

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020 - OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

To boost the growth of the Indian education sector, the present government decided to revamp it by introducing a comprehensive National Education Policy 2020. This is in line with the Prime Minister's recent call on leveraging the Fourth Industrial Revolution to take India to new heights. The currently introduced National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India centered education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommends major changes in the Teacher Education scenario. The recommendation on teacher education is given in chapter- 15 of the NEP-2020 under Part II which details the policy changes in Higher Education. It has divided into eleven sub points. The main objectives of NEP is to "ensure that teachers are given the highest quality training in content, pedagogy, and practice, by moving the teacher education system into multidisciplinary colleges and universities, and establishing the 4-year integrated B.Ed. offered by such multidisciplinary HEIs will, by 2030, become the minimal degree qualification for school teachers" (NEP2020 -Page 42: 15.5). While analyzing the NEP 2020 more deeply, it is a curious combination of opportunities and at the same time challenges for Teacher education scenario. The present Paper tries to analyze National Education Policy 2020 with regard to the paradigm shifts in terms of Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Education Sector.

Keywords: National education policy 2020, NEP-2020, Opportunities and Challenges, Teacher Education.

INTRODUCTION

Government of India, as part of the adoption of the fourth Sustainable Development GoalSDG4-Education- out of the seventeen Goals adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, with regard to 2030 Agenda, prepared The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29th, 2020. It is high time to bring out an Education Policy because a major development since the last Policy of 1986/92 which we follow for around 34 years has been the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 which laid down legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education. Lots of changes are happening in the world. Different countries have their own education systems which lead them for sustainable progress through education. Technology has rapid explosion and influence in every sector. To make India a Super Global Knowledge Power, we essentially need up to date fruitful implementations in the education field. Only through rapid movements and knowledge navigation, we can transform our country to a developed one. Considering multiple parameters for changing the curriculum and education system, it is essential to revise the policies in time for improving the existing system.

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highest quality training in content, pedagogy, and practice, by moving the teacher education system into multidisciplinary colleges and universities, and establishing the 4-year integrated B.Ed. offered by such multidisciplinary HEIs will, by 2030, become the minimal degree qualification for school teachers” (NEP2020 -Page 42: 15.5). While analyzing the NEP 2020 more deeply, it is a curious combination of opportunities and at the same time challenges for Teacher education scenario.

2. MOVING TEACHER EDUCATION INTO THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM NEP 2020

Made an observation that “a marriage of high-quality content with pedagogy that can only be truly attained if teacher preparation is conducted within composite institutions offering multidisciplinary academic programmes and environments”(NEP 2020, Page 42, 15.4.). For the vision implementation, “Teacher education for all levels - Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary - will take place within the university/higher education system as a stage-specific, four-year integrated B.Ed. programme, combining content, pedagogy, and practical training”. Hope these changes may help to maintain the integrity of teacher education system in the country.

3. DUAL-DEGREE PROVISION

The provision of Dual –degree in NEP 2020 stating that “the four-year integrated B.Ed. programme of pre-service teacher preparation for different tracks will be offered at the university level as a dual-degree (in education together with any desired specialised subject) undergraduate programme of study, and will thus include both disciplinary as well as teacher preparation courses” is a fascinating aspect and may be cautioned not to lead to drop outs from the „education“ sector in the context of increased rate of unemployment in India which results in scarcity of committed professionals in the education field.9 (NED 2020, Page 42, 15.5).

4. NO MENTION ON TEACHING SKILL ENHANCEMENT NEP

Identifies certain key areas of the curriculum for teacher preparation that will be reformed and revitalized such as “concentration on foundational literacy/numeracy, inclusive pedagogy and evaluation, knowledge of India and its traditions, and the development in students of 21st century skills such as problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, ethical and moral reasoning, and communication and discussion abilities”. But for a Teacher preparation programme, more than any other aspect, teaching Skill enhancement should be given the highest priority which has not been mentioned in NEP 2020.

5. CLOSING DOWN SUBSTANDARD STANDALONE TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The mission will be taken to shut down the substandard and dysfunctional teacher education institutions by 2023 for promoting only educationally sound teacher preparation programme in India. All stand-alone Teachers Education Institutions should convert themselves as Multidisciplinary HETs by 2030 to offer only four years integrated B.Ed. programme. Mandatory accreditation of all TEIs as multidisciplinary HEIs within the next 3-5 years. The progress of this mission will be supervised by National Higher Education Regulatory Authority [NHERA] every 3 months and by RashtriyaShikshaAayog [RSA] every 6 months(NEP 2020, Page 42, 15.5) which ensures an initiative in maintaining quality teacher education.

6. SECONDARY SPECIALISATIONS FOR SUBJECT TEACHERS OR GENERALIST TEACHERS

As per NPE 2020, Teacher Education faculties include Specialised instructors for specialised subjects, generalist special educators for primary school subject areas, subject teacher in middle or high school. “Education of children with singular interests and talents is addressed through secondary specialisations for subject teachers or generalist teachers, after initial or pre-service teacher preparation is completed and which would be offered as certificate courses, in the in-service mode, either full time or as part time / blended courses - again, necessarily, at multidisciplinary colleges or universities”. More clarity is needed in the concept of Secondary specialisations in the sense that it may not result in less privileged Special Education B.Ed. course.

7. ALL TEACHER EDUCATION WILL HAPPEN IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY INSTITUTIONS

This is the major transformation in the teacher education sector. Teacher training colleges or Teacher Education Institutions which are running single-stream programmes must be phased out. “All multidisciplinary universities and colleges - will aim to establish, education departments which, besides carrying out cutting-edge research in various aspects of education, will also run B.Ed. programmes, in collaboration with other departments” (NPE 2020, Page 42, 15.4.). As a result, majority of Teacher training colleges of the State will be vanished or will be merged to multidisciplinary colleges as a department of education. This results the complete eradication of the great tradition of the prestigious concept of Training Colleges in the Country.

8. ADMISSION TO PRE-SERVICE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMMES, WILL BE THROUGH SUBJECT AND APTITUDE TESTS AS CONDUCTED BY THE NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY

“Admission to pre-service teacher preparation programmes, like all HEI admissions, will be carried out in large part through subject and aptitude tests as conducted by the National Testing Agency. This is in keeping with the principle of separating Board Examinations from official university entrance examinations, while the full criteria and process for admissions will be left to the universities and colleges offering these programmes” (NEP 2020 Page 43, 15.7) which is an innovative and warm idea.

9. CREATION OF SUBSTANTIAL NEW TEACHER PREPARATION CAPACITY NPE

says that “The fundamental transformation to the four-year integrated teacher preparation programme on one hand and the shutting down of dysfunctional institutions on the other hand, will require the creation of substantial new teacher preparation capacity: substantial public investment will be required for the sect. Philanthropic efforts will be encouraged in this sector through special schemes to be designed by the RSA” (NPE 2000, Page 48, 18.13.& Draft NPE 2019, Page 287, P15.2.3.). It is a fearful fact that these measures will largely allow for greater penetration of private capital in education, especially Teacher Education which is meant to “shape the next generation”. Confusion still arises here that by engaging with the multi-fold ramifications of this provision, heavy cost that the common masses will pay in terms of growing inaccessibility of higher education. This model of graded autonomy may not be helpful for the universalization of educational resources and equal access to quality higher education.

10. DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES NEP

has recommended the Department of Universities to strengthen and develop the spaces for research and innovation in education. “Departments of Education in universities will need to be built up to take on the central role of anchoring education programmes in all disciplines through meaningful relationships with all other departments in education. They will cater to pre-service education and in-service Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers in school education as well as faculty in higher education. They will also prepare faculty for teacher education. They must develop courses and activities for in-service CPD of teachers, and offer mentoring programmes to beginning teachers. All courses offerings must be available in a range of formats including part time, evening, blended and online, in addition to full time programmes” (NPE Draft, 2019. Page Nos. 288 & 289, 15.3). Showering more responsibilities to Departments of Education in universities can be considered as opportunities to act.

11. FACULTY FOR TEACHER EDUCATION NPE 2020

has advised to appoint “faculty with training in areas of social sciences that are directly relevant to school education e.g., psychology, child development, linguistics, sociology, philosophy, economics, and political science as well as from science education, mathematics education, social science education, and language education programmes. The faculty profile in Departments of Education will be diverse with Ph.D.’s in different areas. “The faculty profile in Departments of Education will necessarily aim to be diverse, but teaching/field/research experience will be highly valued” (NPE 2020, Page 43, 15.8). Hope that the concept would give more dignified individuality to teachers

12. RE-ORIENTATION OF PH.D. PROGRAMMES

As a matter of re-orientation of Ph.D. programmes, NPE 2020 suggested that “all fresh Ph.D. entrants, irrespective of discipline, will be required to take credit-based courses in teaching/education/pedagogy/writing related to their chosen Ph.D subject during their doctoral training period. Ph.D students will also have a minimum number of hours of actual teaching experience gathered through teaching assistantships and other means. Ph.D. programmes at universities around the country will be re-oriented for this purpose”.

13. IN-SERVICE CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

Existing institutional arrangements and ongoing initiatives will continue for the In-service continuous professional development for college and university teachers. “The use of technology platforms such as SWAYAM/DIKSHA for online training of teachers will be encouraged” (NPE 2020, Page 43, 15.10) which is most welcome and inspire teachers to be continuous learners.

14. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL MISSION FOR MENTORING NPE 2020

suggests “framing a pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty to provide short and long-term mentoring/professional support to university/college teachers”(NPE 2020, Page 43, 15.11) which is also a warm welcome supportive system for teachers. All schools of foundation, preparatory, middle, and secondary level should appoint 4- years integrated B.Ed. degree holders as teachers with dual major specialization (Education & Subject). Till 2030, there will be two years B.Ed. programme for 3 years UG and one-year B.Ed. for four years UG and those who have Master’s degree in other subjects. M.Ed. will be one year with research focus. All interested senior or retired faculty will be utilized short or long term for guiding,

mentoring, or professional support for research/training/innovation. A separate National Mission for Mentoring will be established

CONCLUSION

NEP-2019 has recommended for the quality education for all by creating an educating system which is deeply rooted in Indian ethos and rebuilds India as a Global Knowledge Power. Building Cross disciplinary collaboration in Education through “Liberal Arts Education” is a welcome intention.

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