

NEP 2020 will empower students across grades

Schools need to develop into learning hubs, with corners of exploration and student choice being given priority, writes **Manjima Chatterjee**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 was greatly anticipated by the time it was finally released, especially considering the fact that it has been almost 40 years since the last formal policy release in 1986, wherein the world has undergone a sea change and how we view the role of education.

Four curricular frameworks

The present Policy proposes the “revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance”, which have been critical areas in the past, “to create a system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st-century education, including SDG4, while building upon India’s traditions and value systems”. It has proposed the development of four national curriculum frameworks – National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Care and Educa-

tion (NCFECCE), National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE), National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) and National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education (NCFAE) – of which the first, the NCF for Early Childhood Care and Education, was recently released. Overall, the NEP 2020 seems to acknowledge and embrace the understanding that the teacher’s role in education has made a fundamental shift from being a deliverer of content to that of a connector and synthesiser, a builder of curiosity, a mentor and a guide. This requires a concurrent shift in teacher training methods and curricula and a

different review system.

Training the teacher

Teacher engagement in class is a one-on-one mode of interaction, which requires strong personal, social and emotional skills. For the kind of teaching we wish to develop, a remote, television-based training system seems inadequate. Digital interactivity has potential, but when we shift the focus of engagement from content to the teacher, they need to be trained to develop the skills required of them. There is no real replacement for face-to-face mentoring in this respect. Schools need to develop into learning hubs, with corners of exploration and student choice

being given priority. None of this requires much budgeting, but it does require basic infrastructure and a manageable teacher-student ratio, both of which are largely missing or compromised across the country. Simple, low-technology methods of learning by doing can be practised with a basic space and a trained, creative teacher.

The NEP emphasises on learning which is contextual, and which acknowledges the child’s prior knowledge — a big shift from the traditional approach. The fact that there is a recognition that every learner is different is itself a win. The sharing of curricular goals at every stage will be helpful by providing a framework for excellence at every level and help us figure out level-appropriate activities and lesson designs in keeping with the resources.

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