

A BRIEF NOTE ON DRAFT NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2019

After more than three decades a policy draft on New Education Policy has come to the public domain on 1st June,2019. We appreciate this measures taken by the Government of India. This draft policy document has to be seriously analysis in the broader interest of education of our nation.

Preamble and Vision:

No any national policy is being formulated keeping in view the political philosophy, economic character, social &cultural attitude of ruling dispensation. The present DNEP 2019 is also no exception. It is a reflection of historical conflict of forces to dominate the education process that is to say between democratization and capitalization. In this policy draft democratic, welfare and inclusive agendas have been ignored. There is also no reference to global outlook influencing education. Glory of ancient India only adored. Experience of freedom struggle, fight against imperialism, ideal of education as propounded by Mahatma Gandhi, B.R Ambedkar, Subhash chandra Bose, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Bhagat singh Bharat Singh, Jyotirao Phule, Savitribai phule Maharaja Shivani Raj Gaikwad, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahadeve Govind Ranade Global Krishna Gokhale , Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar have not been mentioned. Directive principle of state policy and preamble of the constitution also is missing in the draft. The powerful ancient Sangam literature also not found as a source of reference. Secular, secularism not even mentioned once.

Comparative Study of post independence education policy:

The first university education commission popularly known as Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) speaks of democracy, secularism, social justice, respect for our multi cultural diversity, scientific temper, Autonomy and less state interference in education. Kothari Commission (1964-65) champions the common school neighborhood system, pivotal of teachers, decentralization of structure, parity between urban and rural and more emphasis on scientific education. The NEP 1986 saw the emergence of a neoliberal agenda of privatization, dual educational system, centralization of educational administration and the death knell of welfare state concept. For a brief period Acharya Ramamurti review committee (1990) suggested equality and social justice, decentralization of educational management, active participation of all stake holders, emphasis on human enlightenment and empowerment for work. Since 1991 till today (including the present DNEP reflects full scale LPG

Economy with disastrous manifestation of commercialization, communalization, bureaucratization and regimentation of thought in the educational system. India has become a signatory of WTO & GATTs where education is being treated as commodity.

Targets in DNEP:

The DNEP has targeted every child in the age of 3 to 6 yrs has access to free, safe, high quality, developmental appropriate care by 2025. Free and compulsory quality school education of all children in the age group of 3 to 18 years in 2030. Inclusive education by 2030. Increase GER (Higher Education) at least 50% from the present 23% (18-23 age group) by 2035. By 2032 all higher educational qualifications including all degree and diplomas shall be granted by

Type-1, Type-2, Type-3 HEI.

Type-1: Research University

Type-2: Teaching University

& Type-3: UG College Education.

Closure of substandard and dysfunctional teachers' training institutes by 2023. By 2025 every student in grade 5 and beyond should achieve fundamental literacy and numeracy. Excess will be increased specially in grade 9-12 to achieve 100% GER across school stage by 2030. Curriculum and pedagogy are to be transformed by 2020 by revising the National curriculum framework of 2005. All HEI by 2030 will be developed on one of the three types of institutions. All currently affiliated colleges must develop into Autonomous degree granting colleges by 2032. There is a ban on opening of Affiliated colleges by 2020. By 2035 the Indian Higher Education System will consolidate into a far smaller number of institutions (40,000 colleges and 800 universities to 15,000 institutions). All institutions offering either professional or general education must organically evolve into institutions offering both seamlessly by 2030. Integration of vocational education to all educational institutions. Schools, colleges and universities will provide access to vocational education at least 50% by 2025. To achieve 100% literacy among the youth by 2030. They have targeted for the formation of Rashtriya Shiksha Ayog by 2019, re-designation of MHRD to Ministry of Education by 2019, HE Grant Council by 2023 and NHERA by 2030.

Positive Features:

The DNEP,2019 covers all aspects of educational system like General, Technical, Professional, Vocational, Information Technology, Adult education, Teachers education, Students support, Secure condition of teachers, Assessment and accreditation, Early childhood care education and financing of education. The language of DNEP and contents appears to be most attractive and keeping with the aspirations of the people. Emphasis on revival and pursuit of classical languages also supposed to be in the interest of the country. The observation that the teachers are in heart of the system, importance to research, care for inclusive education by the concept of special education zone for unrepresented groups, extension of RTE Act from pretty primary to secondary education, tagging early childhood care education to primary education, importance to teacher's education and various support to students appears to be more positive inputs in education policy. For the first time education policy has come with a definite time frame for implementation.

Structural Changes:

The DNEP has suggested sweeping structural changes both in academics and management. It suggests doing away with the present pre primary, primary, middle or upper primary, secondary, higher secondary and college & university education to foundation- 5yrs, preparatory-3yrs, Middle or upper primary-3yrs, four years of secondary education and finally higher education in universities and colleges. It also suggest bringing preprimary under formal education, merger of schools, merger of colleges, university with large number of students, multidisciplinary universities, introduction of vocational education from 14 yrs of age, then semester system right from secondary education, census examination at the end of grade 3, grade 5 and grade 8, secondary board score will not be considered for higher studies. Students are supposed to appear for Aptitude test to be conducted by National Testing Agency, Private parties will be given franchise for NAAC .Then choice of different boards for examination purpose and provision for multiple exit and entry in different level of higher education. In the governing structure the draft

Suggests many regulatory bodies such as.

RSA,NHERA,PSSB,NHEQFW,NSQFW,GEC,NRF,NTP,NET,NAB,HEGC and NCFW In state level they suggested State Education Commission, state level regulatory authority, merging of SSA , RMSA, Teachers Education under one umbrella. They also planning to merge all directorates of primary, secondary and higher secondary into one directorate of school education.

Financing of Education:

In the draft policy they suggested education to be viewed as a quasi public good. They have also proposed that input is immaterial and suggested the return for investment in education. The draft policy reaffirmed the commitment of 6% of GDP as public investment in education. It is to be noted that in 2017-18 public expenditure on education in India was 2.7% of GDP compared to Bhutan, Sweden, Zimbabwe spending 7.5%,Costarica and Finland 7%,Kyrgyzstan, South Africa & Brazil 6%, UK, Netherlands and Palestine 5%,Malaysia,Kenya,Rangoli, Korea and USA 5%.The current 10% of overall public expenditure in education to be increased to 20% over a period of ten years They suggested 1% increase in state budget in every year. They have also mentioned of the other sources of income from private, philanthropic, individual, corporate social funding, community mobilization fund, charging higher fees from capable students, qualitative shift regulation to see the inflow of funds , money from religious endowment. The draft policy proposes a national research foundation to grant financial assistance for research both to public and private institutions after strict scrutiny and assessment.

Observations:

The DNEP 2019 ,after an in-depth study reflects a mismatch of diagnosis and prescription, a contradiction between dream and reality, hidden agenda of ideological domination, consolidation and expansion of indigenous and international capital, strengthen the neo liberal forces, ignored the common school system, violating the norms of social justice, opened the road for more exclusion and negated the fundamental pillars of Indian constitution. The DNEP2019 camouflaged with sugar coating words the forces of cultivation, commercialization, corporatization and communication of education. This policy will create a situation where the children of affluent section have the facility to attend the school of their choice but the children from disadvantage community have the only option to study in the school complex. This draft policy also is a direct confrontation on federal structure of the Indian constitution .A central regulatory authority under the championship of prime minister is empowered to decide all matters concerning higher education is a great danger to our federal and democratic polity. It will further accelerate the process of politicalization of higher education. The draft policy will further accelerate the domination of privatization in education. For the first time in this policy draft private institutions have been given equal status with that public institution. It is also said the regulatory regime shall encourage private philanthropic efforts in education. The policy also suggests for an amendment to RTE Act

where the institutions will not be compelled to take 25% students from marginal sections of the society. The private institutions shall have the autonomy in fee structure definitely will increase commercialization of education. Allowing multiplied board of assessment in private sectors apart from state and central board of assessment is to slowly allow the market forces to interfere in the assessment of the students. Attack on public funded education system, grading of institutions, emphasis on autonomous colleges, merger of school and colleges, entry of foreign universities will have serious impact on social justice strengthens forces of privatization. Vocationalization of education without prohibiting the child labor will encourage cheap labor. The purpose is to provide the cheap labor to the national and international market. The policy draft speaks little about dalits, tribals, disabled, women, minority and other marginal sections of Indian societies.

The DNEP talks only about merit not about denial of educational opportunity to millions of people of India for centuries together. The secular ethos of our constitution is completely missing in draft policy. The communal overtone is clearly reflected by emphasizing the glories of ancient India and ignoring the cultural heritage of other period. Excessive importance to Sanskrit, study of yoga, astrology and astronomy, appreciating the role of religious organizations and their involvement in educational development, mission Nalanda and mission Takshashila and desire to modify NCFW 2005 clearly reflects the medieval, sectarian and unscientific contents of the policy. Though the policy draft speaks of the crucial role of teachers, in reality nothing elaborate is mentioned about their security, salary structure and service conditions. In the matter of appointment though the policy suggests permanent appointment, there is also lot of contradictions. The only emphasis on merit for career progression, probation for three years, tenure appointment goes against the spirit of permanent appointment. The draft policy does not suggest the service condition and regularization of the existing large number of contractual, block grant and partying & guest teachers. The policy does not speak about the democratic rights of teachers, elected representatives of teachers & employees in board of management nor suggests consultative status to the teachers' organisations. There is also no mention of doing away with retrograde, colonial and undemocratic conduct rules threatening the academic freedom of teaching community.

Suggestions:

The voluminous policy document needs for greater scrutiny than it was received so far and that a hasty implementation will have a great consequences, diluting if not reversing and

pains taking attempts to have been made democratize the contexts and contents of education for decades. Hence the government should have a wider consultation among all stake holders to arrive at a national consensus on education policy. Any policy that also includes education should translate the aspirations of the people of the nation. In order to arrive at a more democratic policy government should extend the period of consultation and open debate national debate for another six months.

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