



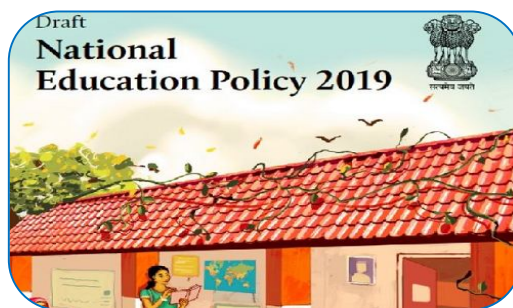
## UNDERSTANDING DRAFT NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2019

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### ABSTRACT :

*The National Education Policy 2019 aims to universalize the pre-primary education by 2025 and provide foundational literacy/numeracy for all by 2025. The Draft National Education Policy, 2019 is out in the public domain. Drawing inputs from the T.S.R. Subramanian Committee report and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), the K. Kasturirangan Committee has produced the policy document.*



**KEYWORDS :** *Draft National Education Policy , public domain.*

### Salient features of NEP 2019

- The policy aims to universalize the pre-primary education by 2025 and provide foundational literacy/numeracy for all by 2025.
- It proposes new Curricular and Pedagogical Structure, with 5+3+3+4 design covering the children in the age group 3-18 years. Under this, Pre-Primary & Grades 1-2 is considered as foundational Stage; Grades 3-5 as Preparatory Stage; Grades 6-8 as Middle Stage and Grades 9-12 as Secondary Stage. This is an academic restructuring only; there will be no physical restructuring of schools. It aims at equitable & inclusive education for every child in the country, with a special focus on under-represented groups (URGs).
- Universal Access & Retention with 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio for all school education by 2030.
- Children learn languages, most quickly between 2-8 years, and multilingualism has great cognitive benefits for students. Therefore a three-language formula has been proposed.
- It proposes the teaching of other classical languages and literature, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit in schools.
- A new independent State School Regulatory Authority (SSRA) to be created.
- It aims to consolidate 800 universities & 40,000 colleges into around 15,000 large, multidisciplinary institutions.
- The policy proposes three types of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs): Research Universities, Teaching Universities and Autonomous degree-granting colleges.
- It aims to provide autonomy to all higher education institutions. Higher education institutions to be governed by Independent Boards with complete academic and administrative autonomy.
- An autonomous body called the National Research Foundation (NRF) to be set up through an Act of Parliament.

- Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog or the National Education Commission - apex body - to be constituted. It will be chaired by the Prime Minister and will comprise eminent educationists, researchers, Union Ministers, representation of Chief Ministers of States, eminent professionals from various fields.
- MHRD to be re-designated as the Ministry of Education (MoE).
- Increase in public investment by the Central and State Governments to 20% of overall public expenditure over a 10 year period.

#### Views in support of Draft National Education Policy

- The school education will cover children of 3-18 years, instead of the present 6-14 years under the RTE Act. It covers three years under early childhood care and education (ECCE) and four years under secondary education. ECCE would facilitate play and discovery-based learning for children of that age group.
- Its emphasis on mother tongue-based education and oral language development are critical.
- The policy focuses on online learning as an alternative to regular classroom interaction between teachers and students. It helps in achieving the twin objectives of cutting costs and increasing enrollment.
- It aims to protect and promote our culture through the study of classical languages, mother tongues, and regional languages.
- The teacher education system will be transformed, with rigorous preparation through a four-year integrated stage and subject-specific programs offered in multi-disciplinary institutions.
- The draft talks about the better engagement of the private sector and provisioning for government funding for R&D work through a proposed national research fund.
- Professional education will become an integral part of the higher education system.

#### Drawbacks in the Draft National Education Policy

- The draft policy is silent on the Institutions of Eminence and agencies like the Higher Education Funding Agency.
- The policy does not address with sufficient clarity curricular, pedagogical and teacher education-related issues that plague the teaching and learning of early literacy in many Indian classrooms.
- The policy proposes largely oral activities for the pre-primary grades, reading hours for Grades 1-3, with an additional hour for writing starting only in Grades 4 and 5. It contradicts evidence suggesting that young children be taught listening, speaking, reading and writing simultaneously and not sequentially.
- It lacks discussion about what it takes to prepare teachers to successfully teach foundational literacy in a multilingual country. Instead, the document recommends recruiting volunteers and community members to support the acquisition of early literacy. Volunteers can be used, but cannot be a primary mechanism to deliver foundational literacy to students.
- It misdiagnoses the causes behind the severe learning crisis - namely poor school and teacher accountability. There is no fundamental reform proposed for revamping the accountability structures for schools. Instead, the NEP provides school management committees (SMCs). SMCs already mandated under the RTE Act are ineffectual.
- With the democratization of knowledge and availability of technology for easy access to information, the draft should have focused more on how to teach and not only on what to teach.
- The National Research Foundation (NRF) is tasked with "permeating the culture of research and innovation" and addressing societal challenges. But, there is no mechanism, such as innovative curricula or extension units, for tier II or tier III institutions to work on local problems. It has no access or accountability to people or their representatives.
- The Constitution puts education in the Concurrent List, giving authority and responsibility to both the States and the Centre. However, the draft had robbed the States by creating an excessively centralized structure of authority and vesting overarching powers with the PM-led Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (RSA).

- In promoting the study of regional languages, the importance of English is neglected. Those who are fluent in the English language live in households with three times higher income than those without any knowledge of English. By ignoring this, the Draft NEP19 has laid out a "language trap", which will create social inequality and impede economic growth due to loss of the demographic dividend.
- The report does not emphasize enough the role and importance of state governments in imparting education to the masses.
- Language issues have to be handled sensitively in view of their emotional overtones, as witnessed recently

### Challenges in implementation

Draft NEP recommended doubling of public funding to 6% of the GDP and increasing overall public expenditure on education to 20% from the current 10%. This is desirable but does not appear to be feasible in the near future, given that most of the additional funding has to come from the States. The report has appealed to philanthropists and companies to route their corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds to supplement government efforts, but it forgets that such funds will not be ideologically neutral. Expanding coverage under the RTE Act to include pre-school children is extremely important, but should perhaps be introduced gradually, keeping in mind the quality of infrastructure and teacher vacancies. Amendment of the Act can perhaps wait for a while. The idea of setting up the Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog is crucial in order to integrate the approaches and programs of multiple departments. However, bringing medical or agricultural or legal education under one umbrella is likely to be met with stiff opposition.

### CONCLUSION

Suggestions of the Draft National Education Policy will play a critical role in the transformation of the Indian education system. It is expected to help India in reaping its demographic dividend. However, the Draft National Education Policy has certain sore points that need to be relooked at for the benefit of teachers and students alike.

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