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### Salient Features of NEP 2020: Higher Education

<sup>1</sup> Ashok Erappa Umachagi, <sup>2</sup> Tejashwini KC

<sup>1,2</sup> Research Scholar, Department of Studies Economics, Davangere University, Shivagangothri, Davangere, Karnataka, India

Corresponding Author: Tejashwini KC

#### Abstract

All children under the age of 14 were expected to get free and mandatory education that was of a satisfactory standard under the National Policy on Education of 1986 and the Plan of Action of 1992. Although though the legislation provided that everyone had access to education, the system's ongoing problems persisted, making it difficult for India's educational system to advance to a global level. The National Policy of Education from 1986 has been replaced by the Government of India's most current education policy, the first in 34 years. The Ministry of Human Resource and Development was renamed the Ministry of Education as part of the new strategy, which brought about a number of changes to the Indian educational system. To develop a new system that is in line with the inspirational goals of 21st century education, the NEP proposes reform and revamping of the educational framework, including its regulation and control. The Universities Grants Commission and the All-India Council for Technical Education are among the significant reforms that the NEP calls for, along with the opening of Indian higher education to international universities. Although concentrating on numerous aspects of education, the strategy also aims to close the technology-education divide. The choice to make mother tongue or

regional language the medium of instruction up to Class 5 is one of the major attractions of NEP 2020. By establishing a National Assessment Centre and creating a system like Performance Assessment Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development for monitoring the achievement of learning outcomes, the policy also emphasizes the need for formative assessments and encourages peer review systems of assessment. It also provides guidance to school boards to help make learning more modern and appropriate for the needs of the future. The establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India, which will eventually take the role of the current regulatory agencies like the UGC or AICTE, is one of the NEP 2020's greatest selling points. This regulatory framework will apply to all higher education institutions. The policy's long-term goal is to abolish the current structure of colleges that are linked with universities and merge numerous small, financially burdensome institutions with larger HEIs. The NEP 2020 seeks to close a number of deficiencies in India's educational system, and it is anticipated that this policy will help India meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal by ensuring comprehensive and equitable access to high-quality education.

**Keywords:** National Education Policy 2020, Higher Education Institutions, Curriculum

#### 1. Introduction

The Union Cabinet approved the National Education Policy (NEP) in July 2020. This policy will usher in sweeping changes to the education policy of the country, including a renaming of the Ministry of Human Resource Development as the Education Ministry. Education is one of the most powerful tools for transforming the whole nation into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. Both education and technology are inter-connected and technology plays a crucial role in imparting education during challenging situation which is evident during the COVID-19 crisis. The global crisis of the COVID-19 virus and the subsequent lockdowns imposed by the government to control the situation has forced the people to stay indoors which has impacted the education sector tremendously. Without the aid of information and communication technology (ICT), it would have been impossible to continue the teaching-learning process during this unprecedented closure of educational institutions due to the pandemic. Information and communication technology (ICT) in learning institutions has enhanced learning by greater heights. Though students from different backgrounds especially those who are from the economically backward section of the society are facing considerable number of challenges to continue the learning process with the help of online education system still with the help of information and communication technology (ICT) educational institutions all over the world are trying their level best to address the situation. In order to keep pace with the current trend of globalization, there is a need of constantly improvising our skills. Proper implementation of the National Education Policy –2020 in its true sense has the potential to bring remarkable changes by transforming the Indian education system. The main aim of National

Education Policy – 2020 is to fill the gap of present education system which is totally mechanized which develops the cramming power of the students but curbs the individual thinking capability of the students. It also interrupts the freethinking of the students. Switching the method of education from rote learning to project/activity based or experiential learning will enrich the learning experience of the learners through hands-on training experience. It will help to promote scientific temperament among the young learners.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) is a policy formulated by the Government of India to promote education amongst India's people. The policy covers elementary education to colleges in both rural and urban India. The first NPE was promulgated by the Government of India by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1968, the second by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986, and the third by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The policy aims to transform India's education system by 2021. The language policy in NEP is a broad guideline and advisory in nature; and it is up to the states, institutions, and schools to decide on the implementation.

## Salient Features of NEP 2020: Higher Education

### 1 The Fundamental Principles of the Policy:

- **Recognizing, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student**, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres.
- **According the highest priority to achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy** by all students by Grade 3.;
- **Flexibility**, so that learners have the ability to choose their learning trajectories and programmes, and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests;
- **No hard separations** between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc. in order to eliminate harmful hierarchies among, and silos between different areas of learning.
- **Multidisciplinary and a holistic education** across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world in order to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge;
- **Emphasis on conceptual understanding** rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams.;
- **Creativity and critical thinking** to encourage logical decision-making and innovation;
- **Ethics and human & Constitutional values** like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice;
- **Promoting multilingualism and the power of**

**language** in teaching and learning;

- **Life skills** such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience;
- **Focus on regular formative assessment for learning** rather than the summative assessment that encourages today's 'coaching culture';
- **Extensive use of technology** in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for *Divyang* students, and educational planning and management;
- **Respect for diversity and respect for the local context** in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject;
- **Full equity and inclusion** as the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system;
- **Synergy in curriculum across all levels of education** from early childhood care and education to school education to higher education;
- **Teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process** – their recruitment, continuous professional development, positive working environments and service conditions;
- A **'light but tight' regulatory framework** to ensure **integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency** of the educational system through audit and public disclosure while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through **autonomy, good governance, and empowerment**;
- **Outstanding research** as a corequisite for outstanding education and development;
- **Continuous review** of progress based on sustained research and regular assessment by educational experts;
- **A rootedness and pride in India**, and its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions.
- **Education is a public service**; access to quality education must be considered a basic right of every child;
- **Substantial investment in a strong, vibrant public education system** as well as the encouragement and facilitation of true philanthropic private and community participation.

### 2. The Vision of this Policy

- An education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower.
- The curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must develop a deep sense of respect towards the fundamental duties and Constitutional values, bonding with one's country, and a conscious awareness of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world.
- To instill a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen.

### 3. Quality Universities and Colleges: A New and Forward-Looking Vision for India's Higher Education System

- Quality higher education must aim to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals.
- It must enable an individual to study one or more specialized areas of interest at a deep level, and also develop character, ethical and Constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, spirit of service, and 21<sup>st</sup> century capabilities across a range of disciplines including sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, as well as professional, technical, and vocational subjects.
- A quality higher education must enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to the society.
- It must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and enable economic independence.
- Some of the major problems currently faced by the higher education system in India include:
  - A severely fragmented higher educational ecosystem;
  - less emphasis on the development of cognitive skills and learning outcomes;
  - A rigid separation of disciplines, with early specialisation and streaming of students into narrow areas of study;
  - Limited access particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, with few HEIs that teach in local languages.
  - Limited teacher and institutional autonomy;
  - Inadequate mechanisms for merit-based career management and progression of faculty and institutional leaders;
  - Lesser emphasis on research at most universities and colleges, and lack of competitive peer-reviewed research funding across disciplines;
  - Suboptimal governance and leadership of HEIs;
  - an ineffective regulatory system; and
  - Large affiliating universities resulting in low standards of undergraduate education.
- This policy envisions the following key changes to the current system:
  - Moving towards multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with more HEIs across India that offer medium of instruction in local/Indian languages;
  - Moving towards a more multidisciplinary undergraduate education;
  - Moving towards faculty and institutional autonomy;
  - Revamping curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support.
  - Reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions.
  - Establishment of a National Research Foundation.
  - Governance of HEIs by independent boards having academic and administrative autonomy;
  - "light but tight" regulation by a single regulator for higher education;

- Increased access, equity, and inclusion.

### 4. Institutional Restructuring and Consolidation

- By 2040, all higher education institutions (HEIs) shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions, each of which will aim to have 3,000 or more students.
- There shall, by 2030, be at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district.
- The aim will be to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.
- Growth will be in both public and private institutions, with a strong emphasis on developing a large number of outstanding public institutions
- A university will mean a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate programmes, with high quality teaching, research, and community engagement.
- The definition of university will thus allow a spectrum of institutions that range from those that place equal emphasis on teaching and research i.e., Research-intensive Universities. Those that place greater emphasis on teaching but still conduct significant research i.e., Teaching-intensive Universities.
- Autonomous degree-granting College (AC) will refer to a large multidisciplinary that grants undergraduate degrees and is primarily focused on undergraduate teaching though it would not be restricted to that.
- A stage-wise mechanism for granting graded autonomy to colleges, through a transparent system of graded accreditation, will be established. HEIs will have the autonomy and freedom to move gradually from one category to another, based on their plans, actions, and effectiveness.
- These three broad types of institutions are not in any natural way a rigid, exclusionary categorization, but are along a continuum.
- HEIs will support other HEIs in their development, community engagement and service, contribution to various fields of practice, faculty development for the higher education system, and support to school education.
- Institutions will have the option to run Open Distance Learning (ODL) and online programmes, provided they are accredited to do so.
- Single-stream HEIs will be phased out over time, and all will move towards becoming vibrant multidisciplinary institutions or parts of vibrant multidisciplinary HEI clusters.
- The system of 'affiliated colleges' will be gradually phased out over a period of fifteen years through a system of graded autonomy, and to be carried out in a challenge mode.
- The overall higher education sector will aim to be an integrated higher education system, including professional and vocational education.
- The present complex nomenclature of HEIs in the country such as 'deemed to be university', 'affiliating university', 'affiliating technical university', 'unitary university' shall be replaced simply by 'university' on fulfilling the criteria as per norms.

## 5. Towards a more Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education

- A holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings -intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner.
- Such a holistic education shall be, in the long term, the approach of all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines.
- Even engineering institutions, such as IITs, will move towards more holistic and multidisciplinary education with more arts and humanities. Students of arts and humanities will aim to learn more science and all will make an effort to incorporate more vocational subjects and soft skills.
- Imaginative and flexible curricular structures will enable creative combinations of disciplines for study, and would offer multiple entry and exit points.
- Departments in Languages, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Indology, Art, Dance, Theatre, Education, Mathematics, Statistics, Pure and Applied Sciences, Sociology, Economics, Sports, Translation and Interpretation, etc. will be established and strengthened at all HEIs.
- Curricula of all HEIs shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education.
- The undergraduate degree will be of either 3 or 4-year duration, with multiple exit options within this period, with appropriate certifications, e.g., a certificate after completing 1 year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas, or a diploma after 2 years of study, or a Bachelor's degree after a 3-year programme. The 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme, however, shall be the preferred option.
- An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) shall be established which would digitally store the academic credits earned from various recognized HEIs so that the degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into account credits earned.
- The 4-year programme may also lead to a degree 'with Research' if the student completes a rigorous research project in their major area(s) of study as specified by the HEI.
- Model public universities for holistic and multidisciplinary education, at par with IITs, IIMs, etc., called MERUs (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities) will be set up and will aim to attain the highest global standards in quality education.
- HEIs will focus on research and innovation by setting up start-up incubation centres, technology development centres, centres in frontier areas of research, greater industry- academic linkages, and interdisciplinary research including humanities and social sciences research.

## 6. Optimal Learning Environments and Support for Students

- Institutions and faculty will have the autonomy to innovate on matters of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment within a broad framework of higher education qualifications.

- All assessment systems shall also be decided by the HEI, including those that lead to final certification. The Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) will be revised for instilling innovation and flexibility.
- HEIs shall move to a criterion-based grading system that assesses student achievement based on the learning goals for each programme.
- HEIs shall also move away from high-stakes examinations towards more continuous and comprehensive evaluation.
- Each institution will integrate its academic plans ranging from curricular improvement to quality of classroom transaction - into its larger Institutional Development Plan (IDP).
- High-quality support centres and professional academic and career counselling will be made available to all students.
- Norms, standards, and guidelines for systemic development, regulation, and accreditation of ODL will be prepared, and a framework for quality of ODL that will be recommendatory for all HEIs will be developed.
- All programmes, courses, curricula, and pedagogy across subjects, including those in-class, online, and in ODL modes as well as student support will aim to achieve global standards of quality.

## 7. Internationalization

- Larger numbers of international students studying in India, and greater mobility to students in India visit, study at, transfer credits to, or carry out research at institutions abroad, and vice versa.
- India will be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs.
- An International Students Office at each HEI hosting foreign students will be set up to coordinate all matters relating to welcoming and supporting students arriving from abroad.
- Research/teaching collaborations and faculty/student exchanges with high-quality foreign institutions will be facilitated.
- High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries.
- Similarly, selected universities e.g., those from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India.
- A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India.

## 8. Student Activity and Participation

- Plenty of opportunities for participation in sports, culture/arts clubs, eco-clubs, activity clubs, community service projects, etc.
- In every education institution, there shall be counselling systems for handling stress and emotional adjustments.
- Increasing hostel facilities as needed.
- All HEIs will ensure quality medical facilities for all students in their institutions.

## 9. Financial Support for Students

- Efforts will be made to incentivize the merit of students belonging to SC, ST, OBC, and other SEDGs.



- Private HEIs will be encouraged to offer larger numbers of free ships and scholarships to their students.

### 10. Motivated, Energized, and Capable Faculty

- All HEIs will be equipped with the basic infrastructure and facilities, including clean drinking water, clean working toilets, blackboards, offices, teaching supplies, libraries, labs, and pleasant classroom spaces and campuses.
- Every classroom shall have access to the latest educational technology that enables better learning experiences.
- Faculty will be given the freedom to design their own curricular and pedagogical approaches within the approved framework.
- HEIs will have clearly defined, independent, and transparent processes and criteria for faculty recruitment.

### 11. Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education

- Actions that are specific to higher education shall be adopted by all Governments and HEIs.
- Steps to be taken by Governments.
  - (a) Earmark suitable Government funds for the education of SEDGs.
  - (b) Set clear targets for higher GER for SEDGs.
  - (c) Enhance gender balance in admissions to HEIs.
  - (d) Enhance access by establishing more high-quality HEIs in aspirational districts and Special Education Zones.
  - (e) Develop and support high-quality HEIs that teach in local/Indian languages or bilingually.
  - (f) Provide more financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs in both public and private HEIs.
  - (g) Conduct outreach programs on higher education opportunities and scholarships among SEDGs.
  - (h) Develop and support technology tools for better participation and learning outcomes.
- Steps to be taken by all HEIs
  - (a) Mitigate opportunity costs and fees for pursuing higher education.
  - (b) Provide more financial assistance and scholarships.
  - (c) Conduct outreach on higher education opportunities and scholarships.
  - (d) Make admissions processes more inclusive.
  - (e) Make curriculum more inclusive.
  - (f) Increase employability potential of higher education programmes.
  - (g) Develop more degree courses taught in Indian languages and bilingually.
  - (h) Ensure all buildings and facilities are wheelchair-accessible and disabled- friendly.
  - (i) Develop bridge courses for students that come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds.
  - (j) Provide socio-emotional and academic support and mentoring.
  - (k) Ensure sensitization of faculty, counsellor, and students on gender-identity issue and its inclusion in all aspects of the HEI, including curricula.
  - (l) Strictly enforce all no-discrimination and anti-harassment rules.
  - (m) Develop Institutional Development Plans that contain specific plans for action on increasing participation from SEDGs.

### 12. Reimagining Vocational Education

- Vocational education will be integrated into all school and higher education institutions in a phased manner over the next decade.
- By 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education, for which a clear action plan with targets and timelines will be developed.
- Higher education institutions will offer vocational education either on their own or in partnership with industry and NGOs.
- The B. Voc. degrees introduced in 2013 will continue to exist, but vocational courses will also be available to students enrolled in all other Bachelor's degree programmes, including the 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programmes.
- 'Lok Vidya', i.e., important vocational knowledge developed in India, will be made accessible to students through integration into vocational education courses.
- The possibility of offering vocational courses through ODL mode will also be explored.
- MHRD will constitute a National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE), consisting of experts in vocational education and representatives from across Ministries, in collaboration with industry, to oversee this effort.
- Incubation centres will be set up in higher education institutions in partnership with industries.
- Indian standards will be aligned with the International Standard Classification of Occupations maintained by the International Labour Organization.
- The credit-based Framework will also facilitate mobility across 'general' and vocational education.

### 13. Catalysing Quality Academic Research in all Fields Through a new National Research Foundation

- Establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF).
- The overarching goal of the NRF will be to enable a culture of research to permeate through our universities.
- The NRF will be governed, independently of the government, by a rotating Board of Governors consisting of the very best researchers and innovators across fields.
- The primary activities of the NRF will be to:
  - fund competitive, peer-reviewed grant proposals of all types and across all disciplines;
  - seed, grow, and facilitate research at academic institutions.
  - act as a liaison between researchers and relevant branches of government as well as industry; so as to allow breakthroughs to be optimally brought into policy and/or implementation; and
  - Recognize outstanding research and progress.

### 14. Transforming the Regulatory System of Higher Education

- Regulatory system of higher education will ensure that the distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standard setting will be performed by distinct, independent, and empowered bodies.

These four structures will be set up as four independent verticals within one umbrella institution, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).

- The first vertical of HECI will be the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC). It will function as the common, single point regulator for the higher education sector including teacher education and excluding medical and legal education.
- The second vertical of HECI will, be a 'meta-accrediting body', called the National Accreditation Council (NAC). Accreditation of institutions will be based primarily on basic norms, public self-disclosure, good governance, and outcomes, and it will be carried out by an independent ecosystem of accrediting institutions supervised and overseen by NAC.
- The third vertical of HECI will be the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), which will carry out funding and financing of higher education based on transparent criteria.
- The fourth vertical of HECI will be the General Education Council (GEC), which will frame expected learning outcomes for higher education programmes, also referred to as 'graduate attributes'. A National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) will be formulated by the GEC.
- The functioning of all the independent verticals for Regulation (NHERC), Accreditation (NAC), Funding (HEGC), and Academic Standard Setting (GEC) and the overarching autonomous umbrella body (HECI) itself will be based on transparent public disclosure, and use technology extensively to reduce human interface to ensure efficiency and transparency in their work.
- The professional councils, such as the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), Veterinary Council of India (VCI), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), Council of Architecture (CoA), National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) etc., will act as Professional Standard Setting Bodies (PSSBs).
- The separation of functions would mean that each vertical within HECI would take on a new, single role which is relevant, meaningful, and important in the new regulatory scheme.

### 15. Curbing Commercialization of Education

- All education institutions will be held to similar standards of audit and disclosure as a 'not for profit' entity. Surpluses, if any, will be reinvested in the educational sector.
- There will be transparent public disclosure of all these financial matters with recourse to grievance-handling mechanisms to the general public.
- The accreditation system developed by NAC will provide a complementary check on this system, and NHERC will consider this as one of the key dimensions of its regulatory objective.
- All fees and charges set by private HEIs will be transparently and fully disclosed, and there shall be no arbitrary increases in these fees/charges during the period of enrolment of any student. This fee

determining mechanism will ensure reasonable recovery of cost while ensuring that HEIs discharge their social obligations.

### 16. Effective Governance and Leadership for Higher Education Institutions

- Through a suitable system of graded accreditation and graded autonomy, and in a phased manner over a period of 15 years, all HEIs in India will aim to become independent self-governing institutions pursuing innovation and excellence.
- Upon receiving the appropriate graded accreditations that deem the institution ready for such a move, a Board of Governors (BoG) shall be established. Equity considerations will also be taken care of while selecting the members.
- The BoG of an institution will be empowered to govern the institution free of any external interference. It is envisaged that all HEIs will be incentivized, supported, and mentored during this process, and shall aim to become autonomous and have such an empowered BoG by 2035.
- The BoG shall be responsible and accountable to the stakeholders through transparent self-disclosures of all relevant records. It will be responsible for meeting all regulatory guidelines mandated by HECI through the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC).

### 17. Professional Education

- Stand-alone agricultural universities, legal universities, health science universities, technical universities, and stand-alone institutions in other fields, shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions offering holistic and multidisciplinary education.
- All institutions offering either professional or general education will aim to organically evolve into institutions/clusters offering both seamlessly, and in an integrated manner by 2030.
- Both capacity and quality of agriculture and allied disciplines must be improved in order to increase agricultural productivity through better skilled graduates and technicians, innovative research, and market-based extension linked to technologies and practices.
- Institutions offering agricultural education must benefit the local community directly; one approach could be to set up Agricultural Technology Parks to promote technology incubation and dissemination and promote sustainable methodologies.
- Legal education needs to be competitive globally, adopting best practices and embracing new technologies for wider access to and timely delivery of justice.
- Healthcare education needs to be re-envisioned so that the duration, structure, and design of the educational programmes need to match the role requirements that graduates will play.
- Given that people exercise pluralistic choices in healthcare, our healthcare education system must be integrative meaning thereby that all students of allopathic medical education must have a basic understanding of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH), and vice versa.

- There shall also be a much greater emphasis on preventive healthcare and community medicine in all forms of healthcare education.
- Technical education will also aim to be offered within multidisciplinary education institutions and programmes and have a renewed focus on opportunities to engage deeply with other disciplines.
- India must also take the lead in preparing professionals in cutting-edge areas that are fast gaining prominence, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), 3-D machining, big data analysis, and machine learning, in addition to genomic studies, biotechnology, nanotechnology, neuroscience, with important applications to health, environment, and sustainable living that will be woven into undergraduate education for enhancing employability of the youth.

### 18. Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts, and Culture

- The promotion of Indian arts and culture is important not only for the nation but also for the individual. Cultural awareness and expression are among the major competencies considered important to develop in children, in order to provide them with a sense of identity, belonging, as well as an appreciation of other cultures and identities.
- Indian arts of all kinds must be offered to students at all levels of education, starting with early childhood care and education.
- Teaching and learning of Indian languages need to be integrated with school and higher education at every level.
- For languages to remain relevant and vibrant, there must be a steady stream of high-quality learning and print materials in these languages including textbooks, workbooks, videos, plays, poems, novels, magazines, etc.
- Languages must also have consistent official updates to their vocabularies and dictionaries, widely disseminated, so that the most current issues and concepts can be effectively discussed in these languages.
- A number of initiatives to foster languages, arts, and culture in school children: greater emphasis on music, arts, and crafts throughout all levels of school; early implementation of the three-language formula to promote multilingualism; teaching in the home/local language wherever possible; conducting more experiential language learning; the hiring of outstanding local artists, writers, crafts persons, and other experts as master instructors; accurate inclusion of traditional Indian knowledge including tribal and other local knowledge throughout into the curriculum, across humanities, sciences, arts, crafts, and sports, etc.
- Strong departments and programmes in Indian languages, comparative literature, creative writing, arts, music, philosophy, etc. will be launched and developed across the country, and degrees including 4-year B.Ed. dual degrees will be developed in these subjects.
- Every higher education institution and even every school or school complex will aim to have Artist(s)-in-Residence to expose students to art, creativity, and the rich treasures of the region/country.
- More HEIs, and more programmes in higher education, will use the mother tongue/local language as a medium

of instruction, and/or offer programmes bilingually.

- High-quality programmes and degrees in Translation and Interpretation, Art and Museum Administration, Archaeology, Artefact Conservation, Graphic Design, and Web Design within the higher education system will also be created.
- Touring by HEI students to different parts of the country, which will not only give a boost to tourism but will also lead to an understanding and appreciation of diversity, culture, traditions and knowledge of different parts of India.
- Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) will be established. The IITI shall also make extensive use of technology to aid in its translation and interpretation efforts.
- Sanskrit will be mainstreamed with strong offerings in school - including as one of the language options in the three-language formula - as well as in higher education. Sanskrit Universities too will move towards becoming large multidisciplinary institutions of higher learning.
- India will similarly expand its institutes and universities studying all classical languages and literature, with strong efforts to collect, preserve, translate, and study the tens of thousands of manuscripts that have not yet received their due attention.
- Sanskrit and all Indian language institutes and departments across the country will be significantly strengthened.
- Classical language institutes will aim to be merged with universities, while maintaining their autonomy, so that faculty may work, and students too may be trained as part of robust and rigorous multidisciplinary programmes.
- Universities dedicated to languages will become multidisciplinary.
- National Institute (or Institutes) for Pali, Persian and Prakrit will also be set up within a university campus.
- For each of the languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, Academies will be established consisting of some of the greatest scholars and native speakers. These Academies for Eighth Schedule languages will be established by the Central Government in consultation or collaboration with State Governments. Academies for other highly spoken Indian languages may also be similarly established by the Centre and/or States.
- All languages in India, and their associated arts and culture will be documented through a web-based platform/portal/wiki, in order to preserve endangered and all Indian languages and their associated rich local arts and culture.
- Scholarships for people of all ages to study Indian Languages, Arts, and Culture with local masters and/or within the higher education system will be established.

### Salient Features of NEP 2020

NEP 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and replaces the thirty-four-year-old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986. Built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability, this policy is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower by making both school and college education more holistic,

flexible, multidisciplinary, suited to 21st century needs and aimed at bringing out the unique capabilities of each student.

The policy has been formulated after a very detailed consultative process, unprecedented in depth and scale. Consultation involved over 2 lakh suggestions from 2.5 lakhs Gram Panchayats, 6600 Blocks, 6000 ULBs, 676 Districts. The MHRD had initiated a collaborative, inclusive, and highly participatory consultation process from January 2015. In May 2016, '*Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy*' under the Chairmanship of Late Shri T.S.R. Subramanian, Former Cabinet Secretary, submitted its report. Based on this, the Ministry prepared '*Some Inputs for the Draft National Education Policy, 2016*'. In June 2017 a '*Committee for the Draft National Education Policy*' was constituted under the Chairmanship of eminent scientist **Padma Vibhushan, Dr. K. Kasturirangan**, which submitted the Draft National Education Policy, 2019 to the Hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister on 31st May, 2019. The Draft National Education Policy 2019 was uploaded on MHRD's website and at 'MyGov Innovate' portal eliciting views/suggestions/comments of stakeholders, including public.

The salient features of the policy are as follows:

### **School Education**

#### **Ensure Universal Access at All Levels of schooling from pre-primary school to Grade 12**

NEP 2020 aims to achieve 100% Gross Enrollment Ratio in school education by 2030. The initiatives that will be undertaken for this include provision of effective and sufficient infrastructure, alternative and innovative education centres to ensure that children who are dropping out of school are brought back into mainstream education, universal participation in school by carefully tracking students, as well as their learning levels. Counsellors or well-trained social workers connected to schools/school complexes and teachers will continuously work with students and their parents to ensure that all school-age children are attending and learning in school.

#### **Early Childhood Care Education:**

NEP 2020 emphasises on the criticality of the early years to ensure quality early childhood care and education for all children between 3-6 years by 2025. The children in the ages of 3-5 will be catered to by the current system of anganwadis and pre-schools, and age 5-6 will be included with the schooling system in a seamless integrated manner, with a play-way based curriculum to be prepared by the NCERT. A National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) for children up to the age of 8 will be developed by NCERT. The planning and implementation of early childhood education will be carried out jointly by the Ministries of HRD, Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW), and Tribal Affairs.

#### **New Curricular and Pedagogical Structure:**

With emphasis on Early Childhood Care and Education, the 10+2 structure of school curricula is to be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure corresponding to ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively. This will bring the hitherto uncovered age group of 3-6 years under school

curriculum, which has been recognized globally as the crucial stage for development of mental faculties of a child. The new system will have 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi/ pre schooling. The new system will cover four stages: **Foundational Stage** (in two parts, that is, 3 years of Anganwadi/pre-school + 2 years in primary school in Grades 1-2; both together covering ages 3-8), **Preparatory Stage** (Grades 3-5, covering ages 8-11), **Middle Stage** (Grades 6- 8, covering ages 11-14), and **Secondary Stage** (Grades 9-12 in two phases, i.e., 9 and 10 in the first and 11 and 12 in the second, covering ages 14-18).

The curricula will aim for **holistic development of learners**, equipping them with the key 21st century skills, reduction in curricular content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking and greater focus on **experiential learning**. Students will have increased flexibility and choice of subjects so that they choose their own paths according to their talents and interests. There will be **no rigid separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams**. The objective is to give equal emphasis on all subjects-science, social sciences, art, languages, sports, mathematics - with integration of vocational and academic streams in school.

A new and comprehensive **National Curricular Framework for School Education**, NCFSE 2020-21, will be developed by the NCERT.

High-quality textbook materials will be developed by NCERT and SCERTs. States will prepare their own curricula and prepare textbooks incorporating state flavour and material. The availability of textbooks in all regional languages will be a top priority. Reducing the weight of school bags and textbooks will also be ensured by suitable changes in curriculum load.

#### **Attaining Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:**

A National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be set-up on priority to focus on early language and mathematical skills from Grades 1 to 3 by 2025. Strategies include: developing school readiness through interim 3-month play-based school preparation module for all Grade 1 students; increased focus on reading, writing, speaking, counting, arithmetic, and mathematical thinking; continuous assessment and adaptive testing; national repository of high-quality resources on foundational literacy and numeracy; filling teacher vacancies; peer-tutoring and volunteer activities; setting up school libraries in every village; A National Book Promotion Policy will be formulated, and initiatives to ensure the availability, accessibility, quality, and readership of books across geographies, languages, levels, and genres will be undertaken.

#### **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 medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/ mother tongue /local language/regional language. Every student in the country will participate in a fun project/activity on 'The Languages of India', sometime in Grades 6-8, such as, under the '*Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat*' initiative. Sanskrit will be offered at all levels of school and higher education as an



important, enriching option for students, including as an option in the three-language formula. Other classical languages and literatures of India, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit, will also be widely available in schools as options for students. Foreign languages, such as Korean, Japanese, Thai, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian, will also be offered at the secondary level. Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized across the country, and National and State curriculum materials developed, for use by students with hearing impairment.

### Assessment Reforms

There will be a shift from summative assessment to regular and formative assessment, which is more competency-based, promotes learning and development, and tests higher-order skills, such as analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity. Board exams for Grades 10 and 12 will be continued, but be reformed to eliminate the need for taking coaching classes. Board exams will be redesigned to encourage holistic development; and will also be made 'easier', by testing core capacities/competencies. All students will be allowed to take Board Exams on up to two occasions during any given school year, one main examination and one for improvement, if desired. All students will take school examinations in Grades 3, 5, and 8 which will be conducted by the appropriate authority.

A new **National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)**, will be set up as a standard-setting body for setting norms, standards, and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognized school boards of India, guiding the State Achievement Survey (SAS) and undertaking the National Achievement Survey (NAS), monitoring achievement of learning outcomes and encouraging and helping school boards to shift their assessment patterns towards meeting the skill requirements of the 21st century.

### Equitable and inclusive education

NEP 2020 aims to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background. Special emphasis will be given on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) which include: gender identities (particularly female and transgender individuals), socio-cultural identities (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities), geographical identities (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts), disabilities (including learning disabilities), and socio-economic conditions (such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor).

A separate **Gender Inclusion fund** will be created as also **Special Education Zones** for disadvantaged regions and groups.

Children with disabilities will be enabled to fully participate in the regular schooling process from the foundational stage to higher education. Recruitment of special educators with cross-disability training, and establishment of resource centres, wherever needed, especially for children with severe or multiple disabilities will be supported. Schools and school complexes will be supported for providing all

children with disabilities accommodations and support mechanisms tailored to suit their needs and to ensure their full participation in the classroom. Assistive devices and appropriate technology-based tools, will be made available to help children with disabilities integrate more easily into classrooms and engage with teachers and their peers.

Every State/District will be encouraged to establish "**Bal Bhavans**" as a special daytime boarding school, to participate in art-related, career-related, and play-related activities. The unutilized capacity of school infrastructure will be used to promote social, intellectual, and volunteer activities for the community and to promote social cohesion during non-teaching / schooling hours and may be used as a "**Samajik Chetna Kendra**".

### Teacher recruitment and career path

Teachers will be recruited through robust, transparent processes. Promotions will be merit-based, and a mechanism for multi-source periodic performance appraisals will be put in place. Progression paths to become educational administrators or teacher educators will be available for the teachers. A common **National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)** will be developed by 2022, by the National Council for Teacher Education, in consultation with NCERT, SCERTs, teachers from across levels and regions, expert bodies in vocational education, and higher education institutions etc. The standards would cover expected roles of the teacher at different levels of expertise/stage, and the competencies required for that stage. This could be adopted by states to determine all aspects of teacher career management, including tenure, professional development efforts, salary increases, promotions, and other recognitions. The professional standards will be reviewed and revised in 2030, and thereafter every ten years.

**School Governance:** Schools can be organized into school complexes or clusters which will be the basic unit of governance and administration that will ensure availability of all resources including infrastructure, like academic libraries and human resources e.g., art and music teachers along with a strong professional teacher community.

### Standard-setting and Accreditation for School Education

Regulation and operations of schools will be carried out by separate bodies to eliminate conflicts of interest. It is envisaged to have clear, separate systems for policy making, regulation, operations and academic matters. To ensure that all schools follow certain minimal professional and quality standards, States/UTs will set up independent, State-wide body, **State School Standards Authority (SSSA)**. Transparent public self-disclosure of all the basic regulatory information, as laid down by the SSSA, will be used extensively for public oversight and accountability. The SCERT will develop a **School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (SQAAF)** through consultations with all stakeholders.

Public and private schools will be assessed and accredited on the same criteria, benchmarks, and processes, emphasizing online and offline public disclosure and transparency, so as to ensure that public-spirited private schools are encouraged.

**Vocational Education:** By 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education. Beginning with vocational

exposure at early ages in middle and secondary school, quality vocational education will be integrated smoothly into higher education. Vocational education will be integrated in the educational offerings of all secondary schools in a phased manner over the next decade. Towards this, secondary schools will also collaborate with ITIs, polytechnics, local industry, etc. Every child to learn at least one vocation and exposed to several more. A 10-day bagless period sometime during Grades 6-8 to intern with local vocational experts such as carpenters, gardeners, potters, artists, etc. Similar internship opportunities to learn vocational subjects to students throughout Grades 6-12, including holiday periods. Vocational courses through online mode will also be made available.

### Higher Education

#### Increase GER in higher education to reach at least 50% by 2035.

The aim will be to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.

### Holistic Multidisciplinary Education

The policy envisages a broad-based multi-disciplinary holistic education at the undergraduate level for integrated, rigorous exposure to science, arts, humanities, mathematics and professional fields having imaginative and flexible curricular structures, creative combinations of study, integration of vocational education and multiple entry/exit points. A holistic and multidisciplinary education will help develop well-rounded individuals who possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication, discussion and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. Such a holistic education shall be, in the long term, the approach of all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines.

The **undergraduate degree will be of either 3 or 4-year duration**, with multiple exit options within this period, with appropriate certifications- a certificate after completing 1 year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas, or a diploma after 2 years of study, or a Bachelor's degree after a 3-year programme. The 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme shall be the preferred option since it allows the opportunity to experience the full range of holistic and multidisciplinary education in addition to a focus on the chosen major and minors as per the choices of the student. An **Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)** shall be established which would digitally store the academic credits earned from various recognized HEIs so that the degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into account credits earned.

Model public universities for holistic and multidisciplinary education, **Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs)** will be set up and will aim to attain the highest standards for multidisciplinary education across India.

A number of initiatives will be taken to ensure **optimal learning environments** are created that are engaging and supportive, and enable all students to succeed. All institutions and faculty will have the autonomy to innovate on matters of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment within

a broad framework of higher education qualifications that ensures consistency across institutions and programmes and across the ODL, online, and the traditional 'in-class' modes. HEIs shall move to a criterion-based grading system that assesses student achievement based on the learning goals for each programme, and also move away from high-stakes examinations towards more continuous and comprehensive evaluation.

Universities and colleges will set up **high-quality support centres** and will be given adequate funds and academic resources to encourage and support students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. **Professional academic and career counseling** will be available to all students, as well as counsellors to ensure physical, psychological and emotional well-being.

### Rationalized Institutional Architecture

A new vision and architecture for higher education has been envisaged with large, well-resourced, vibrant multidisciplinary institutions. Higher Education Institutions will be transformed into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and HEI clusters/Knowledge Hubs, each of which will aim to have 3,000 or more students. A university will mean a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate programmes, with high quality teaching, research, and community engagement. The definition of university will allow a spectrum of institutions that range from Research-intensive Universities, Teaching-intensive Universities and Autonomous degree-granting Colleges (ACs).

The system of affiliation will be phased out over 15 years and a stage-wise mechanism for granting graded autonomy to colleges, through a transparent system of graded accreditation, will be established. Over a period of time, it is envisaged that every college would develop into either an Autonomous degree-granting College, or a constituent college of a university.

### National Research Foundation (NRF)

A new entity will be set up to catalyze and expand research and innovation across the country. The overarching goal of the NRF will be to enable a culture of research to permeate through our universities, helping to develop a culture of research in the country through suitable incentives for and recognition of outstanding research, and by undertaking major initiatives to seed and grow research at State Universities and other public institutions where research capability is currently limited. The NRF will competitively fund research in all disciplines. Successful research will be recognized, and where relevant, implemented through close linkages with governmental agencies as well as with industry and private/philanthropic organizations.

**Financial support for students:** Efforts will be made to incentivize the merit of students belonging to SC, ST, OBC, and other SEDGs. The National Scholarship Portal will be expanded to support, foster, and track the progress of students receiving scholarships. Private HEIs will be encouraged to offer larger numbers of free ships and scholarships to their students.

**Open and distance learning** will be expanded, thereby playing a significant role in increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio to 50%. Measures such as online courses and digital repositories, funding for research, improved student services, credit-based recognition of MOOCs, etc., will be

taken to ensure it is at par with the highest quality in-class programmes.

**Internationalization** of education will be facilitated through both institutional collaborations, and student and faculty mobility and allowing entry of top world ranked Universities to open campuses in our country.

### **Motivated, Energized, and Capable Faculty**

NEP 2020 recognises that the success of higher education institutions is the quality and engagement of its faculty. HEIs will have clearly defined, independent, and transparent processes and criteria for faculty recruitment. Faculty will be given the freedom to design their own curricular and pedagogical approaches within the approved framework. Excellence will be further incentivized through appropriate rewards, promotions, recognitions, and movement into institutional leadership. Faculty not delivering on basic norms will be held accountable.'

### **Effective Governance and leadership in HEIs**

Through a suitable system of graded accreditation and graded autonomy, and in a phased manner over a period of 15 years, all HEIs in India will aim to become independent self-governing institutions pursuing innovation and excellence. Measures will be taken at all HEIs to ensure leadership of the highest quality and promote an institutional culture of excellence. Institutional governance based on autonomy - academic, administrative and financial - is envisioned with each higher education institution having an Board of Governors. All leadership positions and Head of institutions will be offered to persons with high academic qualifications and demonstrated administrative and leadership capabilities along with abilities to manage complex situations.

### **Regulation**

There will be a single overarching umbrella body for promotion of higher education- the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)- with independent bodies for standard setting- the General Education Council; funding- Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC); accreditation- National Accreditation Council (NAC); and regulation- National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC). Regulation will be 'light but tight' to ensure financial probity and public-spiritedness to eliminate conflicts of interest with transparent self-disclosure as the norm not an inspectorial regime. The regulatory body will function through a faceless intervention through technology for regulation & will have powers to penalise HEIs not conforming to norms and standards. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards.

**Teacher Education:** The 4-year integrated stage-specific, subject- specific Bachelor of Education offered at multidisciplinary institutions would be the way forward. A new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021, will be formulated by the NCTE in consultation with NCERT. By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree that teaches a range of knowledge content and pedagogy and includes strong practicum training in the form of student-teaching at local schools.

Stringent action will be taken against substandard stand-alone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

A **National Mission for Mentoring** shall be established, with a large pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty – including those with the ability to teach in Indian languages – who would be willing to provide short and long-term mentoring/professional support to university/college teachers.

### **Professional Education**

All professional education will be an integral part of the higher education system. Stand-alone technical universities, health science universities, legal and agricultural universities, or institutions in these or other fields, will aim to become multi-disciplinary institutions.

### **Technology in Education**

An autonomous body, the **National Educational Technology Forum** (NETF), will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration. Appropriate integration of technology into all levels of education will be done to improve classroom processes, support teacher professional development, enhance educational access for disadvantaged groups and streamline educational planning, administration and management. Technology-based education platforms, such as DIKSHA/SWAYAM, will be better integrated across school and higher education. HEIs will play an active role in conducting research on disruptive technologies and in creating instructional materials and courses including online courses in cutting-edge domains.

**Online Education and Digital Education:** A comprehensive set of recommendations for promoting online education consequent in the recent rise in epidemics and pandemics in order to ensure preparedness with alternative modes of quality education whenever and wherever traditional and in-person modes of education are not possible, has been covered. A dedicated unit for the purpose of orchestrating the building of digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building will be created in the MHRD to look after the e-education needs of both school and higher education.

### **Adult Education**

The policy aims to achieve 100% youth and adult literacy by 2030.

### **Promotion of Indian languages**

To ensure the preservation, growth, and vibrancy of all Indian languages, several initiatives are envisaged. More HEIs, and more programmes in higher education, will use the mother tongue/local language as a medium of instruction, and/or offer programmes bilingually, in order to increase access and GER and also to promote the strength, usage, and vibrancy of all Indian languages. An Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) will be established. Sanskrit and all Indian language institutes and departments across the country will be significantly strengthened. National Institute (or Institutes) for Pali, Persian and Prakrit will be set up. Efforts to preserve and promote all Indian languages including classical, tribal and

endangered languages will be undertaken.

### **Financing Education**

Education is a public service and must not be a commercial activity or a source of profit. Multiple mechanisms with checks and balances will combat and stop the commercialization of higher education. All education institutions will be held to similar standards of audit and disclosure as a 'not for profit' entity. The Centre and the States will work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest.

The **Central Advisory Board of Education will be strengthened** to ensure coordination to bring overall focus on quality education. The remodeled and rejuvenated CABE shall also be responsible for developing, articulating, evaluating, and revising the vision of education in the country on a continuous basis, in close collaboration with MHRD and the corresponding apex bodies of States. It shall also create and continuously review the institutional frameworks that shall help attain this vision.

**Ministry of Education:** In order to bring the focus back on education and learning, it may be desirable to re-designate MHRD as the Ministry of Education (MoE).

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