

NEP2020: Pragmatic up Skilling for Generating Employment for Youth in India

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Abstract

The major lacuna in the earlier educational system was that the curriculum lacked the practical approach that would help students in getting jobs. Hence, in order to generate employment for youth in India NEP- 2020 has made drastic changes in its structure as well as instructional materials and approach. In this paper it has been highlighted that while educating and up skilling children the skills of resilience must also be developed so that it will help them in remaining positive and relevant in the ever-evolving jobs and skills landscape and to train our students for to be entrepreneur sand skilled to generate employment.

Key Words: Skill Development, NEP, Up skilling, Employability

As per NEP: 2020 various domains of technical education will be imparted in regional languages. The fundamental principles of the policy are enhancing multidisciplinary and holistic approach in the Indian educational system. Another key feature is promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning, life skills such as better communication, team work and resilience. The reason for giving education in the regional language could be to emphasize imparting knowledge rather than just information. If India wants to be globally superpower, then there is now way out but to strengthen linguistic competency of the students in English language, graded courses are being designed to accustom students to make them proficient in the four fold skills of English language. The present policy takes into account Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), which is aimed at promoting better overall learning. Organizations, policy makers and stakeholders have to design and provide adequate interventions for

development of soft/communication and life skills which have not been succinct in early stages of development leading to low level of language expression and comprehension.

Skill development is a significant driver to address poverty reduction by improving employability and inclusive growth. It facilitates a cycle of high productivity, increased employment opportunities, income growth, and overall development. For the last few years, the Government has laid the foundations for a sustainable skill development ecosystem; however, it is now time to further build and bank upon it by leveraging the NEP to reap the benefits of our unique demographic dividend.

It becomes crucial to align the skilling efforts with the NEP to further stimulate the skill development initiatives in the country. The on-going skilling initiatives would need to be turned around and tweaked accordingly to inculcate the approach and spirit of the NEP. This would ensure the formation of a strong human capital base ready to serve the nation targeting self-reliance and also engage with the world from a position of strength and valor.

Skill development means a process which enables trainees and the working age people to gain access to dexterity, knowledge and ability, career ethics and good working attitude by skill training, establishing skill standards, and other relating activities.

Borrowing from educational reforms happening world over, the NEP2020 recommends

‘Vocational education will be integrated into all school and higher education institutions in a phased manner over the next decade.’

NEP2020’s thrust is majorly on vocational and skill education of students to prepare employable youth. Courses, disciplines, streams, and subjects ***‘will be reworked based on skills gap analysis and mapping of local opportunities.’*** Hopefully by 2024 the silos of science, humanities and commerce curriculums should be broken down and replaced with a flexible, multidisciplinary, competency-based curriculum of choice.

Introduction

The brink of a technological revolution or more popularly known as the 4th Industrial Revolution that is fundamentally changing the way we live, work, and interact with one another. These disruptions have started to alter the conventional methods of employment resulting in a reduced number of available job opportunities and increasing the urgency for skilling and re-skilling people globally. This has been further accentuated by the age of a severe pandemic that we are currently living in.

India's population is among the youngest in an aging world. Population projection at the National and State level up to 2041 shows that India has entered the next stage of demographic transition, with population growth set to slow sharply in the next two decades. However, the projected demographic dividend can easily turn into a demographic disaster if the fast-growing young population remains unskilled and under-utilized, thereby, undermining India's socio-economic growth prospects.

It has been estimated by A INICEF that almost 50% of the Indian youth are on the wrong track as far as education is concerned and that has resulted into unemployment. Another study estimates that merely 20% out of the five million students who graduate every year get employed in India. It would not come as a surprise if more such findings and forecasts are capturing the dismal state of employability prospects of Indian youth amid the rapidly changing global landscape. The underlying primary reason for poor employability is that, often there is a demand-supply gap between the skills acquired by the students and the skills required by the employer (agriculture, trade, industry, etc). Thus, the main concern for the policymakers is to address not only just the issue of provision of adequate employment opportunities for the youth but also increasing their employability as per the current and future trends at the workplace. Hence, as per NEP-2020 every graduate student needs to undergo either on job training or apprenticeship for 6 credits. To address the skills mismatch, the Government of India in the recent years has set up the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and various schemes under its purview such as the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Skill India, SANKALP, National Skill Development Mission, among others. Although

significant progress has been made to skill and re-skill India's growing young workforce, there remain concerns regarding the market relevance of candidates keeping in view the rapid technological advances and the digitization that is transforming our world.

The future labour market situation of young person will be highly influenced by their initial experiences, including how quickly and how well they can access the labour market, and the skills and competencies acquired through education and training (ILO, 2019). Skill development initiatives offering training, skilling, upskilling, and reskilling of millions of people may not reap the desired outcomes if the foundational and incremental education is highly tilted towards rote learning rather than applied learning. Thus, in all likelihood, it would become difficult to carry out effective skilling missions without the introduction of parallel policies to improve our education system in line with the changing dynamics of the 21st century.

India's National Education Policy was framed way back in 1986 and modified in 1992. Over the last three decades, significant changes have taken place in India's education system in almost every segment of the sector. Still, there remains many problems ranging from inadequate enrolment to quality issues to lack of equity and insufficient infrastructure. At this juncture, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has attempted to diagnose the problems plaguing the sector and provide innovative solutions to the problems right from the pre-school level to higher education courses.

In this paper it has been highlighted that while you educate and up skill children, also develop in them skills of resilience that will help them remain positive and relevant in the ever-evolving jobs and skills landscape. to train our students for to be entrepreneurs and skilled to generate employment.

The policy adopts a learner-centric approach while focusing on experiential & lifelong learning, vocational education, and the transformation of higher education institutions. One of the most crucial policy overhauls in the NEP pertains to the dismantling of the rigid distinction between curricular, extra-curricular, and co-curricular subjects in school along with the integration of vocational education into mainstream education in a gradual

manner. This would provide the much-needed flexibility to the students to realize their interests and sharpen in-built skills while also acquiring new ones.

The proposed vocational skill exposure starting from the middle and secondary grades through internship opportunities with local industry, businesses, artists, craftsperson, and professionals, among others is also a welcome step to lay the foundation of early technical education and would accelerate the skilling efforts in the country. Hence, the NEP envisages a renewed focus to promote creativity and curiosity among young minds to make the curriculum of schools & colleges more skill-oriented, thereby, leading to a transformation of our youth into tangible global resources.

Skill development is a continually evolving process; it doesn't stop at one stage. To become an *Atmanirbhar Bharat* as envisioned by our Hon'ble Prime Minister and a true "knowledge-based economy", India needs to build innovative and advanced skills and go beyond automation, computers, and electronics. Better late than never, the announced NEP should provide a further impetus to Government's Skill India campaign and establish a strong workforce equipped with better skills including life skills, problem-solving skills, critical thinking, scientific vigor, etc to meet the challenges of the times ahead.

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Going ahead, it becomes crucial to align the skilling efforts with the NEP to further stimulate the skill development initiatives in the country. The on-going skilling initiatives would need to be turned around and tweaked accordingly to inculcate the approach and spirit of the NEP. This would ensure the formation of a strong human capital base ready

to serve the nation targeting self-reliance and also engage with the world from a position of strength and valor.

Economic Survey, Government of India.

Skill Development for Generating Employability

Skill labs will also be set up and created in the schools in a **hub and spoke model** which will allow other schools to use the facility. 89. (Refer NEP 2020 Para 16.8) Dropouts from the formal system will be reintegrated by aligning their practical experience with the relevant level of the Framework.

Multilingualism and the power of language: NEP 2020 lays great emphasis on promoting multilingualism so that children know and learn about the rich and vast array of languages of their country. The second reason for promoting regional language is that students must get subject knowledge rather than mere information.

The new National Education Policy (NEP) **gives more freedom of choice for skill development to the students of vocational courses with its multidisciplinary approach and gives due weightage to all types of skills**, All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) chairman Anil D.08-May-2022..

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The fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is here. Education system around the world are buzzing

“Change is needed, change is happening, and more change is on the way. Is the governments’ world over preparing their students for the realities of 4IR workplace? Will a multidisciplinary education recommended by NEP2020, that is an integration of academic and vocational streams with a focus on skill-building through

Competency-based education prepare Indian youth for the new world of work?"

In one of the webinars on reforms proposed by NEP2020 in vocational education & skill building in Schools, Dr Biswajit Saha, Director Training & Skills, CBSE advised the School Managements and Principals to reach out to the local industries and businesses in neighbourhood and forge linkages with them to give their learners a feel of the present-day workplace. He quotes NEP2020 saying this should begin as early as class VI with '*ten bagless days*' of exposure to present-day workplaces such as industrial manufacturing units, banks, retails stores, service industries and local cottage industries. One may wonder what has necessitated the need for exposure to workplace as early as class VI. To understand this fully schools and parents, need to take stock of the current job market and compare it to what our children are studying in their classroom and see the grave mismatch! Also understand that NEP2020 has initiated the educational reforms to make Indian education system more suited to the 4IR workplace.

The problem with current education system is twofold – firstly, the typical choice of streams -science, commerce and humanities offered at senior secondary level makes many students vie for a very small genre of jobs leading to overcrowding and cut-throat competition in certain sectors. When we as school and parents push our children to make such stereotypical choices based on their marksheets, we are inadvertently setting them up for stress & anxiety due fear for failure and ultimately failure of many students. Secondly, the theoretical, bookish, knowledge-based curriculum gives students hardly any job skills to be able to enter the job market based on what they have studied in school and college. By implementing such kind of curricula at Higher Education we are simply preparing students for exam and not for job market. **Jack Ma**, the founder of Alibaba, the e-commerce giant warns

“The knowledge-based approach of ‘200 years ago’, would ‘fail our kids’, who would never be able to compete with machines.”

According to Jack, like other independent skills soft skills like teamwork, values, thinking and time management must also be taught by paying special attention.

Curricular Challenges

It has been estimated that due to the 4th Industrial Revolution around 69% of the jobs in India, especially those which include very low skills, are likely to be demolished.

World Economic Forum's Skill Outlook shares the skills that are growing in use and the ones that are declining in use in the workplaces today.

As reported by The World Economic Forum's, *The Future of Job Skills*,

“Interestingly in this high-tech landscape with automation replacing low-skilled jobs, it's the demand for *human skills* that is out stripping the supply.”

The modern era heavily depends on the atomization of work; therefore, major IT firms like Infosys and Wipro have shifted their routine jobs to atomization. Here, such firms have not sacked down their employees, rather they have started introducing the advanced projects like machine learning. They have also started organising some orientation cum training programs for their employees, so that they can cope up with modern skilled based technology, which require critical and creative thinking for problem solving. This is the reason why the New Education Policy strongly recommends the skill based curricula. The skills required at work place must be incorporated the curricular design so that students will be equipped with the combination of both the steam subjects for scientific research and innovation, humanities in order to understand the human behaviour and values and commerce for making sense of businesses and financial markets. Therefore, NEP rightly provides students knowledge from the varied streams by giving the opportunity in the selection of subjects by introducing Choice Based Pattern. Therefore, NEP-2020 not only brought out the changes in the educational structure but has also strongly suggested drastic changes as far as pedagogical *restructuring* is concerned. It has recommended enhancing literacy and numeracy at foundational and preparatory stages. Along with it the students must be given hands-on experience through experiential pedagogy.

Global Transformation of Education

Nobody can ignore the fact that the present educational system needs to be reformed so that the learners can be exposed to the skills required for their workplace and ultimately the students will be prepared for the jobs. Singapore has already taken a step towards it and by sweeping educational reforms in order to inspire its learners towards meta-cognition and self-development. It is the responsibility of teachers as well as parents to imbibe on the minds of their ward that education is not a competition but an opportunity to lead towards the betterment of life in every sense.

Ong Ye Kung, Singapore's Education Minister says, advising against any comparisons between student performance and encouraging each student to develop own learning. **South Korea** has replaced its traditional rigid curriculum that required learners to choose between science-track and arts-track, with *integrated science and liberal arts education* to promote flexibility and creativity on how students will address the real-life issues and challenges of the 21st century. The focus of classroom interactions is now on digital literacy, promotion of integrated curriculum, reinforcement of character/moral education, and personalized learning.

Finland has consistently carried out common-sense educational reforms that aim to create a happy, healthy and harmonious learning environment where learner's innate intelligence and personality will flourish. The children study 2-3 subjects daily therefore the learning is more in-depth, hands-on, less regimented, more relaxed, and therefore an enjoyable and engrossing experience. Finland has totally given up standardised tests that lead to rote learning and exam focus in classroom. The teachers assess students using *individualised assessment* designed by them specifically for each student. The National Matriculation Exam is totally voluntary and conducted by government at the end of class X to facilitate admission to Universities. Most learners opt for three-year vocational courses for training in job or trade at the end of schooling and they do not need to take this exam.

Re-Imagining Indian Education

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Strong vocational penetration has already begun in CBSE affiliated schools across India as almost one thirds of the total affiliated schools are now offering vocational courses with maximum private schools driving the demand for new vocational courses. This year despite COVID pandemic the response of private and international CBSE schools has been phenomenal with nearly 4500 CBSE affiliated schools introducing vocational education model from class VI onwards (<http://cbseacademic.nic.in/skill-education.html>). The vocational/skill courses, designed with Industry experts are offered in almost all sectors with a special push in IT applications and new technologies sector, BFI sector (Banking, Finance and Life Insurance) Financial Marketing Management, Fashion Design & Technology, Medical Diagnostics, Retail Services & Operations, Hotel Management & Catering Technology, Tourism & Travel etc.

All courses are a part of the **National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF)** and has been incorporated in the new **National Curriculum Framework**. Also, under development is the new **National Higher Education Skills Framework (NHESF)** which will be aligned with above educational frameworks to give Indian learners uninterrupted vertical pathways of mobility from class I into higher education, as never before.

Implementing the NEP mandate, CBSE declared adoption of **Competency-based Education**. The competency-based curriculum focuses on real-world skills and competency development. Lessons are designed around competencies that are needed for a particular profession, instructional material has real-world case studies and work-place simulations for critical thinking and creative problem solving. In CBE learning happens in a carefully created work-place environment with an interactive and experiential pedagogy, and multiple opportunities of problem solving in a simulated work environment. So that by the time the courses finish students are workplace ready by acquiring both knowledge and domain related skills in their chosen fields.

Self-Reliance -The spirit of Entrepreneurship

The new world of work is powered by the creativity, entrepreneurship, and networking. These values must be engrained in the learner through the learning process and environment. For teachers to bring ignitions of entrepreneurship and creativity to classrooms, Schools will have to give teachers the autonomy to design lessons that give learners opportunities to research, explore, experiment, and innovate while balancing the curricular load. Schools may even tie-up with Industry to start incubators. All vocational courses must be delivered with an underlying focus on inculcating financial literacy and skills of personal financial management in the learners with aim to make our learners *atmanirbhar*.

Conclusion

Schools, Technical Institutions Diploma and Degree Colleges, teachers, and parents must play a proactive and encouraging role while planning the career of children. Help them identify their potential and look for opportunities to build up these skills. Keeping them safe at the cost of their natural talent, interest and aptitude would deny them the opportunities of growing intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Let them explore their passions unhindered by supporting their dreams and aspirations. Be the wind beneath their wings! Brain research tells us that academic, professional, and personal success in life depends on socio-emotional neural networks built in the brain during childhood. Therefore, while you

educate and upskill children, also develop in them skills of resilience that will help them remain positive and relevant in the ever-evolving jobs and skills landscape.

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