



Draft National Education Policy, 2019

The Draft National Education Policy, 2019 prepared by a committee **chaired by Dr K. Kasturirangan** has been shared by the Ministry of Human Resource and Development for public comments. The policy aims at making India a knowledge superpower by equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge. It also focuses on eliminating the shortage of manpower in Science and Technology, academics and industry. The Draft Policy is **built on foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability & Accountability**.

Key Features of the Draft Policy

- The policy **covers school education, higher education and professional education** which in turn include agricultural education, legal education, medical education and technical education.
- It also looks at the verticals of vocational education by **including teacher education and the research and innovation**.
- The **early child care and education** have been sought to be integrated within the Ministry of Education (a changed name has been suggested for the Ministry of Human Resource and Development - MHRD).
- The policy also tries to focus on certain foundational skills that children should have in the **proposed new structure of 5+3+3+4**.
 - The **first stage of five years (for children of 3-8 years of age)** i.e. foundational stage looks at discovery learning and learning by play. The foundational literacy and numeracy skills is a mission mode approach under it that includes **National Tutors' Program, remedial instructional aid programmes etc.** It considers nutrition as very critical for strengthening the levels of 3-8 years of children.
 - The next stage is **Preparatory Stage** for the children in the **age group of 8 to 11 years** (grades 3 to 5) followed by **the Middle Stage (grades 6 to 8)** for the students in the age group of 11-14 years and the **Secondary Stage (Grades 9-12)** for students in the age group of 14-18 years.
- For school education, governance level changes have also been suggested. A **State regulatory authority** has been suggested for regulating education in the country. The body will decide the accreditation of different schools. The government will continue to fund and operate education in the country.
- **Main takeaways for higher education:**
 - **Restructuring of the higher education system into Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3.**
 - **Tier 1 includes research universities** focusing equally on research and teaching, **Tier 2 includes teaching universities** focusing primarily on teaching; and **Tier 3 includes colleges focusing only on teaching at undergraduate levels.** All such institutions will gradually **move towards full autonomy - academic, administrative, and financial.** The idea is to **spread 'research culture'** at the undergraduate level.
 - The policy also talks about **National Scholarship Fund** to financially support students for higher education.
- **Promotion of classical and regional languages** have been emphasised upon.
- The policy also proposes to **increase the class of compulsory education up to grade 12 (age-18)**.
 - The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or **Right to Education Act - RTE, 2009** (represents **Article 21-A** of the Indian Constitution) **made education, a**

fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 14.

- The policy aims to **achieve a fully literate society** where all adults are literates by 2030 or so.

Controversy Over the Three Language Formula

- The government has **removed the 'three language formula' from the draft policy**. The three-language formula, dating back to 1968, means students in Hindi-speaking states should learn a modern Indian language, apart from Hindi and English and, in non-Hindi-speaking states, Hindi along with the regional language and English.
- The intention behind the formula was for the **sybiotic relationship between the languages**. One can see a clear partition of languages between the Southern states and the Northern states.
- The **Kothari Commission in 1964** also advocated that students from the north should study one language from the south and students from southern states should learn the northern languages including Hindi.
- In the South, especially in Tamil Nadu, there was **agitation on the imposition of Hindi**.

Factors Considered while Framing the Policy

- The National Policy on Education, 1986 which was modified in 1992, required changes to meet the contemporary and futuristic demands of India.
- The **policy looks at education in a continuum**. The journey of learning for a child is not segmented. The new structure proposed in the policy is from the **perspective of curricular and pedagogical reasons, not from the point of infrastructure** as there may be schools offering education up to only class 3.
- **At the age of 3, 4 and 5, there is a great potential for the development of mind as well as creative aspects in a child**. Proper nutrition is necessary for the same.
- Many sectors of education or touching upon education being outside the periphery of the Ministry of Human and Resource Development (MHRD).
- As India is at a lower position in the research index, the **development of research culture among the students** has been taken into consideration.
- The Government of India, playing multiple roles i.e. funding, producing, assessing and regulating education in the country.

Issues in the Draft Policy

- There is **less consensus on the integration of foundational learning with schooling**. In Europe, compulsory education only begins at the age of 6. In certain countries like Denmark, Germany and Finland, compulsory education begins at the age of 7.
- There needs to be a discussion on whether literacy and numeracy skills should be developed during the time of foundational learning.
- In the draft policy, there is **no mention of how the State regulatory body will regulate the government institutions**.
- A **constitutional amendment is required to change the limits for compulsory schooling in the country**. Also, increasing the limit on higher side i.e. up to the age of 18 is not consistent with the limits across the world. Also, it is a very **expensive proposition**.
- There is **not enough capacity in the country to provide for teachers' education**. Also, M.Ed has been given less importance under the policy. The focus has been more on B.Ed.

Way Forward

- **Education is a concurrent list subject**. Apart from a consensus between the centre and the states, all the other stakeholders including institutions, public and academicians should also be consulted.
- **Natal and prenatal studies should also be included** in the country's education system to ensure awareness about the issues related to mother and infants, considering the high MMR and

IMR in the country.

- There should be **a course of Masters of Teacher Education**. Also, there is a need to build good teacher training institutions.
- The education policy **should maintain a symbiotic relationship between the different regions of the country** through the study of different languages.
- The quality of education provided in the country shall be such that it not only delivers basic literacy and numeracy but also creates an analytical environment in the country.

There is specificity and clarity in the policy. With a few changes, it can be implemented well. The policy aims to bring out a paradigm shift in the field of education by empowering children, teachers and educational institutions.

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