



INTRODUCTION:

Human nature is always positive and change-friendly. This positivity occurs only when an individual is well educated, as education is the only silent power which shows the ways of development and positive change. So, in order to utilise the positive and accommodative essence of human being, education should address each aspect of human society in a way that accords with the place, age and through it the future courses which are about to create inroads into our life and life of the future generations. A well defined educational policy is inevitable to achieve this. Since education is supposed to satisfy the changing world by playing a catalytic role in the human society, the policies must be progressive and the policy-making body or institution should timely update the policies so that policies once made for development would not become obstacles in the path of educational development. Thus, change of education policies and its updating is the key to the development of a country.

It has been 30 years since the last National Education Policy was formulated in 1986 and the same was revised in 1992. Keeping the first growing demand for profession-oriented and human-necessity-friendly education, the previous education policies needed changes, and it is not a political agenda, rather it is a natural agenda of human society. To accomplish this task, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India has prepared a *Draft* of the new policy under the title “Some Inputs for Draft National Education Policy 2016”. This draft was circulated for public opinion in 2016 and responses from different agencies across the country were collected. As a concerned students’ organisation, Campus Front of India had submitted the concerns to the Ministry.

The present draft of National Education Policy 2019 has been an important agenda of the last Parliament sessions. Although this draft was prepared after a nationwide consultation with experts, again it needs to be reviewed by others, especially by the students of the nation and it is their constitutional right. Positive involvement of the students in reviewing the draft will make the policy perfect, as they are the ground of the policy.

Campus Front of India, after reviewing the draft policy is putting forward certain suggestions and amendments to be included in the policy.



1. UNDEMOCRATIC CONSULTATIONS

It is unfortunate to say that before making a policy draft which would be controlling the Indian education system in the future; proper consultation with the stakeholders was not done. The contributions of students, academicians and experts from the education sector are an inevitable component of making the final decision. The selective consultation and the backgrounds of the consulted agencies indicate that the facilitators of this draft have some covert intentions which they do not want to share with others.

NEP draft declares that it had consulted 144 different agencies in the field of education including academicians, teachers, intellectuals and organisations (pp:453-462). However, it is quite clear that this consultation was not done transparently. Only selected agencies (probably pro-NDA agencies) got the opportunity to provide inputs to the present draft. The committee did not consult with the teachers' and students' associations of the top-ranked, premium institutes of the country like Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia University and Aligarh Muslim University. Among this ABVP was the only student organisation they consulted before preparing this draft! (pp:453) The consultation controversies of the inputs

to the draft prepared by TSR Subrahmaniam in 2016 were repeated in the policy draft of 2019. Members of the team are Leena Chandran Wadia from the Reliance funded Observer Research Foundation Mumbai; Anurag Behar, CEO and Vice-Chancellor of Azim Premji University, Bengaluru (pp:439), Vinaya Chandra, director of Veda Vignana Shodha Samsthanam (VVSS) Bengaluru (pp:445). VVSS is an organisation which proclaims RSS chief MS Golwalkar as its spiritual guide who asserts Muslims, Christians and Communists are enemies of the country (Golwalkar,1966 Part-2,XVI). It had a peer review committee which includes Mohandas Pai, Chairman of Manipal Global Education, Bengaluru, a private education corporate (pp:38), and J.S. Rajput, India's representative to the Executive Board of UNESCO and former director, NCERT, New Delhi (pp:441). He became notorious for nepotism and saffronising the Indian history during his tenure as the director of NCERT during MM Joshi era (TOI,2001 Sep-29; The Hindu,2005 May-29). Its technical secretariat includes Gowrisha, Head, New Initiatives, Centre for Educational and Social Studies, Bengaluru (pp:445), All these members are the icons of the corporate industry and right-wing ideologies which make it clear that what the draft is intended to be.

Campus Front urges the government to recall the Policy Draft and revise it with proper consultation with the experts who are working in the public education field and must include all students' organisations for the inputs. It must be ensured that the idea of India should be safeguarded while -preparing the policy with the participation of every section of society.

2. IDEA OF INDIA

India is the largest democracy in the world. It is a socialist, secular and democratic republic. Diversity marks the uniqueness of India and ties the people of

India together, and covers their creeds, castes, religions, languages, colours, and cultures with a single heavenly sheet despite all differences, and they are Indians. They are viewed not as Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhist and Dalits but as Indians by the foreign countries and this is the strength of this country.

Issue 2.1

The draft highlights the Indian culture, languages, traditions and values at different intervals, though the word *secular* is absent in the entire 484-page draft whereas all other attributes of India are mentioned.

Suggestion 2.1

So, before finalising the draft, the policymakers must retain the secular and unitary nature of this great country, so that this policy may not stand as a threat to the *mantra* "unity in diversity". Otherwise, this policy would eat out the concept of India and Indians. It should be made sure that the policy accords with the plurality of India.

Issue 2.2

The draft sticks on the ancient history of India and contributions of Charaka, Shushruta, Pathanjali and Panini "to the world knowledge", are mentioned and they are described as the masters of different traditions in the education(pp:26). Neither medieval nor modern contribution to Indian education is touched. The idea of India had evolved during this period and ironically the draft keeps silence on this fact. -.

Suggestion 2.2

The policy must consider the medieval and modern periods in the curriculum during which the medicine, science and culture were cherished and moreover India as a nation was developed as we see today.

3. STRUCTURAL CHANGES



The pedagogical frame of the present education system is 4+3+3+2 (lower primary, upper primary, high school and higher secondary school). The age limit varies from 5-17. This system has been toppled down by imposing a new system of 5+3+3+4 frame and 3-17 age limit in proposed policy (pp:75 P.4.1.1). The new structure compels a student to take admission at the age of 3 and it is considered mandatory. The foundational stage comprises five years. 1st and 2nd standards along with three years of pre-primary classes. The three years of the pre-primary stage is the combination of Anganawady, LKG and UKG (pp:28, 48: P1.1.).

Issue 3.1

As per the draft, the language and numeracy grasping capacity of a student is high at the age of 3-8, so for better linguistic as well as numerical proficiency student has to start learning at the age of 3. The draft suggests that the learning must be made practical through

fun and games at these ages without making pressure on students (pp:49 P1.1.). However, most of the studies show that this age is the best time for developing moral characters rather than achieving merit in schools. **The mere academic concentrations on “foundational literacy and numeracy” may build generations without social commitment who only care about their future and studies.**

Suggestion 3.1

The proposed policy should consider a curriculum that promotes social commitment and human values in the children. It can be imparted through moral stories from different cultures, including various religious beliefs. It should not be limited to any single religion.

Issue 3.2

The draft proposes radical structural and pedagogical changes but **does not properly address the practical difficulties such shifts would create.** Study shows

that elementary education is more effective when the institution is close to home. Presently, primary schools are comparatively accessible to children of all social backgrounds because it is more in number in a given area and its closeness to home. **There is no clarity about the infrastructure, location and number of the proposed school complex system. So, it again raises the question of whether this changed system would be as accessible to children as the present primary schools. There is a genuine concern that such large infrastructural change may affect students' accessibility to primary schools, which in turn may worsen the already low level of literacy rate in rural areas.**

Suggestion 3.2

Make sure the availability and accessibility of public educational institutions with sound facilities in a given geography and which should be close to the settlement. It is also suggested to follow 'Right to Education' recommendations which mandate the availability of schools in one kilometre radius.

Issue 3.3

The Indian government started Anganwadi in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services program to combat child hunger and malnutrition. The World Bank estimates that India is one of the highest-ranking countries in the world with respect to the number of children suffering from malnutrition. It shows that the service of Anganwadis is more relevant and should be strengthened. "Co-locating Anganwadi with primary schools" (pp:50 P.1.2 b) again affects the accessibility of poor rural students to the system.

Suggestion 3.3

Anganwadi is one of the central points for providing maternity care and nutrition to women and children. The co-location may uproot the community centred Anganwadi programme and it may double the burden of nutritional and health issues. We suggest that planning and implementation of all programmes related to Anganwadi should be the purview of Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Issue 3.4

The fourth stage of the present system includes eight semesters from class 9 to 12 (pp:75 P.4.1.1 d). Students have the option to choose their streams. A student has to attend the examination of any 17 papers in each semester (pp:108 P.4.9.5). Students are getting the lesser number of days which is not enough for covering all the subjects in a semester. When this system is imposed on the school complexes without adequate facilities, it will increase the workload of students. The draft also mentions that there is no difference between vocational and higher secondary streams, extracurricular activities like sports, and yoga have been included in the curricula; and syllabi are in place for teaching this. The extra effort to study all these things in a single semester increases the burden of studying.

Suggestions 3.4

The proposed policy should turn down the idea of 'seventeen examinations' in a given semester and must concentrate on the promises as made in the draft "achieve flexibility, reduce stress and lessen the examination burden on the students" (pp:108 P.4.9.5).

The introduction of semester system in secondary classes would be better after resolving the issues regarding the availability of human resources and sufficient working days to cover the syllabus ●

4. HIGHER EDUCATION CHANGES



The draft also mentions that there will be only three types of colleges or universities (Higher Education Institutions-HEI) in future called Type 1, Type 2 and Type 3. Type 1 is called research university, and it is intended only for promoting research which has national as well as international standards. Type 2 universities are called teaching universities in which along with research, PG, UG courses will be taught. Type 3 is the UG oriented colleges in which students can attain a degree in any subject. The Type 3 colleges will provide multi-disciplinary courses including varieties of science, humanities as well as arts faculties. (pp:214-a,b,c) All stand-alone colleges and institutions which do not offer multi-disciplinary courses will be shut down (pp:120,21; 430). A college should have at least 5000 students to get autonomy (pp:214).

Issue 4.1

“All HEIs will be gradually moved towards full autonomy –academic, administrative and eventually financial...” (pp:213 P10.1. c). The complete autonomy, from the living experience, may increase the financial burden to the institutions. The institutions bring down the burden by imposing higher fees over the students.

Ultimately financial burden will be on the shoulders of students. It results in the dropout of economically disadvantaged groups from higher education centres.

Issue 4.2

“While the financial support for such development must be arranged by the private HEI, the government will treat them on par with public institutions, and empower them equally. The private HEIs will have equal access to NRF funding for research support as public institutions” (pp:218 P10.10). This suggestion promotes private booming with government funds and results in the amorphous growth of privatisation in the higher education sector.

Issue 4.3

“Private institutions with public spirited commitment to high quality equitable education will be encouraged and treated on par” (Ibid.). There is literature with ample evidence stating that private actors cannot promise equity in the society, rather, it widens the gap between social groups based on income standards.

Suggestion 4.1, 2, 3

The draft offers undisciplined scope to the private actors, which will double the inequality in accessing the higher education and eventually derails the public education system. Hence the government should decide the curriculum, admission and fees in such institutions to ensure quality, access and equality.

NO RESOLUTION FOR UN-EMPLOYMENT

Another point is that the government needs 50 per cent of the population to enrol for higher education by 2030. It is a good effort for making a country intellect. At the same time, the employment sector is facing severe problems. The rate of unemployment in the country reached all time high during the last five years. Even today, the graduates are roaming free across the country seeking jobs. The management of these graduates is still a grave issue in the country. What kind of remedial actions would be taken to solve this issue by the government is unknown from this draft.

5. MERIT V/S RESERVATION

Issue 5.1

Reservation, a constitutional mandate is not a matter of issue in the draft. The social exclusions and the remedies for those problems are hardly discussed in the draft. The issue of making provisions for challenging and countering discrimination based on caste and religion is absent in the document. The word caste itself has been used perhaps only twice in the draft and that too in the perfunctory listing of categories. The reservation policy is not referred to even once and the draft consistently emphasis on the so called merit based criterion, “merit based scholarship” (pp116,121 P5.1.1), “merit-based admission” (pp:111) and “merit-based promotion” (pp:119) to all levels of education. Without addressing the centuries-long exclusion and

oppression of the oppressed caste and minorities, dreaming of making a meritorious knowledge society is baseless.

The institutional murders of Rohith Vemula, Anitha Dr Payal and forced disappearance of Najeeb in the recent past are a clear proof of apartheid walls created inside the campuses based on caste and religion. Reservation is one of the ways to empower these communities.

Suggestion 5.1

Inadequate representation of the underprivileged sections in the higher educational institutions is a grave issue in Indian society. This policy will not be complete without safeguarding their rights to study and representation.

Suggestion 5.2

In a country like India where caste, class and religious oppression is rampant, a merit-based system has significant demerits. The merit of a student is determined by socioeconomic factors hence disadvantage and vulnerability should be given weightage than merit while admitting and assessing a student.

6. NRF-NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

National Research Foundation (NRF) is a structure that focuses on funding research within the education system, primarily at colleges and universities. The Foundation encompasses four broad areas of Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences, and Arts & Humanities (pp:30, 209 P.9.6)

Issue 6.1

The selected research topics will be provided funds and the topic of research will be under screening. It

reminds the former proposal of research topics with national importance which again creates a door to government intrusion and gradually limits the critical studies.

Suggestion 6.1

The authority for selecting and framing research topics should be based on student-professor mutual understanding and student's interest must be given priority.

Issue 6.2

The NRF will fund private institutions also. This will turn research to an activity of praising the policies of the

government and its institutions. Gujarat is an example of government-sponsored research works where students have no freedom to choose their thesis works. Research institutes promote critical studies on government policies that bring the pros and cons of policies into public discussion. The proposal will help the government to control those independent institutions

Suggestion 6.2

Public funds for private institute to pursue research should be assessed in frequent intervals by external faculties from eminent public institutions and make it available for open defence.

7. MINORITY EDUCATION



The Sachar Committee findings regarding the pathetic situation of the Muslim community including education sector have not been resolved yet. The draft failed to bring - concrete plans to empower the Muslim community in the education field.

Issue 7.1

The draft suggests that the minority concentrated areas will be provided with more educational institutions, a similar proposal from the Sachar Committee is not executed yet. The draft has no proper action plan as to when and how it would be implemented.

Suggestion 7.1

The government must design a concrete plan to improve the educational standards of minority communities with more institutions in minority concentrated locations. The government should provide land and grant to the sanctioned institutions in order to strengthen them. Special reservation should be given in higher education centres for Muslims as suggested by former committees.

Issue 7.2

The draft indicates that the drop-out ratio in the Muslim community is higher than others. Socioeconomic as well as cultural issues, play a significant role in drop-out ratio. But there is no solution to improve educational standards of the backwards communities which contribute to the overall development of the country

Issue 7.3

The minority scholarships such as the pre-matric, post-matric, MANF and RJNF have not been disbursed since long. The draft is silent about this issue. It should be a matter of concern that the lapse of already allocated fund is only due to the inefficiency and carelessness of the government and bureaucracy.

Suggestion 7.2,3

As it is suggested in the draft, build more schools in the minority concentrated districts and blocks. The draft should propose well designed plan for building the infrastructure in those areas.

Ensure efficient distribution of pre-matric, post-matric and other minority scholarships to improve enrolment and to reduce drop out considerably.

Special reservation to Muslim students in private schools with 'free and compulsory education' based on the Act of Right To Education.

8. IMPOSITION OF HINDI AND SANSKRIT

The draft promotes a compulsory three-language formula from the foundational stage (pp:80, 83 P4.5.6). Along with the mother tongue/home language and English, a student should master Hindi as the third language. The student who has Hindi as his mother tongue is allowed to master anyone from the eight classical languages.

Issue 8.1

The imposition of Hindi language on non-Hindi speaking belts raises the question as to why should they learn Hindi that does not even come in the classical language list. The contrivance of promoting a nationwide single-language that is adopted from the western countries is intended to lower down the importance of the English language. Hindi is not the *lingua franca* in India. No scientific literature are developed in this language yet, then why Hindi has given much important.

Suggestion 8.1

India is a diversified society without any uniform culture or language, unlike Germany and China who can implement such a single-language system without damaging the unity of the nation. Efforts to promote Sanskrit and Hindi are an attempt to constitute a monolithic society (pp:86 P4.5.14). These steps should be revoked in the policy. Students should get the opportunity to learn subjects in mother tongue and other languages should be based on the choice.

9. POLITICISATION

Education comes under the Concurrent List of the Constitution. It means that both State and Centre have control over educational activities. It promotes the federal system of providing region-oriented education too.

Issue 9.1

Formation of Rashtreey Shiksha Ayog-RSA (pp:392 P23.1), detaching the department of education from the MHRD and bringing it under the direct control of the Prime Minister is a planned move to politicise the academic sector. The Chairperson of RSA will be the PM of India and Union Minister will be the Vice-Chairperson (P23.3 and P23.4).

Issue 9.2

“RSA will consist of approximately 20-30 members. Membership will include some of the union ministers... and few Chief Ministers...” (pp:393 P23.5). The plan seems to be to eventually remove education from the Concurrent List and make centralisation in the field.

Suggestion 9.1

Federalism in India is a vital part when it is in the case of education state must be deciding the cause and goal of education and the government should refrain from centralising the education.

Issue 9.2

Half the members of the drafting committee are from different ministries, and the selection criteria of the members are not described in the draft. The constitutional provisions are violated by this concentration of power. The Centre cannot override the powers of the states either in determining or in regulating education which are the prerogatives of state governments and legislatures both of which are finally answerable to the people of the state concerned

Suggestion 9.2

Political intrusion in the field of education is highly condemnable and hence the policy suggestion on this regard should be revoked with immediate effect.

10. STUDENT ACTIVISM

Purpose of education and spending huge amount of money on it is to mould future generation of the country. On this ground the concept of Right To Education policy was enacted. However, this dream, even after accomplishing all these action items, including financing and policymaking, will not be fruitful if the students are not given the democratic opportunity to express themselves through activism.

Issue 10.1

Education is not a software that will suddenly make them leaders, writers and politicians. A degree or study of books or completion of courses may make them qualified, but without activism, they will not be perfect. The draft hardly discusses the students’ activism for responsible education and nation-building.



Suggestion 10.1

So, the policy must respect this democratic right of the students to participate in all positive student activism and it must not minimise their right to a few. Legality and morality should be the only criteria to judge what the students should and should not do. If they do not get this opportunity in their student life, they will be ruled by the people in power in real life. The highly qualified people will be silent, and the unfit will rule the nation. Thus, all the steps taken for education will be futile. So, this policy must acknowledge the positive student activism so that they, after consuming the national resource, could contribute in many folds.

11. GIRLS' EDUCATION

Women constitute half of the society. For some biological and physical differences, their contribution may differ from that of the male population, but never can it be ignored. Without their participation in the mainstream of life, no nation can reach the target. However, women should be prepared for the purpose in a women-friendly environment. It should be started from primary education to research level.

Issue 11.1

The draft does not discuss women education at all. Similarly, women from different religion and caste background are under multiple discriminations; hence, they should have treated with due respect.

Suggestion 11.1

Free education to girls up to research level. The government should come up with unique schemes to uplift the girls, taking into account their present situation. The social taboos and child marriage should be abolished through nationwide campaigning, and the people need to be made aware of the problems arising out of lack of education to girls. The government should allocate more girls' colleges and schools in rural areas with proper infrastructure. Girls must be given Reservation in education institutions based on their social vulnerabilities such as gender, religion, caste, class and location from which they come.

12. COLOURLESS CURRICULUM AND EDUCATION

The entire country is discussing the saffronising elements in the policy draft. The education sector is an index for evaluating the development of a country.

Infiltration of any specific ideology into the syllabus affects the pluralistic culture of this society. Education, as has been pointed out under Nature of India, is invisible and colourless water-like power that helps humankind to differentiate between right and wrong. It does not draw any boundary line between the humankind; instead, it is like a heavenly thread that ties all humans together as children of a single ancestry. Humanity is its only destination. It teaches love and the way to co-exist. If education becomes the parcel of a particular ideology or thought, it may improve the quality of a few selected people, but “purification of hearts” will remain a dream. So, to make education purifier of Indians' hearts, it should be taken care of by purified hearts. All the institutions, bodies, committees and commissions must be headed by those whose hearts are purified, not polluted with superstitious ideas, bigotry and fanatical goal. If there is anybody in the entire education system and related posts affected by the cracks mentioned above, they should be replaced with suitable ones immediately.

ACADEMIC SELECTION FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION



Education should be free from political interventions. Selection to the educational institutions should be based on quality, academic qualifications and democratic social inclusion. The contentious draft violates this concept, provides space for ideological bigotry, and political intervention in the selection process is made easy. The newly formed body after eliminating UGC,

RSA, and Ministry of education and other regulatory departments of different HEI and NRF should be unbiased. There should not be any political influence while selecting those faculties. Campus Front demands a complete academic body constituted with experts in the field of education. If this is not ensured, quality education for all will remain a mirage.

Conclusion

The new education policy draft, along with its all good intentions, there are severe concerns on many suggestions. It has many indications of implementing a pre-determined agenda. Campus Front of India identifies it in three broad ways.

The draft may harm federal nature of the country and intend the **centralisation of education**, the draft proposes free-market policy in the higher education sector which results in the **corporatisation of the education** and it tries to impose one culture to this diverse culture which boosts **saffronisation of education**.

It is intended to enable the government to withdraw gradually from the field of education and handing the education sector to private entrepreneurs. When we analyse the quality education, it is seen that the government educational institutions in rural areas are far below the mainstream private-run institutions. The Indian education system will achieve stability only when poverty, casteism, discrimination and hate-mongering communalism sponsored by the fascist forces are done away with.

To summarise, Campus Front believes that education is the purifier of hearts. It should not be tinged with any colour. It is the constitutional right of every citizen of India. It should be accessible to all. It should help mould future leaders of the nation. The students must be given the opportunity to grow practically and intellectually. It should be ensured that these aspects are considered in the final version of the policy. All those who are involved in the preparation and implementation of this policy that is intended to update the national educational system ought to ensure that no element that would ruin the development of the country creeps into it.