

New Education Policy will Make India Global Education Destination

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New education policy will make India global education destination; will attract students from South Asia

With the setting up of world-class education at low cost India will begin to attract students from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Maldives, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka for whom it is the first choice of destination when it comes to studying abroad, writes Dr. Sheenu Jain for South Asia Monitor



By Dr. Sheenu Jain | Sep 12, 2020



The much-awaited New Education Policy (NEP) has finally been unveiled, and it is on the line to make India a global knowledge superpower. India was indeed in dire need of such a futuristic plan. It is undoubtedly an ambitious policy that has come after 34 years, but its success lies in its seamless execution.

This 21st-century policy is addressing many developmental imperatives for the country. Almost all aspects of the education structure have been addressed with the aim of revisions and revamping and aligning the same with the new system. However, at the same time, it has remained rooted in Indian traditions and value systems in education.

Attracting students from South Asia

NEP 2020 claims to become a premium global education destination providing at affordable prices. The idea is to provide students everything that they get in destination education abroad. This reform is certainly going to be a game-changer. With the setting up of world-class education at low cost India will begin to attract students from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Maldives, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka for whom it is the first choice of destination when it comes to studying abroad.

In the last few years, China has been attracting more students, but certainly the new policy, language, and cultural orientation and more focus on premium affordable education will make India once again neighbourhood's educational hub.

NEP 2020 highlights the 6C's, which includes an increased emphasis on co-curricular activities, critical thinking, communication, continuous review, creativity, and culture. All these aspects have to be driven by 5 V's that include an emphasis on values, Vedas, virtue, vocational education, and versatility. NEP will help in realizing the full potential of students. The NEP 2020 highlights the 4 Energizers in education policy. NEP has focused on the foundational learning of students and gave a high emphasis on experiential learning. It has emphasized on redesigning of curriculum that increases the high engagement level amongst students and makes them employable. It also highlights equitable and inclusive education. It primarily aims to ensure that every child gets an opportunity to learn and excel.

Need for quality education

NEP also gets the right set of 3 Q's, such as questions to ponder, quest for education, and to increase the appetite for a quality education using a holistic and honest approach in this globalized world. Focus on teacher's training and funding the education of girl children are some of the welcome moves. The positive intent of bridging the gaps in policy, communication, processes is finally attended, and these efforts call for appreciation. There is also the flexibility to multidisciplinary education, soft skills to life skills. Ethics and human values, creativity, and critical thinking to respect for diversity and local context got attention in the policy, and its integration will undoubtedly bring out positive changes.

NEP 2020 gives options to students to not to lose out their degrees. It also provides the option of credit transfer across the universities. The broader palate of subjects is offered to students, and they can freely choose subjects of their choice, as stream labeling has been removed. This gives students a chance to live their dreams and freely select subjects based on their talents.

School education in this policy got better impetus, but by sheer numbers, also word Higher education has been used 115 times. And word quality has been used about 128 times in the policy. Do these numbers matter at all? Yes, certainly, they do matter. The policy envisions a complete overhaul and reenergizing of the higher education system. The idea of a multidisciplinary university and college and autonomy of institutions is a grand move with particular emphasis on revamping curriculum, revising pedagogy, and student support towards experiential learning education.

The integration of STEM education will have positive learning outcomes and improved higher-order thinking amongst students. The policy also emphasizes on integration of technology in all levels of learning with its digital drive in professional and teacher education. A particular emphasis has been laid down on creating digital infrastructure, digital content, and capacity building in its offering by both schools and universities.

Major challenges in implementation

The reimagination of the Indian education system is exciting, but true satisfaction will lie in its implementation. The implementation road for India is not so easy. It calls for robust infrastructure, decision-making structure, budget, and prioritization of goals. This will require large planning, a great amount of implementation effort like never before.

It is a herculean task to have a greater number of universities in India. To increase the gross enrolment ratio, it requires a massive opening of new universities which does not seem to be easy. Bringing almost 2 crore (20 million) students into the education system will require almost setting 50 schools every week, which seems to be quite ambitious. It will further require school infrastructure, the pool of teachers. India is currently going through a massive reduction in GDP contracted by 23.9 percent in the last quarter; I wonder where the funding will come from for this new infrastructure creation? Even the entire focus of government today is on healthcare and economic recovery, which will surely lower down the execution speed.

The current policy also brings out the interesting challenge of creating a talented pool of teachers and interdisciplinary amalgamation for cross-functional skills, and experiential learning. The creation of digital infrastructure is also an add-on challenge. To realize the dreams at least these challenges need to be sorted out.

NEP draft document, its launch, and public sentiment towards it talk about its positivity and readiness for the future, and this reform change is welcomed. However, this paradigm shift would undoubtedly require a robust execution plan to see the light of the day. As the saying goes in Hindi: "Picture Abhi Baki Hai Mere Dost!" (The story is yet to unfold, my friend)

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