

## **National Education Policy Changes in School Education System and Inclusive Education**

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### **Abstract**

The National Education Policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle 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. Teachers play an important role in fostering the intellectual abilities of students. Hence this policy will boost employment in the country and fundamentally change our educational system. The new policy will depend on policy initiatives.

**Keywords:** Education, policy and school.

### **Introduction**

The National Policy on Education was framed in 1986 and modified in 1992. Since then several changes have taken place that calls for a revision of the Policy. This National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, including SDG4, while building upon India’s traditions and value systems. The National Education Policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle 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.

### **Scope of New Education policy for Individuals**

The new education policy must provide to all students, irrespective of their place of residence, a quality education system, with particular focus on historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. Education is a great leveler and is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. Initiatives must be in place to ensure that all students from such groups, despite inherent obstacles, are provided various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system. These elements must be incorporated taking into account the local and global needs of the country, and with a respect for and deference to its rich diversity and culture. Instilling knowledge of India and its varied social, cultural, and technological needs, its inimitable artistic, language, and

knowledge traditions, and its strong ethics in India's young people is considered critical for purposes of national pride, self-confidence, self-knowledge, cooperation, and integration.

### **Importance in role of teachers in Education system**

Teachers truly shape the future of our children - and, therefore, the future of our nation. It is because of this noblest role that the teacher in India was the most respected member of society. Only the very best and most learned became teachers. Society gave teachers, or gurus, what they needed to pass on their knowledge, skills, and ethics optimally to students. The quality of teacher education, recruitment, deployment, service conditions, and empowerment of teachers is not where it should be, and consequently the quality and motivation of teachers does not reach the desired standards. . It must do everything to empower teachers and help them to do their job as effectively as possible. The new education policy must help recruit the very best and brightest to enter the teaching profession at all levels, by ensuring livelihood, respect, dignity, and autonomy, while also instilling in the system basic methods of quality control and accountability. The high respect for teachers and the high status of the teaching profession must be restored so as to inspire the best to enter the teaching profession. The motivation and empowerment of teachers is required to ensure the best possible future for our children and our nation.

### **Highlights of NEP 2020 in School Education System**

- 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, 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.
- Quality early childhood development, care, and education must thus be achieved as soon as possible, and no later than 2030, to ensure that all students entering Grade 1 are school ready.
- Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: An Urgent & Necessary Prerequisite to Learning.
- The highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025.
- A pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of under 30:1 will be ensured at the level of each school; areas having large numbers of socio-economically disadvantaged students will aim for a PTR of under 25:1. Teachers will be trained, encouraged, and supported - with continuous professional development - to impart foundational literacy and numeracy.
- Formative/adaptive assessment to track and thereby individualize and ensure each student's learning.
- A national repository of high-quality resources on foundational literacy and numeracy will be made available on the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA).
- Public and school libraries will be significantly expanded to build a culture of reading across the country. Digital libraries will also be established. School libraries will be set up - particularly in villages - to serve the community during non-school hours, and book clubs may meet in public/school libraries to further facilitate and promote widespread reading.
- All school children shall undergo regular health check-ups especially for 100% immunization in schools and health cards will be issued to monitor the same.
- The Gross Enrolment Ratio for Grades 6-8 was 90.9%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12 it was only 79.3% and 56.5%, respectively - indicating that a significant proportion of enrolled students drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8. As per the 75th round household survey by NSSO in 2017-18, the number of out of school children in the age group of 6 to 17 years is 3.22 crore.
- Facilitating learning for all students, with special emphasis on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), the scope of school education will be broadened to facilitate multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes.
- Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and State Open Schools will be expanded and strengthened for meeting the learning needs of young people in India who are not able to attend a physical school.

- Curriculum and Pedagogy in Schools: Learning Should be Holistic, Integrated, Enjoyable, and Engaging. The curricular and pedagogical structure and the curricular framework for school education will therefore 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 aim of education will not only be cognitive development, but also building character and creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with the key 21st century skills. Ultimately, knowledge is a deep-seated treasure and education helps in its manifestation as the perfection which is already within an individual.
- Curriculum content will be reduced in each subject to its core essentials, to make space for critical thinking and more holistic, inquiry-based, discovery-based, discussion-based, and analysis based learning.
- Experiential learning will be adopted, including hands-on learning, arts-integrated and sports-integrated education, story-telling-based pedagogy, among others, as standard pedagogy within each subject, and with explorations of relations among different subjects.
- There will be no hard separation among ‘curricular’, ‘extracurricular’, or ‘co-curricular’, among ‘arts’, ‘humanities’, and ‘sciences’, or between ‘vocational’ or ‘academic’ streams. Subjects such as physical education, the arts and crafts, and vocational skills, in addition to science, humanities, and mathematics, will be incorporated throughout the school curriculum, with a consideration for what is interesting and safe at each age.
- A practice-based curriculum for Grades 6-8 will be appropriately designed by NCERT while framing the NCFSE 2020-21.

### **Inclusive Education in India**

Inclusive education is defined as a system of learning which includes everyone, and one that can cater to the learning needs of Children with Disabilities (CwD).

The definition of ‘inclusive education’ by UNICEF is two-fold. First, it means to have all children in the same schools and classrooms. Second, it goes a step further to mean real learning opportunities for children who have been traditionally excluded. However, the ambit of inclusivity in education as a whole is much broader. It not only deals with receiving an education but also its components, including what is the education about and how effectively is it imparted. Education should ideally be holistic, acknowledging the varied histories and identities of people and adjusted to current times.

### **Why is inclusive education important for the country like India?**

Inclusive Education (IE) is a new approach towards educating the children with disability and learning difficulties with that of normal ones within the same roof. It brings all students together in one classroom and community, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, and seeks to maximize the potential of all students.

According to U-DISE 2016-17 data, about 19.6% of students belong to Scheduled Castes at the primary level, but this fraction falls to 17.3% at the higher secondary level. These enrolment dropoffs are more severe for Scheduled Tribes students (10.6% to 6.8%), and differently-abled children (1.1% to 0.25%), with even greater declines for female students within each of these categories. The decline in enrolment in higher education is even steeper. The act also emphasised on the barrier free access as a non-discrimination measure (Narayan, John 2017).

- Providing bicycles and organizing cycling and walking groups to provide access to school have been shown to be particularly powerful methods in increasing participation of female students
- One-on-one teachers and tutors, peer tutoring, open schooling, appropriate infrastructure, and suitable technological interventions to ensure access can be particularly effective for certain children with disabilities.

- Schools providing quality ECCE reap the greatest dividends for children who come from families that are economically disadvantaged. Meanwhile, counsellors and/or well-trained social workers that work with and connect with students, parents, schools, and teachers in order to improve attendance and learning outcomes have been found to be especially effective for children in urban poor areas.
- Children with disabilities will be enabled to fully participate in the regular schooling process from the Foundational Stage to higher education, inclusive education as a ‘system of education wherein students with and without disabilities learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities’.
- School complexes will be provided resources for the integration of children with disabilities, recruitment of special educators with cross-disability training, and for the establishment of resource centres, wherever needed, especially for children with severe or multiple disabilities. Barrier free access for all children with disabilities will be enabled as per the RPWD Act.
- In particular, assistive devices and appropriate technology-based tools, as well as adequate and language-appropriate teaching-learning materials (e.g., textbooks in accessible formats such as large print and Braille) will be made available to help children with disabilities integrate more easily into classrooms and engage with teachers and their peers.
- NIOS will develop high-quality modules to teach Indian Sign Language, and to teach other basic subjects using Indian Sign Language. Adequate attention will be paid to the safety and security of children with disabilities.
- To integrate and engage the child in the classroom activities, appropriate technology based tools and other assistive devices, as well as teaching-learning materials which are adequate and language-appropriate such as large print textbooks and Braille will be made available in school.
- Home-based education will continue to be a choice available for children with severe and profound disabilities who are unable to go to schools. The children under home-based education must be treated as equal to any other child in the general system.
- National Assessment Centre, PARAKH, will formulate guidelines and recommend appropriate tools for conducting such assessment, from the foundational stage to higher education (including for entrance exams), in order to ensure equitable access and opportunities for all students with learning disabilities.
- The awareness and knowledge of how to teach children with specific disabilities (including learning disabilities) will be an integral part of all teacher education programmes, along with gender sensitization and sensitization towards all underrepresented groups in order to reverse their underrepresentation.

### **Benefits of Inclusive Education**

1. **Social Development:** Children are quick to learn from their surroundings, and when they see diversity is accepted positively, they learn that too. This approach helps them develop respect and understanding for different cultures and abilities through observation and imitation. It also develops self-confidence to a great extent.
2. **Better Friendships:** When children with and without disabilities learn in the same classroom, they develop relationships they may not have considered otherwise. The interaction among peers in inclusive classrooms fosters unique friendships that result in open-mindedness.
3. **Academic Success:** Teachers use special teaching techniques to help students do well academically in inclusive classrooms. A nurturing learning environment coupled with peer support can result in better vocational outcomes than in non-inclusive settings.
4. **Varied Extracurricular Activities:** Since inclusive schools are big on improving their teaching approaches, both disabled and non-disabled students must participate in varied extracurricular activities throughout the academic year. This participation allows for better physical development among students.
5. **Community Building:** Inclusive learning is not only great for children but also for their families. Parents of special children feel supported in their community, which brings them greater

psychological and economic well-being. This, in turn, leads to better community building and the elimination of discriminatory beliefs among neighbors.

### **Role of Teachers in Inclusive Education**

#### **1. Curriculum design**

The special education teacher and regular education teacher engage in co-planning. They work together to design lesson plans to fit the needs of all students, with the special education teacher focusing on the needs of the special needs students. In some cases, however, the general education teacher plans the classroom lessons and the special education teacher adapts those lessons to meet the needs of her students. She may also use the lessons to develop review materials or plan one-on-one instruction with special needs students before or after the class.

As many general education teachers have limited training in inclusive learning, the SEN teachers need to help the instructor understand why specific accommodations are necessary and how to incorporate them.

#### **2. Classroom instructions**

Most of the inclusive classrooms are based on a co-teaching model. With this, most teachers are present all day. There are exceptions too. Others use a push-in model, where special education teachers offer lessons at certain times during the day.

Besides, teachers can also pull students out of the classroom for a senior activity or one-to-one lessons. Also, they can arrange a time with speech therapists, counsellors, dyslexia coaches, and other specialized personnel. SEN teachers should ensure that therapists or professionals are present in the classroom at certain times to assist the students.

And to maintain a favourable climate, they can assist the general education teachers in presenting lessons to the whole class, enforcing rules, grading papers, and other classroom routines. General and special education teachers can break classes into smaller stations or groups to offer more significant engagement opportunities.

#### **3. Learning assessments**

A special education teacher in an inclusive classroom is to conduct regular assessments to check whether the students are achieving academic goals or not. Lessons can be evaluated periodically to determine whether these are sufficiently challenging without overwhelming the students.

Students can have a feeling of general independence in general education settings but can also feel sufficiently supported. SEN teachers can also organize periodic IEP meetings with each student, their family, and some staff members to decide whether adjustments need to be made to the student's plan.

#### **4. Advocating for students**

Teachers work as advocates for special needs children. It includes ensuring that all school officials and employees understand the need for inclusion and implementing inclusion in all campus activities. Besides, advocacy can also include requesting inclusion-focused professional development activities or offering information to community members about the success rates of inclusive teaching.

Effective communication with parents is also vital for the success of an inclusive classroom. Families should receive regular updates on children's academic, emotional, and social development through emails, phone calls, and other communications means.

#### **5. Address Parental Concerns**

The inclusion teacher should be prepared to address parental concerns. While not all parents will be as involved as others, the teacher should always be willing to discuss the inclusion student's progress with the parents.

### **Conclusion**

The objective of the New Education Policy 2020 is to make India a global knowledge superpower. The NEP 2020 policy also proposes that **all universities and colleges aim to be multi-disciplinary by 2040**. This policy will boost employment in the country and fundamentally change our educational system. The success of this new education policy will depend on how it is implemented. Implementation will be guided by the following principles. First, implementation of the spirit and intent of the Policy will be the most critical matter. Second, it is important to implement the policy initiatives in a phased manner, as

each policy point has several steps, each of which requires the previous step to be implemented successfully. Third, prioritization will be important in ensuring optimal sequencing of policy points, and that the most critical and urgent actions are taken up first, thereby enabling a strong base. Fourth, comprehensiveness in implementation will be key; as this Policy is interconnected and holistic, only a full-fledged implementation, and not a piecemeal one, will ensure that the desired objectives are achieved. Fifth, since education is a concurrent subject, it will need careful planning, joint monitoring, and collaborative implementation between the Centre and States.

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