



drishti

Draft Education Policy 2019

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This article is based on “Government wish list for schools” which appeared in Indian Express on 11th June 2019. It talks about policy changes proposed by Draft education policy 2019.

A committee headed by K Kasturirangan submitted a new draft National Education Policy to the HRD Minister, now in public domain, is open for discussion with states (as education is a concurrent list subject) and all stakeholders.

Draft policy envisages India to become a knowledge superpower. It is based on the foundation pillar of access, equity, quality, affordability & accountability

The draft policy provided a comprehensive and holistic view of education reforms - technical, legal, agricultural, vocational, R&D innovation, teacher's education.

What are the salient features of the draft policy and their significance?

- **Pre-primary education**

- The draft policy acknowledges a “**severe learning crisis**” in India, where children in primary school fail to attain basic math and reading skills.
- This learning crisis is due to the “tragic deficiency” in **early childhood care and education (ECCE)** of children in the age group 3-6 years.
- So the draft recommends that ECCE be made an integral part of the Right to Education (RTE) Act.

After which it will be obligatory for the public system to provide appropriate and quality educational infrastructure, facilities, and educators to all children in the **age group of 3-6 years**.

- To **strengthen and expand ECCE**, the draft policy recommends:
 - Increased investment in existing **Anganwadi centres** (meant for providing basic nutrition, healthcare and pre-school education to 3-to-6-year-olds),
 - To ensure continuity from pre-primary to primary schools, the draft advocates bringing all aspects of ECCE under the purview of the Human Resource Development Ministry.

- **Reading and math skills**

- A large number of children currently in elementary school cannot read and understand the basic text and solve simple addition and subtraction problems(Highlighted by ASER report 2018).
- To resolve this learning deficit:
 - It proposes **redesigning of the school curriculum** for Grades 1 to 5 to include dedicated mathematics and reading hours every day.
 - A ‘**Remedial Instructional Aides Programme**’ to draw instructors from the local community to hold remedial classes during school hours, after school hours and during summer vacations for students who need help.
 - A ‘**National Tutors Programme**’ that will enrol the best performers of each school for up to five hours a week as tutors for students who have fallen behind.
 - Also, a school preparation module to be prepared by NCERT for all Grade 1 students to ensure they have the required learning levels (letters, shapes, colours, numbers) before starting the Grade 1 syllabus.
 - A nutritious breakfast, in addition to the midday meal, for improved learning.
 - Vacancies to be filled urgently to ensure a pupil-teacher ratio of 30:1.

- **Higher Education**
 - It aims to create **world-class multidisciplinary higher education institutions** across the country, based on a three-tier system:
 - Tier 1: Research institutions, Tier 2: Teaching institutions, Tier 3: Colleges which become autonomous degree-granting colleges
 - It aims to increase GER(Gross enrolment ratio) in higher education to at least 50% by 2035.
 - It proposes opening up of National Research Foundation, which grants competitive funding for outstanding research proposals across all disciplines.
- **Curriculum and pedagogy**
 - The 1986 national education policy standardised school education with its push for a uniform 10+2 structure.
 - The draft pitches for reconfiguration of curriculum and pedagogy in a “**5+3+3+4**” **design** (A four-staged curriculum).
 - The foundational phase (**From three years of pre-school to Grade 2**), the draft policy recommends, should comprise five years of flexible “play-based, activity-based, and discovery-based” learning and interaction.
 - This is followed by a preparatory phase consisting of **three years (Grades 3, 4 and 5)** of basic education incorporating some textbooks as well as aspects of more formal classroom learning.
 - The next three years of middle school education (**Grades 6, 7 and 8**) would involve developing more abstract thinking.
 - Secondary education phase of four years (**Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12**), for subject teaching.
 - Also, It proposes no hard separation of school content in terms of curricular, extracurricular, or co-curricular areas, and between arts and sciences.
- **Languages**
 - The draft recommends continuance of the **three-language formula**.
 - But it has proposed flexibility in the choice of languages, **Hindi and English are no longer the stipulated language that students must study from Grade 6**.
 - Further, it advocates a reduction in curriculum load and reorientation of the curriculum to promote multilingualism, ancient Indian knowledge systems, scientific temper, ethical reasoning, social responsibility, digital literacy and knowledge of critical issues facing local communities.

What is the 3 language formula?

- The **three-language formula** for language learning was formulated in 1968, based on national education policy 1968 submitted by Kothari commission.

- It envisaged the study of Hindi, English and modern Indian language (preferably one of the southern languages) in the Hindi speaking states and Hindi, English and Regional language in the non-Hindi speaking States.
- It sought to create symbiotic relationship between northern languages(Primarily Hindi) and southern languages(Dravidian languages like Telugu, Tamil, Kannada etc.)
- **Separation of functions:**
The draft NEP 2018 calls for decentralisation, with each of these functions carried out by separate bodies –
 - Policy-making by a '**Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog**' (Education Commission at the national level, headed by the PM);
 - Operation and regulation by the department of school education and an independent State School Regulatory Authority in each state, which will set basic and uniform standards for both public and private schools;
 - Academic matters, including standard setting and curriculum, to be continued to be led by the State Councils of Educational Research and Training.

- **Other reforms:**

- The draft policy envisages an **amendment of the RTE Act**, to increase its ambit from pre-school (age of 3 years) to class 12th.
- Early vocational exposure, with basic knowledge of various livelihoods (gardening, pottery, electrical work, etc) will be taught at Foundational and Elementary levels.
- Teachers will not be engaged in time-consuming, non-teaching work such as electioneering and cooking of midday meals.
- “Para-teacher” (Shikshakarmi, Shiksha-Mitra, etc) systems to be stopped by 2022.
- All schools will be accredited as per the School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework.

Conclusion

The provisions of draft policy are progressive ideas, but there are roadblocks in their implementation. These mostly relate to funding requirements and governance architecture.

(At least it needs doubling of public funding to 6% of the GDP)

Apart from it If the political leadership backs it, implementation of the policy will transform our nation.

Drishti Input

Education can play a central role in the transformation of India. Discuss in the context of Draft national education policy 2019?