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Reimagining India as a Major World Economy Through the Strategic Draft National Education Policy-2019

Ajit M Mulajkar* and Naresh V Pinamkar**

India of 21st Century has brought with it so many opportunities and challenges too. Twenty-first century India is going to face the strange problems which were never ever faced by the nation. The demographic change which India will witness after 2020, was not only foreseen but hypothesized by the Report of the Committee on "India Vision 2020". Dr. S. P. Gupta was appointed as the Chairman of a Committee to create a Vision Document for 2020 by the Planning Commission Government of India, New Delhi. And the Committee submitted its report to the Government on December 05, 2002. This 101 pages vision document activated the brains of many prodigies and intellectual giants to reimagining India. A visionary leader, true patriot and great scientist Hon'ble Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, the former President of India in his great work *Vision 2020*, envisioned India of 2020. This book also remained a major source in shaping "India Vision 2020", the report of Dr. S. P. Gupta (Gupta, 2002).

The Message given to the Draft New Education Policy 2019 (DNEP-19), by Hon'ble Prakash Javadekar, the then Human Resource Minister, Government of India starts with "Education is a national agenda and is the catalytic tool that can transform the future of our children and youth." (Kasturirangan, 2019). He further said that approximately 1.2 billion; it means half of India is under the age of 29. To reap this demographic advantage the Government is ready; and the National Education Policy-2019 is the main strategy. In other words, we have approximately 1.2 billion heads by 2020. And we have a big challenge to transform these 1.2 billion heads into 1.2 billion brains. The main aim National Education Policy 2019 is to make India knowledge superpower through quality education, innovation and research by equipping the students with the necessary skills and knowledge; and to eliminate the shortage of manpower in science, technology academics and industry.

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The DNPE 2019, of 484 pages, was prepared by a Committee of 9 Members and a Secretary under the Chairmanship of K. Kasturirangan, former Chairman, ISRO. It has four parts with an appendices: Part I-School Education, Part II-Higher Education, Part III-Additional Key Focus Areas, Part IV-Transforming Education with Addendum-Making It Happen, and Appendices: Part 1 and Part 2. It was submitted by the Committee to Shri Prakash Javadekar, Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India on December 15, 2018. It rests on the five major pillars: Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. For the first time, the early childhood of a learner-between 3 to 6-is considered as the most flowering age for the full development of any person with a belief that, "The learning process for a child commences immediately at birth", for "Over 85% of cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of six." "Promotion of Indian Languages" as mentioned in Part III - Additional Key Focus Area is the additional feature of the policy document. (Kasturirangan, 2019).

Prof. Rupamanjari Ghosh, Vice Chancellor, Shiv Nadar University says, "We don't lack human resource in India. But our demographic dividend will become a demographic disaster if we don't train our youth in the right way." (Khan, 2019). Youth cannot be channelized over night. Efforts must be taken from early childhood. Now demographic dividend of India is universally acknowledged thing, but the real task before India in general and Government of India in particular is to transform it into socio-economic dividend to India and gratuity to Indian society at large. For the 'Dream India'—India as a developed country—Government and Indian philanthropists must go hand in hand along with alumni and all the stakeholders of educational institutions must contribute in this national mission. The rich persons in India who are having the cue of some educational institutions in general and higher education in particular must work as trustee like Azim Premji, the chancellor, Azim Premji University; and think that "education should not be sold for personal gain" (Khan, Education for Empowerment, 2019). The objectives of the study are:

- To study and have over all understanding of the DNEP-19.

- To understand the goals of the DNEP-19.
- To understand the Education Policy about higher education.
- To contribute in building the nation through suggestions.

Review of Literature

Sources which were closely related to the policy were studied in detail. Various sources were studied critically for the better understanding of the policy document on which the study is based.

Initially the NPE 2019 was kept on Public Domain for the suggestions from 31st May till 30th June 2019; but "Union HRD Minister Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', while replying to the starred question in Rajya Sabha said that the deadline to submit suggestions on draft of New Education Policy is extended for a month i.e. till 31st, July 2019" ('Nishank', 2019).

The Report on "Status of International Students in India for Higher Education", published by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India in 2014 says, "According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the number of internationally mobile students globally has increased to 4.0 million in 2012 with a 135 percentage increment from 1.7 million in 1995. China has been the largest contributor of the world's mobile students since 1995. India became the second largest contributor since 2005" (Sanjay, 2014).

In an article "Education: Key to Master the 4th Industrial Revolution", Bhagwati Prakash says, "We are already on the threshold of this all pervasive revolution comprising huge advances in genomics, artificial intelligence,...., wherein machines are closing in on human abilities, robots are replacing humans in industries and in homes too, reusable rockets can make space travel and colonies in space a reality and gene editing can facilitate to create our favourable traits and new life forms. All of these are bound to outdate our curricula, research and skilling programmes. Only those countries would thrive with prosperity in the 20s, whose education and research systems would cope up and master this paradigm shift" (Sharma, 2018). Twenty first century brought with it so many changes. Travelling in a steam engine in the age of bullet train is like preferring a bullock cart to comfortable highspeed car. One has to change, ones own thinking as per the changed context; otherwise will lag behind. Similarly the policies designed to meet the demands of then current time of 1980s or 90s may not be suitable in the modern context of twenty first century.

Archana Tomar aptly said, "Higher education is a mirror of the society." And it is also important to note that "Higher education is pivot of economy of a country" (Tomar, 2018). India has the third largest higher education system in the world; and of course, unique too. One formula fit for all is difficult in India due to geographical, cultural and demographic differences in various parts of the nation. In a speech at Hyderabad while addressing the students of engineering college, Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam said, "What worked yesterday, will not work today." Such an incredible nation requires incredible education policy. It will not be correct to look at India from/with 'foreign eye'.

Sunil Behari Mohanty in his article "Draft National Education Policy-2019: A Review" says, "The Draft Policy document does not appear like a Policy document. It appears like a well-written curriculum framework. It can be treated as a discussion document as at many places, before suggesting a strategy, it has analysed the problems" (Mohanty, 2019).

"We need to look at education strategically and understand the broader issues facing our country's education landscap", says Ashish Dhawan, Founder, Ashoka University (Zalka, 2019). Shiv Nadar, the Founder and Chancellor of Shiv Nadar University, Dadri believes that transformational education is the only tool that can empower individuals and arrow the socio-economic, rural-urban divide (Khan, 2019).

Research Methodology

The researchers have focused their study only on the DNEP-19. As the study is primarily based on the Policy document, only secondary data is collected from various sources like books, journals and especially e-sources.

The focus of the researchers is only on the Preamble, Vision, National Research Foundation and Higher Education of the policy document. Rests of the parts of the policy document are not focused by the researchers.

The data collected is only qualitative. It is analyzed to understand the Policy document as per the objectives of the study. Analytical research methodology is used by the researchers for the study.

Discussion

"The policy is founded on the guiding goals of Access, Equality, Quality, Affordability and Accountability"; says K. Kasturirangan, the Chairman of the DNEP-19, in the letter to the Hon'able Minister of

Human Resource Development, Government of India (Kasturirangan, 2019). It makes one point clear that the draft of this new education policy is rested on the five pillars— Access, Equality, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. These pillars are enough to build Rome, of course, not in a day!

The Government of India “proposed the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, while remaining consistent with India’s traditions and value systems” (Kasturirangan, 2019).

Vision

“The National Education Policy, 2019 envisions an India centred education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all” (Kasturirangan, 2019).

The Vision makes some points very clear such as i) India is at the centre of the New Education Policy, ii) transforming the nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society and iii) through high quality education to all. In nutshell, it envisions a New India.

It is very important to note that, while preparing the DNEP-19, efforts are taken to rethink about embracing the unfinished agenda of the National Policy on Education 1986, Modified in 1992.

The vision of the DNEP 2019 has been crafted to ensure that it touches the life of each and every citizen, consistent with their ability to contribute to many growing developmental imperatives of this country on the one hand, and towards creating a just and equitable society on the other (Kasturirangan, 2019). It is its unique feature and; more democratic and all inclusive also.

It is important to note that the policy draft makers have given worth consideration to historic Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted at the UN General Assembly in 1948. It declares that “everyone has the right to education”. Article 26 in the Declaration states, “Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages” and “elementary education shall be compulsory”, and that ‘education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of

respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Kasturirangan, 2019).

The main purpose of education is the ‘full development of the human personality.’ International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century chaired by Jacques Delors declared that Learning is bring out the Treasure Within. In its Report submitted to UNESCO in 1996, it argued that education is a lifelong process; and it is rested on “four pillars: i) Learning to know- acquiring a body of knowledge and learning how to learn, so as to benefit from the opportunities education provides throughout life; ii) Learning to do- acquiring not only an occupational skill but also the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams, and a package of skills that enables one to deal with the various challenges of working life; iii) Learning to live together- developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace; and iv) Learning to be- developing one’s personality and being able to act with autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility, while ensuring that education does not disregard any aspect of the potential of a person: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities and communication skills” (Kasturirangan, 2019).

It is very difficult and undesirable too for any country to get uprooted from its past, especially from its past glory. The drafting committee of the DNEP-19 has shown its all inclusiveness in giving due we it age to the rich heritage of India. Actually the concept of holistic education is Indian; and India has a long and illustrious history of it. “The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge, as preparation for life in this world or for life beyond schooling, but for complete realisation and liberation of the self” (Kasturirangan, 2019). This concept expands the horizons of holistic development of an individual which the world is talking now. Realization is the most difficult part. If it is made possible through education most of the societal, legal, political and other problems will be solved. Will it be brought into reality, at least up to certain extent, or will it remain on paper only, will be revealed by time.

The words of Swami Vivekananda: “*Education is... life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas,*” are enough to state the vision of the DNEP-19 (Kasturirangan, 2019). The focus of Vivekananda, the visionary sage of modern India, was on character building and man making. His philosophy

of education was so profound that it is universally applicable. And the DNPE 2019 shows a great impact of Vivekananda's teachings.

The rich legacies of India should be nurtured and enhanced by putting them to new usages as world heritage. And the vision of DNEP-19 is to make it possible through the education system.

Globalized India of 21st century demands knowledge economy and knowledge society. It calls for emphasis on the need for the acquisition of new skills by the learners on a regular basis. For the learners learning how to learn becomes important and they should remain lifelong learners.

India is fortunate to have the demographic dividend in 2020. But it is expected to last for only a little period of 20 years. Therefore, it is essential that children and youth in the country should be equipped with the knowledge and employable skills along with values that would enable them to contribute in socio-economic development and transforming India into a superpower.

Educational opportunity is created when students and teachers engage in purposeful learning experiences that help the students developing in various ways. The drafting committee believes that this requires clear goals, the skills to translate these goals into sound curriculum and pedagogy, and the leadership of teachers, and school and educational administrators to focus on supporting the creation of meaningful learning opportunities. In a nutshell, educational opportunity requires an effective system to support learning, including supportive organisations, resources, and sound policies. Such lofty goals require reconfiguration of the entire education system to support and enhance learning.

In India, at present, a variety of nomenclature for universities is used. The appellations such as 'deemed to be university', 'affiliating university', 'unitary university', 'central university' are found. In the DNEP-19 all these will be phased out. Universities will be characterised only as 'public', 'private', or 'private-aided'; and as multidisciplinary research universities (Type 1) or comprehensive teaching universities (Type 2). A university will be "a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate, graduate, and Ph.D. programmes, and engages in high quality teaching and research" (Kasturirangan, 2019).

It is important to note that all affiliating universities in India will be transitioned to Type- 1 or Type -2

institutions, with one or more campuses. Universities will not have affiliated colleges. It is going to be a major change in higher education. Ample research is done on affiliated colleges and affiliating universities. And the findings suggest that for the quality research and research related activities the present affiliating universities must be freed from the burden of affiliation. Dr. J M Wagmare, former Vice Chancellor, SRTM University, Nanded and former Member of Parliament, while addressing the National Level Seminar on "Draft National Education Policy 2019" on July 27, 2019 at Nanded said that on the model of University of London, three affiliating universities—University of Calcutta, University of Mumbai and University of Madras— were established in 1857. (Wagmare, 2019) The model was brought by the British in 1857 in British India. And unfortunately, after the 72 years of independence we are using the same model which is left by University of London itself by considering it as outdated, and like 'faithful' followers we are still following the same out dated model in India of 21st century! He further said that "we are the greatest barroweres," even after 72 years of independence. We did not create knowledge. Except some geniues like Srinivasa Ramanujan, Jagadish Chandra Bose, C.V. Raman, etc. It is note worthy that some Indian names are found in arts, and philisophy, but in the disciplines like law, science, health-science, social science etc. we do not find any India name. The dearth of Indians in contributing knowledge to the society and the world is a major lacuna of the present education system in general and higher education in particular. A system in education initaly created, later strenghted to follow and not to think critically and independently. And a feeling of contempt for Indians and admiration for the Westers is strenghted among many of us like Mohan Lal of Khushwant Singh. As we find many of the professors feel proud to read foreign authors, instead of Indian authors, and refer them to their students. Of course, they have a reason for that. Majority of the Indian authors are not up to the mark. And the researches point out the present education system is solely responsible for it. If a system, even though it is good, remains unchanged for a long time degenerates, for it requires some modifications and changes from time to time.

National Research Foundation (NRF) to Focus on High Quality Research

The Master's and Doctoral levels are being strengthened with provision of at least three routes into the Master's degree – a one-year degree, a two-

year degree, and the integrated five-year degree. The Master's degree will also have a strong research component to strengthen the appropriate professional competence in the domain area, and to prepare students for a research degree. The biggest lacuna in the present education system is the lack of a coherent direction for planning and implementation of research at the university level. In the DNEP-19 this lacuna is addressed by introducing NRF. It will focus on funding research within the education system, primarily to researchers at colleges and universities. The NRF will encompass the four broad areas of Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences, and Arts and Humanities. It is hoped that it will make cohesion among the various disciplines to have a multidisciplinary character. NRF will provide funding and also take care of the need to seed and build research capacity in universities and colleges through a formal mechanism. Universities and colleges are supposed to be big players in the research scene of the country.

In a TV program entitled "Innovation and Patent" telecasted on September 12, 2019 on DD National, it was said that near about 2.8 million patents are filed every year and only 60 to 70 thousand are registered in India, and unfortunately some of them are filed by foreigners. In the same program it is also told that there are many career opportunities in the area of patent filing. (National, 2019) Type II along with Type I research universities should focus on creating good ecosystem for research and innovation. Lets hope that the NRF will play an important role in it, at various levels.

DNPE 2019 for Facilitating National Development

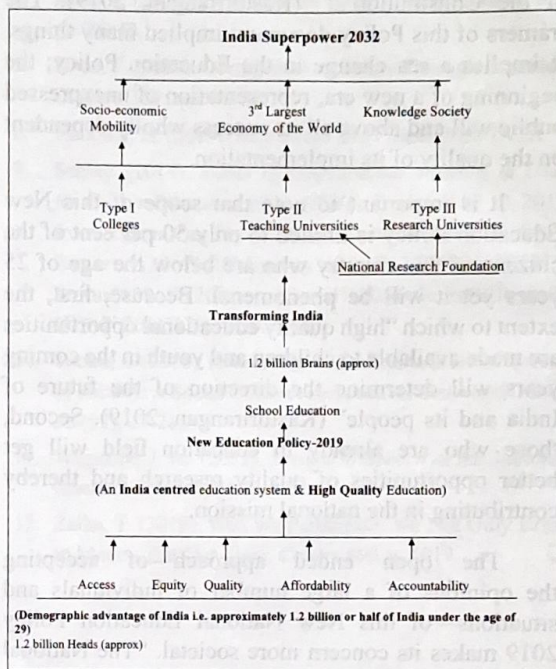
Shri Prakash Javadekar stated in the message of this policy draft that education is a national agenda and is the catalytic tool to transform the future of India. He further said that to reap the demographic advantage the Government is ready. The Government envisions India as the sixth largest economy by 2030-32; it is the same period during which this New Education Policy 2019 will bring about the biggest transformation.

India will reach five trillion in five to seven years taking us to fourth or fifth position in world economy. And by 2030-2032, India will be the third largest economy at over ten trillion. And most importantly, our ten trillion economy will not be driven by only natural and other resources, but by knowledge resources too,

for that we need a knowledge society based on a robust education system.

Quality education will be a key part of the transition to the knowledge economy that is currently underway in parts of India but needs to encompass the entire country. In this regard this DNEP-19 is very important. This is the vision of the Government about New India in the global context; but the ground realities in India have been a matter of great controversies and research.

Box - 1: Vision for India 2032



Vision 2032

The adjective 'incredible' which is placed before India is enough to understand the difficulties in understanding India. The policy document "is not the logical end to realise our dream of a meritorious knowledge society" (Kasturirangan, 2019). In fact, there are a number of steps that has to be taken from National to local level before the Policy can make its impact. The real challenge have to implement the Policy in the spirit in which it has been articulated.

The contribution made by some higher educational institutions in the national development is considered by the drafting Committee. This Policy is aimed at elevating the contribution of the large numbers of early institutions, by providing them better

facilitation. In fact, all the educational institutions are the building blocks of the nation. It is high time to enlarge and expand their qualitative share in this national mission.

By quoting the words of Bharat Ratna Dr B R Ambedkar, about the Constitution: "...Because I feel, however good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot. However bad a Constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot. The working of a Constitution does not depend wholly upon the nature of the Constitution..." (Kasturirangan, 2019). The framers of this Policy document implied many things. It implies a sea change in the Education Policy; the beginning of a new era; representation of unexpressed public will and above all its success wholly dependent on the quality of its implementation.

It is important to note that scope of this New Education Policy is limited to only 50 per cent of the citizens of this country who are below the age of 25 years yet it will be phenomenal. Because, first, the extent to which "high quality educational opportunities are made available to children and youth in the coming years will determine the direction of the future of India and its people" (Kasturirangan, 2019). Second, those who are already in education field will get better opportunities of quality research and thereby contributing in the national mission.

The open ended approach—of accepting the opinions of a large number of individuals and situations—of this New National Education Policy 2019 makes its concern more societal. "The National Education Policy 2019 provides a framework for the transformation and reinvigoration of the education system in order to respond to the requirements of fast-changing, knowledge-based societies while taking into account the diversity of the Indian people, their traditions, cultures, and languages. It seeks to ensure that human capital, the most vital form of capital that would fuel the necessary transformation, is secured and strengthened" (Kasturirangan, 2019).

Conclusion

The researchers focused their study only on the Preamble, Vision, National Research Foundation, Higher Education and Making it Happen part of the DNEP-19. So the focus of the study is only on those parts only. Rest of the parts such as Part I – School Education, Part III - Additional Key Focus Areas, Part

IV - Transforming Education etc are not focused by the researchers.

The study is focused on education in general and higher education in particular. The DNEP-19 is definitely "a new and forward looking vision for India's higher education system." It is going to bring a sea change in the higher education in India which has over 1000 universities and approximately 40,000 colleges; with a strong thought that "India's higher education has developed rigid boundaries of disciplines and fields, along with a narrow view of what constitutes."

The Policy is going to restructure the entire education system in general and higher education in particular. The present universities such as affiliated universities, deemed to be universities etc. will be restructured with new Type I –Research universities and Type II Teaching universities and affiliated colleges into Type III Colleges with a special emphasis on 'Autonomy' to compete with the globe. Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) will be modified into 'multidisciplinary' units by considering Takshashila and Nalanda universities as the role models, for it is considered as the solution to many problems in present higher education system. It is also important to note that 'accountability' is a great pillar of this Policy document.

Findings

1. All the present HEIs will be gradually modified into Type I–Research universities and Type II Teaching universities and Type III Colleges.
2. Special stress is given on 'Autonomy' and on 'multidisciplinary universities and colleges' as a way out to many problems of present higher education in India.
3. Establishment of a 'National Research Foundation' will promote outstanding research across all disciplines.
4. Its vision is to create 'India centred education system' to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society through high quality education to all.
5. Accountability is an additional salient feature of the DNEP-19.
6. The use of the word "we" in the draft document and the title of the document confuses the readers whether it is 'Policy' or a 'report'. Generally policy documents are short and reports are long. But it is long i.e. of 484 pages.

Suggestions

- i. Suggestions invited from all Indians should be considered, on the basis of its worth and importance, irrespective of position or designation of the sender.
- ii. Enough time is to be given to create suitable environment for modifying the existing affiliated colleges into Type 3 Colleges.
- iii. Enough time is to be given to create suitable environment for modifying affiliated colleges especially with mono faculty into Type 3 Multidisciplinary Colleges.

Future Scope

Aspired researchers can focus their research on other aspects such as School Education, Teacher Education, Professional Education, Empowered Governance and Effective Leadership for Higher Education Institutions, Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog / National Education Commission, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, Central Educational Statistics Division etc. of the Policy document, for they are not considered by the researchers for the present study.

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