

The National Education Policy- Roadmap of Holistic Approach towards Inclusive And Visionary Learning

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“Till date, we’ve been focusing on ‘What to Think’ in our education policy. In the NEP, we’re focusing on ‘How to Think’. There is an avalanche of information in this digital era, and thus, we’ve tried to filter out what’s not needed. National Education Policy will set the foundation for 21st century India. We’ve given extra impetus to this national policy for ensuring that it makes Indians more empowered and easily attractive to opportunities.”

- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi

(August 07, 2020)

When independent India adopted its constitution in 1950, the education policy in India had a new chapter. It was imminent that the education system in India, which was introduced during the British period had to be restructured because the Constitution makers recognized that the development of the country which adopts a democratic course depends not just on a well-educated electorate but also on equality of educational opportunity and achievement of social justice. Since then, from time to time, various commissions were set up.

But the most strategic movement in the Indian

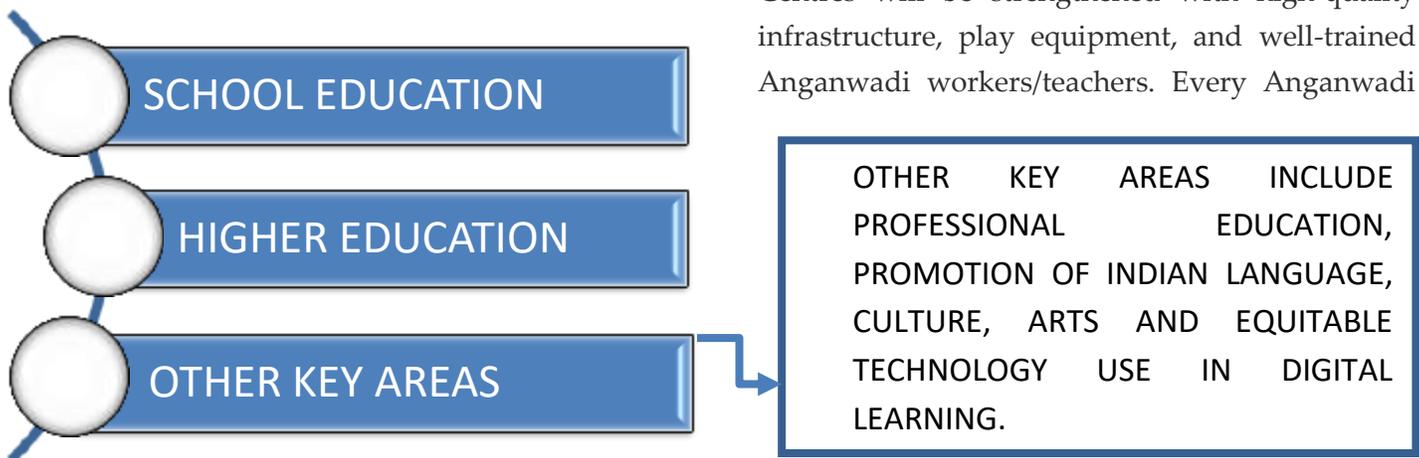
education sector was the implementation of the National Education policy in 1968 under the recommendation of the Kothari commission that sought total reformation and access to the opportunity of education across all sections of the country and achieving national integrity. The second education policy during the regime of Prime minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, in 1986 aimed at the removal of disparities with a special focus on scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It also included the setting up of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in Delhi.

The third National Education policy was released on 29th July 2020 under the Prime Ministership of Shri Narendra Modi which replaced the 1986 National Education Policy after 34 years. The National Education policy was inspired by the ‘agenda of Sustainable Development Goal 4’ which was adopted by India in 2015 and seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030.

“This National Education Policy envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is **Bharat**, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a

global knowledge superpower.”- Former Education Minister, Shri Ramesh ‘Nishank’.⁽¹⁾

NEP 2020 focuses on five pillars: Affordability, Accessibility, Quality, Equity, and Accountability – to ensure continual learning. It has been crafted consistent with the needs of the citizens as a demand for knowledge in society and economy called for a need to acquire new skills consistently. Since the energetic youth of our country are the engines of development of India, The National Education Policy, which is a combination of one and a half million suggestions and the hard work of people from various sectors and regions of our country, aims to enhance the educational environment by advancing and strategic 21st-century skills like Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Curiosity, and Communication. Apart from the basic education being a critical aspect in the National Education Policy 2020, it aims to focus on fundamental aspects and aims to adopt a National Curriculum Framework to make learning integrated and interdisciplinary, and at the same time making it a fun-based and complete experience since the world of the future is going to be quite different from our world today. The flow of this article has been divided into three matrices:



SCHOOL EDUCATION UNDER NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

National Education Policy covers a multitude of aspects under school education which aims at universalization from pre-school to secondary level.

The Policy states that 85% of a child’s cumulative brain development occurs before the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate stimulation of the brain in the early years to ensure healthy brain development and growth. Hence, it is in preschool where children begin to understand their senses, their skills better. For this, there is a need for schools and teachers to provide an environment of fun learning, playful learning, activity-based learning, and discovery-based learning to children. As the child progresses, it is very necessary to develop an ardent desire to learn, logical, scientific, and mathematical thinking. As a whole under the preview of school Education, NEP 2020, focuses on Early Childhood Care and Education as the foundation of learning (ECCE).

“For universal access to ECCE, Anganwadi Centres will be strengthened with high-quality infrastructure, play equipment, and well-trained Anganwadi workers/teachers. Every Anganwadi

will have a well-ventilated, well-designed, child-friendly, and well-constructed building with an enriched learning environment. ECCE will also be introduced in Ashramshalas in tribal-dominated areas and all formats of alternative schooling in a phased manner.”- NEP 2020 states. ⁽²⁾

Another important aspect under School education of New Education Policy Focuses on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy. It will ensure that every child who crosses the third grade can easily read 30 to 35 words in a minute. This will help the child in understanding the content of other subjects with ease.

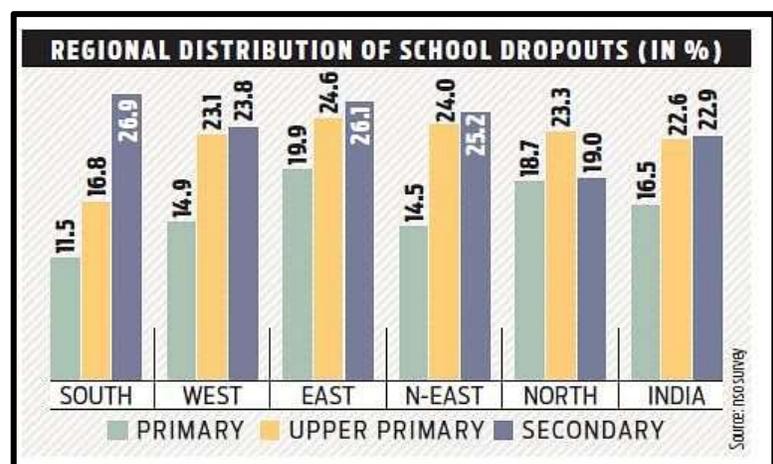
According to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, “This will happen only when the studies are connected to the real world, to their lives, and most importantly, the surrounding environment. Attaining foundational literacy and numeracy for all children will thus become an urgent national mission, with immediate measures to be taken on many forefronts and with clear goals. The highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025.” – NDTV, 7th August 2020. ⁽³⁾

Through initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Right to Education Act, India has made remarkable strides in recent years in attaining near-universal enrolment in elementary education. The GER for Grades 6-8 was 90.9%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12 it was only 79.3% and 56.5%, respectively - indicating that a significant proportion of enrolled students drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8.

The NEP also mentions the two major initiatives to

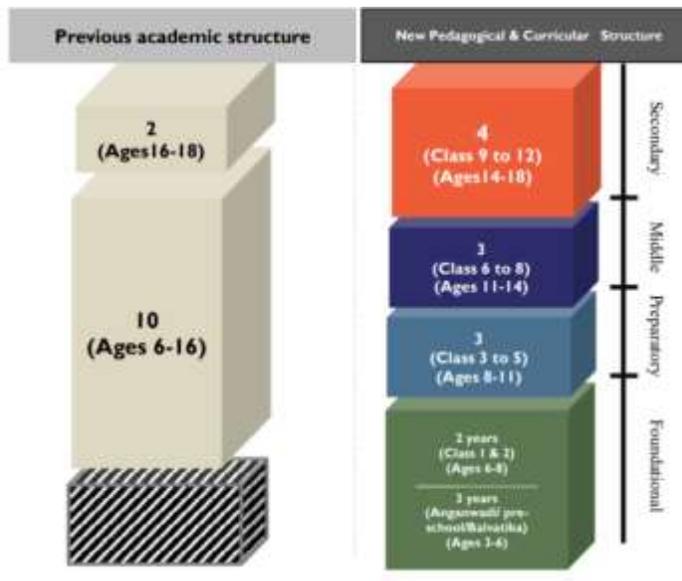
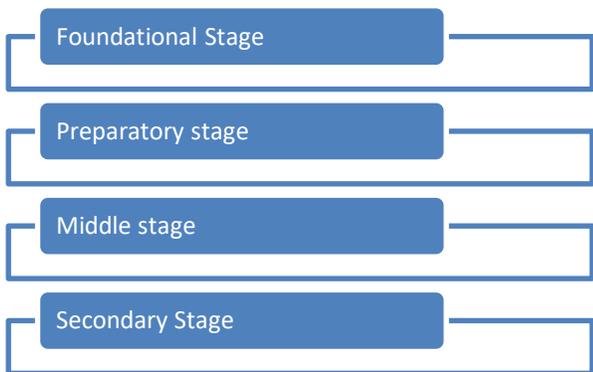
bring the dropped-out students back to school- Firstly, providing efficient, sufficient, and high-quality infrastructure in schools. Secondly, by tracking students and their learning levels. This will require a system of incentives for deploying teachers with knowledge of the local language to areas with high dropout rates, as well as overhauling the curriculum to make it more engaging and useful.

(Source: NSO Survey Information presented by



www.newsindianexpress.com)

“The curricular and pedagogical structure and the curricular framework for school education will be guided by a 5+3+3+4 design, consisting of the Foundational Stage (in two parts, that is, 3 years of Anganwadi/pre-school + 2 years in primary school in Grades 1-2; both together covering ages 3-8), Preparatory Stage (Grades 3-5, covering ages 8-11), Middle Stage (Grades 6-8, covering ages 11-14), and Secondary Stage (Grades 9-12 in two phases, i.e., 9 and 10 in the first and 11 and 12 in the second, covering ages 14-18.”- Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. ⁽⁴⁾



(Image sourced from www.education.gov.in)

“Ultimately, education in its real sense is the pursuit of truth. It is an endless journey through knowledge and enlightenment.”

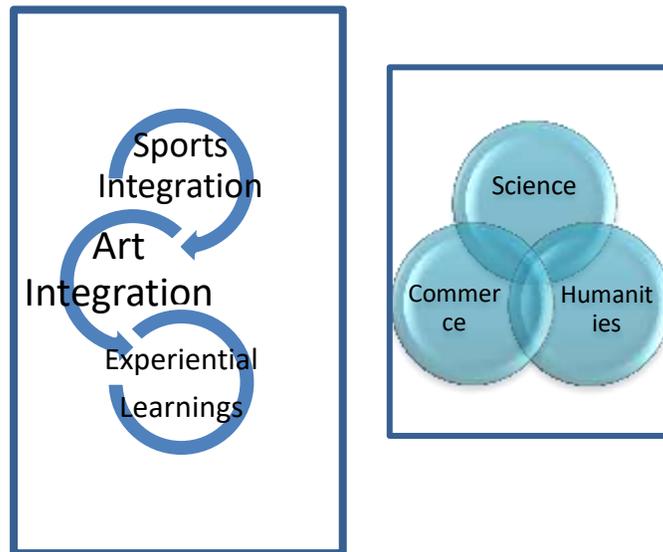
-DR. APJ ABDUL KALAM

The National Education policy also focuses on Specific sets of skills and values across domains that will be identified for integration and incorporation at each stage of learning, from pre-school to higher education. Curriculum content will thus be reduced and special emphasis will be laid on core essentials to enhance critical thinking

through sports and art integration.

“Students will be given increased flexibility and choice of subjects to study, particularly in secondary school. There will be no hard separation among ‘curricular’, ‘extracurricular’, or ‘co-curricular’, among ‘arts’, ‘humanities’, and ‘sciences’, or between ‘vocational’ or ‘academic’ streams. Subjects such as physical education, arts and crafts, and vocational skills, in addition to science, humanities, and mathematics, will be incorporated throughout the school curriculum.” –

(5)



One needs to understand that language is the medium of education, language is not all of education. Some people forget this difference. Therefore, whatever language a child can learn easily, the same language should be the language of learning. Therefore, as far as possible, keeping the local language, mother tongue, medium of education up to grade five, grade five at least, is stated in the National Education Policy. (6) The three-language formula will continue to be

implemented, but with better and increased flexibility. This will be done while keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions, aspirations of the people, regions, and the Union, and the need to promote multilingualism as well as promote national unity. The aim will also be to provide such quality textbooks at the lowest possible cost to mitigate the burden of textbook prices on the students and the educational system.

According to NEP 2020, “The current nature of secondary school exams, including Board exams and entrance exams - and the resulting coaching culture of today - are doing much harm, especially at the secondary school level, replacing valuable time for true learning with excessive exam coaching and preparation.” These exams also force students to learn narrow aspects with not much diversity in a single stream, rather than allowing the flexibility and choice that will be so important in the education system of the future. “While the Board exams for Grades 10 and 12 will be continued, the existing system of Board and entrance examinations shall be reformed to eliminate the need for undertaking coaching classes. Board exams will also be made ‘easier’, in the sense that they will test primarily core capacities/competencies rather than months of coaching and memorization. It is proposed to set up a National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), as a standard-setting body under MHRD that fulfills the basic objectives of setting norms, standards, and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognized school boards of India, guiding the State Achievement Survey (SAS) and undertaking the National Achievement

Survey (NAS).”⁽⁷⁾ – Press Information Bureau, Government of India commented.

Therefore, in school education, the policy focuses on rebuilding the curriculum with “easier” Board exams, a reduction in the syllabus to retain “core aspects” and a thrust on “experiential combined multidisciplinary learning and critical thinking”.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

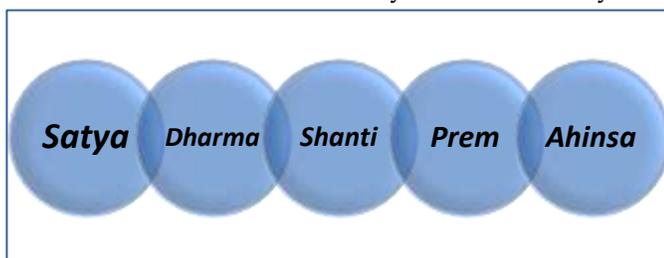
Higher education plays an extremely important role in promoting human intelligence as well as the socio-economic well-being of the society and developing India as envisioned in its Constitution – “a democratic, just, socially conscious, cultured, and humane nation upholding liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice for all.” Higher education significantly contributes to the economic development of the nation. As India moves towards becoming a knowledge economy and society, more and more young Indians would aspire for higher education in order to prepare themselves for global competition.

The NEP 2020 was conceived to “raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) from the current 26 percent to 50 percent by 2030 in the higher education space. It aims at building the overall personality of students by strengthening infrastructure for open and distance learning, online education, and increasing the use of technology in education.” Moreover, the National Research Foundation (NRF) will be set up to boost research work in the country. A National Accreditation Council (NAC) envisaged as a single

regulator for higher education institutions across the country will be established. By 2040, all higher education institutions (HEIs) shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions offering a wide variety and diversity of courses and shall aim to have a larger student base preferably in the thousands, for optimal use of infrastructure and resources, and the creation of vibrant multidisciplinary communities. Regulatory mechanisms of higher education would have “accreditation” conducted by an independent body amongst other key functions. Institutions will have the option to run Open Distance Learning (ODL) and online programmes, provided they are accredited to do so, to enhance their offerings, improve access, increase GER, and provide opportunities for lifelong learning. ⁽⁸⁾

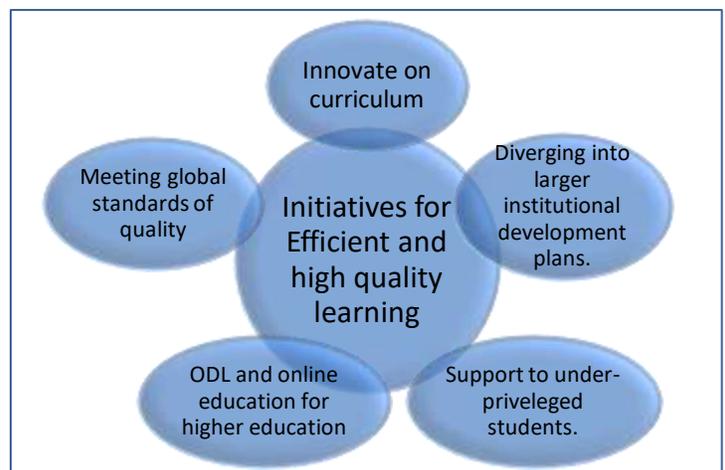
As per NEP 2020, “Value-based education will include the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal human values of truth (Satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (Shanti), love (prem), nonviolence (ahimsa), scientific temper, citizenship values, and also life-skills; lessons in Seva/service and participation in community service programmes will be considered an integral part of holistic education.”

The NEP 2020 document by MHRD, clearly states



that “Higher education institutions will have the flexibility to offer different designs of Master’s programmes: (a) there may be a 2-year

programme with the second year devoted entirely to research for those who have completed the 3-year Bachelor’s programme; (b) for students completing a 4-year Bachelor’s programme with Research, there could be a 1-year Master’s programme; and (c) there may be an integrated 5-year Bachelor’s/Master’s programme. Undertaking a Ph.D. shall require either a Master’s degree or a 4-year Bachelor’s degree with Research. The M.Phil. programme shall be discontinued. Under the four-year programme proposed in the new NEP, students can exit after one year with a certificate, after two years with a diploma, and after three years with a bachelor’s degree.” ⁽⁹⁾



Under NEP 2020, Efforts will be undertaken to set up a National Recruitment Agency for all government recruitment exams, and a Common Eligibility Test (CET)⁽¹⁰⁾ for various recruitment exams of the same level. Moreover, the courses and subjects, such as Indology, Indian languages, AYUSH systems of medicine, yoga, arts, music, history, culture, and modern India, Globally accepted curriculum, meaningful and progressive

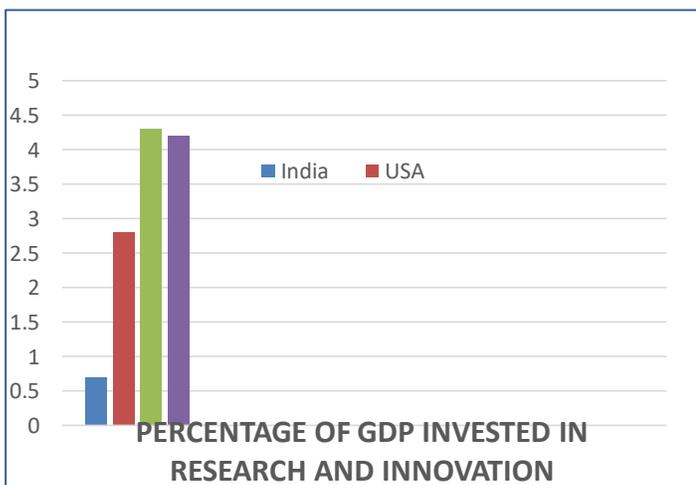
professional engagements, quality residential facilities, and on and off-campus support will be fostered to make Indian institutions at par with global institutions.

NEP lays special emphasis on the fact that Participation of foreign universities in India is currently limited to them entering into collaborative twinning programmes, sharing faculty with partnering institutions, and offering distance education. High-performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and similarly, selected universities e.g., those from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India. A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India. Furthermore, research collaboration and student exchanges between Indian institutions and global institutions will be promoted through special efforts.

Despite this critical importance of research, the research and innovation investment in India is, at the current time, as per NEP, is only 0.69% of GDP as compared to 2.8% in the United States of America, 4.3% in Israel, and 4.2% in South Korea, as was stated by NEP 2020. Research and innovation at education institutions in India, particularly those that are engaged in higher education, is critical. Evidence from the world’s competitive and well-known universities shows that the best teaching and learning processes at the higher education level occur in academic environments where there is a strong culture of research and knowledge creation. To add to that, much of the very best research in the world has occurred in multidisciplinary and diverse university settings. Therefore NEP, 2020 Focuses on innovation in Arts, Humanities, Science, and Social sciences as well.

Vocational education, which was till now perceived inferior, will be reimagined and integrated into all school and higher education institutions. This aspect deals with emphasizing the dignity of labour and the importance of various vocations involving Indian arts and artisanship

According to NEP “Multiple mechanisms with checks and balances will combat and stop the commercialization of higher education. This will be a key priority of the regulatory system. All education institutions will be held to similar standards of audit and disclosure as a ‘not for profit’ entity. Surpluses, if any, will be reinvested in the educational sector. Financial support will be provided to various critical components of



education, such as ensuring universal access, efficient education resources, adequate numbers of teachers and staff, teacher development, and providing highly efficient and globally competitive education for every student with a special focus on students belonging to underprivileged sections of the society.”⁽¹¹⁾

Last but not the least, NEP aims to make India’s higher education institutions world-class institutions based on pillars of excellent and strong self-governance and excellent leadership.

PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND INDIA’S CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Professionals play an important role in the development of any economy. The NEP says that the Professional Courses should involve education in the ethic and importance of public purpose, it should be an education in the discipline, and definitely for practice. The NEP 2020 amongst others also brings attention towards professional education and the need to revive and develop Professional Courses in Agriculture, Law, Healthcare and Technical fields. Stand-alone agricultural universities, legal universities, health science universities, technical universities, and stand-alone institutions in other fields, shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions offering holistic and diverse educational opportunities.

NEP 2020 also advocates the promotion of Indian languages and recommends that efforts should be taken to preserve and promote all Indian languages including classical, tribal, and endangered languages will be taken on with new vigour.

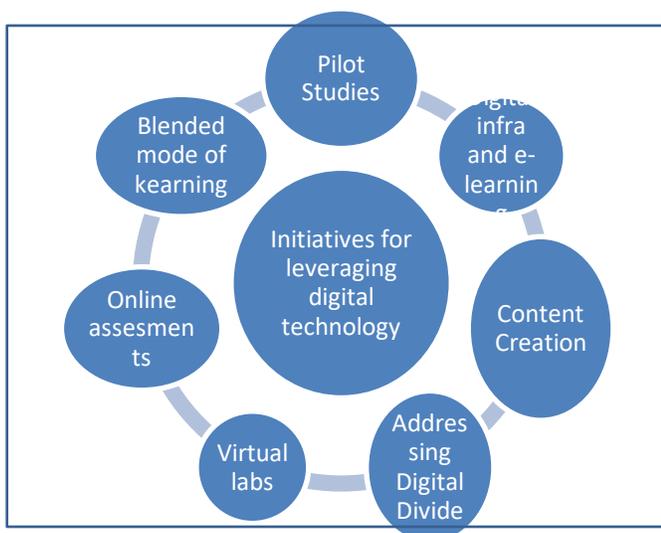
India is a treasure full of respected and hailed culture which is developed over thousands of years and treasured in the form of unique arts, impressive works of literature, customs, traditions, artifacts, heritage sites, and more. NEP 2020 will lay greater emphasis on music, arts, and crafts throughout all levels of the school, will promote multilingualism teaching in the home/local language wherever possible; conducting experiential language learning; the hiring of outstanding local artisans and other experts as master instructors in various subjects of local expertise and inclusion of traditional Indian knowledge including tribal teachings and customs throughout in the curriculum, across humanities, sciences, arts, crafts, and sports, whenever relevant. Much greater flexibility will be provided in the curriculum, especially in secondary schools and in higher education, in order to promote Indian Language and culture.

NEP states that “An Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) will be established. Such an institute would provide a truly important service for the country, as well as employ

Agricultural education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in agricultural productivity through increase in capacity and quality of agriculture and allied disciplines. This will lead to being cognizant of issues like climate change and land productivity.
Legal Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal education will be illuminated with Constitutional values of Justice- Social, Economic, and Political - and directed towards national reconstruction through instrumentation of democracy, rule of law, and human rights.
Technical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical education includes degree and diploma programmes in, engineering, technology, management, architecture, town planning, pharmacy, hotel management, catering technology, etc., which are critical to India’s overall development.

numerous multilingual language and subject experts, and experts in translation and interpretation, which will help to promote all Indian languages.”

Under NEP 2020, special emphasis will be laid on aiding efforts of Digital India, and an autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration, and so on, both for school and higher education. “The aim of the NETF will be to facilitate decision making on the induction, deployment, and use of technology, by providing to the leadership of education institutions, State and Central governments, and other stakeholders, the latest knowledge and research as well as the opportunity to consult and share best practices.” – National Education Policy.⁽¹²⁾



Towards the end, I would like to emphasize that National Education Policy 2020 works along the lines of Article 45 in the directive principle of state

policy and fundamental right in article 21A to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years. Given above sighted constitutional provisions, the National Education Policy will not just help in eliminating existing inequalities but will also address prevailing challenges and enhance immensely competitive aspects which are the need of the hour. Keeping in view the experience of the challenges in the current pandemic situation the NEP’S digital aspect of learning will play a critical role in converting India into a global education hub. Changes in the education policy are true, a major way to provide the nation with better students, professionals & better human beings.

It is equally important for National Education policy to be flexible and open to minor modifications/course corrections based on the views, satisfaction level of parents of students, adjusting capacity of the students, and cooperation of educational institutions to adopt the revolutionized and inclusive National Education Policy.

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- (3),(6) NDTV Report by author, Swasti Bhasin, on 7th August 2020
- (5),(7),(11) Report by, Press Information Bureau, 14th September 2020

(8) Dr. Indrajit Bhattacharya, Director, National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET), Quality Council of India & Dr. Manish Kumar Jindal, CEO, National Accreditation Board for Education and Training, Quality Council of India to Elets News Network (ENN), through Digital Learning Network.

(10) Report published by the Indian Express, Author Ritika Chopra, on 31st July