

DRAFT NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2019 AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN INDIA: A PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Draft National Education Policy 2019 reiterates the necessity of quality public liberal, choice based flexible higher education system to meet challenges of 21st century. The policy claims that it is based on five pillars: Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. 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 paper tries to understand the sections related to language policy and foreign language learning, the changes that are expected in current language learning scenario and the impact and outcome of the policy whether it is neutral, positive or negative.

Keywords: Education, policy, foreign language teaching and learning, liberal affordable higher education.

Draft National Education Policy 2019 in Nutshell

”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”(Draft National Education Policy, 2019 p.41). The policy acknowledges that the changes and challenges brought by globalization, technological advancements and the vision of transforming Indian economy to a knowledge based economy have necessitated a new National Education Policy.

“Young learners today belong to a generation that is born and raised in technology-rich environments. They will use technologies that haven’t been invented so far and enter jobs that don’t exist at present. Globalization and the demands of a knowledge economy and a knowledge society call for emphasis on the need for acquisition of new skills by learners on a regular basis, for them to ‘learn how to learn’ and become lifelong learners. (Draft National Education Policy, 2019 p.27).

Policy identifies the major weakness of Indian higher education system as insufficient or lack of quality. It laments that in the process of ensuring access and equity in the higher education, quality has been neglected for long. “In the decades since Independence, we have been preoccupied largely with issues of access and equity, and have unfortunately dropped the baton

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with regard to quality of education (Draft National Education Policy, 2019 p.26). Therefore the policy tries to ensure quality without curtailing the achievements in the area of access and Equity. The policy also insists that the quality has to be ensured through affordability and accountability. Thus the new National Educational Policy is founded on the guiding goals of Access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability (Draft National Education Policy, 2019, Cover letter). Economic liberalization of the Indian economy since 1991 founded on the liberalization, privatization and globalization has paved the way for the privatization of the higher education in India and it was conceived to ensure the access and quality and to limit the pressure on the public funded education. The data compiled from 12th Five year plan document and All India Survey on Higher Education provides insights into the current levels of ‘access to higher education’ created through privatization.

Growth of access in higher education: Public Vs Private institutions.

Category	2006-07	2011-12	2017-18(AISHE)	Rate
Central Institutions				
Degree awarding institutions	87	152	166	9.21%
Colleges	58	69	69	
Total	145	221	235	6%
State Institutions				
Degree awarding institutions	227	316	403	27.5%
Colleges	9000	13204	8591	-34%
Diploma institutions	1867	3207	2456	-23%
Sub total	11094	16547	11450	-30%
Private Institutions				
Degree awarding institutions	73	191	353	83.7%
Colleges	12112	19930	30459	52%
Diploma institutions	5960	9541	7556	-20%
Sub total	18145	29662	38368	29%
Total	29384	46430	50053	.07%

Sources: 12th five year plan document. S.94 and All India survey on higher education 2017-18.

Note: Central degree awarding institutions includes also the Indian Institutes of Management.

Over all increase in the total number of educational institutions in the last 5 years a period from 2012- to 2017 is ver low, just a meager rate of .07 % in comparison to 58% in the period of 2007-12. Where as the Public sector shows stagnation and negative growth for colleges, private sector contributes vehemently and records a 52% increase in the last five years. Private sector universities also record an explosive growth of 83.7% in the last five years. Surprisingly there is negative growth for diploma awarding stand alone institutions both in public in private sectors.

When we analyse the data regarding enrollment in the higher education, already in the 12th plan period private sector began to contribute bigger share in the number of enrollment. “The Private sector has contributed significantly to higher education expansion during the Eleventh Plan and private higher education now accounts for 58.5 per cent of enrolments”(12th Five Year Plan Document, p.100) and has increased its share to 67.3% in 2017-18 (AISHE, 2018 p.19). Under this estimates, the National Policy recommendations for a public funded higher education which curtails private sector without negatively impacting the access seems a herculean task ahead. Even by fully agreeing with the best intentions of the policy recommendations a serious doubt remains on feasibility of the recommendation to curtail the private sector at this juncture. The privatization of the higher education has been severely criticized for its extreme preoccupation with the marketability and profit orientation.

“It means a break from exclusive preoccupation with marketability; it means a rounded education going beyond the narrowness of technical disciplines; it means inculcating in students a sense of the society to which they belong; and it means focusing within particular disciplines on research themes that have relevance for society instead of being merely copied from abroad” (Patnaik 2007, s.5).

Current enrolment ratio of 25.8% places Indian higher education system under “mass” among the Elite, Mass and Universal categories proposed by Martin Throw (Trow 1973, s.7-11). Throw argued that enrolment ratio below 15% indicates „Elite“ and between 15% and 50% „mass“ and above 50% „Universal“ characteristics of Higher Education. The policy strongly recommends to speed up the enrolment ratio to 50% and to achieve a Universal higher education system for India. Policy aims to “revamp the higher education system, create world class multidisciplinary higher education institutions across the country - increase GER to at least 50% by 2035“(Draft National Educational Policy, 2019 p.201). In a comparison with China and United States of America, Policy strongly recommends a liberal multidisciplinary university higher education than college based systems.

Growth of General Enrolment Ratio (GER) in indian higher education.

Growth of General Enrolment Ratio	2006-07	2011-12	2017-18(AISHE)
	12.3%	17.9%	25.8%

Three tiered affordable liberal degree awarding institutions to ensure quality.

Draft National Education Policy 2019, defines role of higher education under the humanistic traditions. “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.

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- 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.
- 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"(Draft National Education policy. 2019 p.25).

Such an education is possible only through universities like institutions where multidisciplinary departments exist, which allow the students to choose from many and find his or her way ahead. Policy recommends three tiered system for higher education. "All higher education institutions will either be universities or degree granting autonomous colleges - there will be no affiliating universities or affiliated colleges." (National Education Policy,2019 p.220). The policy reiterates further that there will be three types of institutions based on a difference in focus - all three types will be of high quality.

Type 1: Research universities. These will focus equally on research and teaching: they will dedicate themselves to cutting-edge research for new knowledge creation while at the same time offering the highest quality teaching across undergraduate, masters, Ph.D., professional, and vocational programmes. It is expected that, over a period of two decades, a couple of hundred institutions, say 150–300, will belong to the Type 1 category, and each will aim for on-campus enrolments between 5000 to 25000 or more students.

Type 2: Teaching universities. These will focus primarily on high quality teaching across disciplines and programmes, including undergraduate, masters and doctoral, professional, vocational, certificate and diploma programmes, while also significantly contributing to cutting-edge research. It is expected that there will be several hundred such universities, say, between 1000 to 2000, created over a period of two decades.

Type 3: Colleges. These will focus almost exclusively on the goal of high quality teaching. These institutions will largely run undergraduate programmes, in addition to diploma and certificate programmes, across disciplines and fields, including vocational and professional. A large number of such autonomous colleges, say 5,000–10,000, will provide high quality liberal undergraduate education, with a target of on-campus enrolments of 2,000– 5,000 or higher. Over time, such autonomous colleges can begin to conduct quality research across disciplines and introduce graduate programmes, and may thereby aim towards becoming either Type 2 or Type 1 institutions. (National Education Policy, 2019 p.235).

Policy severely criticize the single course offering college like institutions and consider them not as degree awarding but degree selling units under the pretext of higher education. Policy recommends steering those single courses offering college like institutions to become any of three of above group of institutions or demands an immediate closure through appropriate regulatory mechanisms. "Institutions that currently are focused on single (or few) fields will

build and develop themselves into Type 1, 2, or 3 multidisciplinary institutions” (National Education Policy, 2019 p.235). Analyzing and recognizing the grave situation that prevails for Teacher education caused by degree selling private B.ed colleges across India, policy calls for an immediate closure. “There are 33.75% Colleges, which run only single programme, out of which 83% are privately managed. Among these privately managed colleges, 55.1% colleges run B.Ed. Courses only (AISHE 2017-18 p.8).

“While such four-year Integrated B.Ed. programmes are being developed at multidisciplinary universities, every effort will be made to shut down the practice of corrupt and substandard teacher education institutions that sell degrees with little actual education; the purpose of this important initiative will be to bring, as quickly as possible, the needed integrity and thus quality into the teacher education system. By 2030, the goal will be to have all B.Ed. programmes moved into multidisciplinary colleges universities”(National Education Policy, 2019 p.134).

To curb this menace policy proposes an affordable, feasible master strategy of four year Bachelor of liberal Arts/Education programmes. “The four-year Bachelor of Liberal Arts / Education will provide the full range of liberal education with choice of major and minors. The three-year programme will lead to a Bachelor’s degree. Multiple exit options, with appropriate certification, will be available”. (Draft National Education Policy,2019 p.235). Such a move will ensure every graduate to become a B.ed degree holder, or a trained teacher unless she or he exits at the third year of the Bachelor programme. That saves both time and cost for the students without losing quality of liberal university level higher education.

Draft National Education policy 2019 and foreign language education.

Policy emphasizes the importance of language learning for the cognitive development of the learners. “Because children learn languages most quickly during the period of 0-3 years and during the Foundational Stage of 3-8 years - and because learning languages is an extremely important aspect of children’s cognitive development-a key part of the Framework will be aimed at instilling excellent multilingual skills in children as early as is possible and developmentally appropriate” (Draft National Education Policy, 2019 p. 49). Identifying the requirement for the skilled translators policy advocates foreign languages as electives in secondary schooling onwards. Here the omission of Russian from the list of examples of major foreign language is striking.

“Foreign language offerings in secondary school: A choice of foreign language(s) (e.g. French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese) would be offered and available to interested students to choose as elective(s) during secondary school. Such an elective would indeed be an elective and not in lieu of the three-language formula. Because of the need for excellent translators in the country, one aspect of teaching foreign languages will include translation exercises between Indian and foreign languages”.(National Education Policy 2019,p. 83).

Moreover foreign language expertise is not only limited to the translations. Foreign language experts are in high demand for IT enabled services Industry, Tourism etc....The following data will illustrate the situation. There are 16000 IT enabled services companies are operating in India (IT- BPM Sektor in India: Strategic review 2016, p.7). IT enabled services industry requires 200000 to 300000 foreign language experts per year up to 2020 depends on the industry

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growth 9% or 20% respectively. The following table also provides insights into the foreign language skills required by the industry for major foreign languages.

Estimated per year foreign language experts requirements in Indian IT enabled services Industry up to 2020.

Language	GDP contribution in Billion USD on base year 2005	Relative share in GDP	Foreign language experts requirement (CAGR 9% in year 2020)	Foreign language experts requirements (CAGR 20% in year 2020)
English	12717	39.46%	78920	138110
Japanese	4598	14.17%	28340	49595
German	3450	10.71%	21420	37485
Spanish	3204	9.95%	19900	34825
Chinese	2400	7.45%	14900	26075
French	2215	6.88%	13760	24080
Italian	1207	3.75%	7500	13125
Arabic	984	3.06%	6120	10710
Portuguese	872	2.71%	5240	9485
Russian	584	1.82%	3640	6370

Source: Ph.D Thesis, Mathachan, 2017 p.64

The substantial growth of Tourism in has also increased the demand for foreign language experts. The estimates shows that there is an additional requirement of 9900 foreign language experts up to year 2020 in India. (Mathachan, 2017 p.70)

Growth indices of Tourism in India

Year	Tourists (Millionen)	Growth rate (%)	Income (FEE) (in Crore Rupien)	Growth rate (%)
2007	5.27	12.8	5,142,0	27.9
2008	5.07	-3.79	5,634,0	9.5%
2009	5.11	0.78	54,960	-3.0
2010	5.58	9.3	64,889	18.1.
2011	6.29	8.9	77,591	19.0
2012	6.58	4.61	94,487	21.0
2013	6.96	5.9	1,07,671	4.0
2014	7.45	7.1	1,20,083	6.6
2015	8.0	4.5	1,31,558	9.5

Source: Ph.D Thesis, Mathachan, 2017 p.68.

Contribution of translation industry towards employment is considerably low in comparison to the sectors of ITES and Tourism. Estimates shows translation industry in India requires approximately 1300 Foreign language translators up to year 2020. (Mathachan, 2017 p.72.). At this juncture, one might be forced to think whether is it the India centric vision adopted by the language policy has caused a myopia which limited the policy from aspiring a global orientation which is most essential in globalizing times.

Conclusion and Action plan

The strength of the National Educational Policy 2019 lies in its India Centric approach. There lies its weakness too. One might would have been happier if the vision statement would have sounded “The National Education Policy 2019 envisions an India centred, global oriented education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all” . Because the demographic dividend that India has currently has to be trained to take careers and responsibilities globally.

“The higher education system in India has so far adopted an inward looking approach, concerned primarily to meet the domestic demand for higher education. With the integration of the country with the rest of world and the growing trade, investment and mobility of people, there is a need for outward looking approaches in higher education. The Indian Higher education should not only be able to meet the domestic demand but also the international demand for qualified and trained manpower” (Aggarwal Pawan 2006, p.140).

At the same time the policy offers ample opportunities for the department of foreign languages at Type I and 2 Universities to offer a four year Bachelor of Education in foreign languages. Such a move will ensure qualified language teachers and trainers for schools and training institutes across India.

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