

Committee Report Summary

Draft National Education Policy 2019

- The Committee for Draft National Education Policy (Chair: Dr. K. Kasturirangan) submitted its report on May 31, 2019. The Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in June 2017. The report proposes an education policy, which seeks to address the challenges of: (i) access, (ii) equity, (iii) quality, (iv) affordability, and (v) accountability faced by the current education system.
- The draft Policy provides for reforms at all levels of education from school to higher education. It seeks to increase the focus on early childhood care, reform the current exam system, strengthen teacher training, and restructure the education regulatory framework. It also seeks to set up a National Education Commission, increase public investment in education, strengthen the use of technology and increase focus on vocational and adult education, among others. Key observations and recommendations of the draft Policy include:

School Education

- **Early Childhood Care and Education:** In addition to problems of access, the Committee observed several quality related deficiencies in the existing early childhood learning programmes. These include: (i) curriculum that doesn't meet the developmental needs of children, (ii) lack of qualified and trained teachers, and (iii) substandard pedagogy. Currently, most early childhood education is delivered through anganwadis and private-preschools. However, there has been less focus on the educational aspects of early childhood. Hence, the draft Policy recommends developing a two-part curriculum for early childhood care and education. This will consist of: (i) guidelines for up to three-year-old children (for parents and teachers), and (ii) educational framework for three to eight-year-old children. This would be implemented by improving and expanding the anganwadi system and co-locating anganwadis with primary schools.
- **The Right to Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act):** Currently, the RTE Act provides for free and compulsory education to all children from the age of six to 14 years. The draft Policy recommends extending the ambit of the RTE Act to include early childhood education and secondary school education. This would extend the coverage of the Act to all children between the ages of three to 18 years.
- In addition, the draft Policy recommends that the recent amendments to the RTE Act on continuous and comprehensive evaluation and the no detention policy must be reviewed. It states that there should be no detention of children till class eight. Instead, schools must ensure that children are achieving age-appropriate learning levels.
- **Curriculum framework:** The current structure of school education must be restructured on the basis of the development needs of students. This would consist of a 5-3-3-4 design comprising: (i) five years of foundational stage (three years of pre-primary school and classes one and two), (ii) three years of preparatory stage (classes three to five), (iii) three years of middle stage (classes six to eight), and (iv) four years of secondary stage (classes nine to 12).
- The Committee noted that the current education system solely focuses on rote learning of facts and procedures. Hence, it recommends that the curriculum load in each subject should be reduced to its essential core content. This would make space for holistic, discussion-based, and analysis-based learning.
- **School exam reforms:** The Committee noted that the current board examinations: (i) force students to concentrate only on a few subjects, (ii) do not test learning in a formative manner, and (iii) cause stress among students. To track students' progress throughout their school experience, the draft Policy proposes State Census Examinations in classes three, five and eight. Further, it recommends restructuring the board examinations to test only core concepts, skills and higher order capacities. These board examinations will be on a range of subjects. The students can choose their subjects, and the semester when they want to take these board exams. The in-school final examinations may be replaced by these board examinations.
- **School infrastructure:** The Committee noted that establishing primary schools in every habitation across the country has helped increase access to education. However, it has led to the development of very small schools (having low number of students). The small size of schools makes it operationally complex to deploy teachers and critical physical resources. Therefore, the draft Policy recommends that multiple public schools should be brought together to form a school complex. A complex will consist of one secondary school (classes nine to twelve) and all the public schools in its neighbourhood that offer education from pre-primary till class eight.
- The school complexes will also include anganwadis, vocational education facilities, and an adult education centre. Each school complex will be a semi-

autonomous unit providing integrated education across all stages from early childhood to secondary education. This will ensure that resources such as infrastructure and trained teachers can be efficiently shared across a school complex.

- **Teacher management:** The Committee noted that there has been a steep rise in teacher shortage, lack of professionally qualified teachers, and deployment of teachers for non-educational purposes. The draft Policy recommends that teachers should be deployed with a particular school complex for at least five to seven years. Further, teachers will not be allowed to participate in any non-teaching activities (such as cooking mid-day meals or participating in vaccination campaigns) during school hours that could affect their teaching capacities.
- For teacher training, the existing B.Ed. programme will be replaced by a four-year integrated B.Ed. programme that combines high-quality content, pedagogy, and practical training. An integrated continuous professional development will also be developed for all subjects. Teachers will be required to complete a minimum of 50 hours of continuous professional development training every year.
- **Regulation of schools:** The draft Policy recommends separating the regulation of schools from aspects such as policymaking, school operations, and academic development. It suggests creating an independent State School Regulatory Authority for each state that will prescribe basic uniform standards for public and private schools. The Department of Education of the State will formulate policy and conduct monitoring and supervision.

Higher Education

- According to the All India Survey on Higher Education, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education in India has increased from 20.8% in 2011-12 to 25.8% in 2017-18.

Table 1: GER comparison across countries (2014)

	Primary (Class 1-5)	Upper Primary (Class 6-8)	Upper Secondary (Class 9-12)	Higher Education
India	101.4	89.3	62.5	23
China	103.9	100.4	88.8	39.4
USA	99.5	101.9	93.2	86.7
Germany	103.3	101.6	104.6	65.5

Source: Educational Statistics at Glance (2016), MHRD; PRS.

- The Committee identified lack of access as a major reason behind low intake of higher education in the country. It aims to increase GER to 50% by 2035 from the current level of about 25.8%. Key recommendations in this regard include:
- **Regulatory structure and accreditation:** The Committee noted that the current higher education system has multiple regulators with overlapping mandates. This reduces the autonomy of higher

educational institutions and creates an environment of dependency and centralised decision making. Therefore, it proposes setting up the National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA). This independent authority would replace the existing individual regulators in higher education, including professional and vocational education. This implies that the role of all professional councils such as AICTE and the Bar Council of India would be limited to setting standards for professional practice. The role of the University Grants Commission (UGC) will be limited to providing grants to higher educational institutions.

- Currently, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an accreditation body under the UGC. The draft Policy recommends separating NAAC from the UGC into an independent and autonomous body. In its new role, NAAC will function as the top level accreditor, and will issue licenses to different accreditation institutions, who will assess higher educational institutions once every five to seven years. All existing higher education institutions should be accredited by 2030.
- **Establishment of new higher educational institutions:** Currently, higher educational institutions can only be set up by Parliament or state legislatures. The draft Policy proposes that these institutions could be allowed to be set up through a Higher Education Institution Charter from NHERA. This Charter will be awarded on the basis of transparent assessment of certain specified criteria. All such newly constituted higher educational institutions must receive accreditation as mandated by NHERA within five years of being established.
- **Restructuring of higher education institutions:** Higher education institutions will be restructured into three types: (i) research universities focusing equally on research and teaching; (ii) teaching universities focusing primarily on teaching; and (iii) colleges focusing only on teaching at undergraduate levels. All such institutions will gradually move towards full autonomy - academic, administrative, and financial.
- **Establishing a National Research Foundation:** The Committee observed that the total investment on research and innovation in India has declined from 0.84% of GDP in 2008 to 0.69% in 2014. India also lags behind many nations in number of researchers (per lakh population), patents and publications.

Table 2: Investment on Research and Innovation

	Spending on research and innovation (% GDP)	Researchers (per lakh population)	Total Patent Applications
India	0.7	15	45,057
China	2.1	111	13,38,503
USA	2.8	423	605,571
Israel	4.3	825	6,419

Source: Economic Survey of India 2017-18; PRS

- The draft Policy recommends establishing a National Research Foundation, an autonomous body, for funding, mentoring and building the capacity for quality research in India. The Foundation will consist of four major divisions: sciences, technology, social sciences, and arts and humanities, with the provision to add additional divisions. The Foundation will be provided with an annual grant of Rs 20,000 crore (0.1% of GDP).
- **Moving towards a liberal approach:** The draft Policy recommends making undergraduate programmes interdisciplinary by redesigning their curriculum to include: (a) a common core curriculum and (b) one/two area(s) of specialisation. Students will be required to choose an area of specialisation as ‘major’, and an optional area as ‘minor’. Four-year undergraduate programmes in Liberal Arts will be introduced and multiple exit options with appropriate certification will be made available to students. Further, within the next five years, five Indian Institute of Liberal Arts must be setup as model multidisciplinary liberal arts institutions.
- **Professional development of faculty:** The Committee observed that poor service conditions and heavy teaching loads at higher education institutions have resulted in low faculty motivation. Further, lack of autonomy and no clear career progression system are also major impediments to faculty motivation. The draft Policy recommends development of a Continuous Professional Development programme and introduction of a permanent employment (tenure) track system for faculty in all higher education institutions by 2030. Further, a desirable student-teacher ratio of not more than 30:1 must be ensured.
- **Optimal learning environment:** The Committee observed that the curricula remain rigid, narrow, and archaic. Moreover, the faculty often lacks the autonomy to design curricula, which negatively impacts pedagogy. It recommends that all higher education institutions must have complete autonomy on curricular, pedagogical and resource-related matters.

Education Governance

- The Committee observed that there is a need to revisit the existing system of governance in education, and bring in synergy and coordination among the different ministries, departments and agencies. In this context, it recommends:
- Creation of a National Education Commission or Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog, as an apex body for education, to be headed by the Prime Minister. This body will be responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating, and revising the vision of education in the country on a continuous and sustained basis. It will oversee the implementation and functioning of several bodies including the National Council of Educational Research and

Training (NCERT), the proposed National Higher Education Regulatory Authority, and National Research Foundation.

- The Ministry of Human Resources and Development must be renamed as the Ministry of Education in order to bring focus back on education.

Financing Education

- The Draft Policy reaffirmed the commitment of spending 6% of GDP as public investment in education. Note that the first National Education Policy (NEP) 1968 had recommended public expenditure in education must be 6% of GDP, which was reiterated by the second NEP in 1986. In 2017-18, public expenditure on education in India was 2.7% of GDP.

Table 3: Total Public Investment in Education

Country	Investment in 2017 (as % of GDP)
India	2.7
USA	5
UK	5.5
Brazil	6

- The draft Policy seeks to double the public investment in education from the current 10% of total public expenditure to 20% in the next 10 years. Of the additional 10% expenditure, 5% will be utilised for universities and colleges (higher education), 2% will be utilised for additional teacher costs or resources in school education and 1.4% will be utilised for early childhood care and education.
- The Committee also observed operational problems and leakages in disbursement of funds. For instance, it observed that District Institutes of Education and Training have about 45% vacancies which have led to their allocations not being used or being used ineffectively. It recommends optimal and timely utilisation of funds through the institutional development plans.

Technology in Education

- The Committee observed that technology plays an important role in: (a) improving the classroom process of teaching, learning and evaluation, (b) aiding in preparation of teachers and continuous professional development of teachers, (c) improving access to education in remote areas and for disadvantaged groups, and (d) improving the overall planning, administration and management of the entire education system. It recommends focused electrification of all educational institutions as electricity is a pre-requisite for all technology-based interventions. Further, it recommends:
- **National Mission on Education through information and communication technology:** The Mission will encompass virtual laboratories that provide remote access to laboratories in various

disciplines. A National Education Technology Forum will also be setup under the Mission, as an autonomous body, to facilitate decision making on the induction, deployment and use of technology. This Forum will provide evidence-based advice to central and state-governments on technology-based interventions.

- **National Repository on Educational Data:** A National Repository will be setup to maintain all records related to institutions, teachers, and students in digital form. Further, a single online digital repository will be created where copyright-free educational resources will be made available in multiple languages.

Vocational Education

- The Committee observed that less than 5% of the workforce in the age-group of 19-24 receives vocational education in India. This is in contrast to 52% in the USA, 75% in Germany and 96% in South Korea. It recommends integrating vocational educational programmes in all educational institutions (schools, colleges and universities) in a phased manner over a period of 10 years. Note that this is an upward revision from the National Policy on Skills Development and Entrepreneurship (2015) which aimed at offering vocational education in 25% of educational institutions. Key recommendations in this regard include:
- **Vocational courses:** All school students must receive vocational education in at least one vocation in grades nine to 12. The proposed school complexes must build expertise in curriculum delivery that is aligned to the competency levels under the existing National Skills Qualifications Framework.

- The proposed Higher Education Institutions must also offer vocational courses that are integrated into the undergraduate education programmes. The draft Policy targets to offer vocational education to up to 50% of the total enrolment in higher education institutions by 2025, up from the present level of enrolment of well below 10% in these institutions.

- **National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education:** A National Committee will be set up to work out the steps that need to be taken towards achieving these goals. A separate fund will be setup for the integration of vocational education into educational institutions. The Committee will work out the modalities for the disbursement of these funds.

Adult Education

- As per Census 2011, India still had over 3.26 crore youth non-literates (15-24 years of age) and a total of 26.5 crore adult non-literates (15 years and above). In this regard, the draft Policy recommends:
- Establishing an autonomous Central Institute of Adult Education, as a constituent unit of NCERT, which will develop a National Curriculum Framework for adult education. The Framework will cover five broad areas: foundational literacy and numeracy, critical life skills vocational skills development, basic education, and continuing education.
- Adult Education Centres will be included within the proposed school complexes. Relevant courses for youth and adults will be made available at the National Institute of Open Schooling. A cadre of adult education instructors and managers, as well as a team of one-on-one tutors will be created through a newly-established National Adult Tutors Programme.

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