

"NEP 2020: Opportunities and challenges"

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"People who cannot put strings of sentences together in good order cannot think. An educational system that does not teach the technology is preventing thought."

The Need

The new National Education Policy was the need of the hour. There were plenty of debates on electronic media as well as print media on revamping and updating the 34 year old traditional education system in India. The NEP targets to provide a comprehensive framework and overarching vision to the school and higher secondary education system. The need for this policy can be gauged by the fact that when it came out, no one opposed the policy and it received an overwhelming welcome from all sections of society. Due to accelerated evolution of technology and rapid advancements in industries set a benchmark for students to learn those skills required in the 21st century. Hence, to put simply, it was imperative to discard the outdated portions and to update the syllabus to have a multidimensional enhancement of the education system in India.

What is at its core?

The NEP moves beyond the long followed 10+2 structure of schooling system and replaces it with a 5+3+3+4 structure. For the first time, childrens below 5 years of age are also assimilated into the formal education system. The boards exams have been redesigned and a job readiness approach has been focussed to achieve the mission for foundational literacy. Moreover, the knowledge of coding and computers has to be imparted right from class 6th with an internship program which will come into handy with the corresponding courses. Free meals in the government Schools are some of the portions which have been carried away from the previous policy, given their several benefits such as providing nutritious diets for the mental and physical developments of those studying in vernacular school systems. The NEP also aims to teach coding as a part of their technical education.

Opportunities associated

The opportunities associated with this policy can be viewed in several angles. There are several stakeholders and people from academia who are likely to get benefited with this policy. First and foremost is the engineering industry or those who are associated with technical education. Every year around 1.5 million engineers are being produced throughout the colleges in India. A whopping 92% of them do not have skills required and are forced to work in non-engineering sectors or likely to be unemployed for several years. With 1.9 millions of schools and colleges in India, it would certainly be a great opportunity for them to be a teacher in such schools out there. Moreover, Internship opportunities would enable a student experience their classroom knowledge directly into actions, which so far have been kept alienated to a student. The loss due to outsourcing of talent would also get mitigated to a larger extent. If we observe by putting ourselves into the shoes of an employer, they would be able to harness the talent early and hence can better train and make their future employees better acquitted with their *modus-operandi*. The research oriented pupils would also have a great reach to foster their interests and finally to converge to a field to contribute. Now it becomes a win-win situation for all the stakeholders involved. Of course There would be many unintended consequences, and people from non-academia would also get benefitted.

The Bottlenecks

The implementation of NEP at ground zero would present quite a challenge for the government. The collaboration of the federal structure currently existing in India and the heterogeneity of the resource distribution can pose a challenge . For example, providing meals in govt schools could cause friction among the state and central interests. Moreover, lack of infrastructures in more than 96% of the govt schools would certainly hinder the objective, being accomplished at the targeted pace. The post-pandemic world that we would witness would be quite different from what we have seen so far. Hence, the promise of the government to spend 6% of its GDP on Education would remain hollow till the ground zero developments

starts. The challenge also comes in human resource management, as the teachers who are accustomed to teach in a traditional environment need to adapt to the changing classroom environments. Training of senior teachers who have more than 20 years of experience, would certainly be something most challenging. There would be a requirement to amend several state and central university acts, which hitherto been considered as a standard to measure true potential.

Summing Over

There is no doubt that the policy has been welcomed by all the sections of our society. The NEP, if implemented as its full version, would prove to be a boon for the country. Any policy needs an iterative approach to police it and make it error free. Several trade-offs are made intra-federal systems to make it fit. The policy has been much sought and since its announced by the Ministry of Education, We expect it to metamorphosize our education system within the given target time (2040).

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