to India in technical sense of the term,[55]

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[55] V. P. Menon, THE TRANSFER OF POWER IN INDIA Preface 1, Orient Longmans, Bombay, (1957) INDIAN CULTURE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

with the legacy of liberal democratic governance, India underwent evolution; more than revolution through sudden topsy-turvy at once. Indeed, transfer of power took place in favour of native political leadership to attain sovereignty. Thus, two powerhouses- legislature and executive- went reconstituted in India; with immediate effect. Albeit, with reformed character of liberal democratic governance, other powerhouses retained their respective institutional legacy while getting merged to India. For instance, the Indian armed forces went divided between two new Dominions (India and Pakistan) without radical transformation vis-à-vis the institutional character of the forces.[56] Chief Justice Kania and other judges from the Federal Court graced the coveted bench in the Supreme Court.[57] Likewise, Imperial Civil Service cadre in British India continued their respective seats as Indian Administrative Service cadre after independence.[58] A bureaucratic discourse vis-à-vis public policy regime thereby

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https://indianculture.gov.in/ebooks/transfer-power-india:
My story starts with the outbreak of World War II in September 1939. I chose this date because, with the outbreak of the war, the world as we knew it came to an end and an entirely new situation was created. From this date up to the transfer of power on 15 August 1947, I have given a detailed narration of events as I witnessed them. In one capacity or other, from 1917, I was continuously associated with the constitutional developments in India. From 1942, till the transfer of power (sic.) in August 1947, I was the Constitutional Adviser to the Governor-General.

[56] Indian Independence Act, 1947 (enacted by the British legislature) Sec. 11. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1947/30/pdfs/ukpga_19470030_en.pdf.

[57] SUPREME COURT OF INDIA https://main.sci.gov.in/history:
The inaugural proceedings (of the Supreme Court) were simple but impressive. They began at 9.45 a.m. when Judges of the Federal Court - Chief Justice Harilal J.Kania and Justices Saiyid Fazl Ali, M. Patanjali Sastri, Mehr Chand Mahajan, Bijan Kumar Mukherjea and S.R.Das - took their seats.
Taking care to ensure that the Rules of the Supreme Court were published and the names of all the Advocates and agents of the Federal Court were brought on the rolls of the Supreme Court, the inaugural proceedings were over and put under part of the record of the Supreme Court.

[58] UNION PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION on the Historical Perspective of the Institution https://www.upsc.gov.in/sites/default/files/History%20of%20the%20Commission %20final%20%281%29_0.pdf:
With the inauguration of the Constitution of India in January 26, 1950, the Federal Public Service Commission came to be known as the Union Public Service Commission, and the Chairman and Members of the Federal Public Service Commission became Chairman and Members of the Union Public Service Commission by virtue of Clause (1) of Article 378 of the Constitution.

percolated from British India to the Republic with emphasis upon impersonal relations between all successive partisan governments irrespective of ideologue polemics; so far as apolitical policy directives are concerned. Here lies the genesis of consistency in the policy regime irrespective of rise and fall of governments; run by poles-apart partisan politics one after another.

The radical experimentation, therefore, went limited to the pedagogy of social science discipline, History of India in particular; as and whenever poles-apart partisan politics took over the seat of power. While the centrist politics highlighted anticolonial legacy in British India, in recent times, the rightist politics glorified spiritual legacy in India since ancient antiquity. Thus, political rhetoric went engaged to reap electoral harvest since the inception of the Republic. Consequently, electoral verdict in a liberal democracy with majority of the electorate devoid of education- even literacy- after independence, electoral waves went played out by partisan politics of umpteen variety like pendulum of traditional timekeeper; thereby swapped from one polar position to another while the balance of public good got lost somewhere in between; something went unnoticed in quest of policy choice. The apolitical subjects of formal public education, however, received handhold by all. The institution of education with all sundry denominations, therefore, remained hardly affected by the political topsy-turvy out of paradigm shift. Also, successive governments recharged the policy regime with proactive patronage irrespective of politics. For instance, Kothari suggested more public investment on education; something remained ignored, yet, reiterated by Kasturirangan once again:[59]

> Unfortunately, public expenditure on education in India has not come close to the recommended level of 6% of GDP, as envisaged by the 1968 Policy, reiterated in the Policy of 1986, and which was further reaffirmed in the 1992 review of the Policy.

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[59] *Supra* Note 32 at para. 26.1-26.2.

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In order to attain the goal of education with excellence and the corresponding multitude of benefits to this Nation and its economy, this Policy unequivocally endorses and envisions substantial increase in public investment in education by both the Central government and all State Governments. The Centre and the States will work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest.

The seamless continuity of education policy has had its genesis to the Weberian model of bureaucracy; experimented in British India. As mentioned meanwhile, mainstream political powerhouses- e.g., legislature and executive- apart, the institutional character remained similar for others, e.g., judiciary, armed forces, civil services, to name a few among them. In particular, civil services run by the rational discourse of Max Weber reigned India till date in its tryst with destiny vis-à-vis public education; irrespective of successive governments with respective politics of their own. The credit, therefore, is due to prudence in administrative institutions run by the permanent service cadre; more than prudence in successive governments, run by poles-apart partisan polemics. Not without reason that successive governments did carry forward the education policy regime after getting the same updated; thereby customized to the fast-changing world. Consequently, the policy regime suffered no radical rupture till date despite poles-apart politics of successive governments. From Kothari to Shri Rajiv Gandhi to Shri Rao to Dr. Manmohan Singh to Kasturirangan; all rushed to reach the same teleological end: national development. The end remaining constant, the means cannot afford to shoot through the threshold of reforms; something taken axiomatic till date.

Here lies a potential policy paradox vis-à-vis education in time ahead. The government has had the following policy options: (i) Max Weber theory, (ii) post-Weber theory, and (iii) New Public Management; each policy option is a public choice and, therefore,

pregnant with prudence of its own. While the first option adheres to *status-quoist* reform, the next two but resort to reformism and radicalism with their respective means and methods. Thus, post-Weberian prefers reform to keep pace with the fast-changing world while New Public Managers prefer to act radical since they belong to neoliberal discourse in the political economy of public administration; followed by the discursive conviction that New Public Management is better applicable to contemporary administrative praxis; customized to neoliberal political economy.

A. Max Weber Management

The education policy regime in India follows Max Weber school of thought; continuity of the policy directives in particular. The bureaucracy- as conceived by Max Weber-facilitates transparency of the policy regime toward optimal fairness and predictability of the policy; something insignia of public good with better administrative governance of education as a legislative subject in time ahead. The adherence to education policy went instrumental to the social transformation of India from postcolonial to neoliberal. The Continuity of University Grants Commission as a regulatory institution to govern higher education institutions since 1956 is a classic illustration of systemic adherence to Max Weber. Another illustration lies in the establishment of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council in 1994 and gradual blossoming of the institution to fruition nowadays, despite a paradigm shift in the partisan politics of successive governments, since the permanent cadre in bureaucracy pushed the policy regime ahead.

B. Post-Weber Management

The post-Weberian school did not contest Max Weber with eye-connect; yet prefers radical shift of the given policy directives from one position to other on the basis of its discursive premises that-irrespective of its given potential, public policy ought to get subjected to time and space. In its corollary proposition, post-Weber school

prefers shift- even radical shift- in policy; if required by circumstance. Accordingly, after the paradigm shift from postcolonial to neoliberal, post-Weber School ought to reboot the policy regime to relevance. The policy shift from Kothari to Kasturirangan has had the insignia of a post-Weber administrative praxis.

C. New Public Management (NPM)

The NPM School shares the epistemology of neoliberalism, followed by its application upon the public administrative machinery. Unlike post-Weber theory, the NPM school is committed to discursive conviction of its own and engages contestation with Weber as and whenever required. The NPM claims neoliberalism as the best applicable genre of public administration in the given age of liberalization-privatization-globalization; thereby extends policy advocacy to turn all institutions- higher education institutions in particular- self-dependent vis-à-vis revenue generation. Albeit, in circuitous routes, the NPM intends to engage accountability for those run by means of public investment. The sync between National Institute Ranking Framework and release of financial grants to higher education institutions is a classic scheme to cite the systemic design behind. Indeed, justified on the count of austerity, neoliberal embargo vis-à-vis liberal usage of public investment paves the way for privatization of public education; something instrumental to the import agenda of minimal state; devoid of obligation for public good. Consequently, more than entitlement; public education is getting reduced to another service, with access to education getting subjected to systemic subversion from within. A paradigm shift appears on its rise around toward the withdrawal of state patronage from school education and the proliferation of private investment in school education; something sufficient to place the cart before the horse. Also, at times, the state succumbs to the compelling situation and withdraws state enterprise in the wake of public choice vis-à-vis private enterprise in school education.[60] After the lived experience in

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[60] Bikash Singh, ET (ECONOMIC TIMES) BUREAU (Apr. 16, 2022)

Assam, neoliberalism is blessed with the tailwind of liberal trajectory vis-à-vis public choice of private enterprise- despite omnipresence of public enterprise with state patronage- in school education. The fact-fortified with figures- unfolds the lesson of life, stranger than fiction, that liberal end of public good is set aside by liberal means of public choice; something similar to self-incrimination by liberalism, of liberalism and for liberalism; a discursive gap in an otherwise unproblematic trope of liberalism. The official record speaks on its own with the gross enrolment rate of primary education.[61] Gender disparity constitutes another challenge; something apparent in the same official record between all public and private schools.[62] The survey reflects gender discrimination in disguise- with proactive patronage for male children getting enrolled to private schools while female children to government schools- after the public perception that private schools impart better education; compared to state-sponsored schools. Thus, piecemeal patronage to women's education by parents themselves is reflected by gross enrolment rate (GER); something integrated to the common consciousness by default.

The genre of globalization and patriarchy- taken together- captured public reasoning in its captivity; too much for the common consumers to arrive at an independent choice with due diligence

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https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/if-the-current-drop-in-enrollment-continues-government-schools-will-soon-be-empty-says-assam-cm/articleshow/90873751.cms?from=mdr:
Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday (April 15, 2022) said that if the present rate of drop in enrolment in government schools continues there will be hardly any student in government run schools in next 10 years and teachers will have to take voluntary retirement.

[61] Statistics Division, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of HRD, Government of India, EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS AT A GLANCE Table 29: Gross Enrolment Rate (GER), 28 (2018)
https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/ESAG-2018.pdf

[62] *Id*. at p. ii.:
In most of the Indian States, Girls' enrolment is higher than that of boys in Government schools but the pattern gets reversed in Private schools; thus, parents seem to have a preference for Private schools to educate their sons which reflects a broader sort of inequality.

toward their own good. With the discursive Decalogue of liberalism, however, the author ought to appear cynic since the public is perceived by liberalism as omniscient- blessed with due diligence- and, therefore, can never be fooled anyway. With democratic dissidence, the author hereby avails cue to unfold a dialogic vacuum- if not void- that liberal construction of the public as omniscient and diligent by default is but devoid of empirical evidence. Classic cases of governance failure in recent times are plenty, e.g., Venezuela, Greece, Sri Lanka, etc., to name a few among them, and all suffered setbacks by means of rational public choice. Economic policy apart, education and health may and do play havoc to governance. With a fifth of the global population, India ought to act prudent in pursuit of knowledge governance; thereby carry forward economic development. More than cutting-edge knowledge of a Nobel laureate or two, what does matter is skilled workforce to fast-forward the production manifold toward economic development. No wonder that vocationalization of public education has had priority since long back. From Shri Rajiv Gandhi to Kasturirangan, the policy regime is consistent to bring in social transformation through policy directives of the regime- devoid of partisan politics- to boost vocational education, thereby produce workforce (read skilled labour); something non-negotiable to ascertain delivery of quality goods, services and intellectual property to reign the competitive international trade market. The reference of GATT-WTO is relevant since the education industry is scheduled to get invaded by giant foreign brands after compliance of India to the GATS regime. Since these foreign players follow the NPM discourse, prudent policy choice with its agenda of inclusive education lies elsewhere.

In the wake of globalization, classical Weberian praxis fell short to serve the purpose. More than the Weberian praxis, work-ethic of the bureaucratic service cadre at large- exceptions apart- set aside potential from within the system, with no fault of Weber; the way Soviet Union succumbed to its own systemic fallacy; with no fault of Marx. At the other end, ideologue apart, cynicism appears on its rise in India against NPM since foreign players are way ahead with

neoliberal enterprise with lived experience while domestic players ought to take time to be competitive with such foreign discourse. With the given regional reality, compared to NPM, post-Weberian administrative praxis has had potential to push for a sustainable policy regime in time ahead since the praxis is endowed with prudence to respond to the fast-changing lifeworld of public education in India. With welfare politics and transition economics in its background, what India deserves is *sui generis* policy advocacy to fit into the knowledge governance agenda of its own. Here lies the reasoning behind the Education Policy of 2020; something to reflect a newer India on its rise since Economic Policy of 1991. No wonder that Kasturirangan reiterated the basic advisory of Kothari to increase public investment for education;[63] something antithetical to NPM since neoliberalism pleads for a minimal state; limited to the sovereign domains, e.g., defence, justice, police, legislation, etc.

Last yet not least, the education policy regime in India engages a case-sensitive approach vis-à-vis choice of schools since long back and the same appears on its rise. For instance, so far as higher education is concerned, National education Policy 2020 is by and large inclined to the NPM school while the same policy is inclined to post-Weberian praxis; so far as school education and ICT education is concerned. Also, the same regime is prone toward the public welfare policy, so far as early childhood care and education, primary education and vocational education are concerned. National Education Policy 2020, therefore, may be characterized by no particular school in exclusion of all others since the regime resorts to diverse schools; whatever suits to knowledge governance to serve the teleological end of utilitarian praxis, i.e., '*happiness of the community*':[64]

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[63] *Supra* Note 32.

[64] Jeremy Bentham, AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS AND LEGISLATION, Batoche Books, Kitchener 225 (2000), https://historyofeconomicthought.mcmaster.ca/bentham/morals.pdf.

Ethics at large may be defined, the art of directing men's actions to the production of the greatest possible quantity of happiness, on the part of those whose interest is in view.

The policy regime engages modern public education toward gross development product and, encourages the indigenous knowledge system toward 'gross national happiness',[65] for merger of the West and the East, thereby bridge the given breach; the way ancient peace prayer in India proceeded with enlightened knowledge towards perpetual peace:[66]

> Unto the Heaven be Peace
> Unto the Sky and the Earth be Peace
> Peace be unto the Water
> Unto the Herbs and Trees be Peace
> Unto all the Crops be Peace
> Unto Brahma and unto all be Peace
> And may we realize that Peace
> Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

Back to education policy advocacy, from the preceding paragraphs, the author strived to disprove the given folklore that, with earlier shift from liberal to neoliberal economy in 1991, education policy underwent paradigm shift- from Max Weber to Mrs. Thatcher- with National Education Policy in 2020. From Kothari to Kasturirangan, India engaged its experiment in quest of a purposive pedagogy to get a fifth of the global population educated; thereby carry forward the pursuit for national development in time ahead. With the passage of time, the neoliberal India was in need of newer policy directives. A newer education policy was adopted to phase-out

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[65] UN Sustainable Development Goals: knowledge platform. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=99&nr=266&menu=1449#:~:text=The%20Gross%20National%20Happiness%20Index,as%20the%20Alkire%2DFoster%20method.

[66] Recitation of lyrics from *the Yajur-Veda*, by courtesy, the White House Washington, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ozL3i2X-UU.

the postcolonial policy directives, whatever went backdated; not to junk the policy literature in its entirety. To be candid, new policy of 2020 is meant to carry forward national development through evolution- addition, alteration, and the like- upon hitherto regime, thereby get the same updated to keep pace with breakneck speed of the fast-changing time in the globalized world; not to bring in revolution by radical replacement of the prior policy despite topsy-turvy with political leadership of the government; something commonplace in the Republic. Transfer of power in the government cannot change the systemic character of the statecraft, thus spoke Shri Vajpayee.[67] The given legacy is on with continuity of similar policy directives; irrespective of otherwise poles-apart political affiliation.

V. In Lieu of Conclusion: Tryst with Education

Since its inception, by courtesy partisan politics, education policy of 2020 attracted public attention; fomented by the following caustic claims labelled against the policy: (i) it is meant to succumb to the international trade regime in general and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) in particular;[68] (ii) it is meant to minimize institutional autonomy, of higher education institutions in particular. (iii) it is meant to bring in crude political socialization (read saffronization) of social studies discipline in time ahead; Let us unfold the contents within these otherwise discontent claims; thereby explore whether and how far they hold truth.

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[67] Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Lok Sabha Debates, Discussion under Rule 193, 290 (Dec. 19, 2001), https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/809415/1/pms_13_08_19-12-2001.pdf: India is a democratic nation. Ours is a multi-party democracy. ... The entire world, all the countries are looking towards us. Party politics will continue as it has its own place, but this country has a special characteristic that at the time of crisis, the entire country unites leaving behind all differences and faces the challenge unitedly.

[68] Communication from India to Special Session of Council for Trade in Services, (Nov. 24, 2000), https://commerce.gov.in/international-trade/india-and-world-trade-organization-wto/indias-gats-schedule-for-commitments-and-offers/special-sessions/council-for-trade-in-services-special-session-communication-from-india-proposed-liberalisation-of-movement-of-professionals-under-general-agreement-on-trade-in-services-gats/.

A caveat- followed by disclaimer- is laid down to safeguard the term, 'saffronization', an oft-quoted rhetoric with reference to right-wing politics in India. For the purpose of this piece, the author took the buzzword out of politics and landed it to academics; thereby refers to public investment to reinvent the oriental knowledge system since rhetoric of saffron with reference to ancient India is commonplace. Thus, saffronization refers to cultural socialization of the posterity with the Orientalist knowledge system by means of public education; with no necessary innuendo to partisan politics anyway. Similar rationale lies behind usage of saffron at the top band of tricolour national flag:[69]

> In the national flag of India, the top band is of saffron colour, indicating the strength and courage of the country.

Thus, so-called saffronization is a cultural struggle for public investment to encourage indigenous knowledge system. In its essence, the Orientalist movement was a response to the Anglicist movement for public investment to initiate another knowledge system foreign to the subcontinent, experimented in the early-nineteenth century and, therefore, devoid of discursive connectivity to the right-wing political struggle in recent times; albeit, incidental merger of mutual interests apart.

At the very threshold, a disclaimer is extended- with caveat in advance- that the author has had no political agenda either way; to credit or to discredit the given policy regime. All three claims showcase half-truth with the rest undercover. First, education policy of 2020 is meant for compliance to international trade regime; and, to the GATS in particular:[70]

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[69] KNOW INDIA: HISTORY OF INDIAN TRICOLOR
https://knowindia.india.gov.in/my-india-my-pride/indian-tricolor.php#:~:text=In%20the%20national%20flag%20of,and%20auspiciousness%20of%20the%20land.

[70] *Supra* Note 32 at para. 12.8.

An International Students Office at each HEI hosting foreign students will be set up to coordinate all matters relating to welcoming and supporting students arriving from abroad. Research/teaching collaborations and faculty/student exchanges with high-quality foreign institutions will be facilitated, and relevant mutually beneficial MOUs with foreign countries will be signed. High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and similarly, selected universities e.g., those from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India.

Accordingly, concern about the uncertain future of higher education is commonplace since compliance to GATS ought to expose higher education institutions to competition with the market-driven foreign institutions after public choice (read student choice). The given cynicism, however, reflects want of quality assurance in native institution:[71]

The higher education reform world over has been largely informed by the neoliberal logic of privatisation, university governance reform in line with the principles of new public management and construction of a quasi-market for higher education under the supervision of a regulatory authority with support from other institutions. Expanding the scope of students' choice of courses is the primary policy measure in the name of sovereignty, which will foster marketisation of higher education.

Besides the text of the policy, introspection appears imperative upon context of the policy. The compliance to GATS was scheduled since the accession of India to GATT in 1991; something

[71] Saumen Chattopadhyay, *National Education Policy 2020: An Uncertain Future for Indian Higher Education*, 55 (44) ECON. & POL. WKLY. 27 (Nov. 21, 2020) https://www.epw.in/journal/2020/46/commentary/national-education-policy-2020.html.

documented in the contemporary chronicles, yet remained beyond hindsight of the given policy advocacy. While the policy of 2020 is meant to ascertain compliance to GATS, the obligation was initiated by a different government in a difficult situation; with no fault of its own. The given innuendo- that education policy of 2020 is meant for compliance to GATS- is vitiated by half-truth; until read with the residual half that education policy of 2020 is meant to give effect of a legal obligation for the Republic to GATT-WTO regime upon gradual liberalization of the domestic market to services including education, health, and the like, to name few among them.

Second, the education policy of 2020 is meant to minimize institutional autonomy; of higher education institutions in particular; another half-truth apparent on the face of record. Since Kothari, institutional autonomy of higher education institutions has been subjected to short-circuit by two poles-apart trajectories from within the system. First, in the name of institutional autonomy, mediocrity became institutionalized through partisan recruitment, political regimentation, poor work ethic, pursuit of self-interest, to name a few among them, in academic and administrative sides alike. Second, under the disguise of institutional autonomy, radicalism became institutionalized through an anti-establishment political movement against the state; despite the same getting run by public investment. Efforts were initiated by the Government of India to check these evil practices. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established by Shri Rao in 1994 with intent to import more accountability in higher education institutions with an agenda to counter mediocrity. In recent times, efforts initiated by NAAC proved counterproductive for the Government since the same went interpreted as interference into institutional autonomy. Likewise, imposition of discipline in otherwise free-for-all (read unruly) premises of radicalized institutions received flak from self-proclaimed public intellectuals affiliated to left-wing politics; even if counterproductive to national interests of India. The cases of state intervention in radicalized institutions resemble the state intervention at Golden Temple in Amritsar; thereby getting the temple back to

normalcy during the 1980s. The sporadic cases of excess upon either side apart, the folklore of invasion upon institutional autonomy is charged with a default partisan endgame to push the ruling regime to embarrassment; thereby score political mileage for anti-establishment electoral politics in time ahead. The invasion upon autonomy, therefore, is pregnant with corollary chronicles behind.

The contemporary chronicles of India is ridden with left-wing radicalism, followed by state intervention to restore normalcy. The author, however, extends an advisory that state intervention ought to transcend ideologue bias; thereby discipline right-wing radicalism likewise. The civil society indulges in long meditation if right-wing radicalism suffers setback, but engages in long march if left-wing radicalism suffers. The civil society movement, therefore, lacks the locus to contest the statecraft on the count of integrity.

Third, political socialization through pedagogy of social studies discipline; something commonplace in the chronicles of civilization across the world since time immemorial. Before independence, state-sponsored textbooks glorified the empire. After independence, they were replaced by the leadership of Indian National Congress in the freedom struggle. In West Bengal, during the left-run regime, international left-wing leadership reigned. The rule of right-wing leadership in social science discipline, therefore, is anticipated by default. Whether and how far resort to public education for political socialization may be construed as fair use involves a larger policy paradox before knowledge governance. Intent behind the comparative approach is not validation of saffronization of education as commonplace praxis but reiteration of vacuum- if not void- in the policy regime; uncertain upon value judgment vis-à-vis political socialization. Socialization apart, saffronization of education has had a colonial history of its own.

The genesis of tension between retrospective education and prospective education may get traced back to the pedagogical polemics way back in the early-nineteenth century; with the Anglicist-

Orientalist controversy in the subcontinent. At one end, Macaulay-an Anglicist leader- insisted upon modern knowledge by means of English language:[72]

> We have to educate people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother-tongue. We must teach them foreign language (English). ... Whoever knows that language has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations. ... In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of natives at the seats of Government. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East.

Here lies pedagogical polemics among the Anglicist, the Orientalist and the Evangelist in the early-nineteenth century. The Anglicist school dominated the official policy regime in British India for public investment in public education by means of foreign language; thereby implanted English as *lingua franca* to connect those dissociated by language. By courtesy the minute (policy paper) of Macaulay, followed by the English Education Act of 1835, mother tongue of the colonizer remained engaged in schooling the colonized to bridge the breach between ruler and ruled in the South-Asian subcontinent since residents remained divided by linguistic barrier after respective regional divides; with little scope for communication:[73]

> Superficially, the Anglicist-Orientalist Controversy appears to have been about language, and that is the way historians usually treat it. But on closer examination it is apparent that the question was much larger: What was the correct education policy for the British Government to support in an

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[72] *Macaulay's Minute on Education*, (Feb. 2, 1835), https://home.iitk.ac.in/~hcverma/Article/Macaulay-Minutes.pdf.

[73] Natalie Robinson Sirkin & Gerald Sirkin, *The Battle of Indian Education: Macaulay's Opening Salvo Newly Discovered,* 14 (4) VICTORIAN STUD. 408 (JUN. 1971), https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3825959.pdf.

economically poor and culturally stagnant country like early nineteenth-century India? The Anglicists took the position that the first order of education business in India was, in today's terminology, to "modernize": to introduce Western subjects, Western knowledge, Western morals, and Western modes of thought, so as to raise the country from its backward economic, administrative, and social condition.

Subsequently, in the Despatch of 1854, Charles Wood earned credit in the chronicles afterwards, similar Anglicist politics upon spread of the modern (read the Western) knowledge system to educate natives of the subcontinent was reiterated:[74]

Among many subjects of importance, none can have a stronger claim to our attention than that of Education. It is one of our most sacred duties to be the means, as far as in us lies, of conferring upon the natives of India those vast moral and material blessings which flow from the general diffusion of useful knowledge, and which India may derive from her connection with England.

At reverse end, Wilson- the Orientalist scholar- fell short to advance strong arguendo, thereby engaging the Oriental *lingua franca*, e.g., Sanskrit, Arabic, etc.; despite the same remained by and large known to regional residents of the subcontinent. Consequently, the regional knowledge system went into oblivion; by courtesy, Anglicist experiment: The Orientalist school suffered setback with retrospective inertia to antiquity by default; also, at times, even if devoid of sense. The Anglicist school thereby gained its ground:[75]

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[74] Despatch to the Government of India, on the Subject of General Education in India, (1854), https://ia802806.us.archive.org/14/items/dli.csl.5554/5554.pdf.

[75] Syed Mahmood, *A History of English Education in India: Its Rise, Development, Progress, Present Condition and Prospects Being a Narrative of the Various Phases of Education Policy and Measures Adopted under the British Rule from Its Beginning to the Present Period*, Chapter XXXIV, 267 (1781-1893), https://www.rarebooksocietyofindia.org/book_archive/196174216674_10151623323601675.pdf.

> The five years between 1830 and 1835 form the most important period in the history of English education in India, how the views of Lord Macaulay in favour of English education, contained in his celebrated minute, dated the 2nd February 1835, and adopted by Lord William Bentinck in the Government Resolution dated the 7th March 1835, terminated the controversy between the Orientalists and the supporters of English education in favour of the latter, marking a distinct epoch in the annals of the British administration in India.

Back to the given context, more than populist politics, the contemporary saffronization agenda has had a long legacy and its genesis may get traced back to intellectual struggle between the Anglicist and the Orientalist. Despite dominance of the Anglicist school since the early-nineteenth century, dormant dissidence of the Orientalist school survived and resurfaced its worth with the rise of right-wing politics in India. Thus, so-called saffronization represents resurrection of the Orientalist school in contemporary times with the agenda to reinvent, after Basham, 'the wonder that was India'; thereby regain the knowledge system of ancient India, including traditional values as cultural heritage, for valuable lessons to be learnt. Neither the Orientalists did, nor could their contemporary successors indulge in, import of exclusive politics to junk Occidental knowledge system or replace the same with indigenous knowledge system anyway. The Orientalists resort to inclusive politics to ascertain availability of the Oriental knowledge system on the basis of public choice. Yoga, a spiritual-yet-secular healthcare system, may get cited to disprove pseudo-secular hypothesis on this count. The Orientalist regime has brought Yoga back to the public lifeworld with due emphasis; without imposition of the same upon those unwilling to prefer the healthcare system. Also, on the basis of nomination (No. 01163) from Republic of India, the *Yoga* tradition went inscribed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) upon the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity, in its eleventh session, Addis Ababa,

Ethiopia, 28 November to 2 December 2016;[76-77] something initiated by the Orientalist politics to get the *Yoga* tradition acknowledged by the global education agency concerned. Whether or how far one such global agency may be held politicized on the count of its recent endorsement of the *Yoga* tradition as intangible cultural heritage poses a moot point.

With anti-establishment realpolitik behind, a political culture is commonplace in the gentry, with the higher education institutions in particular, to sense foul play in every public policy formulated by the government; more so while right-wing regime reigns the seat of power. A response to crocodiles' cry against the policy advocacy vis-à-vis Oriental discourse is available well in the twentieth-century Occidental literature; where a Nobel Laureate lamented apocalyptic aftermath of the Occidental discourse in course of civilization:[78]

> Where is the Life we have lost in living?
> Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
> Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
> The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
> Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust.

And here lies potential of the Orientalist epistemology. The new policy of 2020 strives to run the Anglicist and the Orientalist parallel to one another without head-on collision between these two otherwise poles-apart trajectories of pedagogy with their respective origins in two hemispheres. At bottom, a teleological end of the policy regime lies in peaceful coexistence of respective knowledge systems in the East and the West, with mutual exchange; followed by open access on the basis of public choice for the system. For the first

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[76] SNAPSHOT INVENTORY RELATED TO YOGA https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/30622-EN.pdf.

[77] INSCRIPTION OF YOGA (INDIA) IN THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY IN 2016,
https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/yoga-01163#diaporama.

[78] T. S. Eliot, COLLECTED POEMS 1909-1962, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, 147 (1963).

time in hitherto chronicles of education, a pluralist policy went extended to the public at large with freedom of choice vis-à-vis knowledge systems available- both the Occidental and the Oriental- in pursuit of education; along with institutions, e.g., *pathshala, madrasa*, and school.

So far as the purpose of the state-sponsored knowledge governance in India is concerned, public debate- employment versus enlightenment- was on forever. Kothari could afford to remain non-judgmental since elementary education- including literacy- was put to priority for empowerment; something central to his focus in the given context of illiteracy in the then public lifeworld. Shri Rajiv Gandhi shifted the purpose of public education policy toward employment through vocationalization of education; something continued by the subsequent policy directives- issued by Shri Rao and Dr. Singh respectively- until the new policy of 2020; another paradigm shift from idealism to realism, from theory to practice, and the like. In final count, the teleological end of education is enlightenment. Such enlightenment is but subject to survival and, therefore, employment is held as the means to reach the desired end. Since 1986, therefore, employment has received priority in the education policy regime and the trend transcends the timeline of previous policy. Thus, employment remains a priority for the present policy since survival of learners in the default habitat of a fifth of the global population and in a land of the largest number of global poor, is non-negotiable for every sundry public policy. Since 1986, therefore, effort is on till date to get the immediate concern (read livelihood) extended- from employment- or occupation- in tertiary sector, meant for white-collar gentry, to self-dependent vocation, in primary sector and secondary sector, meant for blue-collar workforce, and the trend is on with vocationalization of public education through skill development, toward more production for the fast-developing economy of India; rather than rise of a scholar or two to reach the hypercompetitive edge of global standards. The present education policy advocacy is

anchored here.[79] At bottom, government owes the onus of feeding population and public education toward self-dependence of the population for survival appears axiomatic since the population at large no longer remain dependent upon state benevolence; albeit, cases of emergency apart, e.g., aged, ailed, and disabled, also, victims of disaster, or, individual misfortune, and the like.

The realist agenda for synergy of education and employment serves material instinct for survival. The idealist agenda for synergy of education and enlightenment but serves spiritual instinct since humanity is meant to transcend the everyday lifeworld by default. Enlightenment, however, remains the teleological end of better knowledge governance. In final count, enlightenment thereby remains the teleological end of knowledge governance. While public employment remains mainstream focus of the regime, the policy of 2020 engages avantgarde experiment with enlightenment as another policy option and leaves to public choice; at its least, in the domain of higher education. Accordingly, the Sanskrit knowledge system receives reiteration in public education. While school education constitutes a focus for socialization of the knowledge system, after relevant paragraph of the policy, proactive state patronage ought to get extended toward promotion of the knowledge system as a career option in the higher education institutions; the way Hindi language received official patronage with recruitment to the post of Hindi Officer in all sundry departments of the central government once upon a time:[80]

> *The importance, relevance, and beauty of classical languages and literature of India also cannot be overlooked. Sanskrit, while also an important modern language mentioned in Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, possesses a classical literature that is greater in volume than that of Latin and Greek put together, containing vast treasures of mathematics,*

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[79] *Supra* Note 1.
[80] *Supra* Note 32 at para. 4.17 p. 14.

philosophy, grammar, music, politics, medicine, architecture, metallurgy, drama, poetry, storytelling, and more (known as Sanskrit Knowledge System), written by people of various religions as well as non-religious people, and by people from all walks of life and a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds over thousands of years. Sanskrit will thus be offered at all levels of school and higher education as an important, enriching option for students, including as an option in the three-language formula.

While Hindi language received state patronage by means of poles-apart politics, and the patronage is on till date, patronage to the Sanskrit knowledge system is charged with the Orientalist discourse; once initiated way back in the early-nineteenth century and went to oblivion until resurfaced by the partisan politics in recent times. Therefore, more than so-called saffronization, the author finds the policy position as resurrection of the regional knowledge system on its rise in its own merit. Also, last yet not least, be the same a policy for state patronage to Hindi as the official language of India, or a policy for state patronage to Sanskrit as a cultural heritage of ancient Indian antiquity, both represent cases of departure from otherwise dominant pursuit of employment. Also, they reflect an otherwise dormant pursuit of enlightenment in the local knowledge system to transcend material instinct; thereby correspond to spiritual instinct as well. Also, with a similar line of thought, emphasis is put upon the vernacular as a medium of instruction; more so in the courses of elementary education. An aspiration to mainstream Indian languages in respective regions is apparent on the face of record:[81]

More HEIs shall be established and developed in underserved regions to ensure full access, equity, and inclusion. There shall, by 2030, be at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district. Steps shall be taken towards developing high-quality higher

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[81] *Supra* Note 32 at para. 10.8 p. 35.

education institutions both public and private that have medium of instruction in local/ Indian languages or bilingually.

In the preceding paragraphs, all three caveats, e.g., (i) surrender before international trade regime, (ii) compromise with institutional autonomy, and (iii) political socialization, suffers discursive setback since arguments are available to contest the contestation; raised to discredit the policy, e.g., (i) compliance to international trade regime as a legal obligation to nation-states; something committed three decades back, (ii) response to institutional accountability, and (iii) revival of the regional cultural heritage of India. In a nutshell, it is too early to engage in impact assessment of National Education Policy until the policy directives stand implemented in their letters and spirit, with its impact apparent in course of time; something to hit the public hindsight after a decade or two. Prudence, therefore, lies in orthodox implementation of the policy with an agenda to float a knowledge economy; a desired end of the new education policy.

After the grammar of policy studies, policy proceeds through systemic cycle, e.g., formulation, adoption, implementation, evaluation, and the like. The education policy of 2020 constitutes no exception to this end. Accordingly, value judgment ought to be engaged while the policy is getting formulated: whether or how far the draft policy is devoid of prudence. The present policy underwent a systematic procedure. Suggestions were sought from the public with reasonable time. Accordingly, the Draft National Education Policy 2019 was published and left open to the public for further discussion and debate. Myriad suggestions were extended by the public including relevant stakeholders and, after due deliberation, relevant suggestions were taken into count to improve the final draft before National Education Policy 2020 was adopted. After adherence to due procedure, followed by formal adoption of the policy, value judgment on the policy lacks legitimacy since (i) limitation period to get dissent documented is over; (ii) no policy could earn universal appreciation,

with the absolute absence of dissent; (iii) in the absence of consensus, present policy regime is required to run with popular will; something dominant in public perception. Therefore, 29th July of 2020 onward, it is time to implement the new education policy in its letters and spirit; something non-negotiable to succeed the regime. Time for evaluation of the policy, as next staircase, ought to arrive before a policy regime after a decade or two- at the least- since no policy leaves intelligible impact immediately; within a year or two. After compliance to procedure for systematic formulation, while a policy stands adopted for implementation, more there is public confidence in the policy, less there is likelihood for the same to fail out of systemic subversion alone; populist activism out of parochial politics constitutes a classic illustration to this end. The implementation of National Policy of Education 1986, for instance, suffered setback out of opposition with obstructionist intent. Since adopted, National Education Policy 2020 has turned state policy; something obligatory for every citizen of India to succeed the state policy: *so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.*[82] Accordingly, as a regulatory agency for higher education, the University Grants Commission initiated work to implement the policy in its letters and spirit. For instance, a draft manuscript of the University Grants Commission (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Education Institutions to offer Joint, Degree, Dual Degree and Twinning Programmes) Regulations, 2021 is available in public domain;[83] with *bona fide* intent to get the higher education ecosystem of India customized to global standards across the world; thereby get higher education institutions of India connected to foreign institutions. Prudence, therefore, lies in pragmatism to trust democratic governance and join the drive for building a newer India as a knowledge society in time ahead.

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[82] INDIA CONST. art. 51A(j).

[83] University Grants Commission, https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/4258186_Draft-UGC-Academic-Collaboration-with-Foreign-HEIs-Regulations-2021.pdf.

Chapter - 11

NEP: RECHARTING REGULATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Ranjita Chakraborty*

I. Introduction

Education is one of the principal values that shape individual and social lives. It is both a social and an economic value. As a social value, it provides the required knowledge and skills to individuals and develops their personality and character to facilitate their social integration and upward social mobility. As an economic value, it makes persons employable, meets the knowledge and skills required by industries and professions, ensures economic growth, and helps reduce poverty. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development lays down seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 4 of this agenda, adopted by the General Assembly in 2015, seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." (Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) This goal is further divided into ten targets to be measured by eleven indicators. India has also given assent to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and is actively designing and implementing suitable policies in this regard. The NITI Aayog has been assigned the responsibility of designing and monitoring the implementation of SDGs at the national level in India.

Since the mid-1980s, there has been a steep rise in the demand for education due to globalisation and demographic trends. Due to the impact of globalisation, liberalisation, and privatisation, the nature of the larger ecosystem within which the education system

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functions has undergone a radical change. The WTO, under its General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), has identified education as one of the tradable services. There has also been a marked change within the public discourses wherein education is a welfare right, and the public good is being redefined to reinforce it as an economic and private good. Exposed to the global market, universities would have to compete vigorously to capture a share of the global demand for education as well as funding opportunities in business-supported research space. (Wagner, 2004) In cultural terms, globalisation forces the universities to cater to multinational and multicultural students' communities and weakening of the role of education in promoting specific national values. (Wagner, 2004) Globalization has also given rise to the concept of a knowledge economy in which skilled manpower produced by higher education institutions is the driver of economic growth. (Thorp & Goldstein, 2010)

These shifts during the era of globalization have made the framing of education policies a very complex exercise. Due to the impact of globalised social, political, and cultural environment on the educational processes, we face a massive challenge to make education relevant to contemporary demands. The new demands aim to make the education system such that the output is efficient, relevant, and aids practical utility. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) emerged after a long brainstorming process and multilevel deliberation. The draft of this policy was prepared by a committee chaired by K. Kasturirangan, the eminent space scientist and former chairperson of the Indian Space Research Organisation. The committee consisted of several distinguished experts and professionals from education, public life and governance. The committee's report, submitted to the Ministry of Human Resource Development on 1st December 2018, was made public on 30th May 2019. After extensive debate and discussions, NEP was adopted by Parliament with the overarching goal that "education must develop not only cognitive capacities - both the 'foundational capacities 'of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also

social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions". (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 4) The critical objective of NEP is "to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen". (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 7) Changes, therefore, were suggested in the domain of school education, higher education, and vocational education. A radical change has been suggested in redesigning the education terrain in terms of content, pedagogy, and capacity building. In order to facilitate these significant changes, governance reforms are also suggested for the effective implementation of the policy. The present paper focuses only on the Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) and discusses the e of reforms in the governance within the higher education sector and HEIs proposed by NEP.

II. NEP and the Higher Education Sector

Drawing inspiration from the ancient Indian culture and traditions, the present policy envisages the recreation of the model of integrated multidisciplinary higher education institutions like Nalanda, Vikramshila, Takshashila, and Vallabhi and end the fragmentation of the teaching-learning and research processes in the higher education sector today. These huge multidisciplinary institutions, both research and teaching, attracted many Indian and international students to generate new knowledge. The contemporary world requires innovations and new knowledge to support the changed scenario. This also requires reorienting the existing institutions to match the emerging socio-economic needs and the need to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals. Higher education should allow students to study one or more specific areas of interest in greater depth and improve capability in a variety of disciplines such as sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, and professional, technical, and vocational topics. Higher education's goal is to foster lively, socially involved, cooperative communities and a happier, more unified, cultured, productive, innovative, progressive, and prosperous nation.

Therefore, according to NEP, it should foster character, ethical and constitutional principles, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity and a sense of service, and academic knowledge in the chosen domains. Higher education should also "enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to society. It must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and enable economic independence". (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 34)

The establishment of large multifunctional universities, colleges, and HEI clusters/Knowledge Hubs, each with 3000 or more students, would be the future model of higher education delivery institutions under this schema. A university is a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate programmes and high-quality teaching, research, and community service. Hence, NEP offers a three-tier system within the higher education system: research-intensive universities, teaching-intensive universities, and autonomous degree-granting colleges.

Meanwhile, an Autonomous College (AC) with the power to grant degrees is a large multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that grants undergraduate degrees and is primarily focused on undergraduate teaching. However, it is not limited to that and need not be, and it is typically smaller than a traditional university. Furthermore, HEIs will have additional important roles in addition to teaching and research, which they will do through proper resourcing, incentives, and frameworks. These roles include supporting the development of other HEIs, community participation and service, contributing to diverse fields of practice, faculty development for the higher education system, and support for school education.

NEP recommends that by 2030 all higher education institutions shift to a multidisciplinary character and then gradually raise student strength to the desirable levels. More HEIs should be established and expanded in the underprivileged areas to achieve full access, equity, and inclusion. By 2030, every district will have at least

one large interdisciplinary HEI in or near it. Steps should be taken to build high-quality public and private higher education institutions that offer instruction in local/Indian languages or bilingual mode. The goal will be to enhance the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education, including vocational education, from about 26% to 50% by 2035. (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 35)

III. Capacity Building of HEIs

Implementation of NEP necessitates that numerous new HEIs should be developed. Apart from that, the existing HEIs should be modified by consolidating, substantially expanding, and improving their capacities. Also, single-stream HEIs would add additional diverse streams. The new regulatory framework envisioned by NEP will encourage an overall culture of empowerment and autonomy to innovate, including phasing out the system of "associated colleges" over fifteen years through a system of graded autonomy. Each affiliating university will be responsible for mentoring its affiliated colleges to help them develop their capabilities and meet minimum standards in academic and curricular matters, teaching and assessment, governance reforms, financial stability, and administrative efficiency. All schools connected with a university must meet the appropriate benchmarks over time to gain the required accreditation and eventually become self-contained degree-granting colleges. This will be accomplished through a deliberate national effort that includes appropriate mentoring and government backing.

Such holistic and multidisciplinary education would strive to integrate the development of all human capacities, including intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral. A comprehensive strategy is envisioned in this respect in NEP. Individuals with critical 21st-century capacities - in the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields, as well as an ethic of social engagement, soft skills such as communication, discussion, and debate, and rigorous specialisation in a chosen field or fields - will benefit from such

education. In the long run, all undergraduate programmes, including professional, technical, and vocational subjects, will take this comprehensive approach. Therefore, NEP envisages a four-year undergraduate course with a view to not just knowledge enhancement but also facilitation of critical thinking among students to get trained as researchers. Furthermore, a focus on facilitating critical thinking among students at all levels is envisaged so research innovation can occur.

IV. Regulation of HEIs

The diverse tasks of regulation, accreditation, finance, and academic norm-setting are part of higher education's regulatory framework. However, the regulation of higher education in India has been too mechanistic and centralised. As a result, a heavy concentration of power within a few bodies leads to a disempowering impact. Consequently, a conflict of interest among these bodies and a lack of accountability often follows such a situation. Therefore, India's higher education regulatory system must create checks and balances well within the system, minimise conflict of interest, and eliminate the concentration of power to achieve a harmonious synergy.

NEP envisions four separate verticals within one umbrella entity, viz., the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). The National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) will be the first vertical of HECI. It will serve as a single point of regulatory authority for higher education, including teacher education. Its scope would be limited to medical and legal education. This would help to enable single-point regulation and reduce the need for multiple regulators. The NHERC would maintain a public website that would include all updated information about higher education institutions to ensure transparency. There will be a framework for students to provide regular confidential feedback. NHERC will adjudicate any complaints or concerns from stakeholders and others originating from information published in the public domain. At each HEI, feedback from randomly selected students, including differently-abled students, will be requested online at regular intervals to ensure valuable input.

Accreditation will be the primary instrument for enabling such regulation. As a result, the National Accreditation Council (NAC), HECI's second vertical, will be a "meta-accrediting organisation". Institutional certification will be based primarily on basic norms, public self-disclosure, good governance, and outcomes based on the norms enunciated in NEP. The accreditation process would be supervised and overseen by NAC, which would recognise an appropriate number of institutions as accreditors. This system would specify phased benchmarks for all HEIs to achieve set quality, self-governance, and autonomy. A graded system of accreditation will be established through this system. The HEIs would finally design their Institutional Development Plans (IDPs) to function as self-governing degree-granting institutions/clusters.

The Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) will be HECI's third vertical. It will fund and finance higher education based on transparent criteria that will first include the IDPs provided by the institutions; and, secondly, the progress made in their execution. In addition, the HEGC will be in charge of the disbursement of scholarships and developmental funding to establish new focus areas and expand the existing ones.

The General Education Council (GEC), which would frame desired learning objectives for higher education programmes, often known as "graduate characteristics", will be the fourth vertical of the HECI. The GEC shall formulate a National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF), which shall synchronise with the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) and facilitate the integration of vocational education into higher education. In addition, the GEC shall set up facilitative norms for issues, such as credit transfer, equivalence, etc., through the NHEQF.

Professional standard-setting bodies will include the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Veterinary Council of India (VCI), the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), the Council of Architecture (CoA), the National Council for Vocational

Education and Training (NCVET), and others (PSSBs). They will play an essential role in higher education and will be invited to join the GEC. As members of the GEC, these bodies will continue to create curricula, set academic standards, and coordinate teaching, research, and extension of their domain/discipline after restructuring as PSSBs. PSSBs would thus set standards or expectations in specific learning and practice sectors while not acting as regulators. This functional specification is expected to ensure that conflicts of interest between different jobs are minimised and eventually eliminated. It would also seek to boost higher education institutions. There will be no differentiation between public and private HEIs regarding such expectations.

V. New Roles and Reinvention of Old Order

NEP stipulates that the functioning of all the independent verticals for Regulation (NHERC), Accreditation (NAC), Funding (HEGC), and Academic Standard Setting (GEC) and the overarching autonomous umbrella body (HECI) will be based on the principle of a faceless and transparent regulatory intervention using technology. Strict compliance measures with stringent action will be ensured so that Higher Education Institutions conform to the basic minimum norms and standards. In case a dispute arises between the four verticals HECI will resolve them. HECI will be a small, independent body of eminent public-spirited experts in higher education, which will oversee and monitor the integrity and effective functioning of the institution. Public Philanthropic Partnership models for HEIs could potentially be tested to increase access to high-quality higher education. (Alan Abramson, 2014) All HEIs, public and private, will be treated equally within this regulatory framework. They will be led by shared principles, including good governance, financial stability and security, educational outcomes, and disclosure transparency.

Several methods with inherent checks and balances would serve to contain the commercialisation of higher education. All financial matters will be made transparently public, with the broader

public having access to grievance-handling processes. The seamless, timely, and appropriate flow of cash will be the emphasis of financial governance and management. Performance-based funding system for the HEIs will be created. The accreditation system developed by NAC will provide an additional check on this system, and NHERC will consider this one of the critical dimensions of its regulatory objective.

Transparent processes will not harm individual institutions for determining fees with an upper limit for different types of institutions dependent on their accreditation. This will allow private HEIs to determine their pricing for their programmes while still adhering to the established norms and regulatory framework. Private HEIs will be encouraged to give large numbers of scholarships, and other incentives. The fee-setting process will ensure a reasonable cost recovery while also ensuring that HEIs meet their social responsibilities.

VI. Effective Governance and Leadership in HEIs

The formation of a culture of excellence and innovation in higher education institutions is made possible by good governance and leadership. Change and innovation are the key factors in managing the contemporary scenario of higher education. "While adapting to change has always been a challenge for higher education, in recent years the pace of change has accelerated so rapidly that academic leaders face new and unprecedented demands, making it difficult to manage these challenges and adapt to new realities" (Henderickson, 2013, p. 1) Higher education institutions need a leadership that is sufficiently capable and motivated to understand the need for change, embrace change, and navigate the resistance to change. The prevalence of solid self-governance and remarkable merit-based nominations of institutional leaders has been a common trait of all world-class institutions, including India.

Therefore, NEP lays down several steps for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of leadership and governance processes in the higher education sector. It proposes that after an HEI has received the

necessary graded accreditations, a Board of Governors (BoG) will be formed, comprising a group of highly qualified, competent, and dedicated persons with demonstrated competencies and a strong sense of commitment to the institution. The BoG will have regulatory authority to manage the institution without external interference, make appointments, including those of the institution's head, and make all governance decisions. Overarching legislation will provide for the BoG's constitution, appointment, modalities of operation, rules, and regulations, and roles and responsibilities and will replace any conflicting sections of prior legislation. New members of the Board will be identified by a committee of experts selected by the Board.

Through comprehensive self-disclosure of all relevant records, the BoG will be responsible and accountable to the stakeholders. It will be accountable for adhering to all HECI-mandated regulatory criteria via the NHERC. The BoG will select candidates through a rigorous, unbiased, merit-based, and competency-based procedure overseen by an Eminent Expert Committee (EEC) established by the BoG.

While tenure stability is vital for creating a proper organisational culture, leadership succession will be carefully managed to ensure that good practices that characterise an institution's procedures do not end due to a change in leadership. Leadership changes will occur with appropriate overlaps and will not remain vacant to enable a smooth transition. Outstanding leaders will be discovered and groomed early in their careers, progressing up a leadership ladder. All HEIs will demonstrate commitment to institutional quality, involvement with their local communities, and the highest standards of financial probity and accountability while receiving funding, legislative enablement, and autonomy in a progressive way.

To facilitate such a move, each institution will develop a strategic Institutional Development Plan based on which institutions will develop initiatives, assess their progress, and achieve the goals outlined in the plan, which could serve as the foundation for additional

public funding. Board members, institutional leaders, academics, students, and staff will all contribute to the development of the IDP.

VII. Challenges to Implementation

According to the blueprint laid out for implementation of the reforms, certain principles have been earmarked:

1. Emphasis to be placed on the policy's 'spirit and intent' will be the most critical matter concerning NEP's implementation.
2. Implementation is to be carried out in a phased manner.
3. Priorities must be set to ensure optimal sequencing of policy points and the priorities of the most critical and urgent action must be set.
4. As NEP is a holistic concept, its piecemeal implementation is not a desirable option. Only a comprehensive implementation process will realise NEP's objectives.
5. As education is a concurrent subject, careful planning, joint monitoring, and collaborative implementation between the Centre and States will be needed.
6. For the satisfactory execution of NEP, the requisite resources - human, infrastructural, and financial – should be provided for, and it should be ensured at the Central and State levels.
7. A careful analysis and review of the linkages between multiple parallel implementation steps will be necessary.

The implementation of reforms suggested by NEP requires a realignment of the existing governance structures on the one hand and the creation of new structures on the other. The policy envisages autonomy to the HEIs on the one hand and effective interlinkages with diverse categories of institutions catering to different sectors like school education, vocational education, etc. The goal is to develop a holistic and interconnected education sector. Therefore, NEP proposes that the policy's implementation be synergistically led by various bodies, including MHRD, CABE, Union and State Governments, education-related ministries, State Departments of Education, Boards, National

Testing Agency and the regulatory bodies of school and higher education like NCERT, SCERTs, schools, and HEIs. (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 62) As the policy envisages an elaborate plan, implementing it in one go would be pretty tricky. However, gradual restructuring of every segment would facilitate the implementation of proposed reforms.

Operationalising the idea of an autonomous structure of governance in the HEIs, especially university governance in the form of a BoG, necessitates a relook at the types of institutions that prevail in India. There are multi-faculty universities established by the central and state governments. Some of these are unitary, while others are affiliating universities. There are also open universities established by the central and state governments, professional and technical institutions, deemed universities (which are not established by the central or state acts but charted by the UGC), private universities, institutions of national importance established by the Acts of Parliament such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), National Institute of Technology (NITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), and Indian Institutes of Science, Education and Research (IISERs) etc., offering professional undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes. Each of the institutions has to follow a framework of governance derived from the context of their establishment with their Acts and Statutes.

The first challenge springs from the fact that all universities are established by an Act of Parliament or state legislatures which provides the framework for the functioning of these institutions. NEP proposes the autonomy of HEIs, which means the minimisation of governmental interference. In addition, autonomy envisages a minimisation of reliance of the institutions on government funding. However, another crucial issue is how autonomy is implemented against the reorientation of the agreed roles between the government and the institutions.

In the absence of government control, the second challenge is how these autonomous institutions can be tuned to work towards

national development and not towards profit and other motivations delinked from the social goals. Therefore, it is essential to focus on how autonomy is to be granted to these institutions while ensuring compliance and unity with the national goals.

The third challenge emerges from the nature of the internal governance structures, i.e., the level of centralisation/decentralisation. It is essential to understand HEI's internal governance structure regarding decision-making and transparency. It is important to find out the nature of institutional culture in terms of participatory or centralized decision-making, the teachers' space and freedom, and the sharing of power and responsibilities among teachers. It is often seen that one or a few individuals control an institution's decisions and run them in an oligarchic mode. This, too, impacts the restructuring of HEIs proposed by NEP.

The fourth challenge concerns the increasing accountability measures for HEIs. What measures should be undertaken to enhance and evaluate accountability in HEIs? Accountability should be more on outcome-based measures rather than input-based measures. Public and private HEIs should design and evaluate accountability measures based on performance and audit of outcomes.

The fifth challenge is that the governance structures across the HEIs are not uniform. Hence, creating an empowered structure of the Board of Governors in the university system, with the power of appointing the head of the institution, is laudable but may have variable outputs. The governing boards of IITs, IIMs, Central Universities, IISERs, NITs, etc. have many academics and include only a limited number (one or two) of government officials. Many of them are headed by eminent educationists. The boards in these institutions have the freedom to design academic programmes, set research priorities, and decide on staffing. Whereas, in centrally-funded institutions, many more government officials are appointed as members of governing bodies. The situation is similar in state-funded institutions. In the case of the colleges, they are, in a sense, over-regulated and controlled by

the government. The nature of governing bodies and their authority to make decisions on crucial issues are essential elements in exercising autonomy at the institutional level.

In some cases, too many members on the boards are closer to the ministries and the ruling parties than to academics. Apart from that, individuals who are close to the ruling parties or are members are appointed to different institutions, leading to an oligarchic governance model. The possibilities of exercising autonomy will be naturally less in such situations when compared with a situation where most of the board members are closer to academics.

VIII. Probable Strategies for Redoing the Governance Structure:

To facilitate the implementation of NEP, a multipronged strategy is required. The initial condition for initiating a reform is an environment of trust. It is the bedrock of any reform measures. Supporting actions on the part of the union government and the state governments is the next most crucial requirement since education is a concurrent subject within the 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India. Adequate legislative measures and subordinate legislation and incentive structures could be essential tools in the strategies for implementing various proposals of governance reforms in education.

Such a move will require strategic intervention through federal consultative bodies as a federal subject. It may not be out of place to mention that the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) could act as an essential federal body for policy coordination and implementation if it emerges as an empowered institutional structure of federal coordination. The policy proposes to strengthen CABE both in terms of structure and mandate. (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 60)

Strengthening CABE may prove to be an essential step toward creating an environment of trust and confidence and better possibilities of coordination between the union and states in monitoring and implementing the policy. Although nothing is said about the

parameters through which CABE can be strengthened, vesting it with adequate powers buttressed by matching authority could be one of the strategies. Besides, ensuring regular meetings and granting power to enforce decisions/compliance by the HEIs is one of the significant ways of ensuring that the reforms suggested by NEP are implemented in true spirit. Furthermore, the selection of members of the CABE should be conducted impartially and free from political interference. Members should be drawn not only from academia but also from retired civil servants and senior corporate executives, which would help in the infusion of knowledge from diverse fields that can facilitate the generation of tenable ideas, do-able decisions, and financially viable outcomes in the form of decisions.

However, the proposed reforms in the case of higher education may have severe bottlenecks in implementation as well as the design and outcomes. For example, the policy proposes to empower the HEIs by granting them autonomy. To empower them, the policy proposes introducing an empowered Board of Governors in place of the existing structures and bodies like the Senate, Council, Syndicate, etc. It would mean repealing the provisions in the state Acts and amendments in the statutes and ordinances under which these existing bodies were constituted. It means realigning the role of these existing bodies to conform to the new recommended arrangement. Similar realignment would be necessary in the case of Centrally-Funded Institutions. Moreover, such structures are already in place in the case of IITs and IIMs which need a reintegration with the new order.

The policy specifically proposes the creation of an empowered autonomous structure of the Board of Governors at the institutional level. There is the need for a review to assess and ascertain the new governance structures, such as the Board of Governors at the institutional level with State Acts and Statutes of the universities. Similarly, it may also necessitate a redefinition of the powers and responsibilities of the Chancellor / Visitor. The composition of the BoG is fundamental in this regard. To ensure the institution's autonomy, it must be kept away from any political interference in any form.

Different structures also vary in their powers which are derived mainly from the source of their creation. For example, the governance structure in a university in India may consist of a Board of Governors / Governing Board (GB) chaired by the Chancellor, who may be the Governor in case of state universities, a nominee (an eminent academic) of the government in Central universities, a Syndicate, a Senate, an Academic Council, a Finance Committee, Board of Studies etc.

The proposal of transforming the regulatory system along the line of creating four verticals under an overarching structure of HECI is a welcome idea. However, implementing these policy proposals for governance reforms may be a point of contention between states and the union. It may be construed as an intervention in the jurisdictional areas of the states' rights, especially relating to their power and role in establishing and controlling universities and colleges. There may be an issue of mismatch between the state's financial obligations and actual control of the institutions. The proposed appointment of the head of the institutions by BoG may cause a conflict with the provision in the state Acts wherein the role of the state government is of utmost importance.

The varying resource capacity of the states and disparities among them could be critical impediments to NEP implementation. A cautious approach needs to be adopted to ensure equity and minimise further disparities in educational access, opportunities, and resources. The fiscal resource base needs to be ascertained. Continued dialogue and understanding between the union and states to ensure resource availability is needed.

As education is also a social good, it is imperative to focus on the implementation of NEP in remote areas, especially in the multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multicultural diversities ranging across the nation. The 'one size fits all' approach is not suitable for equitable outcomes. It is essential to devise a multiple-level organisational structure with a clear demarcation of jurisdictions. To ensure that the

quality of the curriculum is maintained, an in-house monitoring committee should be developed. Apart from the work mentioned above, the committee should regularly review the new courses that cater to the market demands. An independent body should be instituted with committed academic leaders who would focus on potential new innovative research areas for the faculty and the research scholars. One of the reasons behind the challenges to implementation stems from the non-availability of credible data. Creating a vibrant statistical cell is a must for addressing future challenges.

In regions situated in the remote areas of Northeast India and other remote parts of India, the implementation challenges become manifold. As in the case of urban and metro areas or places with good connectivity, it is possible to form a BoG easily since the members would be aware of the region. However, in the case of remote areas of Northeast India, constituting a BoG with good knowledge of the local demands and at the same time synergising the local with the national goals become a challenging task. This anomaly was also observed during the Covid19 pandemic. We witnessed the varying levels of receptivity and reachability of online education in the metropolitan and urban areas and the rural and remote areas.

Therefore, the governance structure should be so designed that the local human capital potential can be harnessed to the fullest. At the same time, the positive aspects of good governance are maintained. Models based on Public-Private Partnership with clear lines of accountability and responsibilities between the government and the private operators may be developed. This would facilitate the infusion of reasonable values of the public and the private institutions within the HEIs. The HEIs suffer due to the rigidity and red-tapism practiced by the educational bureaucracy, which often delays work in the name of rules which are differently applied to different segments. Therefore, corporatisation of the educational bureaucracy is an utmost necessity to facilitate NEP implementation. It is often observed that reforms cannot be implemented due to administrative rigidity and lack of political will. It is, therefore, essential to develop a strong political will to start the task of the

implementation of NEP in a phased manner. It is also essential for HEIs to carry out studies on possible challenges and ways out. Ultimately it is the broader society whose will is necessary to implement the proposed reforms. It is necessary to find out what society needs in terms of values, innovation, skills, curriculum, and employment opportunities.

IX. Conclusion

It can be stated that HEIs are, in many ways, far more complex than business or social organizations, therefore, good governance in higher education is quite crucial. Governance in higher education is expected to provide a framework for diverse stakeholders. One of the principal tasks of governance in the higher education sector is to enable institutions to manage relationships with various stakeholders and maintain long-term viability. HEIs cannot thrive unless their good governance values are followed. Good governance helps them grow and prosper by facilitating decision-making and effective implementation of decisions. The overall regulation and governance framework creates the ecosystem wherein HEIs achieve long-term sustainability. According to a study published in the *Harvard Business Review,* developing a philanthropic strategy is an iterative process. Three fundamental questions need to be focussed in this regard: How do we define success? What will it take to make change happen? How can we improve our results over time? (Ditkoff & Colby, 2009) In HEIs governance strategy the last two questions are of utmost importance although the first one is also important but not the intent differs in the case of HEIs from the general business ventures. It is to be kept in mind that public philanthropic models emerged as a part of social entrepreneurship projects and management of scarce resources.

The many essential concepts of good governance in public administration and corporate governance also apply to higher education governance. The proposals for reform of educational governance through a restructuring of the existing structures or creation of new structures of governance, as recommended under NEP, can play a vital role in improving the system's functioning along with the acclaimed principles of New Public Management in governance. It envisions a system of a new

model of governance that puts importance on efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and citizen-centric governance. In short, it adheres to the parameters of good governance. It is a welcome change, but it can only succeed if the Centre and the State governments agree to facilitate the reforms in a phased and cooperative manner.

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Chapter - 12

LIBERAL ARTS UNDER NEP: A NEW FRAMEWORK OF INTEGRATED HIGHER EDUCATION

*Amit Dholakia**

I. Introduction

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) maps out the trajectory of the growth and development of India's education system over the next decades against the backdrop of the 21st Century challenges and opportunities. Approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2020, NEP is India's third national education policy after its independence. The earlier policies were promulgated in 1968 and 1986 (further modified in 1992). NEP is the final product of wide-ranging deliberations and consultations on various education-related issues among different stakeholders over nearly five years.

India has emerged as an influential regional power. It is on course to emerge as a great power at the global level in due course on the strength of its economic, strategic and demographic capabilities. NEP recognises the critical role of creating and disseminating knowledge and developing new, sustainable technologies in propelling India ahead in this journey. India has the third-largest higher education system and the largest youth population globally. NEP emphasises the need to harness human capital for economic and social development. It has, therefore, recommended sweeping changes at all levels of education, from pre-primary to higher education, covering all aspects of education: curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation system, research, social extension and so on. These recommendations ultimately aim to

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transform India into a thriving knowledge society and a global education hub.

NEP's recommendations address the imperatives of enhancing access, equity, and quality in the education sector, making education affordable for all and bringing in greater participation and accountability of different stakeholders of the education system. The following core ideas form the basis of recommendations made by NEP: flexibility in the choice of subjects; no rigid separation between disciplines, curricular and extracurricular activities; multidisciplinary programmes and institutions; application of pedagogies and practices that encourage conceptual understanding, critical thinking and ethical values. In addition, the policy places teachers at the heart of the learning process. Multiple actions and initiatives are expected to be taken by Central and state governments and educational institutions in a phased manner and in coordination to implement the policy. While NEP's recommendations encompass a wide range of educational domains and activities, a noteworthy feature of the policy is the importance given to the advancement of academic programmes and research in the group of subjects that go under the rubric of 'liberal arts', including to the Indian knowledge systems.

II. The Idea of Liberal Arts

The coinage 'liberal arts' dates back to the 14th century and originates from the Latin term 'artes liberales' where 'artes' means "principled practice or arts" and 'liberales' means "unrestricted or free", or "the skills appropriate for a free person" in a literal sense. Quintessentially, it refers to such knowledge and skills that help develop civic participation, analytical and critical thinking, ability to solve complex problems, understanding of ethics and morality and inculcation of the desire to continue to learn. Besides, liberal arts sharpen close reading skills, an appreciation for context across time and space, qualitative analysis of social structures and relationships, the importance of perspective, empathy, analysis of the structure of an argument etc.

Liberal arts, in this sense, came to refer to a grouping of disciplines that primarily go by the name of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics. By their very nature, the mainstream liberal arts education is obligated to provide analytical, critical, creative, linguistic, numerical and interpretive skills rather than competencies directed at particular professions and occupations. Liberal education is essentially a broad-based and multidimensional education rather than narrowly based on specialisation in any branch of knowledge.

These fields have been part of liberal arts education globally: languages, literatures, linguistics, history, jurisprudence, philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism, and theory of the arts; political science and those aspects of the social sciences whose content applies humanistic methods, with particular attention to diverse heritage, traditions, and history.

Liberal arts education, in an institutional sense, has a distinct American origin. Interestingly, liberal arts education in the U.S. is imparted with the training of pastors as professionals. Hence, the foundational liberal arts courses focused on fulfilling the requirement of pastors to read and understand Scriptures in their original languages, such as Hebrew, Greek and Latin. As a result, the liberal arts colleges flourished in America from the 17th Century onwards. However, a gradual decline of liberal arts courses and simultaneous growth in the popularity of science courses started in the latter part of the 19th Century. As a result, the definition and meaning of liberal arts itself came under interrogation. Besides, its structure, epistemology, purpose and relevance have been questioned and debated worldwide.

III. NEP and Liberal Arts

NEP's vision and recommendations call into question the dichotomous way of constructing and regulating the creation and dissemination of knowledge that was popularised by the Enlightenment-based rationality of Western modernity. This rationality has primarily determined the academic organisation and teaching-

learning processes in the universities so far in India and elsewhere. Maintaining and justifying barriers between and within disciplines has been the key to exercising the power of expertise and excluding many people from participating in knowledge-oriented activities.

One of the guiding principles of NEP is "multidisciplinarity 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" (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 5). NEP's emphatic advocacy of holistic and multidisciplinary education aims to regenerate and expand liberal arts education in India. Its recommendations seek to achieve this in two ways: introducing a four-year undergraduate degree programme and integrating liberal arts courses with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects. Such holistic education would allow students to take up varied and wide-ranging courses, apart from those from their core discipline. As the policy states: "Imaginative and flexible curricular structures will enable creative combinations of disciplines for study, and would offer multiple entries and exit points, thus, removing currently prevalent rigid boundaries and creating new possibilities for life-long learning"(National Education Policy, 2020, p. 37).

NEP states that the very idea that all branches of creative human endeavour, including mathematics, science, vocational subjects, professional subjects, and soft skills should be considered 'arts', has distinctly Indian origins. Multidisciplinary liberal education is not new to the Indian tradition. This model was the bedrock of the ancient Indian education centres of Nalanda and Takshshila, which were global universities in the contemporary sense. NEP also refers to the concept of sixty-four 'kalas' (arts) enunciated in the ancient Indian literary works such as Banabhatta's Kadambari to underscore the need for an integrated approach to knowledge which combines liberal arts, soft skills, and crafts with the academic pursuit of science and technology (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 36).

Thus, the liberal arts education is a rediscovery of Indian roots and the building of a new educational legacy adapted to the needs of modern India. (Mino, 2021) In line with ancient Indian pedagogical practices, several influential Indian thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and J. Krishnamurti also favoured holistic and multidisciplinary approaches to education, and interconnectedness of life and a relationship of care and trust between teacher and student (Mino, 2021).

NEP recognises that "there will be a growing demand for humanities and arts, as India moves towards becoming a developed country as well as among the three largest economies in the world." (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 3) The driving force for such a change is the excessive emphasis placed in the current education system on compartmentalising the learning process into separate streams, which leads to specialisations at an early stage of a student's higher education and insufficient attention being paid to the cultivation of essential general abilities.

While the draft of the NEP prepared by K. Kasturirangan committee used the term liberal arts clearly and generously in its voluminous report, NEP's official draft has avoided using the term liberal arts, possibly out of apprehension of being identified with the model and nomenclature of liberal arts education prevalent in the United States. Nevertheless, the powerful thrust on the spirit of liberal education, as represented by multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary curricula encompassing humanities, social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences etc., is evident even in the final policy document even without the specific use of the term liberal arts except once wherein it is stated that the "notion of a 'knowledge of many arts' or what in modern times is often called the 'liberal arts' (i.e., a liberal notion of the arts) must be brought back to Indian education, as it is exactly the kind of education that will be required for the 21st century" (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 36).

Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), with a list of open electives from different disciplines, should be introduced in all technical and professional disciplines as a mandatory requirement. However, while CBCS has been introduced in arts, science and commerce programmes across the country, engineering, medicine or management courses are not yet restructured to incorporate the true spirit of CBCS. Also, in arts, science and commerce streams, electives are offered from within a discipline rather than from across disciplines.

Thus, NEP proposes that single-stream higher education institutes be phased out over time. All institutes have to be restructured to become vibrant multidisciplinary institutions or parts of vibrant multidisciplinary higher education clusters to reinforce high-quality multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary teaching and research across fields. NEP also recommends the establishment of model public universities for holistic and multidisciplinary education, at par with IITs, IIMs etc., called Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU). MERUs will strive to attain the highest global standards in quality education based on multidisciplinary approaches (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 38). NEP also aims to set up at least one multidisciplinary college in each district of India.

NEP promotes liberal arts and social sciences in the form of clubs where it suggests that all Higher Education Institutions will provide opportunities and funds for topic-centric clubs and activities organised by students with the help of faculties and experts, and dedicated to science, mathematics, poetry, languages, literature, debate, music, sports etc. Over time such activities can also be incorporated into the curriculum of liberal arts programmes.

IV. Advantages of Liberal Arts Education

English theologian, poet and scholar John Henry Newman had delineated the purpose of liberal arts as "to open the mind, correct it, to refine it, to enable it to know and to digest, master, rule, and use its knowledge, to give its power over its faculties, application, flexibility,

method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, and eloquent expression". (Newman's Three Ideas of a University) However, the question whether traditional liberal arts pursuit has any application and value in the globalising world and technological society has been agitating the academia for long. Additional concerns have been raised in India about the declining quality of students enrolling for B.A. and M.A. programmes and faltering standards of teaching and research in social sciences and humanities. Not surprisingly, social sciences and humanities have been compelled to frequently justify their relevance before policymakers, funding agencies, and society.

Students and parents have come to assume that education in liberal arts is less valuable. They wonder how studying philosophy, poetry, geography, political science, history or anthropology would help in increasing chances of finding a job after graduation or post-graduation. The truth is that studying liberal arts imparts valuable knowledge, information and abilities that would benefit students both professionally and personally.

Liberal arts education is a significant contributor to developing students' intellectual potential and personality in a holistic way. It contributes to a comprehensive view of the world and one's place within it. It seeks to hone the elements of curiosity, creativity, and imagination. Such education aims to produce a person aware of her moral role, competent in various skills, and possesses knowledge of more than one discipline. Liberal arts education builds a person holistically to equip her not just to be successful in life but also to participate actively in civic life.

Liberal education provides integrative learning opportunities that engage students in understanding and addressing real-world situations. Expression of viewpoints and understanding questions with a critical outlook are particularly encouraged. The emphasis in liberal, multidisciplinary education is on how to think rather than what to think. A study of liberal arts contributes to the nurturing of critical and higher-order thinking skills, creativity and innovation, leadership and

teamwork, written and oral communication and problem-solving, among others. Besides, liberal arts education also increases social and moral awareness among students. Several studies have shown that professional and technical education embedded in a multidisciplinary curriculum prepares students to face personal, social, and workplace challenges more effectively than compartmentalised education.

Liberal arts education would also help bridge the education process with the workforce needs, thereby increasing the employability of India's youth. There has been much grievance from industries and professions that graduates from Indian universities, even if well-qualified in terms of their technical knowledge, lack several essential skills and personality traits in today's competitive world. Most of these relate to analytical skills, soft skills and life skills, which liberal arts components would try to provide for. Moreover, the changing work pattern has increased the demand for multitasking among employees. Liberal and multidisciplinary education prepared students to execute such multitasking roles in industries.

Implementation of NEP can strengthen the higher education system by bringing in credit-based courses and projects in community engagement and service, environmental education, sustainable development, value education, soft skills, life skills etc. This will empower learners to become aware of and understand global issues and become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies.

V. Liberal Arts in Indian Higher Education System

Liberal arts education in India has lagged behind technical and professional courses. A large segment of students, parents and policymakers often believe that such education is meant primarily for those who are not capable of securing admission to technical and professional programmes and those who are wont to live in ivory towers, disconnected from the realities of everyday life. However, liberal arts programmes and institutions are becoming increasingly

popular, particularly after opening up the Indian education space to private actors after liberalisation began in 1991. Several institutions focusing on liberal arts programmes in a stand-alone format under schools of liberal arts or as an integral part of the STEM programmes have come up during the last three decades. These include institutions like Azim Premji University, O.P. Jindal Global University, Ashoka University, FLAME University, KREA University, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Bennett University, Pandit Deendayal Energy University, Ahmedabad University, Symbiosis University, Shiv Nadar University, SRM University, Apeejay Stya University, NMIMS University, Christ University, Manipal University etc. These are in addition to the humanities programmes run by various IITs. IITs located in Mumbai, Kanpur, Delhi, Gandhinagar, Guwahati etc. are well-known for their liberal arts programmes. These universities offer integrated programmes spanning several disciplines, enabling students to develop transferable skills and greater employability. Most of these institutions start with a foundation period during which students are introduced to a wide range of subjects from which they choose their combination of subjects for study during the subsequent years.

Top-notch engineering institutions in India have also been following an integrated education model for their students by having a liberal arts component in their engineering curriculum as one of the mandatory or elective courses. Several Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) also offer innovative interdisciplinary programmes in social science and humanities. IIT-Gandhinagar, for instance, offers an M.A. programme in Society and Culture which includes fundamental learning, debates, and methods in the literature, sociology, anthropology, political science, and history and helps students comprehend the intersections between disciplines so that recurring themes such as identity, democracy, tradition, modernity, citizenship, etc. are not restricted with a narrow disciplinary focus. IIT-Delhi offers an M.Sc. programme in Economics and Cognitive Science. IIT–Madras has a unique five-year integrated programme, leading to M.A. in two major streams: Development Studies and English Studies. IIT-Kharagpur provides an opportunity to do bachelor's and master's

programmes in Economics and Human Resource Management. Almost all old IITs have Ph.D. in social sciences and humanities subjects.

VI. Issues in Implementing NEP's Recommendations on Multidisciplinarity

Integration and multidisciplinarity are expansive notions encompassing several educational approaches in various circumstances. Because of this diversity, it is impossible to develop a single, globally applicable definition of integration. Moreover, there is limited agreement among higher education experts as to what constitutes integration of arts and humanities with science, technology, engineering and mathematics. As a result, several doubts exist about the nature and modality of such integration. For example, how can poetry and physics be integrated and in what proportionality? Who would decide about the integrative nature of the existing or new programmes and based on which standards? All these are pertinent questions that follow NEP's recommendations in this regard.

Besides, several internal and external constraints impede the integration of disciplines or the operation of multidisciplinary institutions. The rules of accrediting organisations, faculty training, avenues of promotion, financial frameworks etc., are some critical factors that would influence the pace and outcomes of the efforts to bring in a multidisciplinary higher education ecosystem. The advocacy for multidisciplinary education will also cause resource stress on the government due to the recruitment of new faculties and the creation of additional infrastructure. However, the same can be addressed by offering liberal arts electives in digital and online modes. The government of India has launched the SWAYAM Portal, which provides more than 6000 online e-learning courses.

While developing a multidisciplinary curriculum, there is a need to adopt a realistic approach with interactions and consultations with production units and industries. This would help make the

curriculum truly holistic and relevant. Practical projects and internships that are mandatory for engineering and other professional branches should also be assigned to students enrolled in liberal arts courses to raise their employability and increase their overall thinking capacity. Projects given to students should be of the multidisciplinary domain and restricted to a particular field only. Integrated and multidisciplinary programmes should include a suitable evaluation component to measure students' workforce readiness and learning.

Each state should have at least one **MERU** with enough resources to catalyse the transition to multidisciplinary and integrated education envisioned in **NEP**. However, establishing new **MERUs** will put massive pressure on the state's resources—each of the second-generation IITs established in 2008 cost more than Rs 2000 crores. MERUs would be on par with the IITs and IIMs and could cost anywhere between Rs 5000 and Rs 10,000 crore per institute (Baral & Dash, n.d.).

VII. Concluding Observations

Transcendence and integration of disciplinary content in higher education are deeply related to epistemological issues. Teaching and learning of multidisciplinary courses are inextricably linked to matters of pedagogy. Social science and humanities have distinct ways of looking at the world and making sense of it. These disciplines define their subjects of study, theoretical approaches, types of evidence, interpretations, explanations and standards that determine their validation. Together, these set the boundaries of these disciplines. The boundaries are redefined as disciplines develop and often fragment, with sub-disciplines acquiring independent status.

However, these disciplinary boundaries are not sacrosanct or inviolable; nor are the diverse disciplinary approaches necessarily incongruent or incompatible. On the contrary, they aim to achieve specific human goals. As Einstein said, "All religions, arts, and sciences are branches of the same tree... All these aspirations are directed

toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual toward freedom."

The present world is facing many challenges which are unprecedented as well as unconventional. Climate Change, environmental emergencies, food scarcity, water scarcity, gender disparity, energy deficiency, multi-faceted conflicts, economic instability, etc. are complex problems without a simple one-stop solution. The need for innovative and interdisciplinary research and teaching was never more significant than now. NEP makes a bold attempt to break away from the present specialisation-based and compartmentalised system that we inherited from the British colonial rule and continued in the post-Independence period with minor modifications. By suggesting multidisciplinary education, NEP has opened up an immense possibility for the extension and expansion of liberal arts subjects to other branches of education that were as so far conducted in a uni-disciplinary mode. It has tried to offset the artificial decoupling of disciplines and drawing of intra-discipline boundaries in the name of professional expertise and specialisation. However, barring the IITs, IIMs, and some other limited number of top-notch engineering, management and professional education, most other institutions have remained unconnected from the model of liberal education proposed by NEP. Liberal arts have been looked upon as a luxury and meant for those who do not require jobs immediately after their graduation. Consequently, public and private investments in higher education have centred on new programmes in engineering, management, medical or vocational degrees rather than in liberal arts programmes.

With numerous scientific and technological advancements, the knowledge system is rapidly changing. With the growth of big data, machine learning and other technical advancements, many low-wage jobs will be replaced by artificial intelligence devices. Demand for a competent and multiskilled workforce having the ability to solve problems will increase. Apart from mathematics, science and technology competencies, knowledge of social sciences and humanities

would prove helpful here. NEP's emphasis on integrated, holistic and multidisciplinary education is likely to address this imperative. It would open up new opportunities for students and faculties in liberal arts disciplines as also avenues of investment in liberal arts programmes. Overall, NEP's focus on multidisciplinary higher education with significant elements of liberal arts would have a far-reaching impact, provided the right ecosystem is created and adequate resources become available for the same.

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IS IT POSSIBLE TO BRIDGE THE CHASM?
A REVIEW ON NEP 2020 AT SCHOOL EDUCATION

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I. Introduction

Change is the law of nature. From time immemorial, ancient scriptures pointed out the necessity of change as it is the only constant in this universe. In each and every aspect of life one has to face changes that might or might not be proved useful to him or her. If one wants to ponder through psychological aspects, one might find that every type of change is associated with anxiety, explicit or implicit, either on the part of the individual or that of the collective. These areas should be treated with due care as it might cause fear and unrest when moved onto a larger societal platform. The mighty system of Education is of no exception as it necessarily involves the responsibility to shape the future of a society. The global demands craft spaces for new knowledge and abilities that are to be addressed with due care to meet the need of different sectors and it is that particular junctures where the necessity of change pops up. Education system has a definitive responsibility to attune generations with the changing terms of demands and thus the system has to be reviewed, reshaped and upgraded when necessary.

At the same time, it is important to point out the necessity of dissenting voices that in the ramification of our social, socio-cultural, philosophical life, in every single field of knowledge, stands erect to take ideas forward. Unless we descended through Copernicus, Giordano Bruno, Galileo Galilei or Isaac Newton even through Albert

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Einstein, unless we challenge the existing conception then how the enlightenment would come. So naturally in every exercise of man: art, music, song, literature and even in our social dialogues dissent in the form of questioning remains present and practiced. According to Bible, Eve was created out of the ribs of Adam, "He took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh" (Genesis 2:21); and this idea was questioned by Darwin (and even before him Huxley posed the question) and the idea of evolution come up that changed the human society's knowledge domain from its core. If one considers Tagore's take on Modernity it can be pointed out as a trend that is ushered in through conceptual innovation[1] (Coquereau, 2014). So, it would not be wrong to say that every conceptual innovation is an act of daring and every act of daring is directed to make a difference, however small it is.

So in every policy perspective and especially in the field of Education, this process of upgradation should be based on reviewing the existing dissents and demands of the society. Since independence, the country has witnessed a number of attempts in forms of different committees, commissions and frameworks to impart quality education to the pupils. But even after 75 years, preliminary issues like GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio)[2], question the effectiveness of the system as a whole. At this stage, initiation of a new education policy is no doubt worthwhile. But considering the aspects of practicability, the policy should be judged to decipher the bottlenecks and gaps that might put hindrances to the comprehensive growth of our society. Before beginning the discussion, it is important to point out that India is not only a country determined by physical boundaries, it is also a concept juxtaposing the different ideas, cultures, languages and feelings and any policy should be prepared after considering such issues with utmost care. Hence the scope of this paper includes a review of the NEP-2020

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[1] True modernism is freedom of mind, not slavery of taste. It is independence of thought and action, not tutelage under European schoolmasters. (Tagore, 1916).

[2] Total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education. (UNESCO).

with respect to the school education system with critical notes on its recommendations so that the voice of dissent might also be judged.

II. Indian School Education System: The Policy Backdrops

Until independence, the Education system of the Indian subcontinent was governed mainly by Colonial agenda of the British rulers. The Charter Act of 1813 signified the beginning of East India Company's responsibility for educating Indians, but the idea got momentum after Macaulay's Minutes of 1835. The purpose was to create clerks to assist colonial administration of the country— 'Not quite but white'.

The country felt the need of identifying its educational priorities after the recommendations of the Inter-University Board of Education and subsequently the Government of India appointed three commissions: University Education Commission (1948-1949), Secondary Education Commission (1952-1953) and Indian Education Commission (1964-1966) (Ravi, 2021). Eventually the first Education policy came up in the year 1968. Indian Parliament had passed the second policy, i.e., National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986 which was later modified in 1992. Both the policies advocated for free and compulsory education to children but the latter one was more focussed on the school system as a whole. The NPE (1986) first recognised the necessity of early childhood education with integration of ideas that are 'child oriented' and, 'focussed on play and the individuality of the child' (National Policy on Education-1986, 1986). The NPE-1986 had a long-lasting influence on the Indian educational context. It had several important recommendations like pointing to new dimensions through the distance education system in the light of national unity and development. But there were several issues like much expectation from the community help, not fixing targets in different areas of reforms, recommendation of the multiplicity of authorities in education, not envisaging any linkage between primary, secondary and higher secondary schools etc. (Ravi, 2021). One very important step was taken by the Indian Parliament on 12th December, 2002 the 86th

Constitutional Amendment. This law has provided for the Fundamental Right to Education for 6 to 14-year-old children.

In 2005, National Curriculum Framework was published by NCERT[3] which advocated a 'shift away from teacher-directed toward learner-centred approaches across grade levels' (Gupta, 2022). This document (along with different position papers, policy documents and frameworks) provides a proper sketch of pedagogical practices to be followed at school levels. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, 2009) had also been published to suggest reformations of the teacher education system so that qualified teaching staff could be made available for different grade levels of the school education system.

The latest policy, National Education Policy 2020 has proposed new frameworks regarding structures, functionality and governance of the Education system of India. At the school level it has included ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) with goals e.g.: 'Education thus, must move towards less content, and more towards learning about how to think critically and solve problems, how to be creative and multidisciplinary, and how to innovate, adapt, and absorb new material in novel and changing fields. Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable. The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values, in addition to science and mathematics, to develop all aspects and capabilities of learners; and make education more well-rounded, useful, and fulfilling to the learner. Education must build character, enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring, while at the same time prepare them for gainful, fulfilling employment.' (National Education Policy, 2020)

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[3] National Council of Educational Research and Training — 'is an autonomous organisation of the Government of India which was established in 1961 as a literary, scientific and charitable Society under the Societies Registration Act.' (Wikipedia)

Some points are there that should be mentioned in this context. Any minute discussion about the recommendation of the policies would certainly reveal their borrowings from the global platforms. For example, the notion of NCF-2005 (National Curriculum Framework-2005) was guided by the United Nations agenda of 'Education for All' and the 'Millennium Development Goals' for 2015 (Gupta, 2022). Similarly, NEP 2020 has also been influenced by the UN's agenda for 'Sustainable Development Goals 2030' (especially the Goal 4). The influences can also be judged under the veil of much discussed contexts of Globalization that have created new hierarchical systems changing the priorities of the society. The market economy has been changing day by day creating different demands towards the education systems for its own sustainability. The neoliberal waves of globalization emphasise on 'the individual and minimises the role of the government, shifting away from collectivism towards competition' (Gupta, 2022). The ideas of globalization are manifested through worldwide discourses of education and their impact on local decisions and policy formulations. Such borrowings, according to F. Vavrus, sometimes create 'third spaces of pedagogical hybridity' featuring layers of different power dynamics in the society (Gupta, 2022).

III. School Education & NEP-2020: Priorities & Initiatives

There are certain 'positive' decisions taken up by NEP 2020. In fact, these decisions are needed to focus on the core competency areas of learning. The inclusion of preschool stage in (3+2)+3+3+4 schooling structure is an effort to focus on to regulating 'an unorganized, unregulated, and even profiteering part of education, sometimes with very unhealthy linkages to primary school admission' (Bhaskar, 2021). Extension of Mid-Day-Meal scheme to the preschool children is another important part of the policy that will address the issue of malnutrition among children.

The policy also focuses on developing the ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) where it proposes a National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education

(NCPFECCE) for children up to the age of 8 that is to be prepared by NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training). The policy also proposes to strengthen Anganwadi centres for ensuring universal access and training of current Anganwadi workers. The proposal of flexible course structure and focus on vocational courses are important decisions and these will ensure holistic development of pupils. It is noteworthy that the Kothari Commission also devised a 10+2+3 structure so that students could opt for vocational courses. NEP 2020 also promotes the bag less day's initiative in schools during this time they are to be exposed to avocation of their choice, focussing all-round development of the pupils.

Achieving universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025 is another important priority of NEP-2020. In this regard effective and established methods like 'one-to-one peer tutoring' can definitely be a good option. Such methods need experienced teachers and NEP has also pointed out the need for the same. Setting up of 'National Book Promotion Policy' is another area to ensure 'the availability, accessibility, quality, and readership of books across geographies, languages, levels, and genres.' (National Education Policy, 2020)

The policy also recognizes the importance of digital advancement; hence, it states that a separate unit will be established in the MHRD[4] to look after the requisites of Education for high schools and higher education both (Nagar & Mangla, 2021). It also relies on the 'three-language formula' for teaching in all the states.

For ensuring better achievement of learning outcomes on each stage, classroom transactions will shift, towards competency-based learning and education. Cross curricular pedagogical approaches should also be promoted with care. The assessment process will be made aligned with the learning outcomes, capabilities, and dispositions as

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[4] Under the NEP 2020, the name of the Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) has now been changed to Ministry of Education (MoE).

specified for each subject of a given class. The policy also advocates for 'semester or any other system that allows the inclusion of shorter modules, or courses that are taught on alternate days' to assure greater flexibility. To monitor the competency levels by judging the learning outcomes of different classes a separate body named PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) has to be developed. In this connection the importance of the National Achievement Survey (NAS) is of worth mentioning.

In order to reduce the coaching culture, the Board examinations will be made easier. The NEP-2020 opines that Board exams 'will test primarily core capacities/competencies rather than months of coaching and memorization; any student who has been going to and making a basic effort in a school class will be able to pass and do well in the corresponding subject Board Exam without much additional effort'. The examination system will also be made available to the students twice a year providing scope for improvements and the 'best-of-two attempts' should be promoted in this case. (National Education Policy, 2020)

IV. Where the Dreams are crossed by Chasms...

NEP 2020 is no doubt a visionary document but the very first thing that poses a question is about funding the institutions. For private schools there may be some ways. But, in cases of government schools and government-aided schools, there are no such ways to raise sufficient funds. Philanthropic contribution might be of little help but it is unreliable and the pandemic has exposed the weaknesses of financial models propounded by NEP 2020 (Dev, 2021). Another important issue is that NEP proposes for 6% GDP allocation so far as the education system is concerned. But it has also been done by previous Commissions and never implemented. After the pandemic crisis both state governments and the central government are facing problems like resource crunch and as an obvious result of it the share of government in the school education system is diminishing. So, making allocation for 6%

of GDP[5] seems really far from reality within the preferred time-limit as proposed by the policy and can better be termed as a fantasy in this present-day context.

The politics of language again become another aspect of this NEP 2020. It has adopted a three language policy and also it excludes Mandarin from the list of foreign languages that are to be offered at the secondary level. One issue regarding language use at school level had been reflected in the draft of NPE in 2019 where it advocated in favour of making Hindi a compulsory language but 'backed off only in the face of stiff opposition from all the Southern States' (Bhaskar, 2021). In this case West Bengal also played a big role in opposing the effort of making Hindi a compulsory language at school level. In fact language learning paves new avenues both psychologically and practically. There should not be any political involvement favouring a particular language as India is defined by its diverse linguistic and cultural flavours. These issues associated with language politics have directly linked with the power dynamics which might undermine the core principles of Indian Constitution. The idea of '*Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat*' initiative to cater knowledge about remarkable affinities among native languages to students is indeed a good thinking; but there is a need for proper planning and expertise without which this would not be a success. Scientific discussion regarding the linguistic principles should be properly inculcated and the usability of such ideas should be properly deciphered and acknowledged also. The exclusion of Mandarin points to the recent strained relation between the countries but this is not sufficiently logical to exclude a language that has a rich history. For practical purposes also, learning a language like Mandarin might create more opportunities for employment as China is one of the largest countries in Asia and thus controls different segments of global business.

Gupta (2022) has firmly pointed out a world division between the Global North and the Global South mentioning, 'the terms... do not

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[5] Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the standard measure of the value added created through the production of goods and services in a country during a certain period. (OECD.org).

refer to geographic directions but distinguish Eurocentric frames of thinking from other ways of knowing and being' (Gupta, 2022). Such propositions open up areas of discussion where politics is associated with the neoliberal economic ideas of globalisation. Neoliberal economic ideas tend to reduce the influence of the State on the economy through privatization in an austere manner. The borrowings from the Global North in shaping educational goals might be problematic as large-scale exploitation might take place. This can also be interpreted in terms of postcolonial ideas where there is a 'continuing contest between the dominance of the colonisers and the subsequent legacies that were created' (Gupta, 2022 & de Alva, 1995). It may lead to a grey space of cultural hybridity (Gupta, 2022 & Bhabha, 1994). In this regard the inclusion of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) in the preschool curriculum can be mentioned here. NEP 2020 has asked for a preparatory module of 3 months at the beginning of Grade 1 (and also illustrated in the NIPUN-FLN document). This idea is associated with play based and child centric pedagogical approaches and has its root in America's pedagogical practices. It advocates for planning a curriculum based on apt experiences 'in conjunction with the teacher's understanding of individual children and their socio-cultural context' (Gupta, 2022), thus opening up areas regarding teachers' expertise. Such ideas should necessarily involve a proper monitoring mechanism that should be implemented at the grassroot level to ensure a proper learning-teaching process. But in most of the time no such initiative is to be found and educators are left to continue their teaching at their own will.

And the discussion continues...

It should be pointed out that several drafts have been prepared till date since 2016 and there had been provisions for providing inputs before the publication of the policy document for which a separate link had been provided on the MoE's (Ministry of Education) official website. In this way, the government has already provided opportunities to seek different takes on different segments of the policy. In parliamentary democracy there should not be any such step which does not involve concerns of different segments or issues of the country as it

might face severe barricades. The language issue is one such point that may ignite controversies throughout the country. Again, in states like Goa where there are more than one script for the indigenous language and 'does have possibilities of destruction of mother tongue in the scripts of the minorities' (Ferrao, 2021). In this connection the centralized National Book Promotion Policy and School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (SQAAF) have also been criticised despite being good concepts as it might be governed by the priorities of dominant ideologies diminishing the voices and priorities of the locals. More focus should be given on such segments of the policy to ensure the 'unity in diversity' which is the prime flavour of the design of India's democracy.

The concept of wellbeing which has been highlighted throughout the policy document both explicitly and implicitly is also to be understood differently across diverse cultural worldviews and different priorities. Thus the policy borrowing should be made more rational taking into consideration the local contexts. In this regard one point needs to be discussed, i.e., access to digitalization. Gupta (2022) has stressed on this matter as 'The policy assumes that all schools are urban schools, all children have access to technology...' (Gupta, 2022). The vast geographical and cultural diversities should be taken care of that has not been found in the NEP 2020 policy document. Here one may point out the changed perspectives after the initiation of COVID-19's waves which has already pointed out the necessity of digital platforms and a transformation to a parallel education system through digitalization has already taken place. But a more constructive framework should be needed in this connection to ensure quality education and proper participation of pupils from every nook and corner of the society.

In case of teacher recruitment, centralized teacher eligibility tests might undermine the share of state governments in planning purposes. A common framework or guidelines should be there from which states could devise their own norms. It is indeed necessary as there are several regional language medium boards that have demands and constraints. The same is true regarding the National Achievement Survey (NAS).

This survey focuses on students' learning and 'would be conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) as Assessment Administrator for Grade 3, 5, 8 and 10 students of State Govt. schools, Govt. Aided schools, Private Unaided recognized schools and Central Government schools.' This idea might get opposing feedback as the attainment of learning goals is indeed different in different areas or through different mediums of instructions. If CBSE ignores these diverse experiences and continues to determine learning goals according to its own criteria, then the practicability of NAS could be of abrupt nature. Thus, a more careful consideration regarding the designing of future policy documents should be needed which is a just demand of both the time and the democratic principles.

V. Concluding Remarks

Majority of the controversies come to the forefront as there are several ambiguities in NEP 2020. But it should be remembered that every policy requires a time-frame to judge the effectiveness of it. In the case of educational policy documents, several issues of intertwined nature will always be there which have to be addressed properly by the other policy documents published afterwards. This, by dint of its own merit, ensures the variegated form of a successful democratic system that respects dissenting voices coming out from different strata of the society.

The pedagogical issues are to be addressed here but the infrastructural upgradation should be the very first priority. The principles like ECCE and choice-based curriculum need a more clarified framework in the Indian context defining the learning outcomes in proper fashions. Thus a complete guidance could definitely be designed to pave roads for successful curriculum transactions.

Here the role of NCERT would be great as the organisation has had the responsibility to frame school level curriculum according to the visions envisaged by NEP 2020. And revision of these curricular areas should be performed at a regular basis— both at the central and at the state levels. Proper mechanisms should be implemented to monitor the

implementation of different curricular aspects. Here the resources of the govt. and govt. aided TEIs could be of good use. Less inclusion of teachers in implementation of different govt. schemes would be of great help. Govt. should also consider issues like 'allowing educational institutes to raise funds and expanding to cash-rich areas – not just where the government wants them to go' (Bhaskar, 2021). Such initiatives would like to solve fund related issues in near future.

The visions are of good nature but require more discussions before its implementation. In this regard the states should ponder more to play their part. Recently West Bengal has formed a ten-member committee to evaluate the recommendations of NEP 2020 and other policy documents to find out the need of preparing the state's own education policy. Such initiatives have also been done by Maharashtra and Kerala to make a more comprehensible implementation.

Lastly, it is important to say that dissent is needed to make realistic and valid progress as it questions the established or predominant viewpoints, thus paves a way to find out loopholes in the system that informs the progress as a whole. It may seem anti-establishment at the beginning, but it also ensures a comprehensive growth. The chasms are there (actually right from the beginning when the conceptualisation of one nation came forward). But that does not confirm the views of the majority. In a country like India, local issues should be taken care of when formulating national policies in the fields of Education. Hence, proper inculcation of differences is a must have criteria from which benefits could be drawn for the years ever after.

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Chapter - 14

SCHOOLING DISASTER MANAGEMENT: A QUEST FOR CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

*Subhradipta Sarkar**
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I. Introduction

A disaster is an unexpected, unintended, accidental event that has a detrimental effect on life, property, livelihood or industry which goes on to cause long- term changes to human communities, ecosystems, and the environment. As per the Disaster Management Act, 2005, (hereinafter 'DM Act') "disaster" occurs due to "natural" or "man-made" causes, accident or negligence resulting in "substantial loss of life or causing sufferance to humans or damage to, and destruction of property, or damage to environment or degradation of it, and is of such a nature or magnitude as to be beyond the capacity of the community of the affected area".[1] India has remained an extremely disaster-prone country for a long time and the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT), developed by Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Belgium, reveals that India has consistently remained in the top-three positions in the world in terms of the number of disasters, mortality and damage caused,[2] as more than 55 per cent of the area of land in the country is vulnerable to earthquakes, droughts affect 70 per cent of the land under agriculture, whereas floods affect 12 per cent and cyclones affect 8 per cent. A major

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1   The Disaster Management Act, 2005, No. 53, s. 2(d).
2   EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database, Université Catholique de Louvain, Brussels, Belgium, http://www.emdat.be/ (last visited May. 30, 2022).

amount is spent by the government and aiding agencies on relief and rehabilitation schemes every year.[3]

'Disaster management' has long become a buzzword and it means a "continuous and integrated process of planning, organising, coordinating and implementing measures which are necessary or expedient for both preventing, mitigating or reducing the risk of any disaster as well calling for capacity-building affecting prompt and effective post-disaster response leading the way for reconstruction of the affected community".[4] The need to reduce the increased impact of disasters in a systematic manner is gaining recognition and commitment among the Governments worldwide. The impact of disasters as mentioned above ranges from loss of infrastructure to loss of lives. Researches have established that disaster risk reduction (hereinafter 'DRR') efforts are far less expensive than the actual cost of life involved and the cost of overcoming the consequences. According to the World Bank and the US Geological Survey, a $40 billion investment in the 1990s would have saved a global loss of $280 billion. According to a Red Cross research on DRR in Nepal, DRR measures resulted in a 15:1 cost-benefit ratio in avoided expenses.[5]

There are many examples across the world that show that the children are far more vulnerable to disasters than adults but at the same time they can be influential and effective communicators of disasters too and many times the lessons learnt at school are later

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[3] Diwakar Singh, *Disaster Management Education in India: Issues and Challenges*, 2nd Disaster Risk & Vulnerability Conference, held on (April 24–26, 2014 at the Department of Geology, University of Kerala, Trivandrum), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334458682_DISASTER_MANAGEMENT_EDUCATION_IN_INDIA_ISSUES_AND_CHALLENGES (last visited May. 30, 2022).

[4] DM Act, s. 2(e).

[5] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), PLAN AND SAVE THE CHILDREN, DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES: A GUIDANCE NOTE FOR EDUCATION CLUSTERS AND SECTOR COORDINATION GROUPS GLOBAL SCHOOL SAFETY COLLABORATION PLATEFORM, http://gpss.vizzuality.com/assets/resources/disaster_risk_reduction_in_education_in_emergencies.pdf. (last visited May. 30, 2022).

transmitted to home. One of such glaring examples is that of a child named Tilly Smith, who remembered her Geography lectures on tsunami, after observing the receding water before the Tsunami. She was able to save the lives of 100 visitors on a beach in Thailand in December 2004.[6] This example goes on to reflect upon the fact that by incorporating topics in the curriculum, children learn and are able to work on it and put it to practical use.

Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereinafter 'Agenda'), which India endorsed in 2015, aims to provide "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone" by 2030.[7] In order to fulfil all of the important aims and goals of the Agenda, the whole education system must be rebuilt to support and nurture learning. As per the National Education Policy, 2020,[8] (hereinafter 'NEP') the curriculum and pedagogy in schools incorporating learning should be holistic, integrated, enjoyable and engaging. It has specifically emphasized on imparting basic training in disaster response and first-aid to be included in the curriculum.[9]

In this chapter, the authors explain the need to incorporate DRR into school curriculum and discuss the various approaches through which this may be achieved. The chapter refers to various national and international legal instruments and practices in this regard. Moreover, the post-pandemic world demands such integration of DRR into the school curriculum and educates our future citizens, if we aspire to live in a more disaster-resilient society.

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[6] Kerry-Ann N. Morris and Michelle T. Edwards, "Disaster Risk Reduction and Vulnerable Populations in Jamaica: Protecting Children within the Comprehensive Disaster Management Framework" 18(1) *Children, Youth and Environments* 399 (2008).

[7] UNITED NATIONS, GOAL 4 FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: QUALITY EDUCATION UNITED NATIONS, https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/(last visited May. 30, 2022).

[8] Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVT OF INDIA (2020), https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf> (last visited May. 30, 2022).

[9] *Id.* para 4.28.

II. Need for Incorporating DRR in School Curriculum

DRR is a framework of aspects and elements that are taken into account with the goal of reducing the vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society in order to avoid (prevention) or limit (mitigation and preparedness) the negative effects of hazards and allow sustainable development. DRR is a development and cross-cutting concern. DRR is a multi-faceted process that includes political, technical, participative, and resource mobilization elements. As a result, DRR necessitates the government's collective understanding and efforts, as well as those of various stakeholders in society, including academic institutions. The most common method of DRR integration is infusion, which involves weaving disaster-related themes and ideas into specific educational curriculum. For the most part, DRR is included into a small number of topics, usually the physical sciences.[10]

In the education sector, DRR is a systematic strategy to incorporate disaster risk assessments and disaster risk reduction measures into development planning. It is a set of actions, processes, and attitudes that are required to reduce underlying vulnerabilities, improve preparedness, and strengthen the educational system's resilience.[11] DRR should be addressed in a methodical manner across the curriculum and at all grade levels. Prevention, mitigation, vulnerability, and resilience building must all be considered in addition to the fundamental science of risks and safety procedures. It ensures that the educational system continues to evolve in a positive direction and that all students have access to high-quality education.[12]

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[10] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNICEF, DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN SCHOOL CURRICULA: CASE STUDIES FROM THIRTY COUNTRIES (July. 17, 2012), https://www.preventionweb.net/files/26470_drrincurriculamapping30countriesfin.pdf (last visited May. 30, 2022).

[11] *Id.* at 20.

[12] Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management, INTEGRATING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION INTO SCHOOL CURRICULUM: MAINSTREAMING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION INTO EDUCATION PREVENTIONWEB (2007), https://www.preventionweb.net/files/4006_ADPCEducGuidelineConsultationVersion3.1.pdf (last visited May. 30, 2022).

Natural disasters cannot be prevented because they are beyond anyone's control, but they can be mitigated by evaluation, planning, and reaction readiness. Natural hazards cannot be averted since they are beyond anyone's control, but they may be prevented from becoming disasters via evaluation, planning, and reaction readiness. As schools are the most effective venues for disseminating knowledge and imparting skills, the deliberate use of knowledge, education, and inventiveness in the field of disaster management might be tremendously beneficial in developing good disaster mitigation programs.[13] Schools can play a significant role in educating masses. Making DRR a part of school curricula to raise awareness and improve knowledge of dangers may therefore prove beneficial in saving the lives of family members and community members in disaster circumstances.

III. Recognition of DRR within the United Nations Framework

Disaster mitigation is a step toward preserving development advantages before a disaster occurs. Because we all know that prevention is better than cure, the disaster management policies of the agencies concerned should be designed to minimize the harm caused by catastrophes.[14] History has always gone on to show that when the communities have been prepared to face disasters, lesser damage has been caused, in terms of life, environment and property.

A world conference on disaster risk management takes place once in every decade in Japan. In 2005, the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, the *Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015*[15] on building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters was adopted by 168 Member States of the United Nations

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[13] United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, GUIDINGN PRINCIPLES FOR NATIONAL PLATFORMS FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (2007).

[14] *See Supra* Note 1.

[15] UN General Assembly, *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*, para 18(ii), *adopted at World Conference on Disaster Reduction, Hyogo, Japan (January 18 – 22, 2005)*, UN Doc. A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, res. 2. (January 22, 2005).

which resolved to "use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety at all levels" as one of its action priorities. In fact, the HFA enumerates various key activities towards fulfilling its objectives under Priority 3 that includes education and training and to fulfil the priority. HFA supports the inclusion of DRR knowledge in relevant portions of school curriculum, as well as the use of formal and informal channels to spread information among children; to include DRR as an integral part of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2015), as well as the implementation of local risk assessment and disaster preparedness programs in schools and institutions of higher education.[16]

When the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) dedicated the 2006-2007 World Disaster Reduction Campaign to the subject "Disaster Reduction Begins at School", school safety was a primary focus.[17] This subject was chosen because it aligned with HFA Priority 3, and schools are the finest venues for establishing collective values, making them the perfect location to promote a culture of disaster avoidance and resilience.[18] DRR in education include increasing disaster preparedness in teaching and learning, promoting school safety and disaster management, and providing safe school settings.[19]

Another Framework worth mentioning is the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*,[20] which is a successor of the Hyogo Framework. Increased public education and awareness, according to the Sendai Framework, can help minimize

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[16] *Id.* priority 3.

[17] UNESCO, DISASTER RISK REDUCTION BEGINS AT SCHOOL: 2006-2007 (2006).

[18] Disaster Preparedness European Commission's Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection Directorate General (DIPECHO) – Bangladesh, *School Safety: Towards Building Disaster Resilient Schools in Bangladesh Newsletter* 4, 1, August, 2010.

[19] UNESCO, DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR) IN EDUCATION: AN IMPERATIVE FOR EDUCATION POLICYMAKERS, (2006).

[20] UN General Assembly, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, para. 19(k), *adopted at Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Sendai, Japan, March 14 – 18, 2015*, UN Doc. A/CONF.224/L.2 (April 7, 2015).

catastrophe risk. To achieve this goal, the Framework views children and youths as "change agents", and so they should be prioritized in DRR, which may be aided through school curricula.[21]

IV. Approaches of Inclusion in the Curriculum

If limited infusion is used, DRR is more likely to be exposed to the cultural assumptions and constraints of the small range of topics in which it appears, which is largely Geography and Natural Sciences. Such infusion is frequently based on the availability of pre-existing disaster-related themes in the curriculum, resulting in a haphazard rather than a comprehensive or goals-based approach to DRR curriculum development initiatives. The concept of holistic integration can assist students in overcoming subject-specific barriers by providing a variety of lenses through which DRR can be viewed and executed. The problem is how learning is integrated across different subject contexts.[22]

There are a range of different approaches to integrating disaster risk reduction in the curriculum. Some of the major approaches with their merits and demerits are discussed with instances across the globe.

A. Textbook-Driven Approach

This strategy involves the curriculum arm of the Government, working in collaboration with the national and international non-governmental organizations, to revise the textbooks of particular subjects thereby including and widening the pre-existing treatment of hazard-related or disaster-related issues.[23] The revision of the textbooks in this approach is done centrally and the adoption of the updated or revised textbooks at the ministerial level ensures that hazards and

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[21] *Id.* para. 36(a)(ii)
[22] *Supra* Note 8.
[23] *Id.* at 23.

disasters would be treated in a defined manner in the State schools. A textbook-based classroom with no doubt, increases a student's passivity and prevents the students from engaging themselves in interactive and experiential learning which is seen as a means of promoting engaged and participatory citizenship.[24] There isn't much of a need for teacher training in a textbook-based method because there isn't much of a struggle in grasping their typical roles.

The textbooks have come to drive the curriculum, and one would wonder why the textbook's role in the curriculum-making process is given so little thought. The emphasis on written words as the primary medium of education, as well as the way many teachers were educated, is congruent with the use of textbooks and the workbook.[25]

A need for training is felt in the textbook-based approach when there is a need to vivify its use for a specific national intention thereby introducing innovative approaches to handle the material. It is quite doubtful as to whether this approach alone would be able to deliver the skills, disposition and behavioural outcomes which disaster risk reduction education needs. The textbook-approach is no doubt a 'one-size fits all' approach but is not reflective or responsive to local cultures and the need to address local conditions of hazard.[26]

Bangladesh is a good illustration of this strategy, as it has a highly centralized school curriculum and uses the same textbooks throughout the country. The National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB) has incorporated disaster and climate change-related themes (i.e., hazards, vulnerability, and preparedness) into various textbook chapters, including Bangla, English, Social Science, and General Science for grades 5 to 7, and the chapters are updated and

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[24] *Ibid.*
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] *Ibid.*

reviewed on a regular basis.[27] The Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE) in India has also adopted a similar method.[28]

B. Pilot Project Approach

The pilot approach is a combination of producing new materials be it learning material or developing training manuals along with coming up with new pedagogies and innovative methods of assessment, and training of instructors. This strategy comprises successive phases of pilot application in schools in a few districts in combination with successive and widening waves of teacher training. The pilot programs create opportunities for inspired, enthusiastic involvement with committed leadership, a sense of ownership and also allow scope for innovation.[29]

This pilot approach collects data to assess if the material of the curriculum is useful, relevant and valid and it mostly consists of testing the designs. This method also ensures the teachers and schools that the curriculum is ready for publication.[30]

Pilot curriculum development projects established centrally might be used as a smokescreen to avoid making genuine curricular changes. When they are done, everything they have accomplished is placed on hold. Projects conducted by non-governmental groups or institutions tend to focus on pilot development later and belatedly, taking into account the movement to scale and the costs incurred which results in a stalled development and hiatus of the project.[31]

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[27] *Id.* at 126.

[28] *Supra* Note 3 at 2.

[29] *Supra* Note 8 at 23 – 24.

[30] Albin Caibog, Pilot testing, Monitoring and Evaluating the Implementation of the Curriculum Fairgaze (PowerPoint presentation), https://www.slideshare.net/alvincaibog/pilot-testing-monitoring-and-evaluating-the-implementation-of-the-curriculum-38313120?subscription_success_banner=show (last visited May. 30, 2022).

[31] *Supra* note 8 at 24.

Nepal takes the pilot project method, developing/modifying national education policy and putting it in place in such a way that schools are recognised as vital centres for disaster awareness and disaster education.[32]

C. Centralized Competency-Based Approach

'Competence' is basically the ability to complete a task, role or a duty properly. It incorporates skills, personal values, knowledge and attitudes which are based on work experience and learning by doing. The competency-based curriculum can be defined as a curriculum approach that stresses on the development of the capacity to accomplish (competence) tasks in accordance with certain performance standards, so that the students can master a set of skills.[33]

This method of curriculum building starts with a central government organization engaging with key stakeholders to establish the fundamental messages of DRR-related concepts, knowledge, and important skills that should be included in the curriculum.[34] It follows subject-specific choices and activities, as well as grade-level curriculum creation, module development in conjunction with material development, and teacher training. Expansion plans for additional courses and grade levels are either alternated or purposefully planned. An emphasis on skills and rapid progress in this technique may lead to a 'quick fix' approach in which more time-consuming aspects of DRR curriculum development, such as pedagogical development, attention to values-related problems, and incremental teacher training, are disregarded.[35]

In Armenia, UNICEF collaborates closely with schools to transform them into DRR learning centres. The State Academy of Crisis

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[32] *Supra* note 8 at 182.

[33] Ayu Juliana Nasution & Vivi Arianti, COMPETENCY BASED CURRICULUM SLIDESHARE, https://www.slideshare.net/Blackpaper97/competency-based-curriculum-133638909. (last visited May. 30, 2022).

[34] *Supra* note 8 at 24.

[35] *Ibid.*

Management, a higher education institution specializing in disaster training and preparedness, educates them. DRR-specific lessons are incorporated in the State curriculum and UNICEF assists in the development of materials for training.[36]

D. Symbiosis Approach

This disaster-related curriculum approach focuses on the 'family resemblance' between DRR and other cross-curricular efforts that concern social awareness and equipping individuals for active citizenship in the mainstream. This strategy leads to a cross-curricular dimension which is already there to prove as a means of DRR learning. It is easier to include more strands into the already available cross-curricular dimensions and accompanying professional development which dimensions can provide further depth, width, and substructure to understandings of disaster risk reduction education's aims and scope. The core aims and imperatives of DRR may be diffused or forgotten if they are united with other cross-curricular elements. Myanmar is an example of a country that uses life skills education as the major vehicle for DRR education, i.e., following the symbiosis approach.[37]

E. 'Special Event' Approach

The DRR events may have a catalytic and galvanizing effect on the development of formal curriculum. The use of this approach to promote DRR can provide a boost to the curriculum, pedagogy, and improvements in schools, along with strengthening school-community partnerships. This method offers a practical answer for teachers who think that they are unable to incorporate disaster-related learning into a

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[36] UNICEF, DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN EDUCATION: GOOD PRACTICES AND NEW APPROACHES (2013), https://www.preventionweb.net/files/37137_drrgoodpracticesandnewappraoches.pdf (last visited May. 30, 2022).

[37] *Supra* Note 8 at 25.

curriculum that is already burdened. By providing more arenas, this technique helps students to put to practical use the DRR learning.[38]

Fiji is a standout example of a variety of extremely creative student-centered methods to DRR that strive to incorporate students' personal experiences into learning. It also shows how DRR curriculum may be supplemented with a 'special event' approach.[39]

V. Scope of DRR within National Disaster Law and Policy Regime

Although the DM Act does not expressly address school safety problems, the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), established under Section 42 of the DM Act, has a few responsibilities in the area of disaster risk reduction in education. It includes the creation of disaster management training modules and instructional resources; raising awareness among stakeholders such as college or school instructors; and planning, organizing, and facilitating courses, conferences, lectures, and seminars to raise understanding of the issue.[40]

The National Policy on Disaster Management[41] advocates the extension of disaster management training at all levels of education, including schools, with a prime emphasis on practical requirements as a part of capacity building. While the inclusion of disaster management in the CBSE curriculum is a positive move, the National Policy needs that all the State governments follow suit and extend the topic to all schools connected with their respective State Education Boards. Furthermore, the National Cadet Corps and Girls Scouts may be formed and taught to instil leadership traits and crisis management skills. As a result, disaster education will emphasize the development of

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[38] Matthew J. Muldoon, HIGHER EDUCATION EVENT – A CASE STUDY AND SPECIAL EVENT APPROACH DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP@UNLV (2018), http://dx.doi.org/10.34917/1752398 (last visited May. 30, 2022).

[39] *Supra* Note 8 at 94.

[40] DM Act, s. 42.

[41] NDMA, National Policy on Disaster Management 2009 (2009).

a culture of readiness and safety, as well as the implementation of school disaster management strategies.[42]

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the country's primary disaster management organisation, issued the Guidelines on School Safety Policy,[43] which calls for a reasonable change in the timetable of a school and curriculum to make safety awareness a routine activity.[44] It is noted that discussions, street plays, drawing competitions, quiz competitions, essay/ slogan writing, and demonstrations for children on local hazards and risk reduction with relevant knowledge and life skills are proven methods of immersing youngsters in a meaningful way in local dangers and risk reduction with applicable information and life skills.[45] Teachers must be trained in order to guide students in the appropriate route and for this the SDMAs can help the Department of Education to integrate DRR education into the formal curriculum of schools by collaborating with them and providing training inputs.[46]

Moreover, the State level Education Authorities may instruct District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs) to integrate school safety training in teacher training curricula. DIETs may, for example, provide engaging modules for teacher training on DRR issues, child-friendly and intellectually challenging content for inclusion in the curriculum, and peer trainer training at the school level The Block Education Officer may provide training to teachers and principals on school safety issues and encourage cross-learning across schools on safety initiatives. Students and teachers who are well-trained and knowledgeable will foster a 'culture of safety' in the greater community to which they belong,[47] and it would be the result of a

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[42] *Id.* at 33 – 34.

[43] NDMA, NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES: SCHOOL SAFETY POLICY (February, 2016), https://ndma.gov.in/sites/default/files/PDF/Guidelines/School-Safety-Policy.pdf (last visited May. 30, 2022).

[44] *Id.* at 7.

[45] *Id.* at 17.

[46] *Id.* at 21.

[47] *Id.* at 22.

collaborative effort between educational institutions and other disaster-related entities such as the State and District Disaster Management Authorities (DMAs).[48]

VI. Government Initiatives in Mainstreaming DRR in School Curriculum

The Government of India is focusing on incorporating disaster management into regular school events, such as morning assembly or school functions, as well as educating teachers in disaster management. Disaster Management was introduced as a separate subject for classes VIII, IX and X as a part of CBSE curriculum in the year 2004-05. Module development, a circular on school safety, awareness raising in the form of art contests, exhibits, debates, and essay competitions, and textbook development were among the efforts undertaken by the Board.[49] However, all State Education Boards are not on the same page in this regard.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) proposed establishing a district-level School Safety Advisory Committee, which would be chaired by the District Magistrate and convened by the District Education. Other members would include representatives from school boards, school principals, police and fire officials, and others. This would be supported by a "school safety team", which would comprise members of the school management committee, parents, and students in addition to teachers and staff.[50]

In India, e.g., the State of Odisha, is extremely vulnerable to cyclones almost every year because of its geographical location and it has also faced the brunt of COVID-19 so the State Government

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[48] *Id.* at 18.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] National Disaster Management Division (NDMD), MHA, Government of India, SCHOOL SAFETY: A HANDBOOK FOR ADMINISTRATOR, EDUCATION OFFICERS, EMERGENCY OFFICIALS, SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS (December, 2014) http://www.ndmindia.nic.in/ WCDRDOCS/School%20Safety%20Version%201.0.pdf (last visited May. 30, 2022).

decided in making the pandemic and disaster management a part of the school curriculum with the hope that it would enable and empower the younger generation with adequate knowledge and skills to handle if any situations arise in a better manner in the future.[51]

The NEP has suggested that "learning should be holistic, integrated, enjoyable, and engaging". The transformation should be from "rote learning" to "real understanding". It emphasizes that experiential learning would be adopted, consisting of hands-on learning and with explorations of relations among different subjects.[52] Children must learn about disaster management in a way that does not burden them; in fact, a creative approach may help kids become more aware of their surroundings while also providing insights into DRR and preparedness, emergency relief, and long-term recovery.[53]

VII. Conclusion

Notwithstanding the fact that various national and international disaster management instruments have advocated for the holistic approach incorporating DRR in the school curricula, we have a very long path to travel in that direction. On one hand, the pandemic has provided a renewed interest in preparing us for a disaster; on the other, the NEP has reinforced the importance of practical components in real learning. The NEP has already provided us with an apt opportunity to assimilate academic discourse with real world learning through professional guidance. Furthermore, such an approach will also strengthen India's international commitments made at Hyogo and Sendai. The above discussion also demonstrates that various countries have adopted approaches in integrating DRR in the school curricula.

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[51] Jagriti Kumari, *Students need early introduction to pandemic and disaster management*, TIMES OF THE TIMES OF INDIA, June 15, 2021, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/ education/news/students-need-early-introduction-to-pandemic-and-disaster-management/ articleshow/83540539.cms(last visited May. 30, 2022).

[52] *Supra* note 6 at 11 – 12.

[53] Manu Gupta, *Build resilience and empathy*, THE HINDU, September 19, 2020, https://www.thehindu.com/education/importance-of-introducing-disaster-management-in-school-and-college-curriculum/article32647505.ece> (last visited May. 30, 2022).

We can also take ideas from those initiatives. In India, we are mostly limited to textbook-driven approaches. We have to move ahead to adopt other approaches. However, it would require more training and collaborations with DMAs. This would also have budgetary implications. Therefore, carrying forward the noble intentions of NEP would require political will and necessary budgetary allotments. The CBSE or State Boards may work with NIDM and work out their own model. There is a need to have coordination between the DMAs and the educational departments not only to formulate the syllabi of disaster management courses but also to train teachers and guide students through mock exercises. The State governments should also work together with the Central government to ensure that they meet some minimum standards of curriculum with regional variations because of pre-eminence of certain localized disasters. Odisha is already setting an example to follow suit. Training of teachers shall also be made compulsory because ill-trained or ignorant teachers would not be able to help the students. If we aspire in building a 'culture of safety' we should not miss to catch these school kids young because they can become the 'disaster managers' of the community and make the communities disaster-resilient in future.

Chapter - 15

SCHOOLING LANGUAGE AFTER NEP

Syed Nurus Salam*

I. Introduction

The question of medium of instruction at school level in India has been examined several times before and after independence. There is no doubt that the medium of instruction should be in the mother tongue, especially at school level. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF) prescribes use of mother tongue in schools. National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) went beyond that, encouraging use of local language or mother tongue at home. The teachers should use it at the time of informal interaction so that the student should have a feeling of inclusion in classroom interaction. In addition, NEP prescribed the establishment of Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) for production of 'Teaching Learning Material' through translation from all Indian languages including marginal languages.

NEP-2020 is no doubt a significant policy document formulating the policy of language education. It became more significant in diverse groups of population with different languages and dialects in India. There are also mixed language populations which make the condition more difficult. Twenty-two Indian Languages are included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. This number may increase in future.

NEP-2020 articulated the inclusion of backward, disadvantaged and hardest to reach groups of population. Also, NEP emphasizes education in the mother tongue at the primary level in both

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Government and private schools. But it is not easy as there are more than 850 colloquial languages and dialects in India.

English is one of the most used official languages in India but it is interesting to note that in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, English was not included. India has witnessed privatization of school education with English as medium of instruction.

In fact, English often than not emerges as the most frequent language in urban schools. English has already been accepted as the main language globally and seventy-odd countries beyond the United Kingdom have accepted English as their official language.

So, the given contradiction lies here that keeping English aside, NEP-2020 has deliberately ignored the reality in school education in India. Therefore, it can safely be said that English could not get its legitimate importance in NEP-2020.

II. Language Education at Pre-Independence India

There is a long existing historical debate regarding English education at school level in India originated by British Rulers. English had established its place as a taught subject as well as medium of instruction also through the landmark minute known as *Macaulay's Minute* in 1835. The then British Governor General Lord William Bentinck gave responsibilities to prepare the specific direction regarding English education in time ahead as there was an ongoing conflict between so called '*Anglicist*' (those who were in favour of European education through English language) and '*Orientalist*' (those who were in favour of Indian education through Indian languages). It is also true that conflict still exists in the Indian Education scenario even after two centuries. That biased one dimensional Minute which got concurrence from Lord William Bentinck. The minute deliberately stated that intellectual improvement of those - who went for higher education, had been restrained by some languages not by vernacular. Ignoring all Indian languages, the most controversial Minute gave a

definite deliberate direction that English had to be the only language. According to Macaulay "A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia". Not only that he identified the objective of Indian education which was clear in his own words- "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, ... a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population." (Macaulay's Minutes) There is no doubt that Minutes hammered the Indian languages. As a result, traditional local languages were ruined with the passage of time.

Since Britishers conquered Bengal first and Calcutta (presently Kolkata) was their Capital City, the evolution of 'Babus'or 'Bhodrolokes (civilized) was witnessed as the products of that education policy. The British rulers ridiculed Indian culture through those Babus, who are predominantly found in the Bengali literature of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and other writers of Bengal.

Subsequently, 'Downward filtration theory' of Wood's Despatch in 1854 acted as the last nail in the coffin of Indian education running at that material point of time. English became the language of ruler ('Rajbhasha'). Unfortunately, that has continued in the independent India till now. NEP-2020 is meant to play a game changer.

III. Three-Language Formula in NEP 2020

The Three-language formula is not a new policy. Kothari Commission 1964 report elaborated that for cognitive development language learning is very important to a child which should be in his/her mother tongue and according to the report, the ultimate aim was to promote the Indian languages and development of national

harmony. Three language formula was advocated to bridge the language gap in multilingual countries like India. The report specified the formula as follows: Mother Language or regional language would be First Language. In Hindi speaking, the second language will be any modern Indian Language. In other states it will be Hindi. Third Language will be English or any modern Indian Languages other than first and Second Language.

The NEP-2020 stated that no language would be imposed. The policy only gives importance to the need to learn Indian languages. There is a long-lasting debate that the learning of their languages at an early stage will make the study more difficult for the student. To study their language needs more time and energy and creates an excursive burden to the children. Moreover, in India, the care of linguistic minorities and marginalized groups has transformed into four language formulas since the children of those groups have their own colloquial, dialect or local languages.

The problem became more complex as most states have been created on the basis of speaking language issues which can create ethnic division and conflict.

IV. Language Policy in NEP and the Political Ideology of Indian Pride ('*Osmita*') and Nationalism (*Jatiyotabad*)

Whether the English Language can act as a bridge among the different Indian languages? This is a debated question that attracts attention from the educationist. The perception of a large portion of common Indian people is affirmative. They think that English is the panacea. But it is well established in pedagogy that children should be taught in their mother tongue at an early stage. English may be included at a later stage. The state like West Bengal already experienced it. In the early Eighties, the teaching of English subjects was excluded from the curriculum of Primary Schools in all non-English medium schools in West Bengal. But on the continuous demand and movement of people as well as the political parties of

West Bengal, English was brought back as a taught subject at the end of the last century; by courtesy, report of the Pabitra Sarkar Commission in 1995. But it is beyond confusion that the teaching-learning process in phonemic experiences is the sound association of letters motivating the young children to recognize words along with decoding learning.

In NEP-2020, there is very little space for English. The report concentrated on ancient heritage, knowledge and spiritual thoughts available in India. All foci in the document are on Indian native language as the medium of interaction in school level resulting in almost rejection of English medium indirectly. In this context, it cannot be denied that almost all the earlier education commissions, committees and adopted education policies gave importance to education based on Indian rich heritage and also tried to get rid of British hangover and Indian languages experienced a long run battle against English to establish them. So, like other earlier commissions, in NEP-2020, Indian languages have been given much importance. But NEP-2020 has overlooked the education of English as a language or education in English medium; ignoring the present contextual reality. The policy inclined to the ideology towards the pride of India which is one dimensional.

According to educationists, English has been neglected as it is driven by the political ideology of Indian pride ('*Osmita*') and nationalism (*Jatiyotabad*). Originated from the same ideology, Sanskrit has been included as one of the modern languages in the Hindi-speaking States of Northern India. Sanskrit has been given importance in the policy document. There is no doubt that Sanskrit is a very rich language and the mother of many languages. But there is little justification to rate Sanskrit on the top and giving less importance to all other classical indigenous languages like Malayalam, Oriya, Tamil, Telugu. In recent years, the Government of India spent on Sanskrit almost twenty times in comparison to the classical language together. But it is not acceptable that Sanskrit is the only language which can revive the pride and cultural wealth of ancient India. There is also another debate regarding the utility to learn a language by the common

student which is no longer a speaking language. The option should be open to those students who are interested to learn Sanskrit. NEP-2020 has not given any clear specific logic behind the importance of Sanskrit in comparison to other Indian classical languages. Moreover, the policy document observed silence on the future career prospect for those learned in Sanskrit.

V. Conflict over Imposition of Hindi

It is beyond any controversy that education should be in the mother tongue at least at school level. There might be some doubt about its implementation. It is true that the language of a population carries the culture and custom of that population but in India with large diversity there is obviously a need for a common language. From an academic viewpoint, there is no doubt that children should learn through their mother tongue but a language would automatically emerge as a connecting language. That language can create a bonding among the people of different population groups. According to people of the Hindi belt, the common language should be Hindi. Whereas, the non-Hindi speaking states have disagreements with Hindi as a common language. This is a very old conflict that originated in pre-Independence India and has continued in post- Independence times. Irrespective of all political parties who ruled over the union government so far, they have advocated for Hindi as a language of India. Recently the same voice has been raised by the present Home minister of India. The constitution makers also thought in this line. Article 351 of the Constitution gave a clear directive for development of Hindi language and articulated that it is the duty of the central government to promote Hindi. They felt that Hindi as a Hindustani language might take its place as a common language among the different language speaking Indians of diverse cultures. It would promote the integrity of the nation. So, all the Union Governments tried to develop Hindi. The conflict has originated from the imposition of Hindi over other Indian languages and ultimately has become a political question. Thus, the language education policies turn into a political issue in India. Though NEP 2020 has declared that there will

be no imposition of Hindi but its 'three language formula' again ignited the long existing controversy. As a result of that, the 'three language formula' has not been accepted nationwide. It is true that the 'three language formula' has been accepted again by the NEP 2020 with a strong intention to create a sense of nationalism and to minimize the linguistic and cultural gap among the Indian population. On the contrary many state governments believe that it is not the only way to unite the diverse India. More state autonomy regarding language education policy would be the more acceptable option. Recently the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu rejected the 'three-language formula'. Like Tamil Nadu, some other states hold that 'three-language formula' is a weapon to introduce Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states. After those states, Hindi speaking states are not ready to incorporate other Indian languages.

On the other side of the coin is that the entire country is suffering from the aggressive rise of English medium schools through private schools. In recent years, many State Governments have adopted policies to establish Government English medium schools to meet the demand of common people aspiring for English medium schools for their children. So, the controversy is not limited to Hindi vs non-Hindi, English vs Indian Languages. It became multi-dimensional.

VI. The Challenges of Education in India in Mother Tongue

A. Languages of Migrated Children

There are several migration patterns in India which are very complex in nature. The migration takes place for different causes like economic, political, religious, technological, natural disasters etc. There may be more than one cause clubbed together. It is very difficult to provide education in their mother tongue. As an example, it is experienced that when children move from northern States to southern States in a scattered manner or vice versa, it is very difficult to teach those children in their mother tongue. This problem has occurred even in the migration within the same State where the languages of migrated people are not the same as the place of migration. Along with other parts of the

country, the entire North East region has been witnessing socio-cultural tension due to migration which makes the task of teaching in the mother tongue of the children more difficult.

B. Education through Mother Tongue versus English Medium School

NEP articulated that students will get education through their mother tongue at least in the early stages. Obviously the policy took an attempt to give importance to the Indian languages. Ideally it is welcomed. But at present there is a craze for English medium education. English is the preferred language not only among the upper class, this craze also penetrates in the families of middle class, lower middle class and even in the daily wage earners. There are people with many mother tongues in the first growing cities in India. As an example, the residents of Delhi speak in Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam and other Indian languages. There are refugees from Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and even from Afghanistan. Moreover, Hindi Speakers have different dialects. It appears from the book 'People's Linguistic Survey of India' published by Ganesh Devy that people of Delhi speak in 300 languages. Other cities have the same type of problem. The perception of the parents across the Indian societies that the future of the students be built through English Medium education. It is a fact that the students from other than English Medium Schools find themselves in trouble when taking admission in top Management, Medical and Engineering Institutions in India. In the job market, the people with English Medium are getting preference especially in multinational companies.

VII. Present Scenario of English Medium Schools

There is no doubt that that learning can be possible through a student's mother tongue or at least their recognised State languages. But there should be strong will of both Union and State Government and whole hearted effort with a comprehensive short and long term plan to implement it. It is true that in most of the educational policy documents, there is strong advocacy for education through the mother tongue but it has not been enforced with all effort. The mushrooming of English

medium private schools in every nook and corner of our country during the last two decades makes those policies an empty idea. Everywhere one can see a small board advertising an English medium school. Most of those schools are suffering from poor infrastructure and teachers without professional qualifications as prescribed by the National Council of Teacher Education. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Act (RTE Act) 2009 prescribed the infrastructure and teachers' academic qualifications including professional qualifications. It was enacted that substandard schools are to be closed down but very rare occasions are found where those substandard schools have been closed down by the Government. In the recent pandemic period these schools are fighting for their viability as a large portion of students are coming from the background of lower income groups. But it is observed that these schools are coming up again as there is demand from guardians. On other hand, the local vernacular medium Government schools where almost everything is free including midday meals failed to attract the guardians. There is a need for looking at it deeply. From the latest report (2019-20) of SSA (Samagra Siksha Aviyan erstwhile Sarva Siksha Aviyan) generated from UDISE (Unified District Information System) it appears that more than 25% children in our country are studying in English medium schools. These pictures are also prominent in the northern states despite the fact that the State and Central Government has been pleading continuously for Hindi Medium or Local language medium schools. The fact is that more children in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab are going to English medium schools rather than to the schools of State Languages. In northern India, other two states like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are witnessing a speedy increase of students in English Medium. It is prevalent in Southern States and Union Territories also. In two Telugu speaking states, namely, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, only 35% of students are studying in Telugu medium. That percentage is also diminishing rapidly.

In the last half decade, the percentage of English medium students is increasing very rapidly in other southern states also. In Tamil Nadu that is 57.6%. Malalayam medium school children decreased to 35% but it was 46% in 2014-15. Among the Southern States, only

Karnataka has 53% of the Kannada medium school children. This picture is not a stable picture as the English Medium schools are growing at a rapid pace in Karnataka also.

It is true that the number of children in English Medium is growing day by day across the country but still that increase is smaller in Hindi speaking States like Maharashtra, Odisha and Tripura in respect to other states. But the most pertinent question is how long this picture will persist? The answer is obviously negative. In Rajasthan, more than three times of the students have applied in respect to available seats in Government.

According to a recent UDISE report, West Bengal has a different picture: only 5.3% of students are in English Medium, more than 90% of students are in Bengali medium and the rest in other languages like Nepali, Urdu, Hindi, Santhali, etc. Indeed, there is a debate that this UDISE report could not include many private English medium schools in West Bengal. There is public pressure for English medium schools including the economically weaker sections of West Bengal; though guardians belonging to this disadvantaged group are unable to send their children to the private English medium schools due to financial constraints.

Section 12 of the RTE Act of 2009 provided that the responsibility of schools to admit children belonging to weaker and disadvantaged section of neighbourhood in class I upto 25% of the total enrolment of the class. An unaided school will be reimbursed expenditure incurred by it to the extent of per child expenditure incurred by the state of the actual fees of the schools whichever is less. The implementation of this provision of the RTE Act has also failed in the State due to apathy of private schools, hesitation of guardians and the inefficiency of the public Schools.

As a result of the continuous pressure for English medium schools from the common people across all sections of society, the government of West Bengal decided to provide English Medium Model

Schools in remote rural Bengal including educationally backward blocks. In 2018-19, an English medium section in each class was opened gradually in 100 existing schools of State vernacular. There are many State Government schools in Bengali/Urdu/Hindi medium schools are suffering for want of students in big cities as the children in the feeder zone are going to English Medium private schools. Those non-viable schools have been transformed into English medium schools by the State Government. In 2019, the Government of West Bengal declared that there are one thousand-odd English Medium schools covering every corner of West Bengal in a phased manner. The Government of West Bengal is setting up English medium madrassas in rural areas. Fourteen English medium madrassas are already functioning. Taken together, the number of English-medium schools and availability of the seats therein appears insufficient; compared to the total student crowd; something much more than the logistics of education in English.

VIII. Conclusion

In the present context of Indian school education, the focus on mother tongue, home language and indigenous languages are under the scanner. That is very difficult to implement. According to many educationists, this is one directed policy generated from the political ideology of the present ruling Government. That has been reinforced when there is a claim for only Hindi as a connecting language. The resistance for learning Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states- in five southern states in particular- have cropped up. But NEP-2020 should take a realistic view on present language policy. In the era of Globalization and Information Technology, English must not be overlooked. NEP-2020 should consider in what condition the standing and the shareholders of the Indian community wants to move in what direction no policy can be adopted in idealism ignoring the reality of the diversity of this large country. At the outset, proper education irrespective of any medium even in English Medium is able to find the glory of India. That had already been experienced in British India. During the Renaissance era in the nineteenth century, led by Raja Rammohan Roy in Bengal, many freedom fighters, cultural leaders and

statesmen were educated in the British curriculum and in the English medium, some of them were also educated even in England. But even those educated people fought to bring back the Indian Language, culture and freedom. So, it is not always correct that an education through Indian languages is the only means for the preservation of the cultural glory of India. All the education commissions and education policies in post independent India including NEP 2020 pleaded for education in India but failed to show the definite direction which would be acceptable to all stakeholders and remained almost silent about the way the running English education would be replaced by Indian languages in an effective manner. Those documents behaved like one eyed dear ignoring the demands of the common people. This hypocrisy makes the education in indigenous languages uncertain. So, NEP-2020 might identify the final path by judicious blending of the idealistic and the pragmatic ideas addressing the reality on the ground level.

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NEP 2020 AND THE CHALLENGES BEFORE SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

*Pratyush Ranjan Deb**

I. Introduction

Northeast India is the easternmost region of India. It comprises eight States namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The Seven Sister States is a popular term for the contiguous states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura prior to inclusion of the state of Sikkim into the North Eastern Region of India. Till the year 1999-2000, in this region, 40.04 percent rural population and 7.47 percent urban population were below the poverty line. The root causes of persistent poverty have been the inadequate development of human resources in the region. After 1999-2000, these states have achieved good progress with respect to literacy rate. A good number of educational institutions have been established in these states. The National Education Policy of 1986 (revised in 1992) envisaged provision of free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality up to the age of 14 years before the beginning of 21st century. But this goal is yet to be realized by taking proper steps. Most of the schools of the North Eastern States are still running with basic infrastructural deficiencies. It is observed that there is also a lack of programmes for training of people for acquiring appropriate modern skills and vocational education in the schools of this region. The course curricula demand inclusion of the basic human values like dignity of

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labour, honesty, sincerity, fellow-feeling, respect for human rights, gender equality.

The NEP 2020 has been crafted to ensure that it touches the life of each and every citizen of India. The new policy proposed the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, its regulation and governance to create a new system that is aligned with the inspirational goals of 21st century education. The unfinished agenda of the National Education Policy of 1986, modified in 1992, is properly addressed in the NEP of 2020. This policy appropriately dealt with alignment with the global sustainable development goal, an integrated yet flexible approach to education, facilitating transformation of the education system, facilitating national development. The vision of the NEP 2020 is clearly mentioned as "The National Education Policy envision an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower." So, we can hope that all the weaknesses identified in the area of school education in India will be addressed properly by the regulations of the NEP 2020. The present status of education in North East India will also develop to ensure the process of making India a global knowledge superpower.

II. NEP 2020 and School Education in North Eastern States of India

The New Education Policy suggested restructuring of school education in a 5+3+3+4 pattern covering ages 3 to 18 years. A strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from the age of 3 is also included in this policy. As per the NEP 2020 the new pedagogical and curricular structure of school education will be:

1. Foundational Stage: 3 years (ages 3-6) Anganwadi/ Pre-school/ Balvatika and 2 years (ages 6 – 8) school education of Class I and Class II.

2. Preparatory Stage: 3 years (ages 8-11) school education of Class III, Class IV and Class V.
3. Middle Stage: 3 years (ages 11-14) of school education of Class VI, Class VII and Class VIII.
4. Secondary Stage: 4 years (ages 14-18) of school education of Class IX, Class X, Class XI and Class XII.

But till today most of the states of North Eastern Region of India are not sufficiently empowered to adopt the new structure of school education due to their financial and infrastructural limitations. The present status of number, level and pattern in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim is presented in the table given below. It may appear as a difficult task to the appropriate government to implement the new structure of school education with different types of limitations within the target period.

TABLE – 1
Number of Schools in North Eastern States of India by Level and Pattern: 2020-21

Country/ States	Primary (I-V)	Upper-Primary (VI-VIII)	High (IX-X)	H.S. (XI-XII)	Total
India	774742	442928	151946	139520	1509136
Arunachal Pradesh	39000	9160	12114	3069	63343
Assam	43591	11789	7556	2267	65203
Manipur	2426	1013	961	253	4653
Meghalaya	9313	3554	1452	375	14694
Mizoram	1496	1529	702	198	3926
Nagaland	1156	785	581	197	2719
Sikkim	687	310	149	117	1263
Tripura	2547	1230	688	469	4934

Source: UDISE+ 2020-21

The NEP 2020 ensures that all students at levels of school education will be taught by passionate, motivated, highly qualified, professionally trained and well equipped teachers. All teachers will have academic and professional support within a motivating environment and culture. The high respect for teachers and the high status of the teaching profession will be revived and restored. The NEP 2020 also suggested that recruitment of teachers will be rigorous, impartial, and transparent to find the best teachers, representing the high regard and respect in which they and their profession are held by society. Teachers must be given constant opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations and advances in their profession. But till now there are shortage of trained teachers, shortage of educational aids in different schools in the country. This is also true for the schools of different states in the north eastern region of India.

TABLE – 2
Number of Teachers by Classes Taught (All Types of Management): 2020-21

Country/ State	Primary (I-V)	Upper-Primary (VI-VIII)	High (IX-X)	H.S. (XI-XII)	Total
India	3538121	2146179	1150750	666629	9696245
Arunachal Pradesh	9439	5274	2474	1037	24102
Assam	149863	86423	45110	18835	370341
Manipur	18529	6356	4907	3623	45221
Meghalaya	22847	15799	8627	2659	56150
Mizoram	8059	8353	4257	1863	23688
Nagaland	12163	9087	4066	1522	31805
Sikkim	6585	2692	1579	4589	14332
Tripura	16221	6524	5635	1413	36534

Source: UDISE+ 2020-21

It is a fact that the number of students per teacher is a significant indicator which influences the quality of classroom instruction. From the given table (Table 3) it can be observed that during the year 2020-21 the overall pupil-teacher ratio in the schools of the states of North East India is much better than the national PTR.

TABLE – 3

Pupil – Teacher Ratio (PTR) by Level of School Education: 2020-21

Country/State	Primary (I-V)	Upper-Primary (VI-VIII)	High (IX-X)	H.S. (XI-XII)
India	26	19	18	26
Arunachal Pradesh	13	9	11	16
Assam	21	14	11	17
Manipur	13	10	9	15
Meghalaya	20	14	12	18
Mizoram	15	8	9	13
Nagaland	12	8	10	17
Sikkim	7	9	10	11
Tripura	18	21	14	12

Source: UDISE+ 2020-21

The position of the states of North Eastern Region of India with respect to the pupil-teacher ratio was brighter in comparison to national level statistics at all levels of school education during the academic year 2020-21. But the shortage of trained teachers at all levels of school education will be a significant hurdle in the area of implementation of NEP 2020.

Dropout rate indicates the negative side of educational administration. It shows the internal inefficiency of the system of education. The given table (Table 4) reflects the statistics of school dropouts in the North-Eastern States during the year 2020-21. Dropout rate generally increases with movement from lower classes to higher classes. This is also the fact with respect to school dropouts of the North Eastern Region of India. In the North Eastern Region, dropout rates exhibit a decreasing trend over the years but still remain very high at the

secondary level classes (classes IX-X). To reduce the number of dropouts, the NEP 2020 suggested a new curricular and pedagogical structure for school education. Students will be given increased flexibility and choice of subjects to study across the arts, humanities, sciences, sports and vocational subjects. There will be no hard separation between arts and science streams or between academic and vocational streams. To motivate the students and to attract the young minds, school education will develop scientific temper, aesthetic sense, communication, ethical reasoning, digital literacy, knowledge of India and knowledge of critical issues facing the community and the world.

TABLE – 4
School Dropouts in North-Eastern States by Level of Education and Gender: 2020-21

Country/ State	Primary (I-V)			Upper-Primary (VI-VIII)			Secondary (IX-X)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
India	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.6	2.3	1.9	14.9	14.2	14.6
Arunachal Pradesh	9.8	6.8	8.3	8.3	7.0	7.7	9.5	11.7	10.7
Assam	4.2	2.3	3.3	6.0	3.2	4.6	29.7	32.1	31.0
Manipur	9.0	8.2	8.6	4.3	3.6	4.0	9.4	9.5	9.4
Meghalaya	8.7	6.1	7.4	10.2	7.7	8.9	28.9	27.1	27.9
Mizoram	8.5	7.6	8.1	7.0	3.4	5.2	22.4	17.9	20.1
Nagaland	6.6	5.2	5.9	4.8	2.8	3.8	25.6	23.3	24.4
Sikkim	2.1	0.2	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.4	20.8	23.9
Tripura	4.5	3.8	4.2	3.8	2.8	3.3	31.3	28.3	29.8

Source: Unified District Information System for Education plus (UDISE+): 2020-21

Availability of different facilities in the school system has significant psycho-physical impact on the students. The table (Table 5)

shows that the essential and basic infrastructural facilities are not available in most of the schools of the North Eastern States of India. It is also a reality with respect to the schools at national level and schools of other states. At the national level, 16.08 percent schools are functioning without functional electricity connection, 4.83 percent schools are functioning without functional drinking water facility, 4.29 percent schools are running without functional toilet facility and 14.42 percent schools are running without library facility for the students. Tripura has achieved a brighter condition with respect to infrastructural facilities in comparison to many states of North-East India. But till 2019-20, 60.67 percent schools were running without electricity connections, 19.49 percent schools were functioning without pure drinking water facility, 4.11 percent schools were running without toilet facilities and 39.21 percent schools were functioning without library facility.

TABLE – 5

Number (percentage) of Schools by Availability of Different Facilities: 2020-21

Country/ State	Total Schools	Functional Electricity Connection	Functional Drinking Water Facility	Functional Toilet Facility	Library Facility	Schools with Functional Computers
India	1509136	83.92	95.17	95.71	85.58	39.88
Arunachal Pradesh	63343	47.21	64.24	77.03	42.59	25.69
Assam	65203	57.62	89.61	84.98	84.14	13.73
Manipur	4653	53.36	96.56	82.1	25.47	32.15
Meghalaya	14694	22.9	39.22	75.28	14.14	14.34
Mizoram	3926	80.8	90.27	95.67	81.78	49.96
Nagaland	2719	68.19	62.38	92.2	55.65	44.35
Sikkim	–	98.34	99.68	99.84	90.18	77.67
Tripura	4934	42.14	73.57	83.18	65.93	20.57

Source: Unified District Information System for Education plus (UDISE+): 2020-21

III. Conclusion

It is evident from the analysis of the findings that there are many remains to be achieved for school education in the states of North Eastern Region of India though the situation has been improving in the recent years. But there is still a long way to go on our journey. Dropout rates in the schools have declined but it still remains a matter of concern. Government should take necessary actions in this field. The schools in the state are significantly deficient in basic infrastructural facilities. Therefore, there is a need to make a proper plan of action for the development of basic infrastructural facilities in the schools at various levels in the states of North Eastern Region of India. The state governments need to provide all kinds of support for quality education in the schools. The goal of quality education cannot be achieved without proper nourishment of a huge quantity of schools at different levels.

It is our hope that the National Educational Policy 2020 will provide proper guidance to all the states of India to overcome different problems related to school education at all levels. Universal access to quality early childhood education, as advocated by the NEP 2020, is perhaps the best investment that India can make for our children's and our nation's future. The most important aim of NEP 2020 is to achieve access and participation in free and compulsory quality school education for all children in the age group of 3 to 18 years by 2030. The regulations of NEP 2020 advocated for bringing children who have been dropped out, back into the educational fold as early as possible and preventing others from dropping out from schools. It is also mentioned in the NEP 2020 that the number and coverage of schools and school-sections will increase at all levels in order to work towards achieving 100% GER from the Foundational Stage through Grade 12 for all children by 2030. At the school level the culture of assessment will be shifted from one that primarily tests rote memorisation and more formative, promotes learning and tests higher-order skills. All schools will develop credible mechanism to ensure that

they remain free of discrimination, harassment and intimidation especially for girl students.

The NEP 2020 mentioned that the Indian education system needs inspiring leadership which will also ensure excellence of execution. It is our hope that the proper execution of NEP 2020 under the inspiring leadership in different states of India will make a brighter future for our school education system in India.

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Chapter - 17

MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEARNING AND NEP 2020: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

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World-class institutions of ancient India, such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila and Vallabhi set the highest standards of multidisciplinary teaching and research and hosted scholars and students across backgrounds and countries. The Indian education system produced scholars like Charaka and Susruta, Aryabhata, Bhaskaracharya, Chanakya, Madhava, Patanjali, Panini and Thiruvalluvar, among numerous others. They made seminal contributions to world knowledge in diverse fields, such as mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical science and surgery, civil engineering and architecture, shipbuilding and navigation, yoga, fine arts, chess, and more. Indian culture and philosophy have had a strong influence on the world.

National Education Policy 2020, p.4, para 0.7

I. Introduction

National Education Policy 2020 (**NEP 2020**) has a number of features included into it especially for providing a boost to higher education in particular and the entire system of education in general.

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Some of the features include: focus on interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary learning; learning outcome-based curriculum framework; choice-based credit system; four-year undergraduate programs; multiple entry multiple exit; academic bank of credits; value-based learning and education; and enhancing employability of students are to name but a few of them. This piece is an endeavour to explore the imperatives of multidisciplinary learning and outcome as envisaged by NEP 2020.

NEP 2020 has many new features, some of which were already in existence in earlier models towards improving the quality of higher education in the country; like CBCS (Choice Based Credit System) and LOCF (Learning Outcome Based Curricular Framework). Each time a new model is brought into existence, the old staff in the higher education echelons find it not only difficult enough to implement but also develop a lot of resistance towards the change. Change is the law of nature, as society is always in a state of flux. With the development in the field of science and technology all other aspects of life of an individual changes and a new learning becomes imperative to make the educated lot relevant to the society, state and market. New technology necessitates a new kind of individual trained differently to handle the new technology. It brings changes not only in the field of natural sciences, but also in all other fields of learning like: management, law, business, medicine, social sciences, etc. Therefore, academicians manning higher education have to be experimentative on a continuous basis, always ready to change and adapt to new systems and methods of teaching and learning. Teachers must learn that they are students in perpetuity. Their most important USP is the ability to unlearn and relearn. Those teachers who fail to do so are bound to become outdated and misplaced, thereby becoming a burden within the system of education. Therefore, the change first needs to be within the teachers who are also policy-makers and policy-analysts, and into the process of preparing the future assets for the country.

The emphasis on 'multidisciplinarity' in higher education is not new. Almost since the beginning there has been an existence of a

culture of cross-disciplinary research and teaching. Gone are the days when a negative maxim was often quoted to denigrate somebody, i.e., "Jack of all trades and master of none." Now mankind has entered into an era where one has to be essentially a jack of all trades but of course master of one. It means higher education must endeavour to prepare social capitals which are having knowledge in most disciplines but he or she is having super specialisation in one discipline or area. Thus, in this era of super specialization one has to be also master of many other allied areas of discipline. NEP 2020 thus aims at crafting the course curriculum in such a manner that students are prepared to be analytical, innovative in their approach with tremendous faith, trust and grounding in the traditional Indian system of Knowledge and belief. Multidisciplinarity that is scheduled to be introduced at the behest of NEP 2020 is geared-up to raise the employability of the students. Hence, this makes it imperative to provide students an ambience of multidisciplinary learning.

II. NEP 2020: Major Emphasis on Multidisciplinary Learning

Multidisciplinary learning refers to the study of more than one academic discipline or profession. It offers flexibility to students to design degree programs that fit their professional or particular career objectives and personal interests. A student enrolled in one discipline may feel the requirement of knowledge of other disciplines to supplement and complement his skills as per the requirement of a particular job. Hence, under NEP 2020 the person will be empowered to make a basket of courses for himself or herself so that he/she makes himself/herself relevant to the job or market.

Multidisciplinarity also helps to develop: foundational communication, critical thinking, skills such as computers, text designing, computer applications etc. which may help a student to make himself or herself relevant to the market and employment opportunities in the field that they deem fit. NEP 2020 is geared-up in that direction.

NEP 2020 document has identified some major problems plaguing the current higher education system in the country that include: first, a severely fragmented higher educational ecosystem, with more than 50,000 higher education institutions (HEIs), a large proportion of which offer only a single programme and have fewer than 100 students and a large percentage of which are commercial enterprises in which little or no education is taking place; secondly, poor learning outcomes; thirdly, rigid separation of disciplines with too much early specialization and streaming of students into narrow areas of study among many others. (NEP 2020, pp. 30-31, para 9.4) A deeper analysis of these problems seems to be rooted into fragmentation and separation among disciplines. This is something that the leaders in HEIs will have to understand. Knowledge is a complete whole; it cannot be divided into water-tight compartments. Scientists may discover cloning, but social scientists will research and highlight its social, economic, political and cultural impact over a period of time. Only a social scientist would be needed to discover its after-effects in the long run and may argue whether this invention be allowed or not; even if allowed how and with what legal limitations it must operate in society, and of course many other aspects of the same.

Accordingly, NEP 2020 provides that the higher education system shall have multidisciplinary institutions of higher learning that offer undergraduate and graduate programmes, with high-quality teaching, research, and community engagement. All HEIs will move towards becoming large multidisciplinary institutions, with programmes across disciplines and fields—offered either in their institutions or through HEIs clusters. (NEP 2020, p. 32, para 10.4) It also mentions that by 2040 all HEIs shall become multidisciplinary institutions and shall have student enrolments in the thousands, for optimal use of infrastructure and resources. Since, this process will take time, all HEIs will firstly plan to become multidisciplinary; and gradually increase student strength to the desired levels (NEP 2020, pp.32, para 10.6).

III. NEP 2020: The Road-map for Multidisciplinary Learning

National Education Policy 2020 in its para 0.13 states that "The principles on which this Policy is based are: flexibility, for learners to choose their learning trajectories and programmes, and thereby choose their paths in life according to their own talents and interests; no hard separation between arts and sciences, between curricular and extracurricular activities, between vocational and academic, etc., to ensure the integrity and unity of knowledge and 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; emphasis on conceptual understanding (rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams), on creativity and critical thinking (to encourage logical decision-making and innovation), on ethics and human & constitutional values (e.g., empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, etiquette, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality and justice), and on life skills (e.g., cooperation, teamwork, communication, resilience); ... " (NEP 2020, p. 5)

Emphasis on multidisciplinary learning in higher education is not new. However, NEP 2020 seems to be a new turn to multidisciplinary learning for several reasons discussed later in the text. Several attempts have been made in the past to ensure inter-disciplinary and multidisciplinary learning but the extant mechanism developed so far largely failed. Whatever integration took place between and among different disciplines were on individual endeavours and not on institutional or collective basis. Accordingly, NEP 2020 is a renewed focus and emphasis to make it the part of the curriculum itself. However, the fact remains that still it would largely depend upon the quality and approach of teachers as to whether they are trained enough to adapt to multidisciplinary teaching-learning methodology or not.

NEP arranges phasing out single-discipline specific institutions. The arguments behind this phasing out are that knowledge is holistic and single-discipline specific institutes only provide for one-sided professionals. The policy-makers have taken serious note of continuous marginalization of humanities, arts and languages in the name of promoting professional education. One need to understand that a legal-professional may have expertise in procedural and substantive laws and would be equipped to earn his/her bread and butter. However, he/she largely exists as a legal apprentice. Legal knowledge with a strong knowledge-base would make the student a legal engineer and would be able to critically appraise the existing laws amidst changes taking place in society. The main vision behind promoting humanities, arts and languages is that it will bring these courses into the mainstream of the education process. Once these courses are into the mainstream it will facilitate cultivation of India-centric education which has become quite essential in view of the fact of growing differences within the social whole. The India-centric outlook among the students has become necessary to develop in them a feeling of pride in Indian culture, traditions and knowledge-system that has been existing since ancient days. India has delivered much relevant knowledge to the world which has been the base of further innovation and discovery. This has hardly ever been brought to light to different generations of learners. Following are the ways in which NEP 2020 aims at achieving multidisciplinarity.

Objectives of NEP 2020: NEP aims at developing scientific temper, courage and resilience power, creativity power and inculcating moral values so that the students are developed to create an inclusive, sustainable and equitable society. This could be achieved only when the institutions make the course curriculum that is truly interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary in nature. The focus of the NEP is to end the fragmentation within higher education and move towards the system of ancient universities like Nalanda, Takshila, Vikramshila etc which had a multidisciplinary approach and attracted students from all over the world to study under one roof.

Indianization of Learning: There has been systemic exclusion of Indian treasures of knowledge from the erstwhile curriculum. Hence, NEP 2020 endeavours to introduce the world of learning through the Indian Knowledge system that has been the treasure trove since ancient days but not much of research has been initiated in that direction. Thus, diving deeper into the Indian knowledge system would facilitate multi-disciplinary learning alongside imbibing the Indian value system among students and they may start feeling proud of the indigenous knowledge which stood marginalised since independence. NEP 2020 clearly highlights that knowledge has to be holistic and this could be made possible only through multidisciplinary learning and interdisciplinary research. However, it has to be rooted into the Indian knowledge system.

Increased Emphasis on Research: NEP 2020 emphasises in its curricular framework that last year of both undergraduate and postgraduate must be focused on research. This research would be appreciated if it is inter-disciplinary and socially as well as economically relevant, i.e., it must contribute towards social and economic well-being of the society and country. Research must not be meant for the mere sake of learning the art of research. Research would thus be oriented to be productive and beneficial for society, culture and traditions.

MEME—Multiple Entry Multiple Exit: NEP 2020 has enunciated Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit Points (MEME) in higher education which shall facilitate a student to enter and exit the degree program as per their convenience. A student admitted to four-year Degree Programmes is permitted to exit after one year with a certificate, after two years with a diploma, a Bachelor's degree after three years, and a 'Bachelor's with Research/Honours' degree after four years. Students have been facilitated with ABC (Academic Bank of Credit) to earn and deposit the same in the ABC so that they may enter the next level of course after a certain time as per their convenience. They can earn a degree as per the availability of time and resources at their end. The credit that they earn during different phases of their learning life shall remain safely deposited in their Credit Bank Account. This is a

mechanism which operates in a down-to-top model where rather than the University deciding curriculum for a particular degree, the nature of Degree; the students themselves would create a 'knowledge-basket' in accordance with prevailing need within market and society. Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) is thus a corollary of the MEME-based NEP 2020. All these put together make higher education highly interdisciplinary in nature, as students may choose to opt for courses across different streams including science, technology, humanities and liberal arts. This will also help students to get exposed to different facets of work, practice, culture, environment, during the course of their study. Once a student acquires a particular level of Credit, he/she shall be entitled to the equivalent degree.

Generic Elective: This was a part of the LOCF model too but its essence was probably misunderstood by many institutions. Departments have to offer Generic Elective (GE) courses for a defined number of Credits which shall be meant for students of other Departments belonging to different courses. These courses are not to be opted by the students of the Department that is offering the course. It also facilitates that students belonging to liberal arts stream may opt GE courses of natural sciences and students belonging to natural sciences may opt for GE courses offered by departments of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences streams. This will certainly facilitate students with inter-disciplinary exposure as students will now be compulsorily taking courses from outside their department for a certain number of defined credits by the department in their course curriculum.

Focus on Skill Enhancement: Each curriculum has been provided with some credits that shall be devoted to courses that are designed to impart skills and hone the existing skills if any among the students. Thus, this will raise the employability standards of students and the SEC (Skill Enhancement Courses) could be made possible only when multi-disciplinary learning is made possible as part of the curriculum itself. For example, a student taking an undergraduate course in economics may find that he is poor in language or mathematics. To improve his own quality and to excel in the job market may choose to

opt for an SEC in either of these areas. This would certainly add value to his quality and educational qualification.

Value Added Courses (VAC): An educated man must also be groomed to be a good man, who has a feeling of pride in his own culture, society and country as a whole. One who has a strong feeling of loyalty towards his own nation-state and fellow-beings. This shall be taken care of by the value-added courses which again would be possible only through multi-disciplinary endeavours. Hence, VACs would prepare students not only as good citizens but also as good human beings, which is the most essential requirement given the ever-rising materialism in the world or the market-society. Hence, NEP truly aims at building a global best education system rooted into Indian ethos which will have potentials to transform India into a global knowledge superpower.

The above-mentioned mechanisms are some of the structural arrangements by way of curriculum framework to ensure the initiation of multidisciplinary teaching-learning methodology. However, huge responsibility would rest upon the shoulders of teachers and policy-makers within institutions of higher learning. It makes it imperative that first training must be imparted to the teachers, otherwise NEP2020 too would fall into wrong hands and would proceed in wrong directions.

IV. Challenges towards Multidisciplinarity

Till date, higher education is in deep quagmire, where reckless experimentations are writ large on the name of innovation and learning indigenous knowledge system. First and foremost, the challenge would be to clear the debris. How the HEIs would do so is a big question mark. HEIs have become loathsome and burdensome as it has largely been treated as an employment destination till now. Accordingly, it is ridden with professionals who are a slur upon the name of higher education and have existed as creepers and parasites. Accommodating them even in institutions of primary learning would be a crime against students. Hence, the challenge is to weed out such elements from the institutions of higher education.

Secondly, either recruiting or training the existing teachers to adapt to the new system is going to be a huge challenge. Changing their orientation would not be a simple task. This is essential because they are going to be the vehicle of NEP 2020 implementation within the institutions of higher learning.

Thirdly, multidisciplinary education would turn out to be the bedrock of higher education in India, there is no doubt about it. Indeed, if it is implemented in letter and spirit, it will have the potential to change the landscape of education as a whole. However, it would be quite challenging for single-discipline specific institutions like IITs, IIMs, B. Ed. Colleges, Medical Colleges, Commerce Colleges, Law Schools etc. It would be quite a difficult task for such institutions to take on board courses, which have considerable components of humanities and arts. Some of the IITs have developed their School of Social Sciences and Humanities, hence they will be ahead of others while implementing NEP 2020 in letter and spirit. This of course will help them to brand themselves as institutes of modern India and attract students. However, how the others will adapt to NEP 2020 objectives is something difficult to predict at this stage.

Fourthly, the fact is that the School of Social Science within such elite institutions are at the lowest level of hierarchy. Yet, these institutions have higher status among the institutions of higher learning hence may be able to brand themselves as forerunners of NEP 2020 threatening arts colleges. Therefore, if it is allowed without providing a level playing field to arts colleges and universities, it would turn out to be detrimental to them and enrolment would severely suffer in these institutions which are often starved in terms of infrastructure and teachers. Therefore, the real challenge would be to accommodate the workforce of such colleges and institutions into the institutions of higher learning which are being geared-up to implement NEP 2020; or write them off from the system with some lucrative one-time package.

These are some of the prima facie challenges that are on the road ahead for implementation of NEP 2020. However, there are

many more challenges which the implementation process is going to face. Even if it is implemented, the challenge would be to make it proceed on the right path as envisaged in the policy document.

V. Imperatives towards Ensuring Multidisciplinarity

First and foremost, the need for making interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary learning happen in higher education is to establish quality institutions and improve the quality of those institutions which are well-established. Quality institutions could be established if it aims at good, thoughtful, enlightened, holistic, socially relevant, humanly conscious, creative, innovative creation and dissemination of knowledge and ideas. It could be established only when it focuses on quality education to enhance the market-relevant skills of students with strong knowledge-base and socially-relevant values. NEP 2020 draft regulations that have been circulated thus far are tuned to such ambitious changes to make positive differences to the education system as a whole. The spirit must be carried forward with seriousness.

Secondly, during the course of its implementation due care must be taken of all the stakeholders i.e., students, teachers, not-teaching staffs and the social milieu in which the institutions are located. Good teachers could be made only when they are groomed to be so. Good teachers would lead to making good students and good learners. Good learners would make the society good or a habitable place, where each individual would be able to enjoy their freedom in an equitable manner. Teachers will have greater responsibility of identifying students with singular interests or talents and encourage them, support them to give vent to their talent in furtherance of society.

Thirdly, during the course of its implementation the care must be taken at the stage of recruitment. Institutions of higher learning must not be allowed to become employment shops. A national recruitment agency of high calibre is required to be instituted to get rid of nepotism, and corruption prevailing in the system of recruitment. Recruitment of one wrong teacher ruins the career of at least 30 batches of students in

that particular department. Such teachers are not interested in teaching; moreover, they contribute towards the unmaking of the entire system of education as well as the institution. They resort to politicking and creating nuisance which leads to problems even for those teachers who are motivated to teach. As stated above, in fact, providing employment to such teachers even in primary level schools would amount to crime against students. These teachers become parasites within the system and eat-up the system gradually, thereby contributing towards gross unmaking of the entire system itself.

Fourthly, even the recruited teachers must be made to undergo a rigorous induction programme, which must be certified. It is during these induction programmes that they shall be trained into the features of NEP 2020 that they are required to implement or move forward with it. Teacher education at any level is the backbone of education. Hence, due care requires to be taken care of. Teachers are the first set of infrastructure within the education system upon which the entire edifice of the system is dependent upon. Hence, teachers must be first recruited with utmost care; and then be educated and inducted into the system of education with values and a strong knowledge base.

Thus, there are several pre-implementation preparations that are required to make NEP 2020 a success story. Training the trainers is foremost among them. At the same time, even the leaders within the HEIs require to be trained and enlightened about the aims and objectives of the NEP 2020 and the way they may proceed further. A team of leaders who are 'persons of integrity' may be identified and roped into the process of implementation. It is often said, well begun is half done.

VI. Conclusion

India, undoubtedly is moving towards becoming a knowledge society and knowledge economy. India must keep in mind the requirements of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0. Ensuing fourth generation industrial revolution is characterised by increasing the

proportion of employment opportunities for creative, multidisciplinary and highly skilled workforce. Hence, higher education of the country must re-adjust, revamp and re-energise itself at earliest possible to meet the requirements amidst changing scenarios. NEP 2020 is a great improvisation upon the 1968 and 1986 Education Policy. It is well in accordance with the changing time and society. It was long overdue to contextualise the existing education amidst tremendous changes in the field of digitalization, telecommunication, bioinformatics, artificial intelligence, cybertechnology, virtual world, Internet of Things, and robotics along with other recent breed of science and technology.

Undoubtedly, the vision of higher education that has been laid down in NEP 2020 is ambitious, futuristic, holistic and inclusive. Platonic philosophy claims that a good policy or law would be rendered redundant if the men handling it are wrong; on the other hand, if men are right even the worst of policies and laws would work in the right direction and would deliver the best. Higher education in the country has not been a great success thus far owing to a number of factors; wrong men at the right place have been one of the main reasons for the extenuated performance so far. Therefore, the need of the hour is that it must be entrusted to right hands so that even if there are any inherent anomalies in the NEP 2020 policy document then they are duly taken care of and the policy is implemented in the right earnest and is able to achieve the objectives for which it has been conceived. Putting it precisely, the major objective of higher education is to enhance the employability of the students by preparing them in consonance with the needs of the market, society and the country. Multidisciplinary teaching-learning methodology is the backbone of the same. Thus, the focus of the NEP 2020 must not get dislocated in the process of its implementation, else it would meet the same fate like the erstwhile education policies.

Merely high-sounding rhetorical statements, speeches and documents will not let the education happen in the right direction. It requires a different approach which is both serious and experimentative at the same time. NEP 2020 aims at making the

education system in general and higher education in particular increasingly articulate, dynamic, absorbing, innovative and inspiring to students and teachers. Thus, the onus lies on the implementation aspect of the policy to inculcate inspiration, motivation and innovation among teachers and students to adapt to the changes that are scheduled to be triggered into the system, especially the multidisciplinarity.

High hopes are there from NEP 2020. If it is able to bring about some robust changes, especially in those sectors of education where reform is badly needed it will change the landscape of higher education in the country. A healthy and well-knit step towards multidisciplinarity would precipitate a major change. However, if it goes the wrong way the entire idea and endeavour of interdisciplinary education and multidisciplinary learning would end-up as wishful thinking and rhetoric. The enhanced autonomy that is being accorded to the higher education institutions must be used in furtherance of the spirit of NEP 2020. It has tremendous potential to make India *Atma Nirbhar* (Self-reliant).

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NEP 2020 AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

*Anil Kumar Biswas**

"Literacy in itself is no education. Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning. By education I mean an all-around drawing out of the best in the child and man-body, mind and spirit."

Mahatma Gandhi

I. Introduction

Education is a dynamic process that starts from birth. Education is the mirror of society and the base of socio-economic development. It transforms human beings from ignorance to enlightenment, from underdevelopment to faster economic and social development. Education is a process of character building, strengthening the mind, and expansion of intellect (Biswas, 2017). According to Swami Vivekananda, education is the manifestation of perfection already in man. According to Tagore, Knowledge is liberation. The spiritually liberated man is the aim of Indian education. Education alone can create a climate and establish a state "where the mind is free, and the head is held high, where knowledge is free, where the world has not been broken up into fragments of narrow domestic walls, where words came from the depths of truth." According to these 'Mahatmas', education is a process that enlightens the human being. But in the era of liberalization education has been defined as per its

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market value. Now education has become more degree-based than knowledge-based. After the implementation of liberalization, privatization, and globalization education is now like a commodity like others. India as a welfare state has taken various initiatives for the quality education of its people. In that context, India has taken initiatives for universalization of quality education and making it relevant as per the demands of the market.

The history of Indian education stretches back to the ancient urban centers of learning at Taxila and Nalanda. The Nalanda University of ancient India was a celebrated centre of Buddhist learning. As a seat of highest intellectual activity, Nalanda had a rich and diverse curriculum in ancient times. Along with Astronomy, Metaphysics, and Grammar, there was an emphasis on Yoga shastra, Brahmanical Vedic texts, and Mahayana and Hinayana teachings. At the time of the ancient period, the University of Nalanda attracted scholars and students from outside India. Buddhist monks from China came to Nalanda in search of the original teachings of Buddhism. It was perhaps around 629 AD that Xuan Zang, the Chinese monk, scholar, and preacher visited Nalanda to search for knowledge of Buddhism. There are several references of scholars from Nalanda who visited China, Tibet, and other neighbouring countries to assist in the translation of Sanskrit scriptures into Chinese. At that time many works had been translated into Chinese and Tibetan to help spread the philosophy and doctrines of Buddhism and yoga along with Tantra. The Nalanda University has linked India and East Asia culturally and spiritually since the 12th century (Palit, 2009).

During the Medieval period, education was elitist favouring the rich. In that period the scope of education was very limited. Traditional education in India served a very limited purpose for a particular section of a society belonging to a certain cost. So before the British came to India there was a big gap in the education sector. Western education became ingrained into Indian society with the establishment of the British Raj. But primarily such pre-existing elitist tendencies were reinforced by the British government in the education sector in India.

The British government first introduced the modern education system developed by the three Presidencies (Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras). Since the early-twentieth century. The Indian National Congress has called for national education, emphasizing technical and vocational training. In 1920 congress initiated a Boycott of Government aided and government-controlled schools and founded several 'national' schools and colleges. In 1937 Gandhiji first raised his voice in favour of universal education. Nehru aimed that education for all and industrial developments were seen as crucial tools to unite a country. After independence, through school curricula, effort was made to generate inclusiveness and national pride. According to Chaturvedi, 'education policies of successive governments have built on the substantial legacies of the Nehruvian period, targeting the core themes of plurality and secularism, with a focus on excellence in higher education and inclusiveness at all levels' (Chaturvedi, 2009).

II. Education Policies in India: A Historical Overview

India has a long history in its education system. From the ancient period to till date the education system of India has maintained continuity in its style. Still we are proud of the past glory of our education system. But in the medieval period the education system was not too good. In that period education was an elitist fashion. Modern education started in India in the British period. Policy-based education was started in India in the early British era. Policies taken for education in India are discussed and divided into a) pre-independence policies and b) post-independence policies.

A. Pre-Independence Policies

The Britishers first came to India with the sole aim of ensuring flourishing trade. The only thing the British company owners were interested in was earning good profits and they knew very well that to cater to their administrative work they had to create a new educated class of Indians. They could help them with the administrative work and also accustom them to the diverse Indian values and laws which in turn would

help them to rule over the Indians easily. In that context, they prepared some policies for education in India. Major policies are taken in the British period for education as follows:

(i) Lord Macaulay's Minute (1835)

Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay arrived in India in 1834. When he arrived in India there was a controversy between the Anglicist and Classicists regarding the nature of the education of the Indian people. He always believed that English was better than Arabic and Sanskrit and gave more preference to the English language as a medium of instruction. On 2nd February 1838, he wrote a minute "Minutes on Education", which he wrote for Lord William Bentinck. He wrote that he believed that incorporating English into Indian education would bring a renaissance to India. He also believed in the 'downward-filtration' theory that creating a class of educated people would eventually educate the masses. The historical importance of Macaulay's education policy is that it champions the growth of western education in India; which was the necessity of then India. Another importance of the policy is it was the first step in the establishment of modern education in India (Lord Macaulay's Minute, 1835).

(ii) Wood's Despatch (1854)

Wood's Despatch is also called the 'Magna-Carter' of English education in India. Charles Wood rejected the downward filtration theory of Macaulay and suggested certain changes which must be implemented in the education sector. Following Wood's Despatch, three major universities were set up in Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. Bethune College was set up in Calcutta to promote women's education. Engineering Institute at Roorkee and Agricultural Institute at Pusa were also established.

(iii) Education Commission (1882)

Lord Ripon, the Viceroy of India appointed the Indian Education Commission under the chairmanship of Sir William Hunter in 1882. Sir William Hunter presided over the Commission to enquire into the working of the present system of public instruction and the further extension of that system on a popular basis. The recommendations of the Hunter Commission on education were a very important policy programme for the establishment of the modern education system in India. But the then British Indian government did not show interest to implement the recommendations of the commission.

(iv) Indian Universities Act, 1904

In September 1901, a conference was held in Shimla by Lord Curzon and some of the educational officers of the government and representatives of universities. The act was the outcome of deliberations held at this educational conference at Shimla and the recommendations proposed by the university commission of 1902. The act came into force on 1ˢᵗ September 1904. The main aim of the Indian Universities Act of 1904 was to improve the quality of university-level education (Indian University Act, 1904).

(v) Hartog Committee (1929)

The Hartog Committee which was chaired by Phillip Joseph Hartog gave some major recommendations to improve primary, secondary, and university education. The committee observed that an alarming number of children are leaving school before even completing primary education. The number of failures at the matriculation examination was also very high. The committee thereby suggested improving the quality of education instead of building numerous schools. It also proposed introducing various diverse courses in middle school and recommended improving the quality of education for women and minorities.

(vi) Sergeant Plan of Education (1944)

The British Indian government had set up a committee with 22 members to prepare a comprehensive report on education. The report was submitted to the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in 1944. The Central Advisory Board of Education accepted the report of the committee and recommended its implementation. The scheme is popularly known as the Sargent plan of education. The plan was the first attempt to develop a national education policy for India. For the development of education in India the committee made certain recommendations:

1. Committee recommended the promotion of pre-primary education in the form of nursery schools;
2. The pre-primary education was to be provided for free;
3. Primary schools were divided into two groups i.e. junior basic schools for the age group of 6-11 years and senior basic schools for the age group of 11-14 years;
4. Committee recommended a standing committee of the central advisory board to look after the implementation of the education scheme;
5. Committee recommended for three years degree course in university under graduation level;
6. Committee recommended standard education at the university level;
7. Recommended for provision of preliminary training of workers in technical high schools and then technical institutes for the aim of strengthening vocational education in India.

Report of the Sargent committee was the first national education scheme covering all aspects of education i.e. pre-primary, primary, secondary, university, and technical education

B. Post-Independence Period

India's leaders after independence, already had their hands full trying frantically to conceive and develop a national system amidst severe economic crises and rehabilitation of the displaced due to partition. Reeling under such uncertainties, it was obvious that sectors like education and health did not get the deserved attention. Abul Kalam Azad, the then education minister tried to resolve the complexities involved in conceptualizing a system of "national" education. In doing so he emphasized the need to depart from the system inherited from colonialism by rejecting its content and language of communication. He employed an interesting formulation to describe the then prevalent system: "A system shaped by non-nationals in non-national interest". The "main charge", he argued, "against the present system of education is that it has not led to the development of a national mind (Panikkar, 2011)." His main aim was to ensure that we imbibe the advancements in the field of education that the colonial system had to offer but at the same time make sure that our core values and traditions remain intact.

(i) Kothari Commission (1964-1966)

The Kothari Commission was headed by Daulat Singh Kothari and had provided several recommendations. The commission tried to link education with productivity and urged the government to increase the GDP percentage allocated for education. It recommended free and compulsory education for all and the adoption of moral and spiritual values in a regular curriculum. The Commission had set up 12 Task Forces and seven Working Groups to undertake a comprehensive and holistic study of the issues and problems of the Indian education system. The commission gave utmost importance to technological and scientific education, vocational education, learning about indigenous cultures, religions and traditions, modern languages, and also SUPW (Socially useful productive work). Kothari Commission also advocated the three-language formula and recommended the inclusion of adult education (Education Commission, 1964-66).

(ii) National Policy on Education (1968)

Under the National Education Policy (1968), it was mandated that more than 90% of the country's rural population was within a Kilometer of schooling facilities and more states had adopted a common education structure. It also proposed to increase the government's expenditure to 6% of GDP in the education sector and the three-language formula was adopted as a medium of instruction. The policy was recommended that the first language be the mother tongue, the second language should be either Hindi or English and the third language should be the study of a modern Indian language, preferably one of the southern languages, apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi-speaking States and for Non-Hindi speaking states, Hindi should be studied along with regional language and English (Biswas, 2017).

(iii) National Policy on Education (1986)

During the year (1986-87), the National Policy on Education was finalized after an intensive national debate. The Policy adopted by Parliament in May 1986 was followed up by an elaboration through the programme of action which was placed before Parliament and adopted in August 1986. The policy and the programme of action give shape to the address of the Prime Minister in 1985 when he declared that our educational system needed to be reconstructed as a dynamic force for national growth and integration and a national consensus of reform had to be built (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 1986). The National Policy on Education 1986 recommended a child-centric approach to elementary education. It is necessary for this connection that the academic programme and school activities should be built around the child, and the school environment and condition of school facilities should be such to encourage the retention of children in school (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 1988).

(iv) Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009

The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India which provides the right of free and compulsory elementary education to all children within the age group of six to fourteen years as a fundamental right. Right to Education Act (2009) is a landmark initiative of the government which has the potential to change the entire trajectory of the Indian education system. This bill received Presidential assent and became law on 3rd September 2009 as the children's Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act. The Act was amended in 2019, which received the assent of the President on 10th January 2019. The amendment bill abolished the "no-detention policy" of the Act. Previously no child admitted to a school could be held back in any class until Class VII. Schools were instructed to hold Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluations for every child. Various academicians and pedagogues had pointed out that this clause heavily compromised the quality of education being imparted. Some states accepted this policy while others did not claim that drop-out rates have considerably decreased after the "no-detention policy" was implemented.

(v) Kasturirangan Committee (2019)

The Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development presently renamed as Ministry of Education, Government of India in June 2017. The Draft Policy provides several reforms at different stages of education in India. The draft National Education Policy, 2019 was built on the foundational pillars of access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability. The committee has proposed to rename MHRD as the Ministry of Education (MoE). In school education, a major revamping of curricular structure with Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as an integral part of school education is proposed. The committee recommends the extension of the Right to Education Act, 2009 to cover children of ages 3 to 18. A 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure based on cognitive and socio-emotional developmental stages of

children: foundational stage (age 3-8 years): 3 years of pre-primary plus grades 12; preparatory stage (8-11 years): grades 3-5; middle stage (11-14 years): grades 6-8; and secondary stage (14-18 years): grades 9-12. Schools will be re-organized into school complexes. It also seeks to reduce the content load in the school education curriculum. There will be no hard separation of learning areas in terms of curricular, co-curricular, or extracurricular areas and all subjects, including arts, music, crafts, sports, yoga, community service, etc. will be curricular. It promotes active pedagogy that will focus on the development of core capacities: and life skills, including 21st-century skills. The Committee proposed for massive transformation in teacher education by shutting down sub-standard teacher education institutions and moving all teacher preparation/education programmes into large multidisciplinary universities/colleges. The committee stated that a 4-year integrated stage-specific B.Ed. programme will eventually be the minimum degree qualification for teachers. A new apex body 'Rashtriya Shiksha Ayog' was proposed to enable a holistic and integrated implementation of all educational initiatives and programmatic interventions and to coordinate efforts between the Centre and states (The Ministry of Education, 2019)

(vi) National Education Policy (2020)

After a long period of 34 years, the government approved a new National Education Policy on July 29th, 2020 in line with the recommendation of the Kasturirangan Committee. The National Education Policy, 2020 is the first education policy of the 21[s] century that aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of the country. In particular, 2030, the agenda for sustainable development, was adopted by India along with the United Nations Members States in 2015. The policy includes the Sustainable Development Goal 4 to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. This policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including the regulations and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21[s]-century education along with India's traditions and values (Ministry of Human Resource Development,

2020). The policy emphasizes the creativity of the individual. The policy is based on the principles that education develops the cognitive capacities of the learners in every stage along with social, ethical, emotional capacities including cultural awareness and empathy, teamwork, and leadership, service and sacrifice, courtesy and sensitivity, oral and written communication, integrity and work ethic. For the fulfillment of the vision government framed some major features of the policy are as follows:

1. Ensuring universal access at all levels of schooling from pre-primary school to grade 12;
2. Ensuring quality early childhood care and education for all children between 3-6 years;
3. New Curricular and Pedagogical Structure (5+3+3+4);
4. No hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extracurricular activities, between vocational and academic streams;
5. providing food and nutrition (breakfast and midday meals);
6. Establishing National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy;
7. Emphasis on promoting multilingualism and Indian languages; The medium of instruction until at least grade 5, but preferably till grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother-tongue/local language/regional language.
8. Assessment reforms - Board examinations on up to two occasions during any given school year, one main examination and one for improvement, if desired;
9. Equitable and inclusive education - Special emphasis is given to Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SDGs);
10. A separate gender inclusion fund and special education zones for disadvantaged regions and groups;
11. Robust and transparent processes for recruitment of teachers and merit-based performance;
12. Exposure to vocational education in school and higher education system.

III. What is 'New' in New Education Policy 2020?

The New Education Policy is different from earlier policies. The new essence of this policy is that it aims to disseminate and popularize the rich culture, ethos, and traditions of India, revamp it, and bring back the glory of Indian knowledge and know-how. It intends to once again imbibe and prioritize the ancient Indian values and enrich the education system by assimilating them into the Indian education system. In other words, it wants the young generation to go back to its roots but at the same time not let go of the technological advancements and know-how of the Western world. India boasts of being home to numerous indigenous tribes. According to the Census of 2011, 8.6% of the population is tribal. The policy aims to tap the tribal values, creative endeavours, customs, and culture into the curriculum. It plans to refocus on traditional knowledge.

India for decades has been following the Western trajectory of education and the inception of this has been since 1835. In 1835 the famous Macaulay Minute had advocated that English was the supreme of all languages and Indian learning was inferior. The New Education Policy aims to abolish this trajectory and revive back the lost Indian cultural glory, by inculcating in young Indian minds the true essence of Indian culture, customs, and traditions as well as amalgamating them with modern scientific technology and knowhow.

IV. New Education Policy 2020: Key Reforms in Elementary Education

The New Education Policy has incorporated some key reforms in the field of elementary education:

1. Children in the age group of 3-6 years are not covered in the 10+2 structure because Class 1 begins at the age of 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. Children hailing from poor socio-economic

backgrounds usually do not receive quality ECCE. A good ECCE would provide a strong foundation for all children which would eventually help them prosper in the future. The New Education Policy has an aim of implementing this by the year 2030 (National Education Policy, 2020).

2. ECCE ideally consists of flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity-based, and inquiry-based learning, comprising of alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colors, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles and logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting, and other visual art, craft, drama and puppetry, music and movement. It also includes a focus on developing social capacities, sensitivity, good behaviour, courtesy, ethics, personal and public cleanliness, teamwork, and cooperation. 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 (National Education Policy, 2020).

3. 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-old, and a sub-framework for 3-8year-olds, aligned with the above guidelines, the latest research on ECCE, and national and international best practices. NEP also plans to assimilate local traditional culture in the form of art, stories, poetry, games, and songs (National Education Policy, 2020).

4. The focus will be to provide particularly on the socio-economically disadvantaged. 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 and sections covering at least age 5 to 6 years co-located with existing primary schools; and (d) stand-alone pre-schools (National Education Policy, 2020).

5. NEP advocates building high-quality infrastructure for the Anganwadi Centres. The building must be well-ventilated and well-constructed ensuring a child-friendly environment for children. Complete coordination must be ensured between the Anganwadi Centres and local primary schools. There must be coordination and cooperation between the Anganwadis and primary schools as well as parents, teachers, and children studying in Anganwadis and primary schools (National Education Policy, 2020).

6. Every child below the age of 5 will attend a "Preparatory Class" or "*Balavatika*". The course will be taught by an ECCE-qualified teacher. The learning will be based primarily on play-based learning with a focus on developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities and early literacy and numeracy. Children studying Preparatory Classes will also be provided with mid-day meals. Health check-ups and growth monitoring of these children will also be done (National Education Policy, 2020).

7. The Anganwadi teachers and workers will undergo proper systematic training which will be according to the framework prepared by NCERT. Anganwadi workers and teachers who have qualifications of 10+2 and above will be given a 6-month certificate programme in ECCE, and those with lower educational qualifications shall be given a one-year diploma programme. State Governments eventually shall prepare cadres of professionally qualified educators for early childhood care and education, through stage-specific professional training, mentoring mechanisms, and career mapping. Necessary facilities will also be created for the initial professional preparation of these educators and their Continuous

Professional Development (CPD) (National Education Policy, 2020).

8. The policy also has an important target of ensuring the proper health of the children so that they can learn optimally when they are undernourished or unwell. Hence, the nutrition, physical and mental health of children will be addressed. It should be noted that research shows that the morning hours after a nutritious meal is productive for the study of cognitive subjects and hence the policy advocates providing a simple and energizing breakfast in addition to midday meals. In schools where preparing hot meals might be problematic, a simple, nutritious meal like groundnuts mixed with jaggery and or local seasonal fruits may be provided. All school children shall also undergo regular health check-ups, especially for 100% immunization in schools and health cards will be issued to monitor the health of these children (National Education Policy, 2020).

9. 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, retaining children in the schooling system has remained an issue. The policy targets to prevent students from dropping out and to achieve a 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio in preschool to secondary level by 2030. The policy aims to provide effective and sufficient infrastructure so that all students have access to safe and engaging school education at all levels from pre-primary school to Grade 12. Besides providing regularly trained teachers at each stage, special care shall be taken to ensure that no school remains deficient in infrastructure support. The credibility of Government schools shall be re-established, and this will be attained by upgrading and enlarging

the schools that already exist, building additional quality schools in areas where they do not exist, and providing safe and practical conveyances and or hostels, especially for the girl children. Alternative and innovative education centres will be put in place in cooperation with civil society to ensure that children of migrant laborers and other children who are dropping out of school due to various circumstances are brought back into mainstream education. For providing equitable and quality education from the Foundational Stage through Grade 12 to all children up to the age of 18, suitable facilitating systems shall be put in place. Counsellors or well-trained social workers connected to school complexes and teachers will continuously work with students and their parents and will travel through and engage with communities to ensure that all school-age children are attending and learning in school. Trained and qualified social workers from civil society organizations and departments of Social Justice and Empowerment and government functionaries dealing with the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities at the State and district level, could be connected to schools, through various innovative mechanisms adopted by State/UT Governments, to help in carrying out this important work (National Education Policy, 2020).

10. 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 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). The Foundational Stage will consist of five years of flexible, multilevel, play/activity-based learning and the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE as mentioned in para 1.2. The Preparatory Stage will comprise three years of education building on the play, discovery, and activity-based pedagogical and curricular style of the Foundational Stage. The Middle Stage will comprise three years of education, building on the pedagogical and curricular style of the Preparatory Stage, but with the introduction of subject teachers for learning and discussion of the more abstract concepts in each subject that students will be ready for at this stage across the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities. Experiential learning within each subject, and explorations of relations among different subjects, will be encouraged and emphasized despite the introduction of more specialized subjects and subject teachers. The Secondary Stage will comprise four years of multidisciplinary study, building on the subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style of the Middle Stage, but with greater depth, greater critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations, and greater flexibility and student choice of subjects (National Education Policy, 2020).

11. The policy advocates experiential learning in all phases, including hands-on learning, arts-integrated and sports-integrated education, and story-telling-based pedagogy. To plug the loopholes in the achievement of learning outcomes, classroom transactions will shift towards competency-based learning and education (National Education Policy, 2020).

12. It has been reiterated that children learn concepts more quickly in their mother tongues. In most cases, the mother tongue of the child is usually the home language which is spoken by local communities. There are exceptions for those who have transferable jobs, or hail from multilingual families where the mother tongue is different from the home language which is

spoken by the locals of that particular place. Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother-tongue/local language/regional language. Thereafter, the home/local language shall continue to be taught as a language wherever possible. This will be followed by both public and private schools. The textbooks of even subject science must be made available in-home languages or mother tongue. The language of the transaction between teachers and students should remain the home language or mother tongue wherever possible. There are cognitive benefits of multilingualism and so learning multiple languages should be encouraged. Children between the ages of 2 to 8 years have excellent learning powers and this quality must be utilized to teach them multiple languages at a young age. Rote learning is discouraged, and teachers must teach in innovative ways. The Central and State governments must invest in large numbers of language teachers in all regional languages around the country, and, in particular, for all languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. States from different regions of India may enter into bilateral agreements to hire teachers in large numbers from each other, to satisfy the three-language formula in their respective States, and also to encourage the study of Indian languages across the country (National Education Policy, 2020).

V. Key Challenges of Implementing the New Education Policy

National Education Policy (2020) now is in the implementation phase. Education as a subject of concurrent list falls under the ambit of state government. So, the implementation part of the policy depends on the respective state government. Implementation of the policy is in progress across the country. It is no doubt said that the policy is one of the more ideal ones than previous; although the policy has faced some challenges. The major challenges are as follows:

1. **Financial investment-** The implementation of the ambitious policy both in letter and spirit demands huge financial investment. Public spending on education in India has been low since times immemorial. However, on the bright side, a change was observed. According to the Economic Survey presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in January 2022, the percentage allocated for investment in education was 3.1% of GDP in the year 2021-2022, which was 2.8% in the year 2019-2020. But it is too small for the betterment of education. The policy mandated the investment of 6% GDP in the education sector. Till then, it is a daydream; although it shall not be sufficient for achieving the goals of NEP.

2. **Interdependent policies-** The implementation of several policies is dependent on the implementation of others. For example, if teachers are not given adequate training and are not multilingual, giving instructions to children in their respective mother tongues may not be possible. Similarly, if proper infrastructure which includes functioning science, computer, skill laboratories, libraries, computers, and playgrounds with proper equipment is missing, imparting education in the way that has been visualized in the policy, will also not be possible. The policy advocates extensive use of technology and smart ways of teaching which will be only possible if the gaping digital divide is bridged and easy availability of technological devices and internet connection is ensured even in the remotest of locations. Another important aspect is the availability of teachers, both Centre and respective state governments must ensure that the recruitment of teachers is timely to assure that all the sub-sections of the policy are being implemented properly. The policy indicates that the backbone of the education system is the teachers and educators, and unfortunately, many schools across India are facing shortages of teachers, which is a major hurdle in the implementation of this

policy. India's student-teacher ratio has been at a low for several decades now.

3. **Collaboration of Ministries-** The policy demands cooperation between several ministries, like the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The clauses in New Education Policy that talk about imparting technical education need perfect coordination between these ministries.

4. **Anganwadi workers-** The personnel of already overworked Anganwadi workers have been given many additional responsibilities and have been prescribed to take courses, which will be a challenge to implement in reality. They are paid negligibly and do not have any job security. The policy vests a lot of responsibilities on the Anganwadi workers and this demands proper intervention and adequate investments.

5. **The challenge of a multi-party country-**Education falls under the Concurrent List which requires complete cooperation and single-minded focus between the Centre and the States for implementing the policy and improving the education system. Currently, there are a prominent number of states that are not being ruled by the ruling party of the Centre. In this scenario, cooperative federalism can save the day to building consensus among the Indian states. The proper implementation of the policy demands the leader of all states be on the same page.

6. **Digital Disparity-** The zealous aspirations of the National Education Policy cannot be implemented if the gaping digital divide is not bridged. The pandemic indeed has been an eye-opener and has shown us how millions of children especially those hailing from poor socio-economic backgrounds, girl children, children of migrant laborers, and children of

vulnerable communities have fallen off the map of education due to the lack of basic access to technology. The Centre and the States now have to ensure that no child is left behind and implement the policy in letter and spirit, which is a herculean task.

7. **Hiring locals** – NEP advocates hiring locals as 'master instructors' which is another clause laden with various issues. Even though the clause has immense potential to familiarize and enlighten the students about local traditions, art, music, and culture, the problem of availability cannot be ignored.

8. **Issue of Infrastructure-** It goes without saying that to build the infrastructure as mentioned in the New Education Policy, huge financial investments are needed. The Centre and the States must form a consensus and do proper teamwork for the improvement of the infrastructure of schools. The issue of red-tapism and corruption lingers and can become a major roadblock to development if not addressed.

9. **The question of language-** The inevitable issue of language lingers even in this new policy. The New Education Policy states that no language will be imposed on the state which is commendable but has indeed opened a Pandora's Box. It has received a lot of resistance and opposition from the southern states of India which advocate the two-language policy and fear that promoting the three-language policy would eventually lead to a backdoor entry of the Hindi language. According to Census 2011, there are 121 languages and 270 mother tongues in India. The existing teachers may not be apt to undertake this as this clause needs teachers to be multilingual and a class might have children having various mother tongues. This situation demands either training existing teachers to speak in different languages or recruiting new teachers. Children of migrant laborers and government employees who have transferable jobs will also face problems.

10. **Issue of gender-** "*Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise, you will remain as backward as you are now.*" –Swami Vivekananda. The issue of gender has always remained a challenge in Indian society which needs undivided attention. The policy plans to set up a 'Gender-Inclusion Fund' to achieve equitable quality education for all girls as well as transgender students and to assist them. But it should be noted that ensuring that transgender children get access to education, calls for a sensitization drive. It would be an uphill task to provide an inclusive environment for transgender students. A holistic change of the mindset of the society must be ensured to avoid these transgender children from getting harassed or bullied. Merely providing provisions of sanitation and toilets, bicycles, and conditional cash transfers will not be sufficing. Along the same lines, educating the girl child must be advocated and a conscious effort must be done to address gender stereotypes. The common notion of a 'man' is the 'bread earner' of the family, as a result, a boy's education must be given more importance; must be addressed. Numerous schemes have been launched for the advancement of educating the girl child yet drop-out rates remain high among girl children and enrolment rates remain low.

11. **Menace of the pandemic-** The educational crisis created due to the pandemic cannot be ignored. It was a severe blow to the already ailing education system. The number of drop-outs increased alarmingly once the pandemic struck, and new enrolment rates fell radically. The ongoing pandemic will be a major roadblock to the proper implementation of the New Education Policy 2020. It is blindingly obvious that it will be an uphill task to bring every child back to school and plug the gap between education and employment of this 'out-of-school' generation. The children of comparatively well-to-do families who managed to lurch on and continue studying during the pandemic period also have been on the losing side. These

children's learning ability has suffered considerably due to the suspension of face-to-face teaching. Both the teachers and the students have struggled to accustom themselves to digital learning. The pandemic has had a detrimental effect on students' progress.

VI. Mapping the way forward for New Education Policy 2020

Public policy has three important stages a) policy formulation; b) policy implementation; and c) policy evaluation. All three stages are equally important for the success of a public policy. National Education Policy (2020) is already over the first stage of its process and now it is in its implementation stage. Although all phases are equally important, the implementation phase of the policy is more important for its success. Policy implementation is the task of the executive branch of the government, which means there are one or more relevant ministers for a particular policy. The federal structure is also a key aspect. The policy is implemented through the combined agency of the relevant state ministry and the district and block level bureaucracies (Chakraborty & Sanyal, 2017). It also depends upon the nature of the policy; it may involve a network of government employees at the grassroots level and also individuals. The implementation phase as an important part of the policy is needed for the proper mapping of the way forwards. The following ways are very important:

1. As a federation, there is a need for friendly cooperation between the centre and state governments for easier implementation of the policy. In reality, there is a conflict of interest between state and centre in the implementation of the policy; where the same political party is not in power in both the power centres. There is a need to continue the discussion between state and centre for minimizing misunderstanding on the issue, where the state government has yet not implemented the policy. Proper respect for the federal structure shall be able to minimize conflict of interest between both. The policy is always needed out of narrow party politics for the greatest interest of the nation.

2. Need appropriate finance for the smooth implementation and continuation of the policy. Present allocation of finance; which is 3.1 % GDP for the year 2022 is not only poor but also implies our economic weakness. Allocation for the education sector has been very poor since early. After independence, various committees and commissions recommended 6% GDP for the education sector; but it is a daydream. Till now, expenditure on the education sector has not crossed 4% GDP; expenditure on education was 3.94% GDP in 2000-01, it was 3.39% in 2008-09 and it dropped 1.8% in 2011. From 2013-to 14 total central governments allocation for education was 0.70% of the GDP (Biswas, 2017). The budget 2017-18 emphasizes education, skill development, and job creation for youths earmarking Rs. 6200 crores (Biswas, 2019). In that context, there is a need to increase budget allocation for strengthening the education sector. There is a need for an appropriate and scientific budget for implementation of the new education policy by really calling it 'new' from the previous.

3. The easy and friendly cooperation between various ministries related to education shall be able to implement the policy easily. As per the rule of the National Education Policy (2020), there is a need for cooperation and collaboration between several ministries, like the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

4. Community participation in the phase of implementation shall be able to facilitate implementation of the policy. In India, common people have a scope of participation in only the process of policymaking and policy evaluation. There is no scope for people's participation in the implementation process. Only government personnel are the main actors in the policy implementation process. So, they are facing serious challenges during the time of the implementation process. So, there is a need to widen the scope of

people's participation in the implementation process for smooth implementation of public policy.

5. The present infrastructure of elementary and higher education is insufficient for the implementation of the new education policy. There is a need for rapid improvement of the present infrastructure of the education sector. In that context, there is a need to strengthen the 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan', 'Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan' and 'Rashtriya Ucchatara Shiksha Abhiyan' for the expansion and improvement of the physical infrastructure of education, which is a precondition of the early and proper implementation of new education policy.

6. Every educational institution across the country suffers from huge shortages of teachers, technical staff, and non-teaching personnel. So, there is a need for the recruitment of sufficient numbers of teachers, technical staff, and non-teaching personnel for the implementation of the policy. Common recruitment policy under appropriate agencies or institutions across the country shall be able to recruit quality teachers and other education personnel bypassing corruption and nepotism.

7. The policy of engagement of Anganwadi workers in the pre-primary section shall weaken the aims of the policy and also shall hamper their present duties. So, there is also a need for the recruitment of trained teachers for the section to strengthen the base of the children. There shall be a need to give preference to qualified local people at the time of selection. Need to give preference for the selection of women teachers in pre-primary and primary sections.

8. Teachers of elementary level need to be above from other non-academic works. Right to Education Act (2009) mandated that no teacher shall be deployed for any non-educational purposes. There is also a need to treat private tuition by school teachers as a punishable offense, which is also one of the features of the act.

9. The use of ICT in all levels of education is one of the important elements of the National Education Policy (2020). But the digital divide is one of the serious challenges in the education sector in India. In a pandemic situation, a large number of children were not able to access digital facilities due to their vulnerable position. Low voltage electricity, lack of internet connectivity, weak internet connectivity, the high price of internet charges, and lack of devices make the digital divide among learners across India. So, there is a need to appropriate policy planning to improve the infrastructure of ICT use. I Hope, under the 'Digital India' initiative such problems will be disappeared by improving and expanding the digital infrastructure of the country.

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Chapter - 19

'BAGLESS DAYS' TOWARD VET: NEP 2020 IN BUNDLING EMPLOYABLE SKILL

Nandini C P *

In the era of knowledge enrichment with the help of technology, little is left in the world an individual is unable to know. 'Say it or type it and the screen shows it'. It may be Art, Pottery, Carpentry, Painting to name a few, say "Ok Google" or "Alexa" or "Siri", it's all available through apps and web-links for learning. Physical books are replaced by e -books and use of "Artificial Intelligence", including AI generated teachers and trainers are the trend. Technology helps us to know how to respond to new learning abilities and skills. The *'YouTube'* videos can help us to do any activity from any sphere of life and that includes learning to play musical instruments, painting etc., and it has turned out to be a trainer in developing skill sets that was earlier learnt only through a Guru/trainer in person. Though AI or technology generated learning has not replaced the real person, as there is still a value generated dissemination of knowledge in few professions, it has still made a difference in the world of learning.

As per a few studies "Online Education Market in India is projected to be at INR 360 Billion by 2024, exhibiting a CAGR of 43%. This growth is expected for ease of learning, flexibility, and an extensive choice of study materials that influence the overall growth of the market. It is also predicted that the reskilling and certification market is likely to reach INR 93.81 Billion by 2024, expanding at a CAGR of 36.95%.

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Though the present physical education system has failed to achieve this goal, "the education market is estimated to reach INR 40.63 bn by 2024, expanding at a CAGR of 40.74% by 2024". This growth is forecasted just in the online education market. Online Education market is headed to an extensive growth due to gamification process in the earning, that provides immersive experience with loads of skills that can take place through simulation exercises and learning with other value-added services like internships, live projects, group discussions, and career counselling sessions etc. The services available with different packages are sold to the user. The same is impossible or cannot happen in the physical ambience, as customization of the education system in the current method is quite difficult, unless the student is interested in self-learning or motivated to learn with extra hours with the teacher. However, practically and probably we have lost this path of learning in physical mode. Online education approximately has about 3500 market players and entrepreneurs in the EdTech industry. They have customized services to provide skills that ought to have been provided by the educational institutions in the physical environment or other extension learning techniques. There are various foreign players who are entering the Indian Market to reach the needs of such target audiences. This would be a challenge for the physical educators and institutions.

If we examine NEP and its working expectation, there is an urgent need to introspect. First thing first, it may be our imagination or real, quality of teaching-learning is disappointingly low. Even though millennials are a smart generation, hard work is rarely appreciated other than in very few cases. Liberal marking systems in the recent decades have swayed an accepted norm that the younger generations are smarter as they have the capacity to score 100% or 10 CGPA. Pass percentage is above 95% in State Board or Central Board. Even with a high percentage, their understating of the subject is self-doubting. In spite of high scores, employability skills are questioned during their internships and placements.

High scores are the in-thing, but it should be a major concern. Here the education system's liberalized marking is a question. Are the

1980's 65 % marks, now equivalent to that of 85% -95% of marks of 'Y' and 'Z' generation respectively? Or has the student's ability to reproduce learning improved? Has the understanding and analytical skills slowed down, due to which our research and innovation capacity has reduced. This requires a prompt check. In the recent past, the main motto of educational institutions was to increase the pass percentage, rather than making students work hard. There is no doubt that 'Y' and 'Z' generation children are smarter compared to the older ones as they are techno-savvy and well informed. With this smartness, the increased pass percentage has made every segment happy. Educational institutions boost their results as 100% pass in their advertisements. Students and parents are happy, teachers are happy, i.e. all the stakeholders are excited. Institutional leaders have less challenges to face, as students' pass percentage is high and they themselves "accolade it as academic excellence" for unrestricted and unrestrained grants of degree with lesser placements. In this 'pass' strategy of academic excellence, struggle to hone skills of faculty and students have taken a back seat and the skill development to apply 'knowledge' to 'practice' is completely disregarded.

When there is no basic need of acquiring required knowledge for their profession, where is the next level of learning that NEP aims – "Skill Development"? India needs a thorough revaluation and revamp the education system in-toto with stringent quality check (not a hypocritical or ornamental change- but a real and revolutionary one), which is currently missing in various reputed Regional, Central, National Universities and Institutions. Lack of understanding the subject without quality; minus rigorous skills set is detrimental to the education and training, which should have made them well-prepared for any profession. Thereby, making experiential learning a departed segment and gone for a toss.

In the 21st century, even in India, age is not a criterion to acquire skills due to the tech-savvy population. Gaining skill sets to either learn or earn or to showcase their talent through electronic media (with earnings possible per click or likes) are a trend. For many millions of

people, apps and Web Pages subscription are sources of earning, it has become more than a workplace, or making way to the physical workplace. These initiatives not only help the financial status of an individual but also play a vital part in the growth of the economy of the country. Industry 4.0 is a blend of advanced analytics, Big Data, Robotics and Automation, AI, Internet of Things (IoT), Quantum Computing, Process Digitization across the business value chain are the future. The economic growth average YOY is 7-9%, the study shows a global shortage of manpower of 56.5 million even by the end of this pandemic year i.e., 2020, there is abundance of skilled manpower required. Failure of existing skilled manpower being employable has been disastrous for employability requirements due to shortage of creative minds. Though we produce lakhs of engineers, lawyers, doctors and other professionals and graduates, even with technical education, there is no innovation, creativity and lack of entrepreneurship.

As per the study and report of "Future of Jobs" by FICCI, NASSCOM and EY, 37% new skill sets are mandated for the growth of education and economy. The resource as per the demographic requirement is 50% by 2035 based on an integrated higher education system, including professional and vocational education.

The need of the coming decade is a "skilled" workforce, managers and entrepreneurs based on the industry requirements. 700 million Indians are estimated to be of working age by 2022. Out of these, more than 600 million require some kind of Vocational Education or skill development training (VET). The socio-demographic data firmly show that there is gender discrimination in this area of VET also. The study shows that more men take VET than women, by a margin of 51% to 43%. The survey also finds that people with a higher level of education tend to be more positive about VET than people who left school at a relatively young age, in terms of its positive contribution to the economy and its role in dwindling unemployment. People with lower levels of educational attainment, who have difficulty paying bills and place themselves low down on the social strata, are generally the least likely to believe that VET can have positive effects, leading to a well-paid

job. Availability of a greater number of formal (ITI and ITC that are followed through CTS; ATS and courses regulated by DGE&T) and informal (Family and friends without formal approvals) skill developments through offline and online environments is a driving force for economic and social growth. This is in addition to the premiere institutions that hone good skill sets.

Even the Euro Barometer Survey has identified that VET is an essential tool to prepare the young to prepare creative ways of work methods and techniques, making even young minds earn professional training and achieve their goal in the modern economy with minimal training. Best example of such initiation is Europe that continues to remain competitive and innovative in the face of increasing global competition and shifting demographics. There is a need for a linkage between education and labour market-basic level. It is basically a three-tier relationship. They are:

1. The determinants of education in turn
2. Determine educational outcomes in turn.
3. Determine the labour market outcomes of individuals.

Since ages, ILO continues to insist on Education, vocational training and lifelong learning as the Central pillars of employability, employment of workers and sustainable enterprise development. Inter-Agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2020 Calls for International Coordination through International Organizations like ILO, World Bank, UNESCO, OECD, etc. to individual capacity-building drive through institutions established for this purpose.

In order to achieve and adopt these skills, *firstly*, India needs to have a mind-set to adapt and enhance the ability of the learners, collaborate and bridge cross-competencies in specialized manner as per the market requirement e.g. the traditional skills that are learnt through inheritance or scientific learning of quantum science and AI. *Secondly*, to use the smart and connected technologies those are going to be

embedded within every organization, people, and assets due to development of IoT. The most impactful future would be robotics, analytics, artificial intelligence and cognitive technologies, Nano-technology, quantum computing, the IoT (itself), additive manufacturing and advanced materials. All this needs a trained population: i.e. trainer and trainee level or the teacher and student learning skills, which has risen to 5.8 Million in 2022. The learning has to include, hard teaching skills (Subject Specific), Aptitude and Attitude for training, Awareness of Principles of Teaching, Industry experience, Soft skills.

The most popular slogan "Skill India – Kaushal Bharat Kushal Bharat" "Make in India" Creative India" "Innovate India" which are considered to be a collective endeavour to take skill opportunity to the Indian youth and build a productive and reliant workforce, is an initiative that has to work in reality and not on paper, like other political mantras such as "Garibi Hatao" or "Atmanirbhar Bharat" should not fall flat/dead, so, it needs exertion from all stakeholders. The possible industries that can help developing these categories are unskilled or semi-skilled workers in the construction, textile, transportation, agriculture, weaving, handicraft, horticulture, fishing etc., with language and communication skills, life skills, and personality development skills, management skills including job and employability skills. If the above skills are to be chiseled and sculpted during their young age i.e. schooling level, their interest can be identified and honed in the later part of their education. So, it needs to be understood that only Education and not literacy that works for the betterment of the country, as "Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values". The value creation is "Do and Learn" and "Learn to Learn", that is rarely found in Indian Education system, other than in very few educational institutions as highlighted in popular Bollywood movie "3 Idiots". Due to failure to provide good employment and higher education, Brian-Drain from India continues, even after 75 years of Independence.

So, unless vocational training is part of our learning process and imbibed in the education system, anything that is planned as policy

cannot work successfully and we have seen failure for seven decades. To, illustrate, let's take a Law Schools, with exceptions, no law student can confidently pass out, ready to practice independently, as they are not really made to draft the pleadings or other required skill sets for the professions other than few good Moot Courts, where with a hypothetical situation been given. They learn the skills of argument and research. After law school they would enter the profession unrefined and later fault the legal education system as a whole.

A point as an author, I would highlight is, if even students are considered as consumers, even they are to be aware of their right to learn. So, the aim of bagless days can be achieved with practical or analytical training that requires a high rigor for teachers as well as students and this phenomenon is doubtful in the present situations. Unless the professional and technical courses and technical education are not delivered with high rigor, it may jeopardize many sectors and lives.

NEP has highlighted VET in India with an aim of having an impact on the economy, social status, entrepreneurship skill, quality of services including the environment. As skill and knowledge are the future of any economic growth, this is one such step that NEP 2020 has highlighted to predict the employability of large human resources available in our country. It is a requirement to boost the economy by increasing the employability of young India.

This Young India needs to turn into a Skilled India. Scholarly knowledge without application, has failed us; so, NEP has highlighted the mismatch in the demand-supply of the labour market in all sectors. As per the NEP, the higher education sphere knowledge and skills are required for a diversity of employment needs in various industries like the services, education, health care, and manufacturing sector etc. that are organized sector and major population are semi-skilled workforce and unorganized sector. The proportion of the working age group of 15-59 years will increase steadily, and the demographic divide stands in an

advantageous position for India due to its huge and young population. There are three major challenges that need to achieve this goal:

1. Changing and Broadening Learner Base
2. Increased Competition from other providers
3. Weaker signals of demand from industry

Training market needs a completely different orientation like that of the CISCO Global and Australian Model, which has developed its markets, based on Demand and Supply of workforce. This Model emphasizes on the Industry Partnership and also imposes a Broader and deeper, Tailor made vocational training system.

The author urges that the skilling efforts should begin (as aimed in NEP) at the primary level learning as provided in NEP, but should be in a workable approach and followed up- to further development till the higher education of the learner, so that he can specialize in that area as per his/her interest. With higher initiatives of VET in training from schools, universities and colleges under the purview of watchdogs of Education like School Boards- till the University Grants Commission with robust vision in reality than on paper.

The integration of skills in higher education under the National Skill Qualification Framework and incorporation of skills and ability enhancement courses through Choice Based Credit System for sustainable skill development is also advocated along with the full-time vocational degree/diploma programs and add-on courses offered through Community Colleges like, D. Voc, B. Voc, M. Voc in various centers such as Deen Dayal Upadhyay for Knowledge Acquisition and Upgradation of Skilled Human Abilities and Livelihood (KAUSHAL). "National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF), Skill Councils is to develop Qualification Packs (QPs), National Occupational Standards (NOS), NCOT- National Council for vocational training; Shri Vishwakarma Skill University (SVSU), Haryana; Skill Development Centre, Savitribai Phule Pune University; School of Vocational Education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai; NCIVE National

Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education; NCVET National Council for Vocational Education and Training" etc., to name a few of such institutions. These institutions aim at working and turning India to a manufacturing and self-sufficient country with lesser import and maximize export with the "Make in India" dream come true. There is no other option other than bringing in the change through Institutional mechanisms that need to be implemented for the successful incorporation of skill development based vocational education and training in university and collegiate education systems. Few of the initiatives that need a stern and contentious growth can take place only if the following can be achieved in the education system (As provided in NEP).

Many researchers have insisted on the following:

1. Multiple entry and exit options.
2. Skill basket for choice-based credits in general education
3. Credit banking system.
4. De-linked course duration.
5. Outcome based assessment.
6. Input and output-based credit criteria for general education and skills respectively.
7. Institutional collaboration for credit transfer.
8. NOSs based delivery of skills for national recognition.
9. Finishing schools.

Even the DGET (Directorate General of Training) continuously has developed various Vocational Training Schemes, like:

1. Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS)/ ITI/ITC training (6 Days/ Week programs)
2. Apprenticeship Training Scheme
3. Craftsmen Instructor Training Scheme
4. Advance Vocational Training Scheme
5. Women Training Schemes
6. Research and Staff Training

7. Instructional Material Development
8. Hi-Tech Training
9. North Eastern Skill Centres
10. Modular Employable Skills (MES)
11. Centre of Excellence and World Bank Assistance
12. Upgradation of ITIs through Public Private Partnership (PPP).

The NEP has initiated a 10 Bagless Days program - 2 Saturday's to be utilized for at least one vocation and may be exposed to several others. It gives a sampling of important vocational crafts, such as carpentry, electric work, metal work, gardening, pottery making to name a few, and to be further decided by the States and Local communities to take necessary initiatives during the Grades 6-8 of schools, based on their requirement and availability. It has targeted that at least 50 % of learners shall be exposed to such training from school to higher education, by 2025. The highlight is on creating internship opportunities with local industries to learn vocational subjects to students from 6-12 grades including their (Summer and Winter) holiday period.

The 12th FYP 2012-2017 estimated that only a very small percentage of Indian workforces in the age group of 19-24 (less than 5%) received formal vocational education that shows a wide gap in the formal vocational education. Whereas in the USA, Germany, South Korea it is 52%, 75%, 96% of such training respectably. The warning bell of the above numbers shows it all, as to where we have slipped and thereby makes us to fasten and take initiatives to perform our duty with earnestness and rise to create a completely transformed school of thought for the future.

Another major problem with Indian families is the common feeling of maintaining social status in providing only a few courses for their children, which have reached saturation point; this is due to norm-bound society due to perceptions. So, changes and acceptance of students taking up formal vocational training programs should become a trend or the necessity to integrate the same in the mainstream education at least in a phased manner, but with rapid actions. This is possible when

the society accepts, parents encourage and opportunity provided for in the education system.

Teaching community and the leaders of the Institution have a challenging task to even work as planned in NEP. Even the uninitiated should begin to work with NEP, especially on Vocational courses through offline and online mode. Such facilities can be learnt and experienced only with National & International exposure and use of technology. The erudition to be taken from International Vocational Institutes like the Otto Von Guericke/ University Magdeburg, Germany, can be a good learning experience, where the students can choose from two possible specializations at time of application i.e., VET or TVET.

The main aim of NEP is to adopt the Global Education Development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG-4 in NEP 2020) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 that seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. Such a patronizing goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that the targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved. In the language of NEP, "India to have an education system by 2040 that is second to none, with equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background". In this direction the best change can be through Pedagogy, that must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centric, discussion-based, flexible, and of-course enjoyable. The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values, in addition to science and mathematics, to develop overall growth of children and make them prepared for skill sets and capabilities of learners; and make education all-inclusive, useful, and fulfilling to the learner. Education must build character; enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring with values and morals. While at the same time prepare them for gainful, fulfilling employment in the competitive world.

In this contour, NEP is a good policy initiative, which needs dedicated and ardent authorities, teachers, and other staff, mainly parents and students to make it work and succeed in its aim. Policies are always good to discuss, India has never lacked in making policies, but failed in implementation. There is a need for change from the grass root level and mind-set of leaders and other stakeholders from all spheres of life, especially the heads of educational institutions, who are struggling to keep up with the quality due to undue pressure and unwanted stress. Political and education institutions work hand in glow, and the politicians have an unwanted desire to control the education system since the British Era, a wholesome revolution is the only way out to make "a better educated and skilled India". Only if this first step is taken in the right path, the other aims of 'Make in India', 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' etc. can work. This may later stop the Brain Drain, which continues for centuries, and Indian students can get quality Higher Education in India and contribute to the Indian economy.

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Chapter - 20

INTERWEAVING LIFE SKILLS THROUGH NEP 2020

*Sujata Bali**

I. Life Skills - What?

The World Health Organization **(WHO)** had generally defined life skills as, "the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life".[1]

UNICEF quotes basic life skills as "a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner."[2]

The UNICEF list of basic life skills categorizes basic life skills for youth into three categories, - 1.Self-awareness, 2. Interpersonal skills and 3. Thinking skills.[3] UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO enlist the ten core life skills:

1. problem solving,
2. critical thinking,

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[1] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, MODULE VII LIFE SKILLS - UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME, https://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/action/message/escap_peers_07.pdf (last visited Mar 30, 2022).

[2] UNICEF, KNOWLEDGE BRIEF: BASIC LIFE SKILLS CURRICULUM UNICEF FOR EVERY CHILD, https://www.unicef.org/azerbaijan/media/1541/file/basic%20life%20skills.pdf (last visited May 15, 2022).

[3] *Id.* at p. 3.

3. effective communication skills,
4. decision-making,
5. creative thinking,
6. interpersonal relationship skills,
7. self-awareness building skills,
8. empathy,
9. coping with stress and
10. Coping with emotions.[4]

Through examples, the National Education Policy, 2020 cites life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience.[5] There is no exhaustive definition of life skills.

Generally speaking, how efficiently we adapt ourselves to various changes during the course of our lives, is a sign of having a life skill. Simply put, life skills are those skills which a person would need for living life to the fullest potential. So it may differ from society to society, time to time, profession to profession, and life goals to life goals. For instance, it seems that leaving the pocket dictionary behind, and looking up the online resources, is turning out to be an essential life skill for (re)searchers.

II. Life Skills - Why?

Though it seems difficult to get an exact definition of life skills, as it changes from time to time and place to place, one feeling is clear that these skills help us live life to its fullest potential. The need for life-skills can be highlighted both on a professional and personal front.

Let's take few examples to understand the relevance of life skills in leading professionally successful life:

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[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Ministry of Human Resource Development, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVT OF INDIA (2020), 4,
https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf.

(i) When the employers complain about fresh adult recruits, mostly it is about the lack of life skills rather than technical skills.[6]

(ii) In rapidly urbanizing India, when one moves away from the conventional joint family support system, and relies on friends like family, all life skills, particularly interpersonal relationship skills and dealing with emotions, becomes crucial to fulfill one' social needs.

(iii) In a fast globalizing world, life skills become not just desirable, but necessary to survive.[7]

(iv) Even in the current start-up world, where ideas are becoming businesses, the life skills have become as relevant as the technical skills to run a successful venture.

In the present day definition of a successful personal, social or professional life, the life skill set is dominating the kit of essential skills for success. Let's take few examples to understand the relevance of life skills in leading a happy personal and social life:

(i) Old adage that health is wealth, is gaining greater importance with lifestyle related issues being prominent from early life-stage. Life skills will play a very important role in ensuring a healthy body for a lifetime.[8]

(ii) Mental health is increasingly becoming a major health issue in modern societies, life skills not only focus on external communication, but also self- awareness. Although researchers are wanting more robust data to determine whether life skills training is beneficial for people with chronic mental health

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[6] *See* Sulistyaningsih Sulistyaningsih et al., *The implementation of 21 St Century skills as the new learning paradigm to the result of student's career and life skills*, 2(46) MAGISTER SCIENTIAE 228–237 (2019). https://doi.org/10.33508/mgs.v2i46.2229.

[7] H. Singh, *Strategies for Development of Life Skills and Global Competencies*, INT'L J. OF SCI. RES. (2015), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283491171.

[8] *See* THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, Document 9 (Issue Skills for Health) INFORMATION SERIES ON SCHOOL HEALTH.

problems[9], the positive correlation between mental health and life skills has been generally observed.

(iii) Drug-abuse, usually taken as a youth problem, can be tackled by focusing on developing life-skills, not just technical skills of the learners.[10]

(iv) Gender justice is essential for living a happy life irrespective of gender. Gender issues are created by society, hence having life skills of empathy can largely solve the gender issues.

(v) Social interpersonal relationships get a boost with improved life skills.

(vi) Studies have found relevance of life skills even for the older population by promoting psychological wellbeing and by lessening loneliness/ diseases/ impairment.[11]

III. NEP 2020 & Life Skills

As per the present NEP 2020, the formal education covers in the school education the age group of 3 to 18 years, and later years in the higher and adult education. Most formative years of human life are spent in the formal education system, thus the formal education system must ready her for all conceivable eventualities of life.

The term 'life skills' as such finds mention three times in the NEP 2020.

First mention:

The first mention of the life skills in the NEP 2020 is while laying down the guiding principles of the policy.[12] After emphasizing the

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[9] P. Tungpunkom, N. Maayan & K. Soares-Weiser, *Life skills programmes for chronic mental illnesses*, 1 COCHRANE DATABASE OF SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS (2012).

[10] *See*, Gilbert J. Botvin et al., *Preventing tobacco and alcohol use among elementary school students through life skills training*, 12 J. OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE 1–17 (2003). https://doi.org/10.1300/J029V12N04_01.

[11] A. Steptoe & J. Wardle, *Life skills, wealth, health, and wellbeing in later life*, 114(17) PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 4354–4359 (2017).

core purpose of education on developing 'good capable human beings'[13], the NEP enlists the human qualities such as compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values.[14] All these qualities hint at the relevance of life skills.[15]

One of the fundamental principles that will guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions within it are... - life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience.[16]

The NEP has crystalized the purpose of Indian education system as

"...producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution."[17]

This mention of life skills is explanatory of the meaning of the term 'life skills.'[18] And is cited as one of the fundamental principles that guide both the education system as well as individual institutions. Co-incidentally appearing in the middle of the aspiration list of the new National Education Policy, 2020, life skills seem to be the median of success as well as happiness.

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[12] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 5.

[13] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 4.

[14] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 4-5.

[15] See, Hodge, K., Danish, S., & Martin, J. (2012). Developing a Conceptual Framework for Life Skills Interventions, *The Counseling Psychologist*. 2013; 41(8):1125-1152. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000012462073.

[16] *See Supra* Note 5.

[17] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 5.

[18] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 4. *See also supra* chapter part 1. Life skills- what?

Second mention:

After emphasizing the need of life-skills in fundamental principles, the second mention of life skills is to be found under **Part I.** of the **NEP 2020** on School Education.[19]

While explaining why Curriculum and Pedagogy in Schools: Learning should be Holistic, Integrated, Enjoyable, and Engaging, NEP suggests reducing the curriculum content and increasing experiential learning.[20]

For experiential learning, the focus is on sports-integration as a cross-curricular pedagogical approach, as it helps in developing skills such as collaboration, self-initiative, self-direction, self-discipline, teamwork, responsibility, citizenship, etc. which are essential life skills.[21]

Third mention:

The third direct mention of life skills under **NEP 2020** is under **Part III, Other Key Areas of Focus**[22] for Adult Education and Lifelong Learning[23].

NEP 2020 intends to use **NCERT** to develop curriculum framework for adult education focusing on:

(a) Foundational literacy and numeracy;
(b) Critical life skills;
(c) Vocational skills development;
(d) Basic education; and
(e) Continuing education[24]

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[19] For more on school education, *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 6- 32, point 1.-8.
[20] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 12, point 4.5- 4.8.
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] The other key areas of NEP focus around professional education, adult education, languages, technology and digitization.
[23] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 51, point 21.
[24] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 51-52, point 21.5.

In these expected outcomes, critical life skills are defined as including financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, health care and awareness, child care and education, and family welfare.[25]

Continuing education is defined as to include engaging holistic adult education courses in arts, sciences, technology, culture, sports, and recreation, and other topics of interest or use to local learners, such as more advanced material on critical life skills.[26]

Other mentions:

The NEP 2020 recognized life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience, found mention throughout the policy document.

Under Part-I School Education, communication as a life skill is to be taught through Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).[27]

Sports integration is expected to teach skills of collaboration, self-initiative, self-direction, self-discipline, teamwork, responsibility, citizenship etc.[28]

Under curricular Integration of Essential Subjects, Skills, and Capacities, to become a "good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings", NEP 2020 provides that certain skills[29] need

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[25] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 51, point 21.5. (b)

[26] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 52, point 21.5. (e)

[27] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 7, point 1.2. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) , going beyond basic numeracy and literacy, focuses on developing social capacities, sensitivity, good behaviour, courtesy, ethics, personal and public cleanliness, teamwork, and cooperation.

[28] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 12, point 4.8.

[29] These skills include scientific temper and evidence-based thinking; creativity and innovativeness; sense of aesthetics and art; oral and written communication; health and nutrition; physical education, fitness, wellness, and sports; collaboration and teamwork; problem solving and logical reasoning; vocational exposure and skills; digital literacy, coding, and computational thinking; ethical and moral reasoning; knowledge and practice of human and Constitutional values; gender sensitivity; Fundamental Duties; citizenship skills and values; knowledge of India; environmental awareness including

to be imparted to all students. The NEP 2020 insists that these skills are desirable for all students and universally applicable irrespective of the student's choice of subjects.[30]

Under Part II- Higher education, focus is towards a more holistic and multidisciplinary education, which emphasizes on developing all vocational, professional and soft skills.[31] The NEP 2020 is suggesting integration of humanities and arts with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to achieve learning outcomes such as creativity and innovation, critical thinking and higher-order thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, communication etc.[32] A holistic and multidisciplinary education is being emphasized through NEP 2020 to develop all capabilities of learners.[33]

Importance of resilience as a life skill is underlined through the first line on principles of NEP 2020.[34]

IV. Life Skills through Education - How?

The NEP 2020 does talk of life skills, thrice, to be precise, and indirectly more than three times. However, it's not enough. As modern life keeps getting complex, the life skills which also embody soft skills[35], are going to be increasingly important. Hence, more and clearer emphasis is desirable and pertinent.

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water and resource conservation, sanitation and hygiene; and current affairs and knowledge of critical issues facing local communities, States, the country, and the world.

[30] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 15, point 4.23.

[31] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 36, point 11.1.

[32] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 36, point 11.2.

[33] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 36-37, point 11.3. - 11.8.

[34] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 4.

[35] Soft skills are generally referred to include interpersonal skills, communication skills, time management etc. *See also Supra* Note 5 at p. 36, point 11, wherein 'soft skills' is exemplified as communication, discussion, and debate.

After/along with enabling teachers/facilitators, the author suggests three essential documented ingredients for effective imparting of life skills:

Learning Life skills
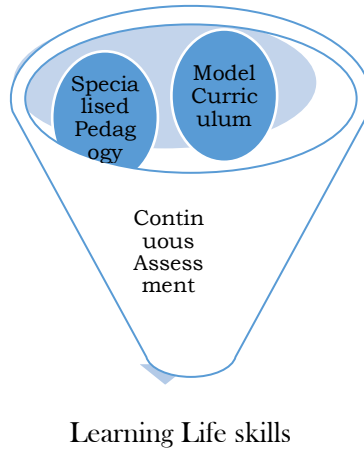
Below are few suggestions to help students learn life skills through formal education system:

A. Life skills at all levels of education

The NEP 2020 elaborates on life skills in school education in particular and in adult education. Though the importance of life skills as highlighted as an undercurrent of this policy is noticeable, a clearer and greater emphasis on life skills during school, higher and lifelong education is desirable.

For instance, at the outset, life skills may seem irrelevant for early child development, but they are not.[36] So a dedicated effort by all regulators and facilitators of education in India, in the field of life skills is desired.

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[36] G.F. Anitha & U. Narasimhan, *Seeing the national education policy 2020 through the lens of early child development*, 30 INDUS. PSYCHIATRY J. 182–186 (2021).

B. Orientation of teachers towards life skills

Teachers are the key factors in implementation of NEP 2020. So the spirit of life courses must first be conveyed more through teacher training programs. Unless the teachers/faculty is convinced, the process of inculcating life skills runs the risk of missing the essence, and only the form may be transmitted. In fact, teacher competence and students' life skills are necessary combinations for learning.[37] A 2010 study evaluated outcomes and implementation processes of teacher training in the Life Skills Training (LST) program in Israel, and highlighted the need for educators to allow enough time for training teachers.[38]

C. Credited courses on life skills

What money is to a worker, marks are to a student. The sincerity of a course can be reflected by giving its due weightage through optimum credits in the score-sheets of students. So, keeping it merely as a non-credited course may not put across the essentiality of a course in the minds of the students. Give life skill based courses their due credits in the curriculum, and then offer more learning opportunities for more specialized or in demand life skills through non-credited courses.

D. Model Curriculum on life skills

Clearly defined and well planned curriculum sets the path for effective teaching-learning experience. A direct mandate through the regulators goes a long way in ensuring inclusion of life skills in the learnings of students. While preparing curriculum, the needs of

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[37] Thanomwan Prasertcharoensuk et al., *Influence of Teacher Competency Factors and Students' Life Skills on Learning Achievement*, 186 PROCEDIA - SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES 566–572 (2015).

[38] Z. Shechtman, M. Levy & J. Leichtentritt, *Impact of Life Skills Training on Teachers' Perceived Environment and Self-Efficacy*, 98(3) THE J. OF EDUC. RES. 144–155 (2010). https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.98.3.144-155.

differently abled, all minorities including linguistic minority, can be guiding force for the creator of curriculum. Model life skills curriculum framework along with suggested pedagogical tools for school, higher education and adult education prepared by the regulators, can provide the basic framework, which can have further improvement by the individual institutions.

E. Pedagogy for life skills

Specialized pedagogical tools will be required to impart the life skills.[39] As life skills cannot be taught as a theory through lectures, projects, discussions, exercises will not be a way to evaluate, rather a way to teach life skills. Focused group discussions, debates, projects, presentations, field studies, interviews, experiments, practicum, and internships are few of the pedagogical tools which can help the students in effective learning. For example, educators can use agriculture as a tool to teach life skills of responsibility and dedication.[40]

F. Evaluation scheme for life skill courses

Life skills courses are not traditional lecture room courses. As the curriculum, pedagogy required for teaching life skills is unique, hence evaluation in the pen-paper mode may as well be redundant and counter-productive. Continuous assessment should be the only assessment mode and can consist of evaluation for projects, presentations, field studies, interviews, experiments, workshop, seminars, and internship.[41] These assessment tools can be varied and revised as per the need of intended outcome.

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[39] A sample exercise is provided by the United Nations, to help youth learn about the essential skills required for protection against HIV/AIDS and STDs. *See Supra* Note 1

[40] *See* L. Amber & C. A. C. Dailey, *Using Agricultural Education as the Context to Teach Life Skills*, 42(1) J. OF AGRIC. EDUC. 11 (2001).

[41] Scott Wurdinger & Jennifer Rudolph, *A different type of success: Teaching important life skills through project based learning*, 12(2) IMPROVING SCHOOLS 115–129 (2009). https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480209105576.

G. Sports for teaching life skills

The NEP 2020 does refer to the importance of sports in developing life skills, and cites sports-integration as a cross-curricular pedagogical approach.[42] However, institutionalizing sports as a part of the overall human development and education system is still not accepted. Relevance of sports for its benefits for physical and mental health, cannot be emphasized enough[43], however, seeing sports-time as the opposite to learning-time, is still a general approach and needs to be stopped, for the sake of a physically and emotionally capable future generations. [44]

H. Customize life skill courses for different learner-needs

Life skill courses need customization as per different stages of life, and different conditions. For example, a school student may be in need of communication skills, while a college student may need stress management or vice-versa. Same applies for the elementary school children[45] and adolescents.[46] Thus, Know-your-student (**KYS**) is the key in implementing the life-skill courses.

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[42] *See Supra* Note 5 at p. 12, point 4.8.

[43] *See* Steven J. Danish, Tanya Forneris & Ian Wallace, *Sport-based life skills programming in the schools*, 21(2) JOURNAL OF APPLIED SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY 41–62 (2005). DOI: 10.1300/J370v21n02_04. *See also* Iris van der Heide et al., *The relationship between health, education, and Health Literacy: Results from the Dutch adult literacy and Life Skills Survey*, 18 J. OF HEALTH COMM. 172–184 (2013).
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10810730.2013.825668 (last visited May 15, 2022). *See also* Daniel Gould & Sarah Carson, *Life skills development through sport: Current status and future directions*, 1(1) INT'L REV. OF SPORT & EXERCISE PSYCHOL. 58–78 (2008).
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17509840701834573 (last visited May 15, 2022).

[44] *See*, Corliss Bean et al., *The implicit/explicit continuum of life skills development and transfer*, 70(4) QUEST 456–470 (2018). https://Doi.Org/10.1080/00336297.2018.1451348.

[45] Carolyn W. Robinson & Jayne M. Zajicek, *Growing minds: The effects of a one-year school garden program on six constructs of life skills of elementary school children*, 15(3) HORTTECHNOLOGY 453–457 (2005). https://doi.org/10.21273/HORTTECH.15.3.0453.

[46] Steven J. Danish, *Interventions for enhancing adolescents' life skills.*, 24 (3) THE HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGIST 365–381 (1996). https://doi.org/10.1080/08873267.1996.9986864.

Indian education institutions, like Indian society, consist of students from diverse backgrounds and communities, locations etc., so few local preparatory steps around imparting life skills need to be taken by the academic institution, so the life skills can be customized and don't lose their meaning.[47]

I. Customize life skill courses for changing times

Need and relevance of every skillset keeps changing over time. Life-skills, their need and teaching method can (and should) change over a period of time. One particular suggestion for keeping the teaching of life skills relevant is to conduct an initial assessment of need for a particular life skill through learner-survey before introducing the course, and then customize the course for the target learner group.

J. Future course of action on life skills courses

After initial implementation, the life skills courses will need constant timely structured revision. Mandatory review and possible variations over years in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment tools, will help the life skills course from turning into mere 'tick-box exercise'.

We all need to solve problems, think critically, communicate effectively, make decisions, think creatively, deal with others, be self-aware, have empathy, and cope with stress and emotions; hence we all need life skills. The more seamlessly these life skills are interwoven in the national education policy and curriculum, the more worthwhile will be the education and education system in India.

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[47] M. N. Vranda & M. C. Rao, *Life Skills Education for Young Adolescents-Indian Experience*, 37(Special issue) J. OF THE INDIAN ACAD. OF APPLIED PSYCHOL. 9–15 (2011).

NEP 2020: EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND CHILD BEHAVIOUR

*Meenakshi Barthakur**

The early childhood period often called the 'wonder years', i.e., from 0-3 years and thereafter up to 7 to 8 years, is considered the most crucial period for child development and growth. Major brain development, almost up to 70 to 80 percent, happens during this period. These formative years shape the child's future and the foundation for emotional development happens. As stated by UNESCO, "It can be the foundation for emotional wellbeing and learning throughout life and one of the best investments a country can make as it promotes holistic development, gender equality and social cohesion".

As the child grows, with succeeding years bringing in physical growth, strength and coordination, the child learns with all kinds of 'experiences', and their brain growth helps them to make meaning out of these experiences. The quality of a child's early experiences makes a critical difference as their brains develop, providing either strong or weak foundations for learning, health and behaviour throughout life.

A child also learns through 'play', so play is considered to be one of the best mediums for them to learn. They learn through their 'senses', so activation of all the senses i.e. touch, smell, sight, hearing, taste makes an impact on how they perceive things. When the child receives various kinds of stimuli through their sense organs they are able to categorise those stimuli in order to give significance to the information they receive. This effect is experienced from the birth,

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where the babies display preferences for certain kinds of stimuli such as sights and sounds of their mother.

Encouraging children's natural 'curiosity' is a part of their development. They must be allowed to explore their environment and try new skills at the same time keeping in mind the hazards, as they would not be able to recognise the factors that may affect their safety and well-being. Curiosity along with the child's interests are the motivators that help create new connections to acquire new skills. Each new skill builds on a skill already learned and it usually follows a sequence (Blair & Diamond, 2008).

Along with the child's health care and nutrition, the responsive 'nurturing and caregiving' by parents and caregivers are much needed (UNICEF). It helps in establishing the wiring of the brain connections and develops a multitude of neural connections that can help a child in their life course. It can affect the child's social competence, cognitive skills, emotional well-being, language, literacy skills and physical abilities (Shanker & Greenspan, 2009).

This is the time children learn how to 'interact' with others and develop interests for the future. As they start schooling, they learn from meaningful interactions with other children, adults and the social context. Children learn critical social and emotional skills and a partnership is formed between the child, their parents and the teacher which lays the groundwork for it to continue throughout the child's education.

Therefore, keeping in mind the importance of these early years, the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) has emphasised on the development of critical thinking and problem solving along with the social, emotional and ethical capacity of each individual during these years. Unfortunately, quality early education and care is not available to many young children, particularly children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds so a lot remains to be done in these sectors. This paradigm shift in the education system by NEP

2020 in focussing on early childhood care and education (ECCE) will go a long way in the all-round and holistic development of the child.

We all know the state of one's mental health plays a fundamental role in our overall wellbeing. Especially, after the recent global pandemic, we have seen a rising trend in mental health issues and nationwide debates are on about how to keep ourselves both physically and mentally healthy.

'Mental health', which refers to a person's psychological, emotional and social well-being, is extremely important for leading a balanced and healthy life. It promotes our productivity as well as our relationships and helps us to deal effectively with stress. It is important throughout the life of an individual starting from childhood through adolescence to adulthood.

The inclusion of 'mental health' policy by NEP 2020 is therefore the need of the hour. It aims at addressing mental health along with physical health by the introduction of well-trained social workers, counsellors and community involvement into the schooling systems. It will help to identify and support, and refer to children needing help and also go a long way in reducing the stigma towards people living with mental health issues.

It is considered that the 'cognitive or mental growth' occurs simultaneously with 'physical growth' of the child. But since the physical growth is more observable, therefore, the height, weight, first step, teeth etc. are all usually recorded by the caregivers. The processes underlying cognitive changes are difficult to observe so they get lesser parental attention (Baron et al., 1980). Cognitive development, or cognition, includes the growth and changes in thinking skills children use to make sense of the world. In fact, cognitive or mental growth and development depends on both genetic and environmental factors.

Jean Piaget's theories and research has given a different perspective to child's cognitive development altogether. To Piaget

cognitive development is the development of the ability to reason logically. According to him, this development happens in an orderly manner or stages and is linked like a chain. Children are constantly trying to construct a more accurate understanding of the external world and making sense out of it at this stage. Criticisms have arisen no doubt about this theory because it underestimates the importance of language and social interactions in cognitive development.

Certain emotions become dominant due to the influence of these social interactions, environment and the family patterns in which the child grows. As stated by Hurlock (2017) "people who have predominantly happy memories of childhood are, for the most part, better adjusted as adolescents and adults than those whose memories centre around unhappy experiences." Individuals experiencing child maltreatment are at an increased risk for a range of mental disorders and physical health problems across the lifespan (Springer et al., 2007). Beginning as early as the fetal development the bad memories and any kind of abuse (Howe, 2009) can affect a child's learning and education, physical health and mental health and make children more susceptible to stress and stress related disorders later in life (Van der Kolk, 2014).

'Stress' and 'Trauma' have been around us in different forms and often exist as part of our lives, with people having different kinds of reactions. Sometimes, we are not even aware about our levels of stress or that we have been traumatized. We tend to internalize the trauma and carry it within us for a long time without realizing it.

Research has shown that the link between stressful and traumatic experiences, and psychological impairment is inevitable, therefore, it is very important to know about its effects. The adverse or traumatic stress events that a child faces at an early stage (Green, et al., 2010) and the related emotions are often stored as memory. These emotions can become a pattern of one's habit, especially in the later stage if a child keeps adapting to new behaviours to adjust to the environment. Researchers, policy makers as well as practitioners across

the world are therefore re-thinking about early childhood developments and understanding the consequences of adverse events and stress during childhood (Harvard University, 2022). We might need adequate support and time to recover from such events, and to regain our emotional and mental stability.

A certain amount of stress is normal for all children in their daily lives; and they have inbuilt systems for identifying and responding to the physiological, emotional and social stressors, mechanisms which are also developed through experience. However, some researchers (Ursano et al., 2004) argue that if acute stress is experienced over a short period of time, it can have long-term consequences like e.g., post-traumatic stress disorders (McLaughlin et al., 2010).

Examples of serious stressors faced by many children include abuse, neglect, the death of a parent, poverty, psychiatric illness at home, violence, exposure to conflict etc., as well as less severe but persistent circumstances such as parents' chronic marital conflict. Trauma related to stressful events can also occur as 'collective' situations and at an 'individual' level too, (Barnett and Breakwell, 2001). A study has shown the long-term effects of traumatic events like natural and technological hazards with adverse reactions (Green, 1994, Green and Solomon, 1995), leading to psychopathology and psychological stress. Of course, factors like exposure to the event, severity of stress, extent of exposure, history of other multiple stressors, proximity of stress event, pre-existing psychopathology, personal significance of stress or trauma, genetic predisposition etc. are responsible for determining the severity of the stress or trauma.

In times of stress, if a consistent caregiver is emotionally available at all times of need, they can comfort the child and provide a very safe and secure base if and when the child is anxious or distressed. Therefore, sometimes it may not be about the adverse event but your support system. Social support can buffer the effects of stress. Individuals in adversity show less behavioural reactivity if they are in

the company of people who provide them with emotional support within the family or outside.

Bowlby (1980) has emphasized the importance of 'attachment' in the early years as a general process of attachment and selective emotional bonding, e.g., a child's affectionate bonding with the parents. Attachment enables the child to learn to trust another person or the caregiver.

The emotional support and security that a child receives can help the child in many ways. For example, children who have secure relationships with their parents develop greater social skills with adults and peers and greater social and emotional understanding of others. They tend to have a positive self-concept and achieve higher moral development. Children also show greater achievement in academic performances and better cognitive and language development. Since these early 'experiences' and the 'environment' they grow up in have a major impact on how the brain adapts to situations, home is often considered the best place for development. Children's relationship with the environment starts with the family and then encompasses people outside including teachers. Children attend schools at a very young age nowadays so it's important to look into the attachments between children and teachers.

In the absence of these supportive relationships, a lack in any area would surely cause a lapse in development. If the severity or number of adverse experiences mounts, the child might have developmental delays, learning disabilities, and childhood behaviour problems, as well as diseases like diabetes, heart disease, depression, drug abuse, alcoholism, and other major health problems over a lifetime (Mate 2019).

As parents and educators, it is our duty to take care of the emotional and mental health of our children. Very rightly the National Education Policy stresses on 'Moving beyond the classroom' and on 'Responsive teaching' by being sensitive to individual children and

fostering positive relationships. Along with the families, learning environments must therefore be able to provide a safe space, support children's self-regulatory capacities, and offer secure and warm relationships to be able to reduce the negative effects children experience as a result of chronic stress and adversity.

The supportive and consistent caregiving can help in preventing the harmful effects of diverse experiences for the child no doubt, but 'caregiving for the parents' and caregivers who are undergoing stress is also extremely important. If children's parents have been victims of physical, sexual or emotional abuse they will struggle to raise their children. If the parents are overburdened by their own issues, they themselves do not have the ability for impulse control or emotional regulations. It then becomes difficult for them to provide the kind of positive environment their children need (Mate, 2019).

At the same time, it is also of importance for a child to learn how to 'regulate' his or her emotions, thoughts, and behaviours. Although emotional and cognitive self-regulation are related, young children tend to gain emotional regulation skills first and gain some level of control over their behaviours (OPRE, 2013). With the interactions that happen in their classrooms, through play and through friendships they learn how to develop empathy and to build emotional relationships with their peers and adults. Children who lack effective self-regulation may not be able to participate well in learning skills and portray behaviours due to which they receive lesser support from their peers, adults that includes parents, caregivers as well as teachers. Having these abilities of self-regulation allows children to handle their own emotions, identify them and express themselves well.

Underlying childhood emotional problems are usually masked by other behavioural issues like hyperactivity, irritation, frustration, sleep disturbances, low academic skills etc. Masking of emotional problems is common among adolescents and adults too (Coleman, 1976). Maladaptive behaviours of children are of major concern in our society and recent years have shown many studies focusing on

childhood behaviour disorders. How our children behave is part of child growth. It is very important to observe child behaviour as they are giving us signals of what we can do for them. With their behaviour they are trying to communicate something about themselves. We need to observe them closely, listen to them carefully, take away their fears and support their needs and treat them with a lot of love. Moreover, research has indicated that young children can experience a range of mental health issues like depression, anxiety disorders or anti-social behaviours that are normally considered as adult behaviours so it is important to observe any change in their behaviours closely.

Every child deserves the opportunities to build upon their unique strengths regardless of their social status, poverty level, community etc. Evidence from early childhood programs on children's development has stressed upon the importance of early intervention to bridge the diverging trajectories in health as well as the cognitive achievements among children by social class (Engle et al., 2011). There are children with special needs that require early intervention and support for development including also their families. Again, there are children receiving education in care homes, child care centres and NGO's and uniformity needs to be maintained providing equal opportunities for development. Most importantly, it must be remembered that different age groups will react differently, therefore the strategies for management needs to be different.

These 'wonder years' are the building blocks for the foundation of all round growth and development of the child. The growth patterns are unique for every child, so it is important to observe carefully in order to identify risks or delays in development. The identification is not about the diagnostic label but for providing appropriate and timely interventions and the required educational procedures. Whatever the cause may be, as mentioned above, if the developmental disorders are not taken care of at an early stage it can become more severe to handle later on. Interventions should include not only the individual (the child) but also the parents, schools and communities for fostering positive growth of a child. School

involvement must be maximum and school counselling given priority by including parents in all meets. The interventions taken must be consistent and effective, and at the same time and nurturing for lifelong learning.

As a child is born into a multifaceted socio-cultural context, the much-needed approaches taken by the National Education Policy will definitely provide meaningful strategies that can help the child in a holistic way because a single pattern of nurture or care, education and learning would be incomplete for a child. Earlier, due to the joint family structures in India, traditional child caring practices which were commonly shared were passed on from one generation to the next, inculcating "sanskaras" or basic values and social skills in children. It has also focused on bringing back these principles of education based on not only the social and ethical capacities, but the emotional and cognitive capacities too.

Unfortunately, mental health and psychological wellbeing are often neglected in our country because of which people refuse to seek treatment for mental health related issues. Children often do not have the awareness and also the vocabulary to express their emotions. The inclusion of mental health programmes in the school curriculum is therefore extremely important. Along with awareness programmes, mental health services and child guidance clinics should be more accessible. Unusual behaviours, maladaptive behaviours, stress related or any other behaviours of children that might be of concern needs to be identified early with the help of mental health professionals like Psychologists and Psychiatrists. It is our responsibility to help our children express their emotions in a healthy and positive way. Reducing stigma about mental health will itself help reduce stress to a considerable extent for all.

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IMPACT OF NEP 2020 ON WOMEN'S EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES AND PROSPECTS

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"*The new hath come and now the old retires*"

Sarojini Naidu.[1]

I. Introduction

"Education", to quote, Nelson Mandela, the great South African anti-apartheid revolutionary political leader "is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." (https://pgc.edu) These profound words highlight the fact that education is the first requisite to disseminate knowledge, enable critical thinking, empower the young minds and develop skills and competency in the students through necessary reforms in the education system from time to time and incorporating changes in tandem with the demands of the time. Keeping this vision and mission in view, the Govt. of India launched the NEP 2020 on 29th July 2020 to incorporate the necessary changes and bring the Indian Education System at par with the global educational systems. NEP 2020, which is "oriented towards the demands of the 21st century" aims at providing accessibility, quality, and equitable education to the girl child.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seems to have heralded a new milestone in the annals of the Indian Education System. This is

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India's third policy which replaces the 1986 NEP. The aim of the new education policy is to introduce several changes in the Indian education system- from the school to the college level, making the education system India-centric, infusing vibrancy, intellectual temper, and Indian ethos into the education milieu of India. It has been framed to make the present education system more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary with an increased focus on non-academic skills, technical skills, more vocation oriented, increased inclusion through language diversity and course fluidity, skill, and competency development to make India a global knowledge superpower ensuring equity and inclusion in the coming days. The crux of NEP 2020 is providing opportunities for universal access to school education at all levels of education without any discrimination so as achieve the target of an increased Gross Enrolment Ratio of 50% by 2035 with women as the key target actors. The main objective is to see that no child will be left behind in the race for getting formal education and acquiring 21st-century skills.

II. Highlights of NEP 2020: At a Glance

The highlights of NEP 2020 include - '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'; 'Achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy' by all students by Grade 3; 'Flexibility in Courses' so that learners can choose their learning trajectories and programs and thereby choose their paths in life according to their talents and interests; 'No hard separations' between arts and sciences, between curricular and extracurricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc. so as to provide flexibility to students to pursue any stream or vocation by eliminating harmful hierarchies among, and silos between different areas of learning; 'Focus on Multidisciplinary and holistic education' across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge; 'Emphasis on conceptual understanding' rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams; 'Promoting Creativity and critical thinking prowess' to encourage logical

decision-making and innovation; 'Ethics and human & Constitutional values' like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, the 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; 'Training in Life skills' such as effective communication, mutual cooperation, teamwork, and flexibility; '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 can thrive in the education system; 'Synergy in the curriculum' across all levels of education from early childhood care and education to school education to higher education; 'Teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process' their recruitment, continuous professional development, positive working environments, and service conditions; 'Light but tight regulatory framework' to ensure integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system through audit and public disclosure while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment; 'Outstanding research' as a core requisite for outstanding education and development; 'Continuous review' of progress based on sustained research and regular assessment by educational experts; 'Rootedness and pride in India' and its rich, diverse, ancient, and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions; 'Education is a public service'- access to quality education must be considered a basic right of every child; 'Substantial investment' in a strong, vibrant public education system as well as the encouragement and facilitation of true philanthropic private and community participation.

III. The Core Vision of NEP

NEP 2020 focuses on five pillars: Affordability, Accessibility, Quality, Equity, and Accountability to ensure continual and sustained learning. An education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, thereby making India a global knowledge superpower.

IV. Impact of NEP 2020 on Women Education & Gender Inclusion

According to the India Census, 2021, the overall literacy rate in India is 74.04%, but the female literacy rate continues to lag significantly, at 65.46%, at the national level. The girl child faces many layers of impediments in receiving quality education, and reports suggest that some of these problems are likely to be accentuated by the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with technology creating another wall of discrimination against girls. 'The dropout rate for girls rises significantly after secondary education', according to Puja Marwaha, the CEO of Child Rights and You (CRY), the Net enrolment ratio for girl children dips from 88.7% in primary to 51.93% in secondary and a disconcerting 32.6% at higher secondary levels. Roughly one in every five girls enrolled drops out after class 8. Out of many reasons, the vital reason is the onset of menstrual age in girls and the lack of availability of safe and hygienic toilets which becomes crucial for their continued education.

As a girl child grows older, safety issues become a serious matter of concern, and a long journey to school makes continued education a hazardous daymare for most parents. In India, child marriage, too, remains an unfortunate reality; according to a UNICEF report, 'nearly 27% of girls get married under the age of 18 every year, and this figure was pushed up by 20% due to the COVID-19 lockdown and the subsequent phenomenal rise in migrant crisis which followed the Covid19 Pandemic aftermath'. Gross discrimination of women from marginalized sectors of society is clearly reflected in denied educational access, socio-economic opportunities, benefits and acquisition of political power. All these

seemingly insurmountable problems make a girl's life cloudy, depriving a child to enjoy the frolic-filled, care-free days of school that is every child's birth right.

NEP 2020, India's first radical education policy of the 21st century, is expected to be a beacon of hope for those in the search for girls' education. The policy seeks to address the many shortcomings and hurdles inherent in our existing education system and seeks to redress the lacuna that has been plaguing our education system. The policy has been hailed for its focus on gender-inclusive learning through the following measures:

1) Gender accorded the highest priority for achieving gender equality in education.
2) Constitution of a "Gender Inclusion Fund" to provide quality and equitable education for all girls as well as transgender students.
3) To ensure an increase in the number of women at the higher echelons of HEIs.
4) To decrease gender imbalance among teachers, especially in rural areas, and focus on higher female teacher recruitment.
5) To ensure the safety and security of the girls inside and outside the campus and ensure a domineer-free/discrimination free/harassment-free campus before going for its annual accreditation.
6) To make it mandatory for all educational institutions to conduct workshops, awareness campaigns, and gender sensitization training programs.
7) To promote educational upliftment of underrepresented socio-economic communities by facilitating free-ships, scholarships and fellowships.
8) Lastly, the policy aims to introduce a gender-neutral, vocational-oriented curriculum to instil technological skills amongst the learners and sync them with sustainable employment.

Keeping in view the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, of providing free universal access to quality education, it promises to bring about a radical overhaul of the present Indian education system such that,

by 2040, it will be a hub for global education. For achieving that end, it has been recommended that the medium of instruction in primary schools, private as well as government, be made the local vernacular language till Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8. This decision is also in keeping with research results that demonstrate that children absorb and retain information best when taught in their mother tongue.

V. Impact of National Education Policy 2020 on Women's Education in North -East India

North-Eastern India, which comprises the eight states-Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura has a major impact on the economy and society of India yet remains marginalized in several spheres. According to the North-Eastern Region Vision 2020 released in 2008 "at Independence, the North-Eastern Region was among the most prosperous regions of India. Sixty years on, the Region as a whole, and the States that comprise it, are lagging far behind the rest of the country in most important parameters of growth." (Vision 2008, p. iii) Not surprisingly, this situation is amplified for the women of North-East India. No less than their other counterparts across the rest of the nation, women in North-Eastern India are confronted with gender discrimination and stereotyping and are underrepresented in the education sector.

One of the primary issues accounting for the under representation of women in the field of education is the drop-out rates of girls at different levels of education. The studies, research and survey reports reveal that the school dropout rates are very high for girls/women in the states of North-east India. According to a report published in *North-East Now*, a digital news platform, the state of Assam has the highest secondary level drop-out rate, with other North-East states showing similar statistics which are far worse than the national average.

"As per the government's data, over 29 per cent of girls in Assam drop out of secondary school; the figure for Mizoram is 21 per cent, while in Meghalaya it is 20 pc, Nagaland 18 pc and in Arunachal

Pradesh, the figure is 16 pc. While school dropout rates have reduced in many states across India, the number of girls dropping out of schools in the Northeast is on the rise, says the policy brief." (NE Now News, February 25, 2019)

In an article published in *India Today*, poor family support and the engagement of children in domestic chores or field work were regarded as the major causes of frequent drop-outs in the North- East. (India Today Web Desk, May 6, 2016) In addition, as mentioned above, lack of safe and hygienic toilets, safety issues, long journey to school, child marriage are some of the primary causes enumerated by Puja Marwaha, the CEO of Child Rights and You (CRY) as impacting girls' education and leading to a significant rise in the drop- out rates for the girls after primary education.

In order to embed equality into the systems and structures of education in the Northeast, it is important to facilitate the re-entry of girls/women in education and bring them back after they have dropped from schools or colleges due to financial constraints, household responsibilities, early marriages, safety and security. In the face of such barriers, the new education policy would act as a catalyst as it addresses the socio-cultural and academic issues that females encounter in education. NEP 2020 with a particular focus on "historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups" ensures "that all students from such groups, despite inherent obstacles, are provided various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system." (NEP 2020, p.4)

NEP 2020 mentions that initiatives will also be taken "to bring children who have dropped out back to school and to prevent further children from dropping out." They will be provided "effective and sufficient infrastructure so that all students have access to safe and engaging school education at all levels from pre-primary school to Grade 12." (ibid. p.10)

The provision to bring back children who have dropped out and the suggestions regarding the availability of proper, safe and secure infrastructure to the students would encourage and promote the active participation of girls in education.

"Special hostels in dedicated regions, bridge courses, and financial assistance through fee waivers and scholarships" are some of the other important initiatives mentioned by NEP 2020 that will be "offered to talented and meritorious students... especially at the secondary stage of education, to facilitate their entry into higher education." (ibid. p. 28)

Initiatives like hostels, bridge courses and financial assistance would specially benefit and impact education of those girls in the North-eastern region who leave their education mid-way owing to the distance of the schools from their place of residence or due to financial constraints.

Recognizing "the special and critical role that women play in society and in shaping social mores" NEP recommends that "the policies and schemes designed to include students from SEDGs should be especially targeted towards girls in these SEDGs." (ibid. p.26)

It is important to note here that the "broad based, flexible learning" suggested by the new NEP makes the teaching-learning program more inclusive and sustainable and lays the ground for promoting participation of women in education.

For example, under the four-year program proposed in the new NEP, students can exit after one year with a certificate, after two years with a diploma, and after three years with a bachelor's degree. Such a designing of educational programme seeks to provide flexibility and a certain amount of autonomy to the underprivileged, marginalized learners who are not able to complete their education due to multiple reasons. In other words, the provision of multiple exit and entry options at different levels of the educational programme would enable the

learners, who have dropped out to re-join and complete their education. Such a provision would be particularly beneficial to the girls/women from the North-East where, as discussed above, the drop-out rates are higher for the girls/women.

This kind of gender equity and inclusiveness is in alignment with and supports North-Eastern Region Vision 2020 according to which the government policy aims at "making growth more inclusive" by "expanding equity of opportunity" by focussing on measures like "providing access and incentives for the education of women and tribal populations in the region", "expanding the educational infrastructure", removing "barriers in accessing education for tribal people and women through appropriate policies including creation of hostels in towns and special coaching for admissions and to improve their overall performance." (2008, p. 27)) To say in brief, North-Eastern Region Vision 2020 believes that "affirmative action will have to extend all the way from school education through to higher education levels" (ibid. p.27).

NEP has instituted positive action measures to address the barriers to women in education. These include the introduction of "Gender Inclusion Fund", focus on the safety and security of school-going girls both inside and outside of the campus, ensuring harassment, discrimination, and domineer free campus and identification of social mores and gender stereotypes that prevent girls from accessing education and causing regular dropouts.

The holistic, inclusive and comprehensive approach of NEP aims at enhancing gender inclusion and gender equity. By reframing and analysing previous policy dynamics, organizational practices, and gender equality outcomes within the education sector, NEP aims at facilitating the participation of women in education, and thus expands the "equity of opportunity" as stated in North-eastern Region Vision 2020. New educational practices suggested in the NEP like academic bank of credit, experiential learning and skill development will help in making every woman employable and financially independent. The proper

implementation of the new education policy would establish women's visibility and provide them a voice for themselves. NEP would contribute to the solution of the issues pertinent to the status and empowerment of women and enhance their participation at every level of education. The gender equity reforms proposed in the new education policy and the inclusive and multidisciplinary approach of NEP would promote gender equality and enhance the capabilities of the institutions to address other pressing social, political, and economic problems. The lack of gender equality, especially in higher education, is one of the most important factors limiting research and development. By reframing and analysing previous policy dynamics, organizational practices, and gender equality outcomes within the education sector, NEP is likely to provide support and opportunities to the girls of North-East India. The policy seeks to address the many shortcomings of the existing education system and aims at facilitating the participation of women in education. The changes in the education policy and governmental funding decisions like the introduction of "Gender Inclusion Fund" and implementation strategies at the institutional level, and attitudinal changes at the individual levels are some of factors bound to impact the education of women, and make it more sustainable for them, especially in North-East India.

VI. Conclusion

The Indian Education System is under reconstruction. With the implementation of the NEP 2020, the educational institutions of the nation would redesign their educational programmes keeping in view gender equity and inclusion in society and provide quality and equitable education for all girls. The provision of academic bank credit would give freedom and liberty to the learners, especially girls, to move freely from one HEI to another, safely guarded by regulations ensuring that their credits earned from different recognized HEIs will be taken into account for the award of their degrees. The huge and positive impact of NEP on the education of women would be visible in the coming years. The government must, therefore, be applauded for its commendable initiative in not only incorporating measures for improving learning

outcomes for children but also heralding the dawn for gender inclusive learning.

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DEBATING DIGITIZATION OF EDUCATION IN THE NORTH-EAST INDIA

*Indrani Sengupta**
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I. Introduction

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 demonstrates a paradigmatic shift in the vision and policy prescriptions from its predecessor, the new education policy of 1986. Unlike the NEP 1986, which flagged equity in education, it set the tone for achieving "desired learning outcomes" (NEP 2020, p. 11). The change in focus may be attributed to the transformations happening at the local, national, and global level in which the meaning of education undergoes modifications to fit into the larger narrative. The education policy came at a time when India is about to appear for the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) examination which places India in global comparison on the basis of test scores. The "learning crises", as the NEP 2020 (p. 8) suggests can be eliminated through an outcome-based approach that needs a complete overhaul of the education system. Technological interventions in the form of creating digital repositories for teachers, online education, and digital learning materials are prioritized as means of achieving the necessary goals of narrowing the learning gap. This 'one size fits all' model of digitization is somewhat problematic due to diverse social milieus in which institutions are embedded. Also, resource requirements to materialize the objectives vary across states as Indian states are not monolithic. For instance, in several states, the additional financial requirement to GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) is more than 1 % to implement

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Right to Education (2009) norms (Bose, Ghosh and Sardana, 2020) which indicates insufficient funds with the states. On the other hand, North East states of India pose different challenges owing to their sociocultural, demographic and historical situatedness. Besides the challenges that lurk the goals of universalization of elementary education, digitization of education bear further challenges in the roadmap of Indian education. As the online wave hits the education system, it is pertinent to reflect on the pitfalls of online mode of teaching and learning and the challenges that it poses on inclusivity in an unequal education system. As we tread on the path of uncertainty, there are numerous children who are deprived of basic education owing to lack of computers, smart phones and infrastructure required for online education. The NSSO data (2017-18) reveal that the percentage of households having computers in India is 4.4% in rural areas and 23.4% in urban areas. These figures vary across states and therefore in some states these figures are lower than the national average. Therefore, if one is to consider possession of a computer as an indicator to capture the extent of access to digital resources, the situation is alarming. For instance, in the state of Assam, the percentage of households with computers is 7.5% which is lower than all India level (10.7%), according to the NSSO data (2017-18).

Apart from the question of access, there are locational disadvantages in various parts of India leading to poor connectivity which questions universal digitization of education. In one of the media articles, Karmakar (2018) reports how the shift in online education during Covid lockdown has crippled the education system in the north eastern states due to poor connectivity. Poor signals in some parts of Itanagar compelled many people to travel in search of better signals to attend online classes (Karmakar, 2018). The regional variation on the issue of internet connectivity coupled with the question of access to resources in the Northeast region indicates that teaching and learning in digital mode is challenging in these regions. The state of education in North-Eastern states is greatly influenced by the sociocultural, historical and political context. Each of the states of North-East India also differs in terms of culture and ethnicity which render further complexities in

situating the North East in the context of digital education. In the state of Manipur, insurgency, identity politics, ethnic conflict and the Armed forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 have adversely affected economic development (Mythili, 2020). This has a serious bearing on the education of the state as frequent forced closures of schools and colleges can disrupt teaching and learning processes. Against this background, digital education might provide further obstacles as it alienates the teacher from the students as the teachers cannot fully immerse themselves in the social context. Therefore, apart from the question of access to digital resources, it is also important to examine the viability of digital education in the North-Eastern states which are culturally diverse and historically distinct from other Indian states.

The objective of this chapter is twofold. It attempts to examine the status of education in North-Eastern states by highlighting different indicators of education. It then situates North-Eastern states in the context of the recent wave of online education driven by the pandemic and delves into the issue of access to resources that cut across the axis of gender and social group using the NSSO data (2017-18). On the other hand, the recent drive of privatization is expected to provide a skewed picture in terms of access to digital resources as private schools and colleges can quickly shift to digital learning owing to better infrastructure and capability.

II. Status of Education in the North-Eastern States

The North-Eastern States in India comprises 8 Indian states- Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The states of North-Eastern Region are officially recognized under the North Eastern Council (NEC) constituted in 1971 as the acting agency for the development of the North Eastern states. Sikkim was included as a part of the NEC in 2002. These states have also been granted Special category status from 1974-79 due to regional and economic backwardness leading to social disadvantages.[1]

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[1] Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram were included under this category in 1990.

Although these states share commonalities in terms of demography and hilly terrains, they are distinct and unique in terms of their culture, language, ethnicity etc. The North-Eastern states of India have been the hotbeds of several problems such as armed conflict, insurgency and ethnic conflict. As they share their borders with neighbouring countries, they have also been the centre of political turmoil. There is also an outcry and resistance against homogenization of cultural diversity in these states (Kikon, 2010). Given this situation, it is assumed that the educational landscape is often shaped by these constant negotiations in these regions and more so when there is silent withdrawal of government in terms of expenditure in social sectors (Sengupta, 2021). The formal or institutional education has a colonial origin in most parts of North-East India, in the sense that the modern educational institutions started in this region during the British colonial rule. Das (2018) noted that a very few fragments of the population in Assam, Tripura and Manipur were educated through traditional education systems like 'Tols', 'Pathsala', 'Moktab' etc.

As far as educational statistics are concerned (2015), the Gross Enrolment ratio (GER) is low in some of the North Eastern states, such as Nagaland and Mizoram. The GER shows a decreasing trend in the higher secondary level for these states. The GER in Assam is the lowest at the higher secondary level (30.9) as opposed to the GER in India (51.4) as per the DISE (District Information System data (2019-20). These figures depict the exit of students at higher levels of education. Further, the region has also been deprived in terms of supply of institutional facilities at all levels in general and secondary education level in particular (NCTE 2009). The literacy rate of these states has been shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Literacy rates in the North Eastern States of India in 2011 (in percentage)

State	Assam	Tripura	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Manipur	AP	Nagaland	Sikkim	India
Literacy rate	73.18	87.75	75.48	91.58	87.75	66.95	79.85	82.2	74.04
Male literacy	78.17	92.18	82.4	93.72	86.49	73.69	86.49	87.29	82.14
Female literacy	67.27	83.15	64.36	89.4	73.17	59.57	76.69	76.43	65.46

Source: Census 2011

According to the Census 2011, except Assam (73.18%) and Arunachal Pradesh (66.95%), all other North-East states are having the (general) literacy rate which is more than the national standard of 74.04%. Mizoram with its impressive literacy rate of 91.58% has secured the third rank in the country including State and Union Territory both and second among all Indian states. In terms of literacy rate, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur and Sikkim have done significantly well above the national literacy rate. Male and female literacy gap is the lowest in Mizoram (4.32%) which is lower than India's literacy gap based on gender. However, in states like Meghalaya the literacy gap between male and female is high.

However, a good literacy rate might not produce a good enrolment rate in the higher education sector. It also denotes the probability of moving out of students in other states of the country or to foreign countries after getting basic education at the NER. While Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura have been progressing significantly well whereas, states like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Nagaland are still struggling and are yet to overcome the gaps between demand and supply. On the other hand, the performances of these states in terms of literacy rate are subdued by the highest dropout rates in these states at the primary level. According to the DISE Report (2020-21), Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram recorded the

highest dropout rates in the country. The dropout rates in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram are 8.3 percent and 8.1 percent respectively. Among all the Indian states, Assam has witnessed the highest dropout rate at the primary level (31%).

The Right to Education Act of 2009 provides for inclusive education i.e., it sets out guidelines for universalization of elementary education. Digital education is often promoted for reaching out to the farthest corner of the country and can be viewed as a pathway to include students. Nowadays, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is largely used in education. With the help of ICT, one is able to improve the teaching effectiveness is a general perception. ICT also helps in providing material, delivering content and assessment and evaluation in education. Das (2020) noted that lack of technology, internet access, and qualified trainers etc. are the biggest challenges in providing ICT-based educational services to the masses, especially to the marginalized group of the people in North East India. These days Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is broadly used in the teaching learning process. As these resources are the *sina qua non* of digitization of education, it is pertinent to examine the North-Eastern states on the basis of these parameters.

III. Digital Divide in North Eastern States

Table 1.2 highlights the percentage of households having internet access in the North-Eastern states. Compared to the percentage in India which stands at 23.8%, all these states show a dismal picture of internet access which is less than 3%. In the states of Meghalaya, Sikkim and Tripura, it is far less (below 1%). This alarming trend questions the implementation of the NEP 2020 in the context of the north eastern states which lack infrastructure for online education. The educational systems in the state of Assam, which is undergoing preparations to implement the NEP 2020 by restructuring its education system suffer from similar deficiencies. According to the NSSO (2017-18), 7.5% households have a computer facility in Assam which is less than the Indian average of 10.7%. While the statistics in the Indian

context is disconcerting, the figures presented below show how digital education during the pandemic has excluded a large section of students.

Table 1.2:
(Percentage of Households having internet access in the North-East region, 2018. (Units in percentage)

State	Percentage
Assam	1.92
Arunachal Pradesh	1.62
Manipur	2.13
Meghalaya	0.74
Mizoram	2.58
Nagaland	1.71
Sikkim	0.78
Tripura	0.67

Source: Authors' calculation from the NSSO (2017-18)

If we disintegrate the statistics to account for the unequal access based on caste and gender (Table 1.3), we find that this inequitable distribution is further reinforced. Student specific data on usage of the internet show variation within the state in terms of social groups and gender. In the context of social groups, it is evident that the students belonging to the Scheduled Tribes category have higher access to the internet as compared to other social groups in all the states as shown in Table 1.3. The SCs are at a disadvantageous position in terms of access. Comparing across the states, Arunachal Pradesh is showing the highest percentage of internet usage for Scheduled Tribes.

Table 1.3. Categories of students above 5 years age using internet access in the last 30 days in different states of the North East Region 2017-18. (Units in percentage)

States	Gender and Social Groups	Percentages
Assam	Male	0.51
	Female	0.54

	SC	0.01
	ST	0.81
	OBC	0.70
Arunachal Pradesh	Male	0.88
	Female	0.54
	SC	0.01
	ST	3.19
	OBC	0.32
Manipur	Male	1.41
	Female	0.78
	SC	0.02
	ST	2.58
	OBC	0.61
Meghalaya	Male	0.26
	Female	0.81
	SC	0.05
	ST	1.52
	OBC	0.20
Mizoram	Male	0.47
	Female	1.41
	SC	0.04
	ST	0.19
	OBC	0.01
Nagaland	Male	0.69
	Female	1.17
	SC	0.01
	ST	3.30
	OBC	0.12
Sikkim	Male	0.06
	Female	0.09
	SC	0.01
	ST	0.11
	OBC	0.01
Tripura	Male	0.13
	Female	0.30
	SC	0.01
	ST	0.38
	OBC	0.17

Source: Authors' calculation from the NSSO (2017-18)

On the other hand, access to the internet does not necessarily imply that an individual is able to make use of the facilities. This echoes with the arguments of capability approach put forth by Amartya Sen (1984) that mere possession of resources does not guarantee an individual's well-being, but questions how (s)he is able to convert one's resources into functioning. Therefore, access to internet facilities is not sufficient if individuals cannot convert the intrinsic value of the resource into their use. For instance, in Assam, during 2017-18, the percentage of persons above 5 years who are able to operate computers stands at 7 % which is below the all-India level (12.8%) according to the NSSO (2017-18). Figure 1 depicts the percentage of currently enrolled students who are able to operate computers in these regions.

Figure 1. Percentage of students who are able to operate computers in the N-E region, 2018.
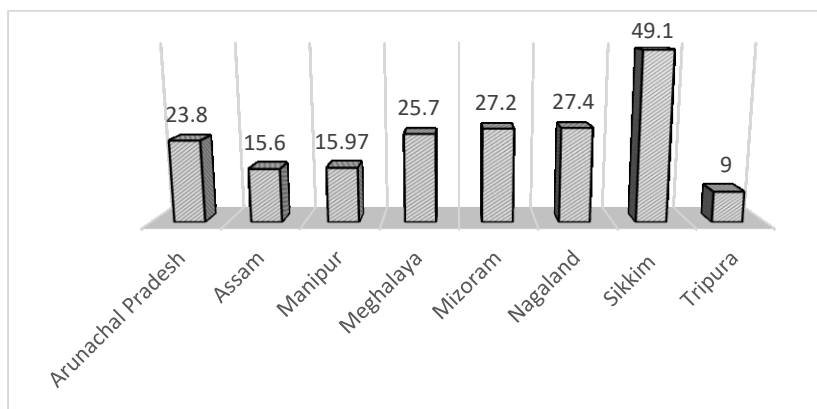
Source: Authors' calculation from the NSSO (2017-18)

The figure shows that Tripura, Manipur and Assam are comparatively in an inferior position (left behind at 9% and 15.6% respectively) as compared to other states. However, Sikkim has shown a good position in terms of the highest percentage of students who can operate computers. The inability to operate computers is another dimension which merits attention. Possession of computers in

households, therefore, does not necessarily reflect whether the students can use them.

As argued earlier, the poor internet connectivity in the NE region also acts as a hurdle even if internet access rate is high. According to a report by the Lok Sabha in 2021, 73% villages in Arunachal Pradesh do not have mobile or internet connectivity.[2] As far as schools are concerned, the percentage of schools with electricity in some states in the NE region is far below the national average of 60%. Out of the eight North-Eastern states, Assam and Meghalaya have performed poorly in terms of the percentage of schools with electricity. According to the DISE (2015-16), the percentage stands at 22.40 % for Assam and 26.72% for Meghalaya. While the figures are alarming, it is interesting to note that these are also the states which launched smart classrooms to gear up the process of building digital India.[3]

The question of access to digital education with respect to gender reveals an interesting picture and shows variations across North-Eastern states. The percentage of female students using the internet is higher than their male counterparts in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Tripura. The percentage is the highest for Mizoram and the lowest for Sikkim as shown in Table 1.3. Compared with the figures at the national level, only 30% of the internet users are female in India. The influence of matrilineal tribal groups is likely to increase the access to education for the female students as kinship structure affects outcomes for women as the cultural practices favour women (Lowes, 2020). Lalremmawii and Zohmingliani (2020) have done an in-depth analysis of the educational performance of the students in Mizoram. The study reveals that both male and female

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[2] Rahul Srivastava, OVER 25000 VILLAGES IN INDIA STILL LACK INTERNET CONNECTIVITY, LOK SABHA TOLD, March 18, 2022, v
https://www.indiatoday.in/technology/news/story/over-25000-villages-in-india-still-lack-internet-connectivity-lok-sabha-told-1780758-2021-03-18 (last visited Mar 18, 2022).

[3] Smart Classroom project launched in Meghalaya, TIMES OF INDIA, July 4, 2015, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/smart-classroom-project-launched-in-meghalaya/articleshow/47938324.cms (last visited Mar 18, 2021).

secondary school students had the same level of performance in mathematics and that female students were not inferior to male students in this region. Therefore, in terms of internet access, we do not find male dominance as compared to the rest of India. However, the optimistic picture of the higher percentage of females with access to the internet should not veil the disparity that exists in terms of overall access to digital resources in the NE region.

Last but not the least, there are supply constraints in terms of trained teachers in North-Eastern region. Except Mizoram, the percentage of untrained teachers is high in these states (Bose, Ghosh and Sardana, 2020). With a large pool of untrained teachers, the shift towards digital education needs serious scrutiny as it requires specific training to equip the teachers for online classrooms. Bose, Ghosh and Sardana (2020) found that a large number of teachers in Meghalaya are contract teachers who do not have professional qualifications. These are also the states whose funding is dependent entirely on the Centre as the states belong to a special category status.

While the NEP 2020 glorifies the advantages of digital education, it has failed to set a necessary well-designed roadmap for its seamless functioning of the inclusive sustainable educational system. The guidelines that run through the document emphasizes on online mode at several instances including developing online courses for adults, online feedback system for teachers etc. However, NEP (2020) document recognizes the challenges as it states, "... online/digital education cannot be leveraged unless the digital divide is eliminated through concerted efforts, such as the Digital India campaign and the availability of affordable computing devices" (p. 58). Keeping this in mind, the North-Eastern states should be considered as a case where the shift towards digitalization might need special attention. The socio-cultural context along with structural imbalances poses insurmountable challenges to the guidelines set by NEP, 2020 in these regions. As the North-East region has not fared well in terms of retention of students in schools as shown by the soaring dropout rates, digital education might increase the number of dropouts due to lack of accessibility and

connectivity. Thus, education, which is a means of gaining social mobility, will remain an unrealized dream for the NE regional backward localities if we try to continue to drive for an elite digital model of learning without coping with the challenges that remain in the region in terms of access.

IV. Conclusion

This has attempted to review the existing situation of the NE region of India in the context of access to the ICT facilities. The Covid pandemic has challenged the traditional modes of teaching and learning. But simultaneously the emerging science and technology have paved new ways for extending (digital) education in India. However, it is very difficult to achieve the goals in the existing scenario. In the North-Eastern states, as we have noted, there exists a very high dropout rate at the basic primary levels. The current situation in the region suggests that the conditions necessary for continuation of physical classes are very difficult because of the undeveloped infrastructure, poverty, lack of public transport, trained teachers, network availability etc. Again, virtual classrooms may be considered a quick solution in the face of an emergency and of an unprecedented pandemic situation; it should not continue to gain supremacy over other existing alternative methods of learning. The virtual classes have every possibility to develop distances between the learners and the teachers. As North-Eastern region is diverse enough and every sundry pocket has a specific history of its own, it is important for the teachers to be able to immerse themselves into the context of a diverse classroom which is immensely challenging in a digital platform. The measures towards an inclusive education through access to information technology (ICT) should take top priority for achieving digitalization of the educational system in the North-East region.

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Chapter - 24

NEP 2020: SUPPORTING LINKAGES BETWEEN SCHOOL EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Moyuri Sarma*

I. Introduction

Education is the backbone of society as well as nation. Since time immemorial education has been given top priority in all efforts for societal progress. As such the Government of India has formulated a number of educational policies for upgradation of education at all levels. The recently declared National Education policy 2020 has endeavoured to cover a wide range of areas, starting from elementary school education to higher education; with extended focus on micro and macro levels of development for inclusion of common man in the mainstream through education.

Till date India had three major reforms in the field of education. Based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission, the first education policy was introduced in 1968. The policy recommended equal opportunities (for both rural and urban sectors) of education to achieve national integration and better cultural as well as economic development. The NPE of 1968 called for expenditure on education to rise to 6% of the national income (Govt. of India, 1968).

The former Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi, launched a new policy in the year 1986. The main highlights of the policy were to eliminate inequalities through educational opportunities irrespective of caste, gender and economic status. The policy suggested increasing the

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number of scholarships and subsidies, providing allowances and several other methods for promoting social integration.

The 1986 New Education Policy was revised in the year 1992 by the former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, which was known as Programme of Action (POA1992). The policy suggested for Adoption of Common Entrance Examination (CEE) for all India-based vocational and technical training admissions). The former Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, introduced a revised "Common Minimum Program" policy.

The process of preparation of the third National Education Policy was initiated with the release of the Draft NEP in the year 2019 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). The Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020 declared The National Education Policy (NEP) intending to bring numerous changes to the prevailing education system. The Draft NEP deliberates on reduction of curriculum through augmentation of vital educational experiences and developing the capacity for critical thinking and reasoning. The aim is to harness holistic, experiential and analytical based learning experiences among students. The most noteworthy element is the suggested change i.e., 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 structure from the present 10 + 2 + 3 structure of education.

The National Educational Policy suggest few far-reaching changes namely, tie-ups between Indian and foreign higher educational institutions, structural change in the regulatory bodies namely, University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), introducing a four-year multidisciplinary undergraduate program having multiple exit options with focus on research and innovation. In school education, the policy focuses on revamping the core curriculum, "stress-free" Board exams, reducing the syllabus load though continuing with "core essentials" and initiative on "experiential learning and critical thinking".

Further, the NEP 2020 very appropriately detects one of the predicaments of Indian education is lack of a proper linkage between school and higher education. It may be easily identified from a comparison of the present GER in higher education with that of school education. The Gross Enrolment Ratio at all levels of school education i.e., 89.7 percent in 2019-20 at Upper Primary level; 97.8 percent at Elementary Level; 77.9 percent at Secondary Level and 51.4 percent at Higher Secondary Level reflects the low level of transition at different levels of school education (UDISE + Report). Further, the present GER in higher education in India is 27.1 per cent for the year 2019-20 as per the AISHE Report. As such, transition rates in the Indian school system are so far as incongruent with regard to aspiration for higher education. The trailing rates of transition from the school stage would remain a barrier if not addressed timely. The creation of skilled human capital demands inspiring students towards skill-based quality higher education.

These barriers need to be assessed and addressed by the higher authorities in a time bound manner. It is pertinent that with the movement of students from one stage to another, their teaching and learning are perpetually calibrated in accordance with the proposed educational objectives. Some of the crucial aspects namely acquaintance of students with new environments, their social and emotional adjustments etc. are not given much attention as required. These areas are also not given due importance in the teacher training programs. Transition rates across different stages of education can be intensified if institutions persistently handle emotional issues of students along with providing academic and vocational guidance. Proactive steps are highly recommended for vulnerable belonging to marginalized groups of the society.

II. Vision of NEP 2020

The National Educational Policy 2020 has very righteously stated the need of integrating identified set of skills and standards from early school education to tertiary level for developing holistic

individuals capable of contributing towards nation building. Higher education can never be planned secluding school education; a well-structured linkage must be established for producing efficient human resources. The cognitive and neural progression in learning can be accomplished through a sequential and graded manner. Hence synergy in curriculum across all disciplines and levels of education is inevitable.

It is also rightly mentioned in NEP, 2020 that there will be no hard separation between arts and sciences; vocational and academic streams; curricular and extra-curricular activities, etc. in order to eliminate silos between different areas of learning. Hence it requires a better linkage between school and higher education to accelerate economic, social, industrial, skill-based employability among learners in sequential and graded manner beginning from school education itself. To accelerate this process, the following suggestions may be incorporated:

1. "For the purpose of developing holistic individuals, it is essential that an identified set of skills and values will be incorporated at each stage of learning, from pre-school to higher education." [NEP 2020, 9.1.2]
2. "... synergy in curriculum across all levels of education from early childhood care and education to school education to higher education" [NEP 2020, Principles, p. 5]

There is a need to enhance the employability of graduates by linking entrepreneurship education with industries in order to develop operational research, transferable and communication skills required in the labour market. Further, teacher's efficiency and professional growth is to be enhanced for quality education focusing on multidisciplinary HEIs as well as through the introduction of a 4-year Integrated Teacher Education program. Professional development will keep teachers and administrators up to date on new curriculum resources and use of the latest technological tools in the classrooms.

III. Current Challenges faced in regard to linkage between school and higher education

The following are some of the limitations of the current education system:

1. Absence of Higher education readiness among students- There seems a dearth of higher education readiness on the part of students. Due to a dearth of career guidance and counselling from school level students fail to develop high academic and vocational aspiration.

2. Less priority to the Higher Secondary Classes in the General Degree Colleges- One of the limitations of the higher education system is lack of proper grooming of students in General Degree Colleges where a sizeable number of students are pursuing education in the +2 standard.

3. Divergent teaching methodology and environment in higher education institutions- One of the reasons of under-achievement on the part of students in higher secondary level is the inability of the learner to adapt to the changed learning environment.

4. Language barrier- The multilingual situation in specific geographical areas creates the problem of underachievement specifically in SEZs.

5. Limited vocational orientation and guidance – Students fail to plan their future vocational career due to lack of information right from the school days.

6. Limitations of the teaching-learning procedure in schools- Due to insufficient focus on experiential learning, critical and analytical thinking as well as research skills, many students face problems further study after school education.

7. Limited scope for Continuous Professional Development for higher secondary school teachers- The teachers of the Higher Secondary classes must receive incentives for their continuous professional development. But this important area is not receiving proper attention in the teacher training programmes.

8. Lack of counselling facilities for students and parents in schools, lack of well-structured counselling facilities for both the students and parents keeping in mind the different career options available.

9. Economic disparity – There exists economic disparity among the households which is also one of the key determinants of low transition rates to higher education.

10. Diversity in the existing higher education system-A severely fragmented higher educational ecosystem is another problem, where hard separation exists between arts, science and commerce, co-curricular activities, vocational and academic streams.

IV. Steps to bring Synergy between School and Higher Education

For encouraging students towards high educational aspirations from the school days onwards, establishing a synergic relationship between school and higher education curriculum is to be done in sequential and graded manner. While designing subject-wise curriculum and learning outcomes by HEIs, a thorough review of corresponding curriculum and LOs at the school level should be done and linkage is to be established accordingly. As such the following suggestions may be forwarded:

1. School learning should be a coordinated activity, encouraging children to link knowledge with their life experiences. Schools must try to promote a regime of thought inspiring creative thinking and insights among students. Education imparted in schools must incorporate vital dimensions of the human capacity to create new knowledge.

2. The linguistic barriers may be reduced by introducing Multilingualism in teaching of school subjects leading to curb dropout rates. Hence, it is suggested to held continuous professional development programs for school teachers and

enhancing their capacity to transact the curricular by bridging with the local language.

3. The learning gaps may be thoroughly assessed through School supervision and inspection. the quality of teaching-learning and assessment at school level may be improved by means of appropriate strategies like National Achievement Survey (NAS), State Achievement Survey (SAS), GUNOTSAV.

4. Teachers from all levels of institutions should work together on sharing educational resources and teaching strategies for an integrative approach towards education. The most important tools for this are development of transversal competencies, multi-disciplinary learning modules, pupil assessment and adopting bottom-up approach in curriculum construction.

5. There is need for strengthening academic reforms namely, Choice-based credit system, comprehensive internal evaluation at school stage for the purpose of improving transition rates from school education to higher education

6. In order to ensure a more equitable and inclusive education system, inclusive educational facilities ought to be introduced from school to higher education. Children with special learning needs must be assessed and required assistance should be provided judiciously.

7. Students from school education onwards must be provided with insight into higher educational opportunities specifically professional courses and skill-based courses be provided

8. Proactive steps and initiative should be taken to improve the quality of curriculum, pedagogical processes, assessment techniques and continuous professional development programs. Teachers should also undertake action research to improve- academic attainments, organize motivational lectures,

science exhibitions, summer camps to improve the overall quality of school education without which Indian higher education will continue to remain woefully deficient both in quantity and quality.

9.   In order to develop skilled personnel of different categories students should be encouraged to transit to labour market with industrial input based on their interest and abilities

10.   Merit based admission and equitable treatment should be followed in the admission policies in HEIs.

11.   The 360-degree holistic progress card of each learner should be critically examined and the identified deficiencies should be addressed in a time bound manner.

12.   Visit to HEIs /professional institutions may be organized for school students to give them an exposure to the institutions of higher learning and its learning environment.

13.   It is suggested to link each school complex/cluster with at least one nearby HEI as a Guardian institute. The faculty members of these institutions should interact with students and teachers on various educational issues and provide academic support if and when required

The projects and schemes initiated to bridge the gap between school and higher education are as follows:

1.   Saptadhara Scheme: This is a unique scheme for imparting education especially in co-curricular activities and for providing an opportunity to every young child to explore global knowledge on skill based innovative teaching and learning. Under the auspices of the mission for excellence SAPTADHARA, all schools, school to colleges and at a later stage in the Universities across Assam focuses on various areas

of Education, art and knowledge for the manifold progress of the youth. These areas of focus are known as Band/Cluster/Spectrum/Continuum/ Symphony of activities (Dharas) amongst the students viz.

   i. Gyan Dhara (Knowledge Band)
   ii. Upasthapan Dhara (Presentation Band)
   iii. Gaurav Dhara (Self-esteem)
   iv. Sukumar Dhara (Music, Dance, Games & sports)
   v. Rang Kala, Natya Dhara (Yoga & Athletics)
   vi. Samaj Seva Dhara (Community/Social service Band)
   vii. Udbhaban Dhara (Inborn talent)

2. **Gyan Jyoti scheme-** Through this initiative 7500 nos. of students from the rural areas to be offered to visit Guwahati every year during the summer/winter vacation of the school in order to provide them exposure to these institutions. This exposure helps in their career planning and will also inculcate competitiveness amongst them. Through this initiative, school students from the rural areas may be given the scope to visit important higher education institutions like IIT, Universities, NIIT, NEIST every year during the summer/winter vacation in order to gather real-life experience.

3. **Gyan Sagar-** is a school monthly journal which encourages students to express their creative thoughts and ideas. RMSA allocates funds for the publishing of the journal. It adds a great educational value to all students.

4. **Granthor Surabhi-** is a book fair organized for the high school students to expose them to the culture of book reading and a better exposure. It promotes life-long learning, intellectual development and a good culture of reading habits.

5. **Maitree Ek Gyan Yatra-** It is a unique initiative launched by the Assam government in Sivsagar district to link primary

schools to high schools to colleges. Under the initiative, college teachers will take classes in high schools and high school teachers will teach in primary schools voluntarily. The basic idea of implementing the initiative was to improve the quality of school students and create better synergy in the education sector.

6. As a part of extension activities, HEI faculties are involved in the process of supervising and grading schools through programs like GUNOTSAV. Further, many HEI faculties are also involved in preparing e- content for school teachers through digital platforms such as DIKSHA, SWAYAMPRABHA, PM e-Vidya etc.

V. Strategy to strengthen the linkage between school and higher education

1. An integrative, multidisciplinary pedagogical approach and innovative tools are to be adopted for crossing the boundaries of subjects.

2. The faculties from HEIs may share their knowledge, expertise and experiences through meetings, discussions and occasional classroom for proper linkage between school and HEIs.

3. Guidance and counselling is to be provided to school students as well as to their parents for awareness and motivation towards academic and skill-based courses that are available in HEIs as per their potential and interest.

4. There should be provision for reservation of seats in technical institutions, through a purveying lateral and vertical entry system for those students who will undertake these courses.

5. Enhancing Peer teaching, Team teaching, and application of innovative teaching methodology to enhance the linkage.

6. Learner-centric approach may be undertaken in school education in order to prepare learners for higher education, giving proper weightage to individual differences.

7. Experiential Learning and Cognitive skills (such as coding) in school education enhance all round development of learners for

greater efficiency which in turn prepares them for higher education and labour market.

8. Students' Performance assessment should not only cover their academic proficiency but also reflect their holistic development as well as college readiness.

9. Each HEI should act as a guardian institution for one or more school clusters. The faculty members of HEI should extend their specialized academic support for quality assurance in the school cluster, which will ultimately enhance the transition from school to higher education. This will minimize the existing gap between higher education and school education.

10. Higher education institutions in collaboration with appropriate authority can organize awareness programmes and counselling sessions at secondary school level, to guide students in making the right decision with regards to career plans based on their abilities, skills and interest.

11. Organizing different short term in-service training support to the school teachers, to enable them to prepare the school students for transition to higher education.

12. Initiative may be taken for providing scholarships to students from low-income groups, families belonging to SEZ (Special Education Zone) etc. and fee waiver facilities for economically weak meritorious students.

13. Financial support in the form of scholarships may be provided to girl students for pursuing higher education.

14. Initiative may be taken by the HEIs to act as a mediator between students and financial institutions (Bank) for the purpose of providing educational loans in order to pursue their courses.

15. HEIs may organize workshops for parents and students to make them aware about college affordability, availability of scholarship facilities, aid sources, and financial aid processes (like aid for regional, national and international study).

16. Comprehensive Career Guidance and counselling for parents and guardians to help students to understand the labour market and educational opportunities which will prepare students in planning their career.

VI. Conclusion

Education is the key to success in life and higher education is one of the most powerful tools to change our life and thereby change the entire social order. India being one of the highest youngest populations in the world, definitely implies a greater workforce as well as a market. Therefore, the time has come to plan for a well-managed education system across the country with emphasis on the quality of curriculum, pedagogical processes, assessment techniques and continuous professional development programmes which will lead to the achievement of long-term goals. It is also essential to take on action research to improve- academic achievements, organise teachers training programmes both in-service and pre-service, motivational lectures, students' counselling and guidance to improve the overall quality of school education without which Indian higher education will continue to remain woefully deficient both in quantity and quality.

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IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF NEP 2020 ON CONSUMER EDUCATION

*P.V.V.S. Murthy**

I. Introduction

How the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) promotes introduction of new subjects- like consumer education- is a question before us to ponder over. Let us examine NEP 2020 and the possibilities to further strengthen consumer education taking advantage of radical changes contemplated. We need to examine whether the new policy would accommodate consumer education at all levels of education from primary to higher education. It is desirable to start consumer education to students of elementary education because at this age whatever is taught to them will have deep impressions on their minds which they will preserve lifelong. The following wisdom is commonplace: if anyone wants to have a brighter future, invest in children because they are the future. It equally holds good for consumer education also. We need to catch people when they are young if we want to build a well-informed consumer society. The NEP 2020 provides an opportunity to deviate from archaic thought that students are overburdened by many new subjects like environmental issues, consumer issues, health care issues, and so on. Now there are no specific streams to think that other subjects are burdening the teachers as well as students. Education is not confined to those old streams now. Students are given their own choice to select any subject in which they are interested. Thus, subjects themselves form an integral part of the curriculum. In that sense, consumers also need to be taught.

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It is a welcome attempt by the Government of India to bring a new education policy after 34 years. In fact, waiting for 34 years is too long a period because the policy regime cannot wait for such a long time in such a fast-changing world. At least, there needs to be a review of the policy after every 10 years and such aspects which are not suitable in the prevailing circumstances can be changed. There will be no wisdom in changing the entire existing policy. The present education policy aims to increase state spending on education from 3% to 6% of the GDP as soon as possible. The new policy strongly encourages acquisition of practical knowledge. This newly approved policy talks about major transformational reforms in the Indian academic sector which are appreciated by many. Along with appreciation, there is also criticism which focuses on the drawbacks of this new education policy. But the merits ought to outnumber the demerits. NEP 2020 will transform more than 1.5 million schools and more than 9.6 million teachers who will receive training and more than 264 million children may develop critical thinking and become skilful.

This policy envisages professional standards for teachers. In consultation with expert organizations like NCERT, SCERTs, including teachers, the National Council for Teacher Education is supposed to develop a common National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST). Professional standards for teachers are meant to ensure quality teaching, though not necessarily quality education. For quality education, performance of both the teacher and the taught should be measured alike. Quality education is linked to the development of students. For a successful outcome of quality education, we cannot undermine the role of parents. Students need motivation at home as well as at the institution. Similarly, infrastructure facilities, technological tools deployed for education would add to quality education.

For example, paragraph 26.3 of NEP 2020 envisages an adequate number of teachers and staff, teacher development, etc. Further, in paragraph 26.4(e) of NEP 2020 identifies teacher education and continuing professional development of teachers as key thrust

areas for financing. These policy parameters would have a great impact on the quality of teaching. If teachers receive continuous training, as planned, we can expect quality output from the educational institution. According to the policy, the preparatory, middle or upper primary and secondary education will be as follows:

1. Preparatory stage will be of 3 years: Grades 3, 4, and 5
2. Middle or upper primary will be of 3 years: Grades 6, 7, and 8
3. High or secondary stage will be of 4 years: Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12.

NCERT will prepare syllabi and textbooks as per the NCF (national curriculum framework) so that these subjects could be incorporated into the curriculum which State councils of educational research training in states may edit, rewrite, and supplement as per their needs.

As per the policy document, Secondary stage is for 4 years (age 14-18, class 9-12). The stage supports students in critical and analytical thinking and multidisciplinary study, and students can choose subjects without any stream restrictions. There will be no rigorous separation of learning areas like science and humanities in terms of curricular. There will not be any separation between co-curricular and extra-curricular areas and all subjects, including arts, music, crafts, sports, yoga, etc. will be a part of the overall curriculum. Student assessment is subject to be done on competency. The present education policy gives scope to offer consumer education which is a life skill. Consumer education must reach the students when they are at a tender age. In this backdrop let us discuss introducing consumer education in a practical way.

Consumers today are challenged by growing amounts of information and wider choices of products. To make good choices in increasingly complex markets, they must develop a greater range of skills and knowledge. This can be greatly facilitated through improved awareness and education. Children also encounter these complex

markets at an early age. Providing consumer education in schools is an excellent opportunity to enhance their ability to think critically and increase their awareness.

Consumer education is for preparation of an individual to develop capability of making informed decisions in purchasing products and services. It generally covers various consumer goods and services, prices, standard trade practices, etc. Consumer education aims to help the consumer to gain maximum advantage by improving their value and ability, and to make them understand the economy and changing market circumstances. Let us discuss contents of consumer education afterwards.

Under the UN guidelines, a method to protect consumers is consumer education that includes environmental education, social and economic impacts of consumer choice. Consumer education is an education that can be found in several disciplines of study well within the formal school curriculum and incorporate knowledge from many disciplines, including economics, game theory, law, mathematics, psychology, behavioural science, etc. Teaching the subject is imperative because consumers are hardly articulate, assertive and aware of their rights. Besides consumer education, training for trainers must include instructions regarding different branches of consumerism.

Consumer education focuses on both functional skills and rights. These two elements are inseparable in the sense that awareness of several rights leads to functional skills. There are instances when consumer education is conducted with an agenda of getting consumer perception customized, such as, the educational drive to increase consumer confidence in e-commerce. Consumer education facilitates the consumer interest in many ways in protecting himself from the malpractices of the seller and in making judicious purchases. The advantages of consumer education are enumerated below:

1. It helps a person in making wise choices and enables the consumer in making the right selection.

2. It familiarizes the consumer with the problems which he faces while making purchases.

3. It provides information about marketing conditions like various sources of purchasing a particular commodity, from where to get cheap and best goods, the shops providing additional facilities, to the latest products. Such information enables him to make the right decision regarding shopping.

4. It educates the consumer with various standards and their markings.

5. It provides legal knowledge and familiarizes the consumer about various enactments passed by the government from time to time to protect consumers.

6. It helps the consumer in getting maximum satisfaction by proper utilisation of his money and leads to a better living standard.

Broadly, consumer education should cover the below mentioned aspects.

1. Financial literacy: Financial literacy, particularly in areas that are relevant to consumers such as credit, interest rates, savings and investment.

2. Market economics: The basic economics of the market is an essential requirement in consumer education. Sellers often have much more information about a product, service or asset than the buyer.

3. Behavioural economics: Behavioural economics includes the common behaviours and firms. For example, irrational purchases driven by a fear of missing out or decision fatigue.

4. Pricing: An overview of common pricing practices such as price discrimination whereby sellers try to sell at a higher price to consumers with low price sensitivity.

5. Quality consciousness: The factors that influence quality of products and services are important in consumer education. For example, comparing the safety characteristics of different types of bicycle helmets.

6. Cost-benefit analysis: Modelling total cost of ownership of products and services. For example, a cheap printer that constantly needs expensive cartridges versus an ink tank printer that has a higher purchase cost but far lower operational costs.

7. Consumer protection: An overview of consumer protection laws, consumer rights and fair commercial practices. For example, when you have the right to return the item or cancel a contract without penalty.

8. Health, safety, wellness: Special attention may be paid to products that influence health, safety and wellness such as the nutritional value of food products.

9. Media and consumers: A critical look at advertising and media promotion of products and how this influences consumers.

10. Consumer society: Social aspects of consumerism, for example, a brand that represents social status such that it sells products and services with very high profit margins. This represents commoditization of human experience whereby products and services try to serve needs that were once non-commercial.

11. Ethical consumerism: Investigation upon the impact of purchases on the people and the planet.

The topics mentioned above can be taught in different subjects like social, science, psychology, economics, mathematics, law etc. so that neither the teacher nor the student consider consumer education as an extra burden.

Consumer education is a statutory entitlement provided under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 alike. Though rights are mentioned in the Act, there were no corresponding remedies mentioned in the enactment. The doubts of consumers are not clarified on who will offer consumer education to the public? The general public thought that it is the sole responsibility of the government to provide consumer education. It is difficult for the government alone to create consumer awareness. The Government of India also designed well-organized programmes like '*Jago Grahak*

Jago'. In a subcontinent-like country like India, dissemination of information through consumer education appears a herculean task. Subsequently, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs established consumer clubs in educational institutions for the spread of consumer awareness. Unfortunately, the majority of the trainers in charge of these Consumer Clubs suffer from a lack of innovative ideas on what type of education they can impart to the consumer club members. Consequently, these consumer clubs have failed to deliver desired results. In this background, there is a need to explore more possibilities of making use of NEP 2020 to improve the awareness on consumer issues.

II. Why is consumer education required?

Consumer education is the cornerstone of consumer protection. Without consumer education, consumers cannot make an informed choice to buy goods and services. It is often noticed that lack of consumer education is the main reason for many consumer problems. Consumer education can provide the right direction to the consumer and form a basic step to economic literacy. Consumer education provides the knowledge foundation necessary to develop the citizens into intelligent consumers. Thus, consumer education plays a pivotal role in protecting the interest of the consumers.

Consumer education is not confined to a subject or just one topic but pervades the whole curriculum. For instance, pupils may be taught "shopping common sense" in economics. Although consumer education may not be a compulsory or an examination subject, pupils may be naturally interested in the subject. [1]

Informed consumers are essential to economic development. The council of Europe opines "by exercising a free choice based on the knowledge of the facts, the consumer will be able to make best use of his resources, money, time, knowledge and ability". Consumers thereby contribute to the proper functioning of a free market economy

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[1] Anil Sheth, *Consumer Education in India*, SILVER JUBILEE SOUVENIR OF CFBP, at 23.

by stimulating effective and fair competition and contribute to social and economic development.[2]

Several countries introduced consumer education and made experiments for imparting better consumer education. We need to follow the experiences gained by these countries to design study material for consumer education under the NEP. Various topics under consumer education need to be included in various streams like science, social science, arts, mathematics, etc. For example, France, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Netherlands, United States, etc. are forerunners in designing consumer education. Let us take into consideration their experiences to design appropriate study material for consumer education in India.

A. American Experience

Consumer education is a process by which consumers develop skills to make informed decisions in purchase of goods and services in light of personal values, maximum utilization of resources, available alternatives, ecological considerations and changing economic conditions. This knowledge enables consumers to participate actively and confidently in the market place and make appropriate action to seek consumer redress. Consumer education develops an understanding of the citizens' role in the economic, social and government systems. Further, it also guides how to influence these systems to make them responsive to consumer needs as prepared by the US department of education. [3]

B. Dutch Experience

The purpose of consumer education is to teach people how to consume. The Dutch government in its report has said "to consume means to buy, to use and to dispose of scarce products and services in

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[2] GRADE HELLMAN-TUITERT, PROMOTING CONSUMER EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS', IOCU, Hague, 8 (1985).

[3] *Id.* at p.3.

order to fulfil their needs". However, consumer education is something more than just knowing what consuming means. "It is the process of gaining the knowledge and skills needed in managing consumer resources and taking action to influence the factors which affect consumer decisions. Thus, consumer education aims at imparting knowledge and skills because consumers will need them to act as wise consumers". [4]

C. West German Experience

In West Germany, it is considered most important to prepare students for working and participating in the economy as consumers. "Consumer education is usually taught at all four levels of secondary schools and is therefore a required component of various school subjects".[5]

D. Swedish Experience

The Swedish government also developed course plans and lesson materials for imparting consumer education to the students. Swedish children enter preparatory school at the age of six. These kids are educated on such basic themes - 'managing yourself', 'tidying up' and 'clothes and shoe care'; between 7 to 16 years of age practical themes like 'home and living', 'my pocket money', 'my leisure time' and 'our environment'.[6]

E. Latin American experience:

Almost all non-governmental organisations in the Latin America Region consider education to be an important component of their social responsibility. Most of the educational efforts are geared at strengthening the participation of people in the solution of their

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[4] MOHINI SETHI & PREMAVATHY SEETHARAMAN, CONSUMERISM – A GROWING CONCEPT, Phoenix Publishing House, New Delhi, 47 (1994).

[5] Volker Preub, Educating Professionals in West Germany, *IOCU Newsletter* 2, Penang, 8 (1990).

[6] World Consumer, IOCU, Penang, (1990).

problems. Thus, consumer education is intended to reveal the links between daily living experiences and challenges faced by consumer organisations in the domain of consumer education must be seen in the context of distorted markets and accelerated changes in consumer habits forced by the constant struggle for economic survival. Only then one can understand that consumer education and capacity-building seek to foster consumer participation in collective efforts to defend peoples' right to a dignified quality of life.

The consumer education may vary from place to place depending on the size of the market, availability of the products, frauds prevailing in the market etc. In order to develop the course content one must know the existing situation both at national level as well as at the local level. Then formulate a plan of action to introduce consumer education. At what levels such education is to be imparted should be planned properly. Every care should be taken to implement the plan of action. There might be some initial problems at the implementation stage. In such an eventuality the plan may be modified to circumvent the problems. A fresh assessment is required to assess the effectiveness of the plan and its implementation. Once the assessment is done and set for a good start the last stage is to follow up. If the proper follow up is not made, the entire exercise may become futile.

Topics for imparting consumer education should be carefully planned; based on the age group of the children. Cleanliness, healthcare, savings etc. must be taught at the earliest opportunity even at the higher preparatory level. They need to understand at the age of six that they are consumers and the markets may be fraudulent. Further, they need to understand that they should not buy any product unless there is a need. Let them know the difference between need and want. Syllabi are generally designed, based on the comprehension of learners at different ages. In the same fashion, consumer education should also be developed for easy understanding of the students. Similarly, some games can also be developed because children will be more enthusiastic to play games like 'business' or 'snake and ladder' depicting various consumer issues. If a strong foundation is laid at

younger age of next-generation consumers, then they develop more inquisitiveness to learn more consumer related topics.

Consumer education literature must be developed, based on the present consumer challenges while suggesting remedies. For preparing the material the following aspects should be taken into consideration: (i) personal hygiene; (ii) plastic menace; (iii) environmental protection; (iv) save water and energy; (v) pollution; (vi) health care; (vii) adulterations and how to detect them; (viii) consumer protection legislations; (ix) false weights and measures; (x) price manipulations; (xi) cyber frauds; (xii) consumer rights; (xiii) consumer responsibilities; (xiv) consumer weaknesses; (xv) market frauds; (xvi) frauds in financial sector; (xvii) online purchases; (xviii) misleading advertisements; (xix) importance of consumer solidarity; (xx) precautions in the use of electronic gadgets; (xxi) food safety; (xxii) how to select products? (xxiii) wise buying tips; (xxiv) standard marks; (xxv) group buying; (xxvi) unilateral agreements; (xxvii) multi-level marketing; (xxviii) unfair trade practices; (xxix) restrictive trade practices; and (xxx) consumer disputes redressal commissions.

Preparation of the material for consumer education is one part, and employing capable teachers to train the students is another. If a teacher fails to motivate students to become wise consumers all the efforts of making consumer education material becomes futile. If we take the examples of defunct 'consumer clubs' in colleges and schools, we realise the importance of learned teachers. Though governments started these clubs with an avowed objective of creating consumer awareness to students, they failed to meet the desired objective. At that time the teachers were not trained and fully equipped to conduct consumer club activities. They had no idea on what to teach and what kind of activities to take up. Later local consumer organisations were assigned with consumer club activities. Majority of the consumer clubs in India have become defunct. Such a situation should not arise once again.

In perspective of the past consumer experience, consumer education scheme may be organised in the following steps:

1. Prepare the study material in the appropriate language either in English and or in local language;
2. Teachers in-charge of consumer education must receive orientation and training;
3. Schools and colleges must provide specific time in the timetable to enable students to receive consumer education in an appropriate manner including field work;
4. Hold competitions and suitably reward consumer club members;
5. Giving a certificate after completion of the prescribed academic requirement, works like an incentive.

III. Conclusion

Consumer education is an important subject to be taught at all levels of education that can only assist in building a better consumer society. Consumer education must be carefully designed appropriately for their age. At the same time, we should not undermine the importance of good teachers. Adequate number of teachers is required and they must receive training. As consumer protection has become a priority, all governments signify its importance both at national level and state level alike. Consumers are kingpins of national development. Unless he actively and confidently participates in a free market economy there would be no demand for products and as a result GDP growth suffers. In the light of the aforesaid discussions, it is very much necessary to introduce consumer education at all levels of education for better results; something doable under the new education policy framework. Consumer education is *sine qua non* for consumer protection.

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