

**REVIEW OF INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM FROM HISTORICAL  
APPROACH TO  
NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2019**

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**Abstract**

The idea that education must result in the ‘full development of the human personality’ continued to be reflected in the “New Education Policy: Draft 2019” proposed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. This research effort aims to review it from the historical time. It looks at the draft of the New Education Policy through its major pillars presented as school education, higher education transforming education etc. Along with the focus it has set, this paper has looked at the pace and progress of education in India till date keeping an eye on the limitations of the draft.

**Key words:** education, philosophy, higher education, policy

**Introduction**

The historic Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted at the UN General Assembly in 1948, declared that “everyone has the right to education”. Article 26 in the Declaration stated that “education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages” and “elementary education shall be compulsory”, and that ‘education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms’

The idea that education must result in the ‘full development of the human personality’ continued to be reflected in influential reports such as that entitled ‘Learning: The Treasure Within’, which the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century chaired by Jacques Delors, submitted to UNESCO in 1996. The Report argued that education throughout life was based on four pillars: i) Learning to know - acquiring a body of knowledge and learning how to learn, so as to benefit from the opportunities education provides throughout life; ii) Learning to do - acquiring not only an occupational skill but also the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams, and a package of skills that enables one to deal with the various challenges of working life; iii) Learning to live together - developing an understanding of

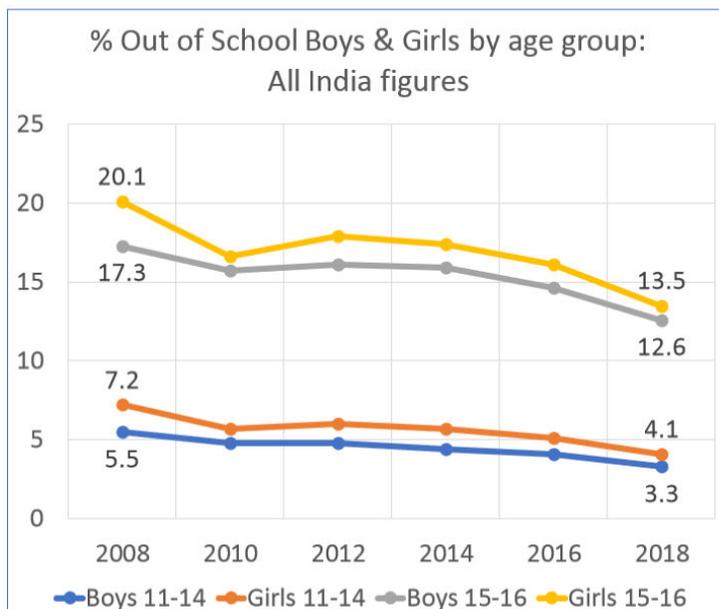
other people and an appreciation of interdependence in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace; and iv) Learning to be - developing one's personality and being able to act with autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility, while ensuring that education does not disregard any aspect of the potential of a person: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities and communication skills.

### Scenario of the right to Education

But today, across the nation, maximum children and adolescents are absent from class. The Union budget speech recognized the need to measure learning outcomes in schools. An amendment has been introduced to the Right to Education (RTE) Act to permit detentions after class V and class VIII after a test, remedial education and a retest. In light of this, the following data captures some trends with respect to enrolment, drop-out, and transition rates across various levels of education.

While universal enrolment has been achieved at the elementary level (class I-VIII), the enrolment consistently falls with successive levels of education. Gross enrolment ratio (GER) is the student enrolment as a proportion of the corresponding eligible age group in a given year. GER in class I-V reduced from 114% in 2008-09 to 100% in 2014-15.

On the other hand, the ASER (Annual Status of Education Report) says through its own survey and data as shown in the official website of ASER



Overall, enrollment of children in the age group 6-14 is over 96%.

This figure has been 96% or higher since 2010.

The proportion of children out of school in different age groups has been falling over time.

Gender gaps in enrollment have also narrowed considerably over time.

(<http://img.asercentre.org/docs/ASER%202018/Release%20Material/aser2018nationalfindingsppt.pdf>) claims that the enrolment of schools between the age group of 6 to 14 years is improving and the gender gap is shrinking too, as the proportion of children out of school in different age groups has been falling over time and the gender gaps in enrolment have also narrowed considerably over time.

### Vision

*'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.'*

The vision of India's new education system has accordingly been crafted to ensure that it touches the life of each and every citizen, consistent with their ability to contribute to many growing developmental imperatives of this country on the one hand, and towards creating a just and equitable society on the other. Government has proposed the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, while remaining consistent with India's traditions and value systems.

It is true that education can break generational cycles of poverty by enabling children to gain the life skills and knowledge needed to cope with today's challenges. Education is strongly linked to concrete improvements in health and nutrition, improving children's very chances for survival. Education empowers children to be full and active participants in society, able to exercise their rights and engage in civil and political life. Education is also a powerful protection factor: children who are in school are less likely to come into conflict with the law and much less vulnerable to rampant forms of child exploitation, including child labor, trafficking, and recruitment into armed groups and forces.

### Indian Education System Historical Perspective

India has had a long and illustrious history of holistic education. The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge, as preparation for life in this world or for life beyond schooling, but for complete realisation and liberation of the self. According to Swami Vivekananda, "Education is not the amount of information that we put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. If education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages of the world and encyclopedia are the greatest Rishis". The Indian education system produced scholars like Charaka and Susruta, Aryabhata, Bhaskaracharya, Chanakya, Patanjali and Panini, and numerous others. They made seminal contributions to world knowledge in diverse fields such as mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical science and surgery, civil engineering and architecture, shipbuilding and navigation, yoga, fine arts, chess, and more. Buddhism and its strong influence on the world, particularly in south-east Asia and especially so in China, prompted Hu Shih the former Ambassador of China to the United States of America to say "India conquered and dominated China culturally for 20 centuries without ever having to send a single soldier across her border". Education in India was only enriched through the mixing of cultures that arose from the very first invasions, till the arrival of the British. The country has absorbed many of these influences and blended them into a unique culture of its own as we believe that a journey of thousand miles begins with a single step.

### **Indian Education Policies**

In the decades since Independence, we have been preoccupied largely with issues of access and equity, and have unfortunately dropped the baton with regard to quality of education. The implementation of the two previous education policies is still incomplete. The unfinished agenda of the National Policy on Education 1986, Modified in 1992 (NPE 1986/92) is appropriately dealt with in this Policy. A major development since the formulation of the NPE 1986/92 has been the establishment of Constitutional and legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education. The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 that inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India envisages free and compulsory education for all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) which came into force in April 2010, entitles every child of the age of six to fourteen years to the right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till the completion of elementary education. However, despite progress in some aspects, a mind-numbing uniformity prevails in the education system today, one in which students are not nurtured for their individual potential, in complete antithesis to our ancient traditions. Education has become a mode of memorizing rather the word cramming would serve the purpose here whereas it shall be a way to mould a human being in relation with his/her developing compoment. Education shall bridge the gap of thoughts and action through a holism called learning language. Any language remains true to itself by being open to the receiving mind.

### **Key Features of New education policy 2019**

The new National Education Policy 2019 A competently written compendium, the 484 pages report, under the chairmanship of space scientist-administrator K. KasturiRangan, isa call for a significant restructuring of the educational system and its governance. It assigns a key role to both public and private capital in education and recommends liberal arts education as the foundation of higher education.

1. The Draft National Education Policy 2019 is focussed on Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability, and Accountability of the education system of the country.
2. Starting with the early years and school education, the policy talks about a major overhaul in the curriculum of the early Childhood Care and Education or ECCE which concerns the pre-schoolers.
3. NEP suggests the extension of the Right to Education or RTE to cover all children from 3 to 18 years of age. At present it covers students till the age of 14 years.
4. A 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure has been proposed which is based on the cognitive developmental stages of the children rather than their ages. This further divides the K12 years into Foundational Stage (age 3-8 yrs.): 3 years of pre-primary plus Grades 1-2, Preparatory Stage (8-11 years): Grades 3-5, Middle Stage (11-14 years): Grades 6-8 and Secondary Stage (14-18 years): Grades 9-12.
5. Draft proposes restructuring of schools into school complexes. Notably, a move in this direction has already been initiated by CBSE from this year.
6. No hard separation of learning areas in terms of curricular, co-curricular or extra-curricular areas.

7. Massive focus on Teacher Education and improvement of the quality of the educators. The committee has proposed multiple multidisciplinary programs for teachers which would be included into large universities.
8. Proposal of a four-year integrated stage-specific B.Ed. programme has also been presented. This has already been proposed by the HRD Ministry.
9. A restructure of technical and medical education in the country is also proposed in the draft along with the exit examination for medical professionals.
10. The proposal of continuing with the three language formula has also been reinforced in the National Education Policy. The NEP 2019 has reiterated its commitment to providing a renewed focus on the Indian languages from early and formative years.

### **Insights of the proposed draft from the perspective of language and its learning**

Considering the 10 points are mentioned about and within the policy talk about the formative structure of the education at every stage. Point 4.5 of the draft talks about the education in local language or mother tongue. The point may lead us to the multilingualism in the three language formula explained as the last spot of the key features mentioned here. It is pertinent to ponder over the matter of the starter language as the draft made a promise to provide substantial and sufficient text books in different Indian languages. It is important to rethink about the predominant scenario of the number of languages and the dialects existing in this subcontinent; there are many prevalent dialects exist without any script of its own like *Adi* in Arunachal Pradesh and a considerable figure (250,000 approximately) in statistics speak the dialect spread over Arunachal Pradesh, Tibet and China. Such would be the case for many other dialects. Therefore, the controversy of the decision of the availability of text book remains with another added dubiousness of the education of a huge young population born out of inter cast, inter religion, inter community marriages. The latest quizzing tickles us also about that generation in diaspora growing up in a region other than their very own. So far, this young generation is bound and attached by the chord of English language although it is often considered as the part of the post-colonial hangover. Hence, on behalf of the said generation, could it be questioned as a step toward abandoning English? Or, as per 16.9.3 (National Education Policy Draft), if the Indian languages are to be promoted through syllabi and curricula, we are considering English as one of the Indian languages.

While wrestling with the multilingualism, if the field of higher studies is having an ostensive dearth of a plausible knowledge of foreign language (16.7.2 National Education Policy Draft). That being the case as mentioned in the chapter 16 of the Draft National Education Policy, vocational studies or professional courses as part of the higher studies or post graduate education and research would take a turn toward varied Indian languages; especially the field of comparative study would only among Indian languages. Such studies have its own importance to enrich the intra cultural tolerance and acceptance and at the same rhythm these fields shall have another opening toward the other cultures and wherefore an openness toward other languages beyond the boundary of this Greenland.

Part 16.8 and 16.9 elaborate divergent branch of and profession like healthcare education, medical tourism, technical education i.e. Hotel Management, Management, Catering

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Technology etc. To study or to work at these grounds, the knowledge of one or more than one foreign language(s) is a predominant parameter.

### Conclusion

It recognizes there is a severe learning crisis and emphasizes the need to focus on building a foundation for reading and arithmetic from Class I onwards. To be sure, the draft talks about better engagement of the private sector and provisioning for government funding for R&D work through a proposed national research fund. It also seeks to achieve 50% gross enrolment ratio from less than 30% now, and advises use of technology to expedite the process. It says under-graduate education must be revamped through a four-year Liberal Arts Science Education degree with multiple entry and exit options. However, the draft lacks operational details and does not offer insights into how the policy will be funded. The centre must also ensure that the policy does not face litigation, state resistance, and operational challenges on the ground.

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