



ENVISION

Transformation through Education



IN THIS ISSUE

1. LEAD ARTICLE

2. SURVEY ARTICLE

3. FEATURE

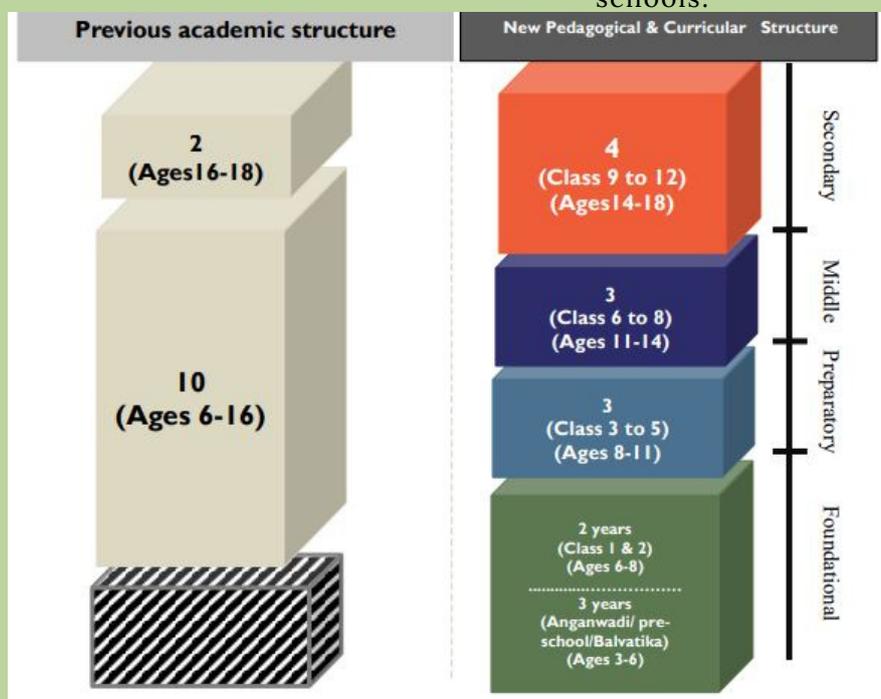
4. INTERVIEW

National Education Policy 2020: All you need to know

The Union Cabinet in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved National Education Policy 2020 and renamed Ministry of Human Resource and Development as Ministry of Education. The committee which recommended the changes was presided over by the ex-ISRO Chief- K Kasturirangan. The policy was last updated on 1992. Now, it is only a policy, not a law. It's implementation depends on the regulations of state government and central government, as education is a concurrent subject. Below are some significant takeaways from the new National Education Policy:

- The educational pattern of the new policy will have the format of 5+3+3+4. The first five years will include 3 yrs of pre-primary, class I and class II followed by three yrs of class III, IV and V. The next three yrs will include class VI, VII and VIII followed by the last four yrs which adds class IX, X, XI and XII
- The medium of instructions up to class V will be the regional languages
- Vocational courses will be introduced in schools and coding will also be taught from Class VI
- Common entrance exam will be held for universities and higher educational institutes through National Testing Agency. However, it will not be mandatory
- Universalization of early childhood education will be developed. NCERT will prepare the curriculum
- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya will be extended to class XII
- E-courses will be developed in the regional languages
- It aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education to 50 percent by 2035 from 26.3 percent in 2018
- Students will be able to take a sabbatical and return to their studies after a certain time to be determined by the Higher Education Commission
- The Bachelor degree can be procured in 3 yrs and 4 yrs as well. If a student has done B.A. in 4 yrs, she can do the M.A. in 1 yr. The first year of Bachelor course will be counted as a Certificate Course, second year will be counted as a Diploma Course.

It is envisaged that prior to the age of 5 every child will move to a “Preparatory Class” or “Balavatika” (that is, before Class 1), which has an ECCE-qualified teacher. The learning in the Preparatory Class shall be based primarily on play-based learning with a focus on developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities and early literacy and numeracy. Health check-ups and growth monitoring that are available in the Anganwadi system shall also be made available to Preparatory Class students of Anganwadi as well as of primary schools.



Parents are willing to send their children to school amid Corona pandemic with all the precautions, an NEG-FIRE study says

In a bid to understand the migrant children's milieu; their acceptance by the fellow village dwellers amid this pandemic and their need towards the education, NEG-FIRE conducted a survey in the 16 project areas of the central, northern and south-eastern regions.

The report reveals that 51.3 percent migrant families faced the discrimination by the local residents of the villages by initial days of August and 48.7 percent migrants are leading a normal life (without any discrimination).

One of the significant outcomes of the survey is that most of the parents are willing to send their children to schools and anganwadi centres providing all the safety measures by the schools and centres. All the families are aware of COVID19 and its safety measures.

The study also found that the children don't have any access of education in any format in the northern region. They are keeping themselves busy in looking after the younger siblings or helping parents in their household chores. In the Central region, the children have access to learning centres or treasure houses, as schools are not functional. The children from South-East region are regularly attending online classes.

Parent also shared that children should get mid day meal dry ration in their home, as they're not allowing children to eat outside.

On the mental condition of the children, the survey says that all the children are facing fear and uncertainty. Children belonging to the non-migrant families have fear that the infection can be spread from the migrant children, whereas the migrant children have shared fear and unhappiness as they always have to stay inside and other children are avoiding them.

Children want to go to school and anganwadi centres, want a place to explore their creativity and interact with other children. They also want to know more about COVID19 to keep the fear at bay.

Know the Santhal Tribe

The Santals/Santhals are one of the largest and oldest tribes in India, primarily found in Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal and Tripura. The Santhal tribes are known for waging war against Lord Cornwallis in 1855 and fighting against the British regime. Their main occupation lies within the premises of the forest they reside in, ranging from hunting to fishing and cultivation for their livelihood. Dancing and singing in a group is an integral part of the Santhali culture. Sohrai is the most celebrated festival for them and Santhali is their language. The Santhal tribes are known for their expertise in making musical equipments, mats, blankets from plants. Our intervention for the empowerment of Santhali people are in Katihar district of Bihar and Sahibganj district of Jharkhand.

Know your Right to Education

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, popularly known as Right to Education, is an attempt to make the education accessible to each and every child of India irrespective of their caste, gender, religion and under any circumstances (be it migrant children, begging children, children on street, child labours etc.). This Act provides free and compulsory education to the children of 6 yrs to 14 yrs old under Article 21A of the Indian constitution.

One of the significant norms of RTE mandates the reservation of 25 percent seats in the private schools for the economically weaker section (EWS). The expenses of these 25% students will be borne by the state as a part of the public-private partnership.

It also brought the concept of neighbourhood which offers the students from the vicinity of 1km first. If the seats remain unfilled, it will then take students from within 3 km from the school.

In the most backward areas where there is no school, the government must provide the transportation so that the children can have the access of school from every corner. One of the provisions says that it is the government's duty to provide sufficient number of schools to cover every child. If there is a lack of school or there is no school in some areas, the government has to build new schools with all the facilities.

The different provisions of RTE extends not just to sufficient number of schools but also to provide safe environment in schools, prohibition of any kind of mental, physical and sexual harassment. The school will provide free uniforms and books to all the students. The school can't deny admission in case the

The school has to ensure the presence of teachers and their regular trainings.

Apart from the election, census and any emergency duty, teachers shouldn't be given any other work.

To maintain the teacher-students ratio, the school must have one teacher for every 30 students for Class I to Class V and one teacher for every 35 students for Class VI to Class VIII.



The RTE also provides the concept of School Management Committee which monitors the overall management of school. 50 per cent of the members are expected to be females and three-fourth members will be the parents of the students.

Interview with Jayanthi Nayak



An education consultant, a mentor of educational entrepreneurs and community teacher, Jayanthi Nayak has a multi-disciplinary background in Science, Environment Education and Indian classical music. She comes with an extensive experience on teachers' professional development, curriculum design, capacity design, menstrual health and hygiene, content development, subject pedagogy among others. She is also well-versed with English, Hindi, Marathi and Tamil. She can also speak Odiya, Malyalam and Bengali.

What is the impact of COVID19 on the education of the rural areas?

The terrifying and severe impact of COVID-19 has shaken the world to its core. As a response towards containing the spread of the virus, the Government of India, as a part of the nationwide lockdown, has closed all educational institutions, as a consequence of which, learners ranging from school-going children to postgraduate students, have been affected. The UNESCO estimates that about 32 crore students are affected in India, including those in schools and colleges. What becomes glaringly obvious here is that the impact of this crisis on rural India has exposed the large disparity and numerous drawbacks in access to education for learners in this sector.

How will COVID19 and lockdown increase the female and migrant drop-outs of schools in rural areas?

Past evidence suggests that short term disruptions in schooling often lead to permanent dropouts among the poor. One reason for this is the loss of parents' employment for which child labour is leveraged as a substitute, a case in point being the migration of large numbers of workers in the city to their native towns/ villages. The inevitable economic backlash of the lockdown is likely to reduce the earning capacity for many poor households, and may increase the opportunity cost of sending children to school, especially in rural India. As a result, children may be pushed into the labour market.

Dropout rates are likely to be even more severe for girls who are often left out of household resource allocation decisions. Girls may also be required to undertake additional household responsibilities as parents increase their own labour hours to cope with economic distress. Similarly, these economic shocks are likely to have a greater impact on children from communities that are marginalized on the basis of their caste, tribe and religion, and already experience higher dropout rates. Dropping out, in turn, may lead to increases in child marriages, domestic violence, early pregnancies and a plethora of other development issues.

What are the barriers in digital learning in the rural areas?

India has a clear digital divide and rural areas are far beyond the digital outreach. Remote learning increasingly relies on reliable power supply and continuous Internet connectivity, which might be a far-fetched thing even for Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities in India, leave alone the larger rural component. Weak internet penetration has turned e-education into a distant dream for many children in the rural areas. Rural area students do not have the required infrastructure nor are financially strong to avail the resources required for digital education like electronic devices, data packs, internet connectivity etc.

Many households either may not have a smart phone, or children don't have access to digital devices. Oftentimes, the phone is owned by the man of the house. A father or older brother may not handover the phone to the child to learn. The problem with digitisation that we are taking for granted, is that a certain group of children will be missed out.

The risk that the lack of internet has brought also means that sometimes, children are forced to leave the house for a few hours every day to go to a neighbour's/ friend's house- the reason - access to the internet for e-learning. These incidents reveal how education has become a privilege.

What are the alternatives of school education for such situations (lockdown)?

Teachers in some rural areas have arranged for a loudspeaker system on a cart. They take turns to go with the cart and park it at a feasible location and impart lessons from there. It cannot match up to classroom learning, but will ensure some learning, although this puts a different kind of strain on teachers, who have to move around, following all health precautions in this pandemic, and especially on women teachers who also have the added onus of extra housework, keeping up with their own children's schooling etc. in this period.

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