

## EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AS AN AGENDA OF NEP 2020

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### **Abstract**

New Education Policy, 2020 aims to make Indian education globally competitive and cater to the demands of economic, social and technological developments. Despite several interventions and programs, lot remains to be achieved. Equitable good quality inclusive education is a not only one of the significant objectives of education policies but also a global challenge as large number of children still remain out of school. The study is literature-based and looks into the issues from policy point of view. The paper provides a view of government's vision to provide education to all groups and enhance its quality. It highlights the need for equitable education both at the national and global level and tries to establish the relevance of equitable education in a challenging environment and draws similarity in various policy measures.

**Keywords:** New education Policy, Indian Education, Equitable, Quality, Inclusive Education

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a fundamental right of children and the most basic requirement for improvement in quality of life. Challenges include lack of access, poor quality and rigid curriculum issues. To address issues pertaining to education several measures and interventions are being introduced, yet lot more needs to be done in NEP 2020, was presented by the Education Minister of India, and is characterised by its effort to bring about significant change from approaches to classroom practices. It has been an attempt to bring the Indian education changes to make it globally competitive, cater to demands arisen due to changing structure of technological infrastructure and knowledge economy. The policy very clearly identifies the disadvantaged groups of the society on various parameters. This identification goes a long way in deciding the measures and interventions for these groups to enhance access to good quality education according to their needs. Quality of education has several dimensions like quality of infrastructure, teaching learning material, presence of technology, effective curriculum, well trained, skilled, and motivated teachers. Equity and equality are two goals that governments over years have tried to achieve. Though there has been a lot of positive changes, several hurdles remain to be achieved.

### **OBJECTIVES**

To identify the relevance of equitable education in Indian school context.

To explore the significance of equitable education in global context.

To understand the meaning of equitable education in Indian context.

## METHODOLOGY

The study is literature based with most of the data collected from various Government and Non-Government agencies. It also includes identifying relevant key terms from various policies with aim to draw agreement on issues of equity and equitability in school education at domestic and global level. The next step in analysis of data is to identify the relevance of these issues in policy recommendations.

## NEED FOR EQUITABLE EDUCATION

**Merriam Webster defines “equitable” education as one that is dealing fairly and equally to all concerned”**

Equity and equality are terms that are frequently used and discussed in context of Indian education and learners need. While equality refers to providing similar treatment without discrimination between different groups, equity focuses on learner specific need fulfilment to bring about equality among them. Equitable quality education refers to providing fairness in access and quality of education provided to all learners. This is necessary due to huge disparities that negatively affects education and learning outcomes. This has adverse effect on the future education quality of students. Equitable quality education promotes efforts which are according to the needs of the students. Disparities exists among different groups of society due to several factors like geographic region, religion, income, socio cultural practice and abilities of students. Several backward and remote areas do not have enough schools or trained teachers which affect the enrolment and attendance of students of that region. Poor infrastructure or lack of well-equipped schools also has strong impact on quality of learning. Equitability issues also relate to access to resources like teaching learning material(TLM), staff and gender specific need. Differently abled learners have special needs for which schools need to be upgraded and prepare. All these dimensions determine the equitability aspects of school education.

## GLOBAL SCENARIO

Number of children out of school in 2030: 200 million

Total primary school children: 59 million

Lower secondary school children:62 million

Upper Secondary school:138 million

## INDIAN SCHOOL SCENARIO

As per UNICEF, India has achieved near universal enrolment at the primary level with 70 million children attending primary school. However concerns arise from the following figures:

- Out of every 100 students, 29 percent boys and girls drop out before completing the elementary education.
- 20 million children are not attending primary school.
- Total number of out of school children in the age group 6-17 years stand at 3.22 cr (NSSO survey 2017-18)

- Majority of out of school children (almost 75%) are from the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal.
- Poor representation of children from scheduled caste and scheduled tribe in school education.
- Greater percentage of drop out children come from marginalised communities.

## QUALITY ISSUES

Infrastructure Issues	2018(%age of schools)
Mid-Day meal	91
Drinking water	74.8
Toilet	74.2
Girl's toilet	66.4
Library	36.9
Electricity(on the day of visit)	78.5
Computer (on the day of the visit)	6.5

(ASER 2018 Report)

Despite efforts in forms of government schemes and programs like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, RMSA or Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Schools specially government schools have not been able to achieve success in provision of basic amenities in schools like quality infrastructure and resources.

## GLOBAL ACTION

DAKAR FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION, 2000
Expanding and improving early childhood care and education by providing comprehensive education specially to disadvantaged groups.
Provision of good quality, universal primary education to all by 2015.
Provision of free access to good quality education specifically girls of disadvantaged groups.
Improving access to equitable education to all children by fulfilling learning needs of various learners' groups.
Removal of gender inequality in education and achieving equality by 2015.
Access to lifelong learning programs and skill development.

SDG 4: TARGETS TO BE ACHIEVED BY 2030
SDG-4: Sustainability Development Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
Free primary and secondary education
Equal access to quality pre-primary education
Equal access to affordable quality technical, vocational and higher education

Increase in number of people with relevant skills for financial success
eliminate discrimination in education
Universal literacy and numeracy
Education for sustainable development and global citizenship
Build and upgrade safe and inclusive schools
Increase in the number of scholarships for the developing countries
Improving the number of qualified teachers

## NEW EDUCATION POLICY, 2020

### SOCIAL AND ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS IDENTIFICATION

Socio cultural basis	Gender basis	Socio Economic	Region	Disability
Schedule Caste	women	Low income	Rural	Learning
Minorities	Transgender	Migrant workers	Small towns	
Scheduled Tribe		vulnerable	Aspirational districts	
OBC		Orphans and abandoned children		

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF NEP,2020

- Setting up of Gender inclusion Fund with focus on education of women and transgenders through adequate provisioning and availability of resources.
- Identification of Special Education Zone in areas of socially disadvantaged groups and aspirational districts. This would enhance efforts in regions which require better and increased resources for education purposes.
- Giving recognition and identifying measures to follow the Rights of persons with disability act (RPWD), 2016.
- Following the disability Act, increased efforts to be made for inclusive classroom, with well-equipped infrastructure covering all areas of school education.
- Provision of scholarships for students of various economically weak background through setting up of “Single Window System” under one agency.
- Making a flexible curriculum with choice-based learning method for children with special needs.
- Improving teacher education programs to prepare future teachers to meet the learning needs of children with special needs, creating greater awareness among teachers and use of technology.
- Improving the curriculum of teacher education by making it more dynamic and multidisciplinary in nature and flexible in structure.
- Making infrastructure disable friendly and provide them with flexible and suitable modes of learning.
- Promoting alternate schools to meet the requirements of children with special needs

- Standardization of Indian Sign Language across states and also regional sign languages where they find relevance.
- Creating a safe and sensitive environment through inculcating values in the formal school learning process.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The review of various reports like ASER,2018, Dakar Framework which goes back to 2000, Education for all and NEP,2020 highlight certain common goals that governments over decades have tried to achieve, yet efforts have fallen short of requirements. Since Dakar Framework of Action (2000), focus has been on different disadvantaged groups and has found mention even in the New Education Policy. Access to good quality education has not been achieved despite efforts and programs.

Greater focus of all the policies and programmes have been the disadvantaged groups like ethnic minorities, girls, transgenders, disabled and economically weak students. Quality continues to be a challenge with changing dimensions. Out of school children are a big cause of concern and makes age-appropriate education an important aspect of quality education.

Discrimination is one of the severe problems faced by many children due to various reasons even today.

In Indian education also, government schools lack sufficient support and basic facilities which negatively affect the attendance rate. There exists disparity in quality of government and private schools.

Several disadvantaged groups continue to miss out on the development and progress made in ICT and lag behind others on various learning outcome parameters like reading, numeracy skills etc at early stage of education itself. Greater focus is on Early child-care and education. The new structure of education proposed by the policy is aimed at making classroom learning process effective, enjoyable and experience based.

## **CONCLUSION**

The efforts to improve the quality of education in NEP,2020 is in accordance to global policy “Education for all” giving acknowledgement to issues and concerns raised by global agencies like UNICEF. The New Education Policy, and its recommendations follow the global targets from Dakar framework and UN policy on equitable education. The recommendations are expected to address concerns of existing disparities among various learner groups through identification of grounds of existence and make efforts for removal of discrimination.

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