

# National Education Policy-2020: an Instrument for Indian's Transformation in the 21st Century

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## ABSTRACT

*Education is the mirror of a society. Also, it is considered as the sharpest weapon by which one can defeat the socio-economic evils. Education makes one wise, sympathetic, conscious and responsible citizen. Like the health, foreign, trade and commerce every democratic government has some policies on education too. And, this policy needs necessary changes from time to time to meet the demands of time. India formulated its first Policy on Education in 1968 under Indira Gandhi while the second and last Policy on Education came into effect in 1986, which was modified partially in 1992. Since then three decades have been passed, and the world has undergone a sea change. As a result, a new education policy was essential to fulfil the social, scientific, technological and vocational needs of society. Besides, two global development goals – Millennium Development Goals (2001) and Sustainable Development Goals (2015) have been declared by the United Nations, and the latter goals are targeted to be achieved by 2030. In the middle of second decade of 21st century, in place of the National Congress Party the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has emerged as the rulers in India. The 2014 Election Manifesto of the BJP discussed about a sound education policy. Moreover, the Sustainable Development Goal No. 4 seeks to attain inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. These prepared the background of the National Education Policy-2020. This small article seeks to highlight the aims of NEP-2020; the position of India in comparison with some Very High and High Human Development countries; and subsequently delineates the salient features of Secondary Education mentioned in the National Education Policy-2020, which is going to revolutionize the social, political, economic and technological fields in the days to come.*

**Keyword:** Sustainable Development Goals, National Education Policy, Japanese Education system, Student, Teacher, Society

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The challenges faced by the 21st-century economies and societies are multiple ranging from financial crisis to meeting sustainable development goals, responding to climate change, knowledge economy, and global citizenship. It is education that plays a critical part in responding to all these crises. Angel Gurria, the general secretary of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) pointed out that, "Education is a critical part of any response. Knowledge increases both wealth and well-being: University graduates in most countries earn more....need to equip people with knowledge, skills, and tools to stay competitive and engaged. Education is an investment in the future."<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 Aims of National Education Policy

Every Government Education Policy has some aims and objectives, and the new National Education Policy-2020 is not an exception. The Introduction Part-I of the National Education Policy on Education, 1992 highlights that

"Education has continued to evolve, diversify and extend its reach and coverage since the dawn of human history. Every country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of the times. There are moments in history when a new direction has to be given to an age-old process. That moment is today. The country has reached a stage in its economic and technical development when a major effort must be made to derive the maximum benefit from the assets already created and to ensure that the fruits of change reach all sections. Education is the highway to that goal. With this aim in view, the Government of India announced in January 1985 that a new education policy would be formulated for the country."<sup>2</sup> The same can be said as the aim of education policy in the 21st century too. Despite that, the aim of the NEP-2020 can be well understood from the initial words stated in the introduction part. It points out that, "Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and

promoting national development....Universal high-quality education is the best way forward for developing and maximizing our country's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the society, the country, and the world.”<sup>3</sup> Further, for the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations including the Goal No. 4 that seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030, the National Education Policy is an epoch-making initiative of the Government of India.

### 1.2 Education and Human Development

Human development and education are closely related. The Human Development Report-2019 considers that “Human development means expanding the substantive freedoms to do things that people value and have a reason to value.”<sup>4</sup> Further, it is indicated that “human development is not defined merely by the choices that people make; it is also defined by “the freedom that a person has in choosing from the set of feasible functioning, which is referred to as the person’s capability.”<sup>5</sup>

### 1.3 India and the World Education Scenario

Every National Education Policy is the result or response to the demand of time. There is no doubt of the fact that our youngest members of society deserve the best possible start in life. The present National Education Policy-2020 aims to help students, teachers, and other stakeholders that can affect the quality of education and care to enhance child development, sustainable development, learning, and well-being of every child.

Before going to discuss in detail about the National Education Policy, we need to understand what is the education and literacy rate in India. Indian education scenario can be compared with some of the developed economies in the world to understand the position of India and the target to be set to reach with our counterparts.

At first, let us see the literacy rate in India from the following tables:

**Table 1: Literacy Rate of Whole Population in India Fromm 1951 to 2011**

S.N.	Census year	% of Male Literacy	% of Female literacy	Persons	Gap in Male- Female Literacy Rate (in %)
1.	1951	21.16	8.86	18.33	12.30
2.	1961	40.40	15.35	28.3	25.05
3.	1971	45.96	21.97	34.45	23.98
4.	1981	56.38	29.76	43.57	26.62
5.	1991	64.13	39.29	52.21	24.84
6.	2001	75.26	53.67	64.83	21.59
7.	2011	82.14	65.46	74.04	16.68

(Source: census 2011, India)

In the last 70 years, the literate population of India has increased to fourfold from 18% in 1951 to 74% in 2011. The women's education is still in very pitiable condition as the population of literate women is still hovering around 65% of the total population of the country. The percentage of literate women in the country was just about 9% in 1951.

### 1.4 The uniqueness of Indian National Education Policy-2020

So far India has formulated three national Education policies. The first one was made in 1968, the second complete policy was brought out in 1986, further modified the same in 1992, while the third and latest one is just introduced in July 2020. Unlike the previous ones, the National Education Policy-2020 (henceforth NEP-2020) is unique for its size, content, aims and objectives, and above all vision. The entire NEP is divided into 4 parts comprising a total 66 pages. Other than the 3-page Introduction, the four parts of the NEP are Part-I – School Education, Part –II - Higher Education, Part –III – Other key areas of focus, and Part-IV- Making it happen. In this article, we will discuss only the First Part that deals with School Education. It is to be remembered that, the entire school education system revolves around three main pillars such as students, teachers, and guardians. In addition to the three main components, taking another important beneficiary- the society, we will divide our discussion into four sections.

## 2. STUDENTS

Students are the backbone of a nation and the main pillar of the educational edifice. Hence, the interest and benefit of the students hold the prime priority of any education policy, and the National Education Policy-2020 is not the exception. Let us examine how the NEP-2020 is going to benefit the students, who are the backbone of society and future helmsmen of the country.

1. The National Education Policy brings about a Uniform academic session and the Academic Session will begin from September-October.
2. The span of learning will increase from a total of 12 years to 15 years from Pre-Primary to Secondary level.
3. The children will learn great things in the Anganwadi/Pre Nursery/Balvatikas. The children in the Anganwadis will learn drawing, painting, and other visual art, craft, drama and puppetry, music, and movement. Also, they will learn social capacities, sensitivity, good behavior, courtesy, ethics, personal and public

cleanliness, teamwork, and cooperation. Students will learn communication skills, literacy, and numeracy.

4. Also of Mid-Day Meal, nutritious food such as groundnuts/chana or local fruit will be distributed to the students in the breakfast. The nutrition, health including the mental health of the children will also be taken care of.

5. The pupil-teacher ratio will be 30:1, in case of socio-economically disadvantaged students aims will be to make this ratio at 25:1.

6. From now onwards, teaching and learning will be conducted more interactively. Classroom teaching will be more fun, creative, collaborative, and exploratory. Students will learn skills such as collaboration, self-initiative, self-direction, self-discipline, teamwork, discipline, responsibility, citizenship, etc.

7. The students will be able to learn their lessons through home language or mother tongue/local language or regional languages at least until Grade 5, but preferable till Grade 8 and beyond. Studies suggest that children pick up the language quickly between the age of 2 and 8.

8. Sanskrit, a modern language, mentioned in Eighth Scheduled of the Constitution possesses classical literature. Sanskrit has a greater treasure in volume than that of Latin, and Greek put together containing a vast treasure of Mathematics, philosophy, grammar, music, politics, medicine, architecture, metallurgy, drama, poetry, story-telling and many more. Therefore, Sanskrit will be offered, in all stages of school and higher education as an important and enriching option for students, including as an option of the three language formula.

9. In addition to the classical and English languages, foreign languages such as Korean, Japanese, Thai, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian, will also be offered at the secondary level for students.

10. Value education, skills, and capacities will be developed. In addition to proficiency in languages, the students will learn creativity and innovativeness; a sense of aesthetics and art; oral and written communication; health and nutrition; physical education, fitness, wellness, and sports; collaboration and teamwork; problem-solving and logical reasoning; vocational exposure and skills; digital literacy, coding, and computational thinking; ethical and moral reasoning; knowledge and practice of human and Constitutional values; gender sensitivity;

Fundamental Duties; citizenship skills and values and knowledge of India.

11. Mathematics and computational thinking will be given increased emphasis throughout the school years, starting with the foundational stage.

12. In place of existing Class-VIII, the minimum class for opting vocational courses will be Class VI. The Human Development Report, 2019 gives much emphasis on capacity or skill development, which is the demand of time. Also, it is a necessary prerequisite for nation-building. But what capabilities or capacities should we consider? Professor Amartya Sen argues that “one must adjust in response to evolving social and economic conditions. For example, in India at the time of independence in 1947, it was reasonable to concentrate “on elementary education, basic health, [...] and to not worry too much about whether everyone can effectively communicate across the country and beyond. Later, however—with the internet and its applications, as well as broader advances in information and communication technology— access to the internet and freedom of general communication became an important capability for all Indians.”<sup>6</sup>

Later, however—with the internet and its applications, as well as broader advances in information and communication technology— access to the internet and freedom of general communication became an important capability for all Indians, but also with values and with people’s changing demands and aspirations. In the 21st century, the capabilities or capacities or skills are essential for ‘agency’ that determines human development. “These capabilities, while essential for agency, are not their sole determinants because human motivations are not driven exclusively by improvements in one’s well-being; “people’s sense of fairness and concern that they and others be treated fairly.”<sup>7</sup> The National Education Policy has made provisions for capacity and skill-building following the demand of time. Through the implementation of the Policy, India will be able to make a balance between the requirement of the market and the flow of the supply chain of skilled personnel.

13. All students will participate in 10 days bag-less period sometime between grade 6-8 where they will intern with local vocation experts such as carpenters, gardeners, potters, artists, etc. Similar internship opportunities to learn vocational subjects may be made available to students during grades 6-12. Children will be given periodic exposure to activities outside school through

visits to places /monuments of historical, cultural, and tourist importance, meeting local artists and craftsmen, and visits higher educational institutions in their village/Tehsil/District/State.

14. Students will learn at a young about the importance of “doing what’s right” for making ethical decisions. Students will be imparted basic ethical reasoning, traditional Indian values, and all basic human and Constitutional values such as – Seva, Ahimsa, Swachhata, Satya, Niskam Karma, Shanti, Sacrifice, tolerance, diversity, pluralism, righteous conduct, gender sensitivity, respect for elders, respect for all people and their inherent capabilities regardless of background, respect for environment, helpfulness, courtesy, patience, forgiveness, empathy, compassion, patriotism, democratic outlook, integrity, responsibility, justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity will be developed in all students. Children

15. Mode of Assessment of Students is very student-friendly. Instead of the present method of testing rote memorization skills through summative examinations, the present method will be more regular and formative. It will be based on more competency-based.

16. The progress card for assessment of all students in secondary schools will be redesigned. It will be a holistic, 360 degrees multidimensional report that reflects in great detail the progress as well as the uniqueness of each learner about cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

17. 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; any student who has been going to and making a basic effort in a school class will be able to pass and do well in the corresponding subject Board Exam without much additional effort. To further eliminate the ‘high stakes’ aspect of Board Exams, all students will be allowed to take Board Exams on up to two occasions during any given school year, one main examination and one for improvement, if desired.

18. Another good step: Exam is easy, questions are easy. Board exams in certain subjects could be redesigned to have two parts—one part of an objective type with multiple-choice questions and the other of a descriptive type. To track progress throughout the school years, and not just at the end of Grades 10 and 12—for the benefit of students, parents, teachers, principals, and the entire schooling system in planning improvements to schools

and teaching-learning processes—all students will take school examinations in Grades 3, 5, and 8 which will be conducted by the appropriate authority. These examinations would test achievement of basic learning outcomes, through assessment of core concepts and knowledge from the national and local curricula, along with relevant higher-order skills and application of knowledge in real-life situations, rather than rote memorization.

19. Olympiads and competitions in various subjects will be conducted across the country. Olympiads and competitions in various subjects will be conducted across the country, with clear coordination and progression from school to local to state to national levels, to ensure that all students may participate at all levels for which they qualify.

20. Free boarding facilities will be arranged for students who come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Suitable arrangements for the safety of students and especially for girls will be made. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Kendriya Vidyalaya will be set up in Educationally Backward Zones.

21. Inclusion and equal participation of children with disabilities will be ensured. Children with disabilities will be given the highest priority and endeavour will be taken to enable their full participation in the regular schooling process from the Foundational Stage to higher education.

22. The opening of NCC in every school will be encouraged. Under the aegis of the Ministry of Defence, State Governments may encourage opening NCC wings in their secondary and higher secondary schools, including those located in tribal-dominated areas. This will enable harnessing of the natural talent and unique potential of students, which in turn would help them to aspire to a successful career in the defence forces.

#### 4. TEACHERS

After the students, the teachers are the most important component of the education system. Hence, how the National Education Policy will support the teachers, and increase the promotional and service-related benefits to the teachers needs to be highlighted. But due to paucity of time and scope, only the cardinal features will be discussed hereunder in a succinct manner.

Existing Teachers will be Trained and Upgraded in Anganwadi centers. The NEP-2020 points out that, all the existing teachers in Anganwadi/Pre-primary section will

be trained through systemic efforts following the curricular/pedagogical framework prepared by the NCERT. The teachers with 10+2 qualification will have to undertake 6 months certificate program in ECCE, while the teachers with the lower educational qualification will be trained a one-year diploma course. The training can be taken by using the DTH system or smartphones so that no time is wasted and money is spent on the teachers, and no work of the school is hampered.

2. Not only that, but incentives will also be provided to quality teachers who take up jobs in rural areas, especially in areas where the shortage is acute of quality teachers. A key incentive for teachers in rural schools will be the provision of local housing near or on the school premises or increased housing allowances.

3. Excessive teacher's transfer will be halted. At present teachers are being transferred haphazardly without supplying the subject teacher in place of the transferred one. There is a charge of corruption in the transfer of teachers. Hence, the harmful practice of excessive teacher transfer will be halted for students to maintain continuity of their role models.

4. Schools /school complexes will be encouraged to hire local eminent persons or experts as 'master instructors' in various subjects, such as in traditional local arts, vocational crafts, entrepreneurship, agriculture, or any other subject where local expertise exists, to benefit students and help preserve and promote local knowledge and professions

5. Teachers will be given continuous opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the best innovations and advances in their profession. Each Teacher including Principal/HM will be expected to participate in at least 50 hours of CPD opportunities every year for their professional development.

6. Teachers doing outstanding work must be recognized and promoted, and given salary raises, to incentivize all teachers to do their best work. Further, it will be ensured that career growth (in terms of tenure, promotions, salary increases, etc.) is available to teachers within a single school stage (i.e., Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, or Secondary), and that there is no career progression-related incentive to move from being teachers in early stages to later stages or vice versa (though such career moves across stages will be allowed, provided the teacher has the desire and qualifications for such a move).

7. There is a provision of vertical mobility of teachers based on their merit; outstanding teachers with demonstrated leadership and management skills would be trained over time to take on academic leadership positions in schools, school complexes, BRCs, CRCs, BITEs, DIETs as well as relevant government departments. These facilities were not there for teachers in anytime in India.

8. The teachers are now engaged in a variety of non-teaching activities including Mid-Day-Meal, election duty, BLO duty, census duty, Aikyaashree program, minority benefits program, and other activities that affect their teaching greatly. Hence, the NEP -2020 highlights that teachers will not be engaged any longer in work that is not directly related to teaching; in particular, teachers will not be involved in strenuous administrative tasks and more than a rationalized minimum time for mid-day meal-related work, so that they may fully concentrate on their teaching-learning duties.

## 5. PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Parents or guardians will be much benefited from the National Education policy. In India, middle-class parents are bearing the brunt of private tuition fees. Also, the middle-class parents are spending sleepless nights to manage exorbitant prices quoted by home tutors – the fees at times outstrip school fees. With rising demand and limited supply, tuition is only getting dearer with every passing year. Working parents, peer pressure, and desperation for high scores are forcing citizens to pay through the nose for tuition. It is learned that, popular teachers of mathematics, physics, and chemistry charge about Rs1 lakh per subject for class 11 and 12. The package for class 9-10 (all subjects) has touched Rs1.5 lakh. It is about 10% more for students ISC, CBSE, and international board students. Commerce teachers charge between Rs 50, 000 and Rs 60, 000 per subject for classes 11 and 12 and the seat must be booked six months in advance. The rates depend on locality. Tutors in Colaba, Cuff Parade, Worli, and Bandra (W) are the most expensive.<sup>8</sup>

In West Bengal a study was conducted by the State Council of Educational Research and Training with financial assistance from the School Education Department, Govt. of West which was an eye-opener to private tuition. It was found that 71% of the children in primary schools and 82-85% of the children in rural and urban areas of the state in upper primary levels take the assistance of private tutors.<sup>9</sup> The Pratiche Education Report<sup>10</sup> has also mentioned that it has become a

“regrettable necessity” for the system of school education, in West Bengal. One more of such a study by Pratham reported that, compared to other states in the country, the majority of students in 6 to 14 years of age study in government schools and attend tuition classes in West Bengal.<sup>11</sup> Considering the demands of the parents and guardians, and a section of social scientists who have been vigorously opposing the idea of dependence on private tuition of the students, the Government of India through the National Education Policy – 2020 sought to finish the coaching culture in India.

It is not that the provision of private tuition is not anywhere in the world. It is revealed that about 7.3 percent of lower-secondary school students take extra lessons at home with tutors in Japan. On the other hand, according to the OECD, “Students in Finland have the least amount of outside work and homework than any other student in the world. They spend only half an hour a night working on stuff from school. Finnish students also don't have tutors. Yet they're outperforming cultures that have toxic school-to-life balances without the unneeded or unnecessary stress. Finnish students are getting everything they need to get done in school without the added pressures that come with excelling at a subject. Without having to worry about grades and busy-work they can focus on the true task at hand – learning and growing as a human being.”<sup>12</sup>

The culture of private tuition will be finished after the introduction of NEP-2020. The new curriculum, teaching method, question pattern, and examination system will change the current tuition-dependent school education. Moreover, the teachers being freed from other non-teaching works will be able to concentrate more in teaching activities. Thus the NEP-2020 will finish today's coaching culture in India.

## 6. SCHOOL

1. At present, the Anganwadis are not equipped with trained teachers to impart world-class teaching. Therefore, for universal access to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), all the 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.

2. Two things would be done to stop the drop-out rate and retain students. The NEP-2020 seeks to provide sufficient

and efficient infrastructure to have access to safe and engaging school education from pre-primary to class 12. Along with this, safe and practical conveyance, and hostels for girls will be set up. Secondly, alternative and innovative education centers will be set up with the help of civil society to ensure the inclusion of the children of migrant laborers, and others drop out students in mainstream education.

3. The NEP-2020 seeks to provide adequate and safe infrastructure including working toilets, clean drinking water, clean and attractive spaces, electricity, computing, devices, internet, libraries, and sports and recreational resources to all schools to ensure that the teachers and students, including children of all genders with disabilities, receive safe, inclusive, and effective learning environment and are comfortable and inspired to teach and learn in their schools. 4.

4. The school complex will be set up. State or Union Territories may introduce innovative formats, such as school complex, rationalization of schools for effective school governance, resource sharing, and community building.

5. Empowerment of Schools through the School Complex Management Committees will be ensured. The School complex will conduct virtual classes, better student support, enrolment, attendance, and performance through the sharing of social workers and counselors, and School Complex Management Committees (rather than simply School Management Committees) for more robust and improved governance, monitoring, oversight, innovations, and initiatives by local stakeholders.

6. To further enhance cooperation and positive synergy among schools, including between public and private schools, the twinning/ pairing of one public school with one private school will be adopted across the country, so that such paired schools may meet/ interact with each other, learn from each other, and also share resources, if possible. Best practices of private schools will be documented, shared, and institutionalized in public schools, and vice versa, where possible.

7. Every State will be encouraged to strengthen existing or establish “Bal Bhavans” where children of all ages can visit once a week (e.g., on weekends) or more often, as a special day time boarding school, to partake in art-related, career-related, and play-related activities. Such Bal Bhavans may be incorporated as a part of school complexes/ clusters if possible.

8. The school should be a point of celebration and honor for the whole community. The dignity of the school as an institution should be restored and important dates, such as the foundation day of the school, will be celebrated along with the community, and the list of important alumni may be displayed and honored.

9. Empowerment of Schools through Accreditation. All in all, regulation must aim to empower schools and teachers with trust, enabling them to strive for excellence and perform at their very best, while ensuring the integrity of the system through the enforcement of complete transparency and full public disclosure of all finances, procedures, and educational outcomes.

10. The NEP-2020 aims an effective quality self-regulation or accreditation system for all stages of education including pre-school education-private, public, and philanthropic-to ensure compliance with essential quality standards. To ensure that all schools follow certain minimal professional and quality standards, States/UTs will set up an independent, State-wide, body called the State School Standards Authority (SSSA).

11. Self-Disclosure of all basic regulatory information in Public Domain to be initiated. Transparent public self-disclosure of all the basic regulatory information, as laid down by the SSSA, will be used extensively for public oversight and accountability.

12. Curricula and Academic Standards will be maintained by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). In academic matters, including academic standards and curricula in the State will be led by the SCERT (with close consultation and collaboration with the NCERT), which will be reinvigorated as an institution. The SCERT will develop a School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (SQAAC) through wide consultations with all stakeholders.

13. Each stakeholder and participant will be accountable. The culture, structures, and systems that empower and provide adequate resources to schools, institutions, teachers, officials, communities, and other stakeholders, will also build concomitant accountability. Each stakeholder and participant of the education system will be accountable to perform their role with the highest level of integrity, full commitment, and exemplary work ethic.

14. All Schools – public and private will be assessed and accredited on the same criteria. Public and private schools (except the schools that are managed /aided/ controlled by the Central government) will be assessed and

accredited on the same criteria, benchmarks, and processes, emphasizing online and offline public disclosure and transparency, to ensure that public-spirited private schools are encouraged and not stifled in any way.

## 7. SOCIETY

Society as a whole will be the greatest beneficiary of the National Education Policy. The opportunities and scopes of the people can be enumerated hereunder succinctly.

1. Opportunities for a new job will be widened to aspiring youths. To meet the shortage of teachers for teaching to a large number of students in the coming days, a lot of (i) new teachers will be recruited, (ii) they will be trained, (iii) recruitment will be made from local people who are efficient with the local language, (iv) people-teacher ratio will be 30:1, in case of socio-economically disadvantaged students aims will be to make this ratio at 25:1.

2. The new Policy ensures the participation of philanthropic organizations. The NEP-2020 welcomes private philanthropic organizations to build schools in India.

3. New Job Opportunity for Language Teachers. There will be a major effort from both the Central and State governments to invest in large numbers of language teachers in all regional languages around the country, and, in particular, for all languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Even the foreign language teachers will be recruited based on the demands of schools from more than six million Indian villages, and thousands of towns.

4. Classical languages will be preserved for their richness. In the NEP-2020 it is stated that Tamil, Telegu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Prakrit, and the other classical languages will be preserved for their richness. These languages will also be available in schools as options for students, possibly as online modules. It is necessary to know that at present there are a total of six languages that enjoy classical status such as Tamil (declared in 2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014).

5. Special focus will be given on educationally backward communities. Bridging the gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes of children belonging to Scheduled

Castes will continue to be one of the major goals of the National Education Policy.

6. Students of Minorities and Special needs will be given preference. Minorities are relatively underrepresented in school and higher education. Therefore, the Policy acknowledges the importance of interventions to promote the education of children belonging to all minority communities, children with special needs/Divyang, and particularly those communities that are educationally underrepresented.

7. All facilities will be maximized in the Special Education Zones (SEZs). It is recommended that regions of the country with large populations from educationally-disadvantaged should be declared Special Education Zones (SEZs), where all the schemes and policies are implemented to the maximum through additional concerted efforts, to truly change their educational landscape.

8. Women and Girls will be given priorities. The NEP-2020 recommends that the policies and schemes designed to students in Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) should be specially targeted to women and girls.

9. Gender Inclusive Fund will be set up. Besides, the government of India will constitute a "Gender-Inclusion Fund" to build the nation's capacity to provide equitable quality education for all girls as well as transgender students. The fund will be available to States to implement priorities determined by the Central government critical for assisting female and transgender children's access to education (such as the provisions of sanitation and toilets, bicycles, conditional cash transfers, etc.).

Moreover, a National Assessment Centre PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), as a standard-setting body under MHRD will be set up. A National Testing Agency (NTA) will be set up to test a student. The exams conducted by the NTA shall test conceptual understanding and the ability of a student to apply knowledge and shall aim to eliminate the need for taking coaching for these exams. All these measures will further improve India's progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) of ensuring free, equitable,

and quality primary and secondary education for all children.

## 6. CONCLUSION

It is hoped that India will truly be a global knowledge hub by 2040 by implementing all the above noble ideals and norms mentioned in the National Education Policy. Today's students, who are the future citizens of India, will be more disciplined, more sensible, patriotic, and respectful to their parents, elders, and teachers. After the complete implementation of the NEP-2020, an Indian student with the knowledge of Constitutional duties, consciousness of environment, personal and societal health will participate in nation-building. Every student will be empowered with India's rich cultural heritage and national feeling of unity in diversity. Today's students will be more ethical, more passionate, and more caring towards their family members, school teachers, and society as a whole. India's dream of a 5 trillion dollar economy will be a reality in the days to come and it will be a very strong and powerful country in no time.

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