

National Educational Policy 2020 : A Sociological Discussion

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Abstract

The government of India declared the National Education Policy 2020 for shaping the social structure. The policy is adopted by the government in July 2020 after the long discussion, discourse with the various stake holders of the society. Though, in the policy, it is claimed that the policy is based on the rich educational legacy of India which is inherited from centuries, but it has been observed that the educational pattern particularly structure and pattern is adopted from the American educational system. The national education policy 2020 has the characteristics of interdisciplinary approach and flexibility in various stages in the educational system. It has been observed from the policy document that the policy is divided into four major parts namely school education, higher education, other key areas of focus and making it happen. The policy has strictly recommended some steps to incorporate and include the Socio-economic disadvantaged groups in the higher education system. Many times it has been seen that the policies or the programmes are excellent on paper, but worst in action as concerned to the proper and effective implementation. Hence government should outline the action plan for effective implementation of the policy.

Keywords: NEP2020, Education and Development, Educational Inclusion

Introduction:

The government of India declared the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP: 2020) for shaping the social structure. The policy is adopted by the government in July 2020 after the long discussion, discourse with the various stake holders of the society. The policy has been drafted by the committee chaired by well-known scientist K.

Kasturirangan. It has been said that the policy will change the structural and functional dimensions of the existing educational pattern. Though, in the policy, it is claimed that the policy is based on the rich educational legacy of India which is inherited from centuries, but it has been observed that the educational pattern particularly structure and pattern is adopted from the American educational system.

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The article is aimed to understand the policy framework of National Education Policy 2020 with respect to deprived, weaker sections of the society and analyse it in a sociological discourse.

In the policy there is a provision that in 100 universities there should be online education. But this provision in the policy is quite difficult for the downtrodden section of the society because instead to accumulate them it will exclude them from the mainstream education. Though it has been claimed that the online education will support to spread the education among the interior section of the society, it is difficult particularly for the backward section of the society due to the lack of physical infrastructure. There are certain limitations of the government for online education. Even though the system will be more beneficial but it is indeed a magical conclusion because the another side of this provision will be worst for the backward section of the society because online education is not yet developed with respect to understanding skill education and it could not be the proper alternative

for the face to face education particularly at the age of adolescence. NEP 2020 has a provision regarding the admission in higher education system that it has the multiple entries and multiple exit system. It may be very fruitful provision with respect to dropouts in higher educational system because a person who has completed a year of Higher Education will be awarded by a certificate, the person who has completed 2 years of Higher Education will be awarded as a diploma holder then a person who has completed 3 years in higher educational system will be awarded by a degree. So this pattern will overcome on the problem of college dropouts because he or she when exit from the higher education system he or she would have at least certificate or diploma. But this provision will in the policy will encourage the students for dropping out from the higher educational system. It has not been considered in the policy.

One of the most important features of this policy is flexibility and this flexibility is the basis on which this provision is framed but at the same time such multiple exits are likely to make the students' attitude towards higher education casual. The enrolment of students in education may get reduced, especially students from the weaker sections of the society who are likely to be deprived of higher education. The solution is to organize special scholarships for students.

This education policy does not seem to provide a comprehensive explanation of women's education. Disadvantaged elements in Indian society include women, there is lack of proper provision for women's education. This will have to be taken into consideration mainly at the time of implementation of the policy otherwise a large section of the society is likely to be deprived of higher education due to lack of special provisions so the core of this educational policy may get shaken. Special attention needs to be paid to women's education while formulating those rules on educational policy. Even today, child marriage is so prevalent in Indian society that girls are forced to drop out of school due to household responsibilities at this age.

While dealing with region wise implementation of the policy, the most important difference is that the

same provisions are made for rural and urban areas. In fact through educational perspective it is seen that there is maximum diversity in the educational problems faced in rural and urban areas. The socio-economic and cultural factors of the region need to be considered but the policy does not appear to have such a provision and hence the biggest impact is likely to be on the rural areas. Considering the social structure of rural areas in Indian society and the diversity of socio-economic needs, separate provisions need to be made for higher education or education at school level. In view of the fact that it may be difficult for students from rural areas to compete with students in urban areas, a special attention needs to be paid to the education system in rural areas. In the policy there is no such provision made to bridge up the gap between rural and urban. Let us expect that while formulating the rules for the policy this factor would be considered.

Another important part of this education policy is that it encourages privatization which is even pointed out by many scholars. Hence governmental enterprises like governmental schools are not given the upliftment to cater good quality education. There is less response to governmental schools and the tendency of taking admissions in private schools by giving lucrative amount of fees is fostered by parent to avail their children a good education. In this policy also as privatisation is encouraged more there is threatening of demoralisation of the governmental schools. Instead of that the governmental schools should be made more students favoured. The policy also reflects the tendency of parents to focus on such schools hence there is large scope for privatization. The policy does not appear to have any special provision or explanation for the economically backward students in the society.

NEP-2020 will replace the national policy on education-1986. This educational policy encompasses the holistic approach of leaning of the child from elementary level to higher education. Likewise any education policy attempts to avail the facility of education to every element of the society whatever may be his socio-economic conditions, NEP-2020 also expects 100 percent Gross Enrolment

Ratio (GER) for school by 2030. The policy also tries to decrease the social gaps in the accessibility and learning process at school level. The highest priority of an NEP is to achieve literacy and numeracy by all students by grade 3 till 2025. NEP mainly focuses on making education accessible, equitable and inclusive if implemented at all levels. The country is facing education challenges in context to learning approach which fails the Education to All (ETA) programme. NEP-2020 understands the evaluation of "higher-order skills" such as analysis, critical thinking and conceptual clarity of the child and the dire need of assessment now to be shifted from mark based to competency based. The unemployment is a big challenge standing in front of our country. The policy aims mainly to increase employability potential of higher education programmes. The policy accelerates more degree courses taught in Indian languages and also bilingually. It ensures the infrastructure of building and facilities to be more wheelchair-accessible and dis-abled-friendly. It also reaffirms the sensitization of gender equality in teachers, students and other elements of the education system. It is noteworthy that policy enforces anti-harassment rules and no discrimination.

While implementing NEP-2020 there should be changes to be restructured at each level comprehending the curriculum, pedagogy and content in accordance with NCF (National Curriculum Framework). A regulatory body National Alliance for Technology (NEAT) will be set for blending teaching- learning with technology. The artificial intelligence will be included so that learning will be more personalized and customized for learners. The national alliance with EdTech companies will be perceived for effective learning experience. The big lacuna in implementation could be due to establishment of robust digital infrastructure even in remote areas which could be expensive, time consuming and hence the outcomes of the policy will not be achieved initially. Also the competencies and role of teachers at different levels of expertise will demand higher performance standard for teachers. Teachers would have to be digitally trained for pursuing the digital learning process. In the implementation of the policy, the stakeholders should be given

incentives as this encourages the uniform and effective execution. There should be building of reliable information repositories, developing credibility through transparency actions and participation, developing adaptability across regulatory bodies, governmental agencies, developing sound principles of management. For the phenomenal outcome the schools have to transform the teaching learning process by giving thrust on literacy and numeracy so that the reading, writing and speaking skills of the children up to grade III would be improved. The practical and experiential learning is emphasized in the policy to inculcate the skills of creativity and critical thinking in the children. The pedagogical structure should be revisited with the learning outcome that should not be based on completion of course but on adopting the competencies and comprehending the curriculum. The integration of technology in education with digital literacy, scientific temper and computational thinking should be done for holistic learning experience.

There is a special provision for the students who are coming from disadvantaged educational backgrounds that it is mandatory for the educational institutions to develop the bridge courses for coping up with the mainstream education and to compete with the advantaged groups. These bridge courses will be beneficial for these students to learn basics in in the particular course. The inclusion of bridge courses for students coming from disadvantaged educational backgrounds will help in adopting the curriculum for such students. Therefore it is an urgent need to develop these breeds' courses by considering the various requirements of the disadvantaged students with respect to skills, knowledge and attitude. This will create more opportunities and platforms for the students. Courses may be interdisciplinary based on the basic skills and knowledge of the particular subject.

The literacy rate in India is not yet reached to the satisfactory level. To change this scenario, New Education Policy has decided to adopt National Literacy Mission Hence a step would be taken by literacy mission towards developing the writing and reading skills in each and every child.

The policy has highlighted the principle of equity and inclusion in higher education. It's a crucial characteristic of the national education policy 2020 that it has included special attention on the social economic disadvantaged groups and is trying to suggest for the inclusion of this group. These groups should be brought in the system by availing some funds. It has been suggested that there should be management and monitoring system for fund to be utilised for this group and special attention should be given in the general enrolment ratio of the disadvantaged students. it is always said that the government who has involved in the inclusion of disadvantaged section of the society in its various programs with the help of welfare schemes here also the policy is not an exception. For the sake of inclusion of this group the policy covered various aspects of the disadvantaged groups and trying to bridge the gap between the mainstream and the disadvantaged section of the society by suggesting many measures. The prime measures suggested by national education policy are as below it is mandatory for all the higher education Institutions to develop and support Technology tools for better participation and learning outcomes of the weaker section of the society. The another important suggestion is given by this policy is that to set a special target of graduate enrolment ratio of social economic disadvantaged groups in the higher education institutions.

The policy has strictly recommended some steps to incorporate and include the Socio-economic disadvantaged groups in the higher education system. As per the policy government should be taken serious actions like earmarking funds for the education of SEDGs, increasing Graduate Enrolment Ratio (GER) of SEDGs, establishing Higher Educational Institutions in districts having large number of SEDGs, teaching in local languages, conducting outreach programmes on higher education opportunities and scholarships among SEDGs and developing technology tools for better participation. Though the recommendations are highly appreciable with respect to the inclusion of the weaker section of the society, its success will depend upon the honest

and cumulative efforts of state and central governments and the implementing authorities.

The policy document has assured for affordable and quality education for all and suggested to invest 6 percent public expenditure of GDP as it has been recommended by previous policy. It is indeed a doubtful provision as not fulfilled yet. The principle of equity in higher education has been discussed in the document but no clarity is seen as such.

The policy has focused on the skill imparting at school as well as higher education level among the students. Particularly it is expected that each student should acquire a skill at school level for better understanding of livelihood and to understand the importance of vocational competencies for future productivity. After all each and every person in the society is a source of human resource and hence should be developed with the help of education at various levels. Joshi And Panigrahi (2020) have further suggested, by observing the policy document, to emphasis on practical learning by providing education blended with skill oriented work experience to the students.

There is a suggestion in the NEP2020 that world class foreign universities and higher education institutions should be encouraged to establish their campuses in India for improving quality education in Indian higher education institutions and affordable education to the Indian students. Even, Deb (2020) welcomed the entry of Foreign Universities (FUs) and complements a scheme like Global Initiative of Academic Network (GIAN) that seeks to bring renowned international faculty members to India for short periods. But the other side of the scheme is that there will be the possibilities of enrolment of students from higher income group families. The economic disparities will be created between students of higher income group families and lower income group families. Further the opportunities will be ultimately for the higher income group families. Hence, government should make provisions of financial supports for the underprivileged students who wish to enrol in the FUs.

Conclusion:

In the view of holistic education, the new revamp would lead to qualitative education. The flexibility of courses, multidisciplinary approach, synergy in curriculum across all levels of education, extensive use of technology are the salient features which will enrich the outcome of education. Many times it has been seen that the policies or the programmes are excellent on paper, but worst in action as concerned to the proper and effective implementation. Hence government should outline the action plan for effective implementation of the policy. There should be continuous review of progress based on research and regular assessment. The factors of concern for socio-economically disadvantaged society and women would witness the trajectory of development with national equality. The integrity in all levels of education for enhancing the creativity and critical thinking of child would bring out responsible

citizens. The policy gives thrust not on learning but to understand how to learn which will give conceptual knowledge to a child. The borders of disparity based on education level as well as on economic level will disappear.

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