

Draft National Education Policy 2019: An Overview

Abstract

This paper gives a brief summary of the main issues and recommendations in the chapters on school education and teacher education of the draft NEP 2019. The paper extracts the crucial points that are the most important for the current times.

Introduction

After a long wait, the Draft National Education Policy 2019 was released on 31 May 2019. The Draft Policy, which is in the public domain at the time of writing for comments and suggestions till 30 June 2019, was developed by a nine-member Committee headed by Dr K. Kasturirangan.

The process of formulation of the National Education Policy was initiated long before this Committee was constituted, in May 2015 with ground level consultations (at the Panchayat, Cluster, Block and District levels) across States. These inputs were collated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (to be referred to as 'Ministry' here on) by means of online entries of State level inputs.

In October 2015, the Ministry constituted the Committee for the Evolution of the National Education Policy chaired by Shri TSR Subramanian, a retired bureaucrat. The Committee submitted its report in April 2016. But, due to reasons in the public domain, the Report was not released by the Ministry. However, it was put up on the website of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, which had acted as the Secretariat of the Committee. In June 2016, a document called 'Some Inputs for Draft National Education Policy 2016' was put up by the Ministry, and online feedback requested from States

as well as individual citizens. This document also did not yield the National Education Policy.

In June 2017, the Ministry constituted the Committee for the Draft National Education Policy, chaired by the eminent scientist, former Chief of ISRO and Padma Vibhushan Dr. K. Kasturirangan. This Committee, as outlined by Dr Kasturirangan in the Preamble, evolved the Draft National Education Policy 2018 through discussions (with educators, researchers, policy makers, sector experts, industry, academies, community groups, engaged citizens and more) and consultations (held from July 2017 onwards with 70 ministries/organisations/institutions/associations and 217 eminent persons).

The Committee also drew on relevant work and knowledge base from the past, including the National Education Policies of 1968 and 1986 Modified in 1992, the TSR Subramanian Committee Report, the Inputs for Draft National Education Policy put up by MHRD, and inputs from the ground level consultations. The Draft Policy underwent peer review by seven academics and eminent citizens.

The Draft National Education Policy 2019 outlines the following vision for education in the country - *The National Education Policy 2019 envisions an India centred education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an*

equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all.

In adherence to this vision, the document goes on to address every stage and every facet of education in its 23 chapters, both school and higher education, as well as additional key focus areas. The document also has two addendums, outlining financial implications of actualising the vision, and the key actions necessary for implementation of policy actions and related timelines.

In the Preamble, the Chairperson states that 'Education must be delivered in a holistic manner and the education system must be responsive to the fast-changing environment and the needs of a knowledge society'. To this end, it proposes an apex body, the Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog/National Education Commission, to synchronise action towards the attainment of the vision. The Draft Policy also suggests renaming the Ministry of Human Resource Development as the Ministry of Education, 'in order to bring the focus back on education and learning'.

This paper outlines the key highlights of the Draft Policy, and then summarises key aspects related to school education, teachers and teacher education.

Overview of Key Policy Actions in the Draft National Education Policy 2019

The Draft Policy takes an 'integrated yet flexible approach to education', which implies looking at education at all levels as a whole, giving equal importance to all subject areas and student choice and mobility across streams and programmes. It also addresses the 'interconnectedness' of education, which means that it addresses education in a holistic manner, and seeks to 'incorporate continuity, coherence and processes to ultimately realise an end-to-end educational roadmap for the country'. These approaches-manifest in different ways across the document.

Given the persistence of the advantages of early childhood education throughout life,

the Draft Policy emphasizes the criticality of the early years and sees early childhood education as an integral part of school education. To this end, it states that early childhood education will be under the purview of the Ministry of Education.

The Draft Policy also emphasises the criticality of achieving foundational numeracy and literacy for all learners in grade 5 and beyond within the next five years, as well as 100% literacy rate among youth and adults within a decade. It envisages a 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio for all school stages within a decade and that of 50% for higher education within the next decade and a half. It outlines various measures to ensure the inclusion of under-represented groups, in both school and higher education, with a special focus on access to quality institutions in socio-economically disadvantaged areas. The Draft Policy also envisages that the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 will be extended to assure availability of free and compulsory education from pre-school to grade 12.

The Draft Policy proposes a new curricular and pedagogical structure for school education, that is in sync with a child's natural cognitive, emotional, social and physical development, thus being responsive and relevant to the needs and interests of learners at different stages of their development.

School complexes, comprising several geographically close schools that are not necessarily in the same campus, are suggested as pedagogically viable and optimal alternatives to the current practice of educationally suboptimal schools. These school complexes are seen as the basic unit of governance and administration.

The Draft Policy also suggests restructuring of higher education, both in terms of institutional architecture and approach. It is proposed that the current 800 universities and 40,000 colleges be consolidated into about 15,000 high quality institutions, each with a large student body. This is with the intent to remove the current

fragmentation of the higher education system, and the practice of establishing stand-alone institutions offering single programmes. The Draft Policy envisages multidisciplinary institutions, to change the current hard boundaries, and the early specialisation and streaming into disciplines.

The Draft Policy envisages three types of institutions, differentiated only by their focus – Type 1 will focus on research and teaching, Type 2 on teaching with significant contribution to research, and Type 3 mainly on undergraduate teaching. All institutions will be either universities or degree-granting autonomous colleges; the practice of affiliation will stop.

Pedagogy and curriculum in both school and higher education are dealt with in great depth. The emphasis is on doing away with rote memorisation and developing capacities which enable learners to deal with a variety of situations and to develop newer capacities as needed.

The Draft Policy proposes that the school curriculum be reduced to a few essential concepts in order to provide space for 'holistic, experiential, discussion, and analysis-based learning' so that essential learning and critical thinking are enhanced. The curriculum will be flexible to enable student choice, with equal emphasis given to all subjects, and 'no hard separation of curricular, co-curricular or extra-curricular areas', and with equal status given to vocational and academic streams. Assessment will be reformed to focus on formative assessment, and on core concepts and skills as well as higher order capacities. The Draft Policy emphasises the need to reduce student stress, and recommends specific changes in Board Examinations as well.

In higher education, the Draft Policy proposes that the current separation of professional and general education be removed. It states that 'The needs of the 21st century require that liberal broad-based multidisciplinary education become the basis for all higher education. This will

help develop well-rounded individuals that possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational crafts, an ethic of social engagement, and rigorous specialisation in a chosen field or fields'. This broad-based liberal arts education at the undergraduate level will enable integrated, rigorous exposure to science, arts, humanities, mathematics and professional fields, through imaginative and flexible curricular structures, creative combinations of disciplines of study, and multiple exit and entry points.

The Draft Policy emphasises the importance of capable, motivated and professionally qualified teachers at all stages of school and higher education. It stresses the importance of appropriate working conditions, pupil-teacher ratios and professional development opportunities for all stages of education. Specifically, for school teachers, it proposes that teacher education be part of the higher education system. For higher education, it proposes a permanent employment (tenure) track system for all higher education institutions.

With respect to regulation and governance in school education, the Draft Policy stresses institutional autonomy, and the separation of functions of standard setting, funding, regulation and accreditation to completely eliminate conflict of interests. With this end in mind, it proposes a revamping of the structures of governance in school and higher education.

School complexes will be semi-autonomous and higher education institutions will be granted administrative, academic and financial autonomy. At the same time, The Draft Policy emphasises the importance of accreditation, which will also form the basis of regulation. Private and public institutions are to be regulated in the same manner.

The Draft Policy brings renewed focus to research through both structures and processes for catalysing and supporting research. To this end, the National Research Foundation, will be set up through an Act

of Parliament as an autonomous body of the Government of India. The Foundation will be given an annual grant of Rs.20,000 crore, to be increased progressively over the next decade. The work of the Foundation will include funding across the broad areas of science, technology, social sciences and the humanities, building research capacity, and recognising outstanding research.

The Draft Policy includes technology in education, vocational education, adult education, and promotion of Indian languages in additional key focus areas.

To oversee this transformation of the education system, the Draft Policy proposes that the Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog or National Education Commission, headed by the Prime Minister and comprising eminent educationists, researchers, Union Ministers, a representation of Chief Ministers of States and eminent professionals from various fields be set up as an apex body. The Aayog will facilitate coherent and synchronised implementation and review of education policy, with an integrated national vision of education, while catering to the diversity of our country. The Aayog will work closely with every State to ensure coordination and synergy. States may set up apex State level bodies for education which may be called the Rajya Shiksha Aayog or the State Education Commission.

Finally, in an Addendum, the Draft Policy 'envisions significant increase in public investment in education. This would go up from the current 10% of overall public expenditure in education to 20%, over a 10-year period'. It delineates priority areas and approximate figures to meet the demands of fulfilling policy actions in these areas.

Draft National Education Policy 2019 on School Education

Early Childhood Education

Citing evidence that 'over 85% of a child's cumulative brain-development occurs prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical

importance of developmentally appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in a child's early years to promote sustained and healthy brain development and growth', the Draft Policy envisages early childhood education as an integral part of school education. At the same time, it takes care to point out that the care component, comprising attention to health and nutrition, not be compromised in any way. It also emphasises that existing Anganwadi Centres be strengthened, and outlines various modalities for ensuring access to early childhood education depending on feasibility of geography and infrastructure, with particular attention to socio-economically disadvantaged areas. These modalities include co-locating Angawadis and pre-schools in primary schools, and building stand-alone pre-schools.

The Draft Policy further states that 'no hard separation of ages' in the range of 3 to 8 years 'would be required for Anganwadis and pre-schools (including when they are co-located with primary schools), except as needed for social reasons or due to limitations of institutional infrastructure'.

All aspects of early childhood education will come under the purview of the Ministry of Education (the erstwhile Ministry of Human Resource Development) effectively linking early childhood education with the rest of school education; a transition plan will be finalised jointly by 2018 by the relevant Ministries.

Other initiatives to ensure quality of delivery will include instituting a regulatory system, high quality infrastructure and materials, professionalisation of educators for this stage, and a framework constituting a framework for 0-8 year olds with State and local contextualisation. Large scale advocacy efforts will be initiated to generate demand among stakeholders.

Ensuring Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Among All Children

The Draft Policy devotes an entire chapter to the 'severe learning crisis' with respect to foundational literacy and numeracy. Given the persistence of the effects of this deficit over the lives of learners, it proposes efforts of the nature of a national mission to address it.

Setting the objective 'By 2025, every student in Grade 5 and beyond has achieved foundational literacy and numeracy', the Draft Policy emphasises increased focus on these aspects in Grades 1-5, expansion of the mid-day meal programme, regular assessment, availability of quality materials and other aids, a national repository and expansion of public and school libraries to facilitate a culture of reading and communication, as well as ensuring a pupil teacher ratio of less than 30:1 in each school. In addition, starting 2019, all Grade 1 students will undergo a three-month long school preparation module.

Teacher training, both pre- and in-service will be re-designed with renewed emphasis on foundational literacy and numeracy, while teachers will be further facilitated through ensuring appropriate deployment and conditions. A pupil-teacher ratio under 30:1 will be ensured at the level of each school. Parental participation will be ensured through various means, and social workers and counsellors-recruited to help ensure retention and mental health of all children.

An important aspect will be mobilisation of the local community and volunteers. The National Tutors Programme (NTP) and the Remedial Instructional Aides Programme (RIAP) will be instituted, the former comprising peer tutors identified within the school, while the latter will be a 10-year project, drawing instructors from the community; these programmes will be managed by teachers.

Restructuring School Curriculum and Pedagogy

The Draft Policy relooks the current structure of schooling, proposing a new 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure informed

by current evidence of developmental needs of children at various stages. The first five years, called the Foundational stage will comprise the education of children aged 3-8 years, and the current grades 1 and 2. This restructuring is driven by the need to facilitate learning based on play and active discovery during this period. The next three years, for children aged 8-11 years, and the current grades 3-5, will be called the Preparatory stage, which will build on the Foundational stage to begin the transition to structured learning. Textbooks and more formal aspects of learning will be introduced. Next, the Middle stage will comprise three years, for children aged 11-14 years, and the current grades 6-8. This stage will involve more abstract thinking and learning of subjects. Experiential learning within each subject and relationships between subjects will be in focus.

The final stage, comprising four years, will replace the current grades 9-12, for children aged 14-18 years. Each year of the Secondary Stage will be divided into 2 semesters, for a total of 8 semesters. The notions of 'higher secondary or 'junior college' will be eliminated; Grades 11 and 12 will be considered an integral part of the secondary stage. This stage will offer students choice of multidisciplinary studies – each student will take up to 5-6 courses per semester, which will allow exposure to a multitude of subjects at differing levels. There will be some essential common subjects for all, while simultaneously there will be flexibility in selecting elective courses (including in the arts, vocational subjects, and physical education) so that all students can expand their horizons as they see fit and explore their individual interests and talents.

It must be noted that the physical infrastructure of schools need not necessarily be aligned with this pedagogical and curricular organisation.

Ensuring Universal Access and Retention to Education at All Levels

While noting the progress in enrollment, the Draft Policy expresses concern at our inability to retain children in school. It proposes that access gaps will be met through various strategies, including increasing intake in existing schools, developing new facilities in under/un-served locations, and school rationalisation, with support to learners through transport and hostel facilities, while ensuring safety of all students, particularly girls. Appropriate norms for the foregoing will be developed based on local reality, while ensuring proximate access in early years. If necessary, norms for school access maybe made flexible without compromising on access, quality, equity, and safety, thereby allowing multiple models. Also, credible mechanisms for redressal will be developed and a zero-tolerance policy towards breach of child rights adopted.

Further, participation and learning of all children will be ensured through tracking attendance and learning outcomes of enrolled children, and also tracking drop-outs and out-of-school children; social workers and counsellors will be included in this effort. In addition to the NTP and RIAP, programmes for long-term out-of-school adolescents will be instituted with equivalence to the mainstream school education system. Multiple pathways to learning, involving formal and non-formal modes, will be available with strengthening of the open and distance schooling, and technology platforms.

Inclusion of Under-Represented Groups

The Draft Policy has several concerted initiatives to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background. Policy actions related to early childhood education, foundational literacy and numeracy, school access, enrolment and attendance will receive targeted attention and support for students from under-represented groups.

Special education zones will be set up in geographies with large representation of

students from under-represented groups for targeted attention and support, with the Central government providing financial support in the ratio of 2:1 for every rupee spent by the State. Funding will also be provided for research on inclusive education.

Financial support will be provided to students through a National Fund created specifically for the purpose. Alternative means of support include recruitment into the NTP and the RIAP, breakfast in addition to the midday meal, and special internship opportunities.

Other key initiatives include capacity development of teachers and ongoing efforts to sensitise them, creating alternate pathways for recruitment of teachers from educationally under-represented groups, restricting the pupil-teacher ratio in schools with a high proportion of learners from educationally under-represented groups to not more than 25:1, creation of inclusive school environments through establishment of mechanisms which address harassment, intimidation and gender-based violence and eliminate exclusionary practices, as well as revising the curriculum to make it inclusive.

Up to date information for each student will be maintained in the National Repository of Educational Data, with data analysis undertaken by the Central Educational Statistics Division.

Transformation of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Reduced, Flexible and Integrated Curriculum

The Draft Policy sets the objective of transforming curriculum and pedagogy by 2022 'in order to minimise rote learning and instead encourage holistic development and 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, scientific temper, communication, collaboration, multilingualism, problem solving, ethics, social responsibility, and digital literacy'.

The curriculum load will be reduced to 'key concepts and essential ideas', to allow for 'deeper and experiential learning'. However, all students must learn certain subjects and develop certain capacities. These include proficiency in languages; scientific temper; sense of aesthetics and art; languages; communication; ethical reasoning; digital literacy; knowledge of India; and knowledge of critical issues facing local communities, the country, and the world.

A flexible curriculum – with no hard separation of content in terms of curricular, co- or extra- curricular areas; nor of arts and sciences, and “vocational” and “academic” streams – will enable student choice particularly at the secondary school level; courses in physical education, the arts, and vocational crafts will be offered along with general courses.

Vocational exposure will begin early with all students taking a year-long survey course on vocational skills and crafts in Grades 7-8. In Grades 9-12, children will have access to vocational courses along with more traditional academic courses, with students having choice to 'mix and match'.

Indian contributions to knowledge and the historical contexts that led to them will be incorporated in an accurate and engaging manner, wherever relevant, into the existing school curriculum and textbooks. Topics will include Indian contributions to mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, psychology, yoga, architecture, medicine, as well as governance, polity, society and conservation.

Local and tribal knowledge systems will also be included in the curriculum and textbooks, in more detail in regions where such knowledge systems may hold a greater relevance with respect to local needs and customs.

Language

Education will be in the home language/ mother tongue at least till Grade 5 but preferably till Grade 8, with a flexible (bilingual) language approach where

necessary. High quality textbooks will be made available in native languages as needed and feasible, and materials will be developed for students with hearing impairment.

The native language will continue be taught as a language after Grade 5/8; courses on languages of India, including classical languages, will also be included in the curriculum. Secondary school students can choose a foreign language as an elective; however, this will not be in lieu of the three-language formula.

The three-language formula will be implemented in spirit – promoting national integration, and raising the status of regional languages and literature. The intent will be to promote multilingual communicative abilities for a multilingual country. Special measures will be taken to develop and recruit language teachers.

Children will be immersed in three languages from pre-school stage with the aim of developing speaking proficiency and interaction, and the ability to recognise scripts and read basic text, in all three languages by Grade 3. In terms of writing, students will begin writing primarily in the medium of instruction until Grade 3, after which writing with additional scripts will also be introduced gradually. Students may choose to change any one or more of the three languages they are studying in grade 6 or 7.

Students whose medium of instruction is the native language will begin to learn science bilingually in Grade 8, so they can think about scientific concepts in more than one way, and talk about science in more than one language.

Indian sign language will be standardized; local sign languages will be respected and taught as well where possible.

Curriculum and Textbook Revision

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 will be revisited and revised by

end-2020, and made available in all regional languages. In order to have local variations, State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) in each State will be encouraged to develop textbooks which contain (i) NCERT core material, (ii) any NCERT supplementary material of interest to the State, and (iii) material/edits by SCERTs or at the district level to allow for local relevance and flavour. New textbooks will be developed by NCERT/SCERTs for additional subjects (e.g. music, literature).

High quality translations will be developed by the Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation.

Public and private schemes will incentivise innovative textbook development to increase choice of textbooks in all States and all regional languages; at the same time, these textbooks will have to be approved by an autonomous body of experts.

Assessment Reforms

A new paradigm of assessment for learning and development, situated in formative assessments, will align to the revised NCF, with assessment resources being available for teachers. The focus will be on periodic assessment to optimise learning. All examinations including school, entrance, large scale achievement surveys, and for employment will test core concepts and skills, along with higher order capacities. Board examinations of Grades 10 and 12 will be restructured in alignment to this paradigm. In addition, State Census Examinations for Grades 3, 5 and 8 will help track student learning. Mechanisms such as multiple attempts will be in place to reduce psychological burden on students; assessment at all levels will move towards adaptive computerised testing.

From 2020 onwards, the autonomous National Testing Agency (NTA) will administer aptitude tests and tests in various subjects, which can be taken on multiple occasions during the year. These could be used for

university and college admissions.

Nurturing Singular Interests and Talents

In order to nurture students with singular interests and talents, pedagogy will be such as to foster a diversity of abilities. Identification through Olympiads and competitions, and focussed clubs at various levels, along with residential programmes will further support this effort.

Safety And Security of Children in Schools

A framework and guidelines for ensuring school safety and security of children will be developed, and will be made a part of the eligibility conditions for recognition and registration of schools.

All principals and teachers will be sensitised, and mechanisms for redressal put in place. Adolescent education will be included in pre- and in-service education programmes of secondary school teachers, and counsellors and social workers will be trained to confidentially advise parents and teachers on adolescent problems faced by growing boys and girls.

Self-learning online programmes on child rights will be developed for the benefit of students, teachers, and parents.

School Complexes as the Unit of Governance

State governments will group schools into complexes according to population distribution, connectivity and other local considerations by 2023. The grouping exercise will also include review and consolidation of schools with very low enrolment (e.g. <20 students). Due care will be taken that access is not impacted in the process through measures such as provision of transport; proximate access during early years will be non-negotiable.

The school complex will be the primary administrative unit of the public school system, making school governance more local, effective and efficient.

Each school complex will be a semi-autonomous unit that will offer education from the Foundational stage till Grade 12. Each school complex will consist of one secondary school (Grade 9-12) and all the public (government) schools imparting preparatory and middle school education in its neighbourhood.

The grouping of schools into school complexes will enable sharing of resources across schools including subject teachers, sports, music and art teachers, counsellors and social workers. It will also make possible sharing of physical resources such as laboratories, libraries, ICT equipment, musical instruments, sports equipment, sports fields etc. leading to optimum utilisation of public resources and facilities.

The school complex will create a community of teachers and principals who can work together and support each other, academically and administratively. Each school complex will also be connected with institutions offering vocational education and adult education, teacher support institutions and higher education institutes in its geographical vicinity. Thus, school complexes will break the isolation of small schools through creating a coherent set of educational institutions in each geography.

The Principal of the secondary school will be the head of the school complex. Each school complex will have a School Complex Management Committee comprising representatives from all the schools in the complex, as well as other institutions attached to the complex. The Committee will be empowered to have a voice to intervene on behalf of the school with the State and its bodies. It will also play a central role in the performance management of teachers.

Individual schools will develop their plans, which will be used to evolve the plan of the school complex, which in turn will be endorsed by the Department of School

Education. Each district will also have a District Education Council/Zilla Shiksha Parishad for both the oversight of the school system and to enable their functioning and empowerment.

Regulation of School Education

Regulation and operations of schools (service provision) will be carried out by separate bodies to eliminate conflicts of interest. There will be clear, separate systems for policy making, regulation, operations and academic matters.

An independent State-wide regulatory body called the State School Regulatory Authority, with a quasi-judicial status, will be created for each State, while the operations of the public schooling system of the whole State will be handled by the Directorate of School Education. The SCERT will be the academic authority while the Boards of Certification/Examination will have no role in determining curricula.

Regulation will be based on a system of accreditation informed by a School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework, which will be developed by the State Council of Educational Research and Training. The Framework will address only basic parameters, and in turn will inform the License to Start a School. Schools will use the School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework to self-accredit every three years, by giving details on their meeting all the basic parameters, and the relevant supporting documents. At the same time, a mechanism of audit will be set up. This process will apply to both public and private schools.

Private and public schools will be regulated on the same criteria, benchmarks and processes, ensuring that public spirited private schools are encouraged along with private philanthropic initiatives; at the same time, private operators who try to run schools as commercial enterprises will be stopped.

The sample-based National Achievement Survey of student learning levels will continue

to be carried out by the National Council of Educational Research and Training. States may also continue to conduct a census-based State Assessment Survey.

To track students' progress throughout their school experience, and not just at the end in Grade 10 and 12, all students will take State census examinations in Grades 3, 5, and 8 in addition to the Board Examinations in Grades 10 and 12.

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 will be extended to assure availability of free and compulsory education for all children from pre-school through Grade 12. Its requirements will be made substantially less restrictive, while ensuring physical and psychological safety, access, inclusion, the non-profit nature of schools, and minimum standards for learning outcomes. This is to allow for local variations and alternative models, while making it easier for governmental and non-governmental organisations to start schools.

Draft National Education Policy 2019 on Teachers

Teacher Recruitment and Service Conditions

Recruitment of teachers will be done through a robust process based on comprehensive teacher requirement planning at all schools, with preference given to local teachers and those fluent in the local language, while ensuring diversity. The first step would be a redesigned Teacher Eligibility Test, followed by an interview and teaching demonstration.

Teachers will be recruited to the district and appointed to a school complex, and must ideally have a fixed tenure and rule-based transfers through a transparent technology-based system. They will be incentivised to teach in rural areas.

The practice of 'para-teachers' (unqualified, contract teachers) will be stopped across the

country by 2022.

Merit-based scholarships will be instituted to enable outstanding students from underprivileged, rural or tribal areas to undertake the four-year integrated B.Ed. programme. In certain cases, employment will be guaranteed in their local areas. Female students will be targeted in particular.

All teachers must be able to teach with no interruptions in the form of non-teaching activities during school hours (e.g. cooking midday meals, procuring school supplies, etc.). In turn, teachers will be held accountable for being absent from school without cause or without being on approved leave.

Adequate physical infrastructure, facilities and learning resources, along with desired pupil-teacher ratio will be ensured to facilitate teachers' work. Remedial programmes will be established at all levels to help teachers ensure that all students learn.

All teachers will be able to move into either educational administration or teacher education after a minimum number of years of teaching experience. In the long term, all educational administrative positions will be reserved for outstanding teachers who are interested in administration.

Continuing Professional Development and Support

Rejuvenating Academic Support Institutions with a careful plan to strengthen all existing academic support institutions as well as sufficient academic resources (e.g. a good library) and availability of high quality material in Indian languages for teachers will be accorded priority.

Each head teacher and/or school principal will be responsible for building strong in-school development processes and a supportive school culture. The School Management Committee will be sensitised and officials of the Directorate of School Education will reorient their functioning to

support such a culture.

Continuous teacher professional development will be based upon a flexible and modular approach, with teachers choosing what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. Attention will be paid to induction of newly appointed teachers, and processes of mentoring put in place. States could adopt a technology-based system for enabling choice-based professional development and to track the professional trajectory of each teacher. There will be no centralised determination of the curriculum, no cascade-model training and no rigid norms. The resource people for delivering these programmes will be carefully selected, effectively trained and will have tenure in the role.

A comprehensive Teacher Development Plan will be drawn up for each school complex. Peer learning communities will be consciously developed and sustained through processes such as weekly meetings and teacher learning centres. In addition, other modes of continuing professional development will be provided, such as seminars, in-class mentoring, exposure visits, etc. The academic and teacher support system, including the District Institutes of Education and Training, and the Block and Cluster Resource Centres, will be aligned to the school complex system.

Teacher Accountability

The Draft Policy states that teachers are accountable to students, their parents, the community and the public at large for what they are doing or not doing for education in schools; this ensures professional integrity and transparency in the education system. The periodic (annual or higher frequency) performance appraisal of teachers based on professional standards for teachers developed by the State will form the basis for determining teacher accountability. However, it will always be important to remember that empowerment and autonomy are preconditions for true accountability.

Draft National Education Policy 2019 on Teacher Education

Teacher education will be a part of higher education and the four-year integrated Bachelor of Education programme, which will have a liberal education approach, will be the minimum qualification for all school teachers. This programme will be offered at multi-disciplinary institutions as an undergraduate programme of study, including both disciplinary and teacher preparation courses. It will be a stage-specific, subject-specific programme that will prepare teachers from pre-school to the senior secondary stage (Class 12) for all subjects including the arts and sports and those with a vocational education or a special education focus. It will be on par with other undergraduate degrees; students completing the programme will be eligible to take up a Masters degree programme in any discipline.

Good pre-service teacher preparation needs expertise across disciplines for rigorous theoretical understanding of educational perspectives, subject and pedagogy along with a strong theory-practice connect - this demands the availability of a range of experts in core areas of education (psychology, sociology, philosophy) and all other school subjects (sciences, social sciences, languages, mathematics, arts, sports). Thus, faculty of teacher education must be experts in diverse fields, both theoretical and practical.

The current two-year B.Ed. programme will continue till 2030. After 2030, only those institutions which offer a four-year teacher education program will run the two-year programme as well; these programmes will be offered to those with a graduate degree. No other kind of pre-service teacher preparation programmes will be offered after 2030.

Substandard and dysfunctional teacher education institutes will be shut down after due review through legal processes. Promoters of such institutions will be free to put their infrastructure to other productive uses, such as for vocational education.

Conclusion

In the thirty years since the last national education policy was formulated, the socio-economic environment in India and the world around has changed significantly. A major development has been the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, which makes education for children aged 6-14 years a Fundamental Right. Technology has seen dramatic advances, changing the way in which people communicate and the very nature of processes and information. Globalisation along with this rapid growth of technology-require learners to prepare for jobs that don't exist at present.

While taking forward the unfinished agenda of the previous policies, the Draft National Education Policy 2019 responds to these changes, and in the words of Dr Kasturirangan in the Preamble to the document, 'The National Education Policy 2019 provides a framework for the transformation and reinvigoration of the education system in order to respond to the

requirements of fast-changing, knowledge-based societies while taking into account the diversity of the Indian people, their traditions, cultures, and languages. It seeks to ensure that human capital, the most vital form of capital that would fuel the necessary transformation, is secured and strengthened'.

However, at the end, the question is of implementation-without dilution, or even mutation, of the spirit of the Draft Policy. Implementation requires, among other things, investment, political will and capacity. With the kind of changes this Draft Policy envisages, including the autonomy to persons and institutions, these become even more critical.

