

Technology-Based Issues in The New Education Policy of India

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Abstract: Bridging the gap between traditional education and matching the pace of education with the rest of the world, Govt. of India implemented a new education policy this year which was much waited for a long time. The new education policy is a big step to change India's overall education scenario by changing the examination pattern. However, this new type of decision-making process seeks to ensure that it achieves great benefits covering all uncovered elements while keeping technology as a parameter, so this new policy in the previous education system is also missing some key issues that must be addressed in the next amendments. Making it an example of impact, this paper describes salient issues where new educational policies are silent or those grey areas have been only superficially touched upon.

Keywords: NEP; new education policy; Indian education system; technology in education; outcome based education

I. Introduction

Education is everyone's fundamental right, so it's accessed. Providing quality education to everyone has been a long-term of policymakers of India. The constitution of India says that access to good quality education must be mandatory for everyone without any obstacle, either administrative, societal, economic, demographical, regional, or religious. The constitution of India passed an act for providing education to all in 2009 and further made it better by an act using the powers of parliament on the footprints of Article 26 in the year 2002. The constitution reinforced the norms and passed the 'Right to Education (RTE)' which emphasizes that 'Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.' Later on, article 21-A came into existence which was more mature having the incorporation of words i.e., 'Free' and 'Compulsory'. Compulsory education forced center-level and state-level governments to frame strict norms for attendance and course completion while making the admission process easy and accessible for all. RTE enforced the government to provide quality education until the completion of primary level education in a neighborhood school. Certain guidelines and norms were laid by multiple state-level governments at school-level education systems to implement RTE at the advanced level and because of this, some major issues were observed i.e., lack of benchmark in quality education either at the course, syllabus, etc. Some other region-wise minor issues have been also observed instead of having different state boards and vast canvas of central board of secondary education (CBSE) and other similar education boards i.e., ICSE, CISCE, etc. [1].

II. Current status:

Despite several efforts by made by the Ministry of human resources the assimilation quotient among guardians of the wards studying in Indian universities was not up to a satisfactory level as per the different reports of independent media groups. It is marked able to quote the report by India Today printed in the year 2021, which says that there is lots of scope for profusion and confusion among Indian while considering the quality and preparedness of students for international courses i.e., CAIE, IBDP, etc. [1].

Some major issues had been observed from the inception of the modern education system which was laid back on the framework of the British education system. The major problem areas in the old education policy of India can be summarized as –

1. **Lack of central body:** There are multiple state boards and multi-central level boards, and they have their educational course structure, unparalleled, and unequaled, they have their curriculum as well as their way of assessment. This lack of a central body brings out the discrepancy issue in learning outcomes among the students having the same degree not only with the varying subject but also with the varying syllabus of the same subjects [2].
2. **Unregulated university structure:** There is no central authority at the university level to bring uniformity to all universities. Flexibility and freedom at the university level have created irregularities at the undergraduate level and post-graduate levels. Multiple universities have different capabilities and different levels of freedom at the course level to faculty selection level. Lack of uniformity lies in many segments [3].
3. **Lack of Internationalization:** Old Indian education system at the pre-university level grossly lacked the platform which is normally required to make students ready for international courses. Indian universities also lack the avoidance or absence of international standards i.e., ABET, QS, Shanghai Ranking, Erasmus, etc. not only at the student's level but also at any type of course ranging from adult education, vocational education, and up to internship and training. [4].

III. Issues in the policy

Considering several issues of quality and standards at pre-university level education, the government of India approved the 'New Education Policy' on 29th July 2020. This new education policy gave a new skeleton to the Indian education system which will bring a paradigm shift from the school education system to higher education and the time duration for this policy has been considered 20 years [5]. There are some salient features in this new policy i.e., the inclusion of regional languages as instruction of teaching, Ensuring Universal Access for students at all levels of school education, and a multilingual course-based support system for a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual country like India was very necessary. Equity, Quality, Equality, Affordability, and Accountability are some certain features that have been majorly touched on in NEP to cater to the needs of students at all levels making them ready for the future either at or national level or at the international level, however, still, some gaps are there which can affect the learning outcome at different level such as [6]:

1. **Language:** This is a debatable issue however seeing the student-teacher ratio, it is very difficult to maintain and check the learning outcome in students when language-based in-competency is an issue for a teacher in a country like India where more than 22 scheduled languages are there and no official national language. There is no examination in India for teachers which identifies the teacher's knowledge in a particular subject as well as the efficiency of a teacher to teach that subject in a regional language fluently [7]. There are some incidents where a few Indian states are refraining themselves from participating in entrance examinations conducted by the central government such as Tamil Nādu has said openly that because of the language barrier, the ratio of success of Tamil students is going down in NEET examination annually. some other issues may arise i.e., what will be a benefit to students if they study the course material in translated manner, still an extensive study is required to check the outcome of the study and performance of the students in courses where the language of study is not English, and the course content is translated into a native language other than English [8]. This becomes more complex in a case where NEP says that students in primary-level education systems will be introduced to the English language at a very early stage in private schools in comparison to a public school funded by the government so this may encourage a kind of discrepancy in next level as well as it may discourage govt. school's students for further study where an alternative language of instruction is also existing in the same course. [9]
2. **Lack Of Focus for Gypsy and Tribal Groups:** In a country like India which is multiethnic, multilingual, and home to many tribal groups in each of the states, there are no guidelines for

them in the new education policy. The new educational policy seriously lacks the focus and plan which can cater to the educational needs of gypsy groups of India or for the tribal group race of people who travel from place to place in caravans, rather than living in one place. Tribal groups living close to rivers, ponds have not been given adequate focus and appropriate right for education according to their current status. [10]

3. **Infrastructure Level Online Readiness for Tomorrow:** There are no clear pathways in the new education policy that describe the pathway to handle the course structure in case of a sudden epidemic situation at the pan India level. There is no suitable model for handling educational issues at the time of the pandemic situation. Currently, almost every country is suffering from Covid-19 and with its different variants i.e. Delta or Omicron yet there is no specific policy to handle the needs of students at different levels i.e. school, UG, PG, and Ph.D. Students are left with no choice but to follow the school's guidelines and practically there is no specific tool standard-wise. Student of different classes and different standards are taking their online classes with those online tools which are not specially designed for online teaching i.e., Zoom, MS Team, Google Meet, Skype, and WhatsApp, and ironically all these tools are developed by different companies with their objective not matching with the needs of Indian students at the different level either Ph.D. or UG/PG. [11]
4. **Manpower Training:** There have been few efforts to train teachers for online teaching. University teachers and schoolteachers, in the era of the pandemic, everyone was exploring the ways of online teaching in their way, so it resulted finally an immature way of teaching. A survey conducted by one of the leading media groups of India, Indian Express [12] reported that 92% percent of teachers in a study experienced that online teaching is different from regular classroom teaching and no help or training was provided by their school or college. Further schools asked the teachers to frame course files, syllabus, Mid-term examinations, Quizzes, and Lab experiments and their evaluation in which level-wise training was highly needed because the program outcome is different in each evaluation; however, no proper training was provided to teachers. Creating the online course materials, evaluation guidelines, results in analysis, etc. was a kind of experiment that was done unknowingly by school authorities, and it was not improving the quality of education. This is still the same and no guideline is there in the new education policy to improve the situation at the school level. Upskilling is the factor that has been completely ignored in new education policy while considering the teachers and quality of education [13,14].
5. **Lack of Skill Enhancement for Teachers:** Teachers must be trained in different ways for online teaching. Online skill development must be included as a part of course structures for all types of teachers either teaching at school or the university level. Teachers must also be trained via MOOC courses for online examination, evaluation, checking of answer sheets, and conducting online quizzes and practical evaluations. [15]
6. **Distress Management:** Teachers must be trained to handle stress during the pandemic while handling the different types of issues related to online teaching and issues of students. Better preparedness is needed of the time for handling the problems of online teaching for the stakeholders either students or teachers. There must be upskilling programs for teachers to prepare all the materials based on the feedback [16].
7. **Policy for Online Teaching:** There is no specific IT policy for students, institutes, and faculties while considering the issues of device, bandwidth, type of online apps for online learning, etc. Most of the students are not able to grasp the knowledge because of a lack of readiness course-wise. Students from many courses i.e. Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Electronics, and Communication Engineering have been observed as clueless about their course outcome and content [6]. Because the learning outcome and its quality depend on the type of digital access and efficacy of the digital content as online teaching is different from the traditional classroom so there is no uniformity found in different course materials prepared using online tools so there is a need for a policy for development and monitoring of uniformity in the e-content of different courses at the university level. The NEP outlines "Students' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement through Quality Education" (SARTHAQ) however it is still in its primary phase [17,18].

8. **Capacity Building:** According to the latest research study, the total number of faculties in 2019-20 was 9.68 million (a surge of more than 250,000 from 2018-19) and this data will be on the verge of downfall after the pandemic [19]. Standing Committee on Human Resource Development (2020) says that more than 25 percent of vacancies at universities are still vacant, and this data will also change in the time of Covid-19 so continuous capacity building is needed for teachers. How and when it will be implemented is still fuzzy in NEP, which must be a point of concern. [20].

IV. Conclusion

NEP has come at a time when it was needed very crucially in Indian education systems and its implementation must be in such a way that Govt. must be able to reach the last mile in educational ecosystems in India. Lots of pitfalls in current educational systems either at the school level or at the university level still exist and they must be addressed in a well-planned manner, NEP was a way for all these issues however there are still many roadblocks in its implementation and there are still many points of concerns i.e. skill inculcations, foundational improvement of infrastructure, high-level monitoring, holistic uniformity in every syllabus and course running at different levels in different states at state level or central level organizations. All these points must be well addressed in the next improved version of NEP.

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