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विशेषांक



राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 : परिप्रेक्ष्य और परिवर्त्य

मध्य भारती

मानविकी एवं समाजविज्ञान की द्विभाषी शोध-पत्रिका

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संरक्षक

प्रो. नीलिमा गुप्ता
कुलपति

प्रधान सम्पादक

प्रो. अम्बिकादत्त शर्मा

सम्पादक

प्रो. भवतोष इन्द्रगुरु
प्रो. ब्रजेश कुमार श्रीवास्तव
डॉ. आशुतोष कुमार मिश्र

अतिथि सम्पादक

डॉ. संजय शर्मा

प्रबन्ध सम्पादक

डॉ. छबिल कुमार मेहेर



डॉक्टर हरीसिंह गौर विश्वविद्यालय

सागर (मध्यप्रदेश) - 470003

दूरभाष : (07582) 297133

ई-मेल : madhyabharti.2016@gmail.com

सम्पादकीय परामर्श मण्डल

- प्रो. आनंद प्रकाश त्रिपाठी
- प्रो. अशोक अहिरवार
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मध्य भारती

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ई-मेल : madhyabharti.2016@gmail.com

आवरण : डॉ. छबिल कुमार मेहेर

मुद्रण :

अमन प्रकाशन

कटरा नमक मंडी, सागर (म.प्र.)

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राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति : परिप्रेक्ष्य और परिवर्त्य की सैद्धान्तिकी

संजय शर्मा

तीन दशक से अधिक के लम्बे अन्तराल के बाद भारतीय लोकतंत्र ने शिक्षा के माध्यम से 'सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक परिवर्तन से आत्म-निर्भर राष्ट्र' बनाने की वैचारिक परियोजना के रूप में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 को दो वर्ष पूर्व अंगीकार किया है।

इस शिक्षा नीति के निर्माताओं के समक्ष ऐसी कई चुनौतियां थी, जिनका सामना संभवतया इससे पूर्ववर्ती शिक्षा नीतियों के निर्माताओं को नहीं करना पड़ा। मसलन इस शिक्षा नीति को जहाँ एक ओर 21वीं सदी के लिए अद्यतन ज्ञानात्मक कौशल से परिपूर्ण नई पीढ़ी का निर्माण करना था, वहीं दूसरी ओर भारतीय ज्ञान, संस्कृति और मानस के वि-औपनिवेशिकरण की नवाचारी पहल करते हुए देशज ज्ञान परम्पराओं में अंतर्निहित जीवनादर्शों को पुनः सृजित करना था। इस संदर्भ में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 के अध्यक्ष प्रो. के. कस्तूरीरंगन ने अपने एक लेख के हवाले से यह स्पष्ट किया कि 21वीं सदी का भारतीय अधिगमकर्ता जहाँ एक ओर अपनी समृद्ध ज्ञान-विरासत, संस्कृति एवं मूल्यों से पुनर्संगठित होगा वहीं आधुनिक-तकनीकी दुनिया के प्राणसूत्र "बिग-डेटा, मशीन लर्निंग और आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलीजेंस" उसको वैश्विक नेतृत्वकर्ता के रूप में परिलक्षित करेगा।

I

यह शिक्षा नीति आद्योपांत इस बात का व्यावहारिक स्पष्टीकरण है कि राष्ट्र के समग्र विकास की वैचारिक परियोजना की याग्निक प्रतिदीप्ति का मूल शिक्षा के मार्ग से निर्मित जनचेतना से ही संभव है।

'न हि ज्ञानेन सादृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते' (गीता अध्याय-4, श्लोक 38) में संकल्पित अवधारणा से वैश्विक मानवता का ज्ञानमार्गी संधान करने की जिजीविषा ही भारतीय जनचेतना का सांख्यिक मूल और ज्ञानमीमांसीय पक्ष है। यही कारण था कि शिक्षा नीति ने अपनी प्रस्तावना में इस बात को रेखांकित किया कि ज्ञान, प्रज्ञा और सत्य की खोज भारतीय विचार परम्परा और दर्शन में सदैव सर्वोच्च मानवीय लक्ष्य रहा है। इसी कारण प्राचीन और सनातन भारतीय ज्ञान और विचार की इसी समृद्ध परम्परा के आलोक में यह नीति तैयार की गई। शिक्षा की यह लोक नीति 27 अध्यायों में वर्णित है जिसमें भारतीय शिक्षा के हर आयाम को व्याख्यायित और संदर्भित किया गया है। यह नीति शिक्षाविदों के अलावा 2.5 लाख ग्राम पंचायतों, 6600 विकासखंडों, 6000 ग्राम स्तरीय ईकाइयों, 676 जनपदों से प्राप्त लगभग 2 लाख से अधिक सुझावों एवं अभिमतों के आधार पर तैयार जनभावना को अंतर्भूत किए हुए हैं। इस नीति के पांच महत्वपूर्ण आधार-स्तम्भ हैं, सभी तक पहुँच, सभी की भागीदारी, एक समान गुणवत्ता, सहज-वहनीय (किफायती) शिक्षा और जबाबदेही। यह नीति सम्पूर्ण शिक्षा व्यवस्था को 21वीं सदी के नये अर्थ संदर्भों में अवलोकित करती है। जिसके तहत विद्यालय शिक्षा से लेकर उच्च शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में आमूल-चूल परिवर्तन का मार्ग-प्रशस्त हुआ।

वस्तुतः शिक्षा के संदर्भ में यह प्रगतिगामी समझ और रणनीति एक लम्बे अन्तराल से बहु-प्रतीक्षित ज्ञानमीमांसीय प्रकार्यात्मक परियोजना का ही विस्तार है, जिसे इस शिक्षा नीति के हवाले से अमलीजामा पहनाया जा सका। नीति के द्वारा न केवल शैक्षिक तन्त्र, संरचनाओं एवं प्रकार्यों को ही परिमार्जित करने का लक्ष्य रखा गया बल्कि सम्पूर्ण ज्ञान उद्देश्यों एवं संदर्भों को 'अन-लर्न, लर्न और री-लर्न' की संज्ञानात्मक त्रयी के रूप में एक नवीन परिप्रेक्ष्य में भी प्रस्तुत किया गया।

यह एक ऐसे ज्ञान समाज को निर्मित करने वाला शैक्षिक दस्तावेज है, जो एक ओर 'स्मार्ट -ईरा' के कारण दुनिया में होने वाले तीव्रगामी परिवर्तनों और उभरती हुई आधुनिक-तकनीकी विश्व व्यवस्था के साथ प्रगतिशील सम्बन्ध स्थापित करती है तो दूसरी ओर भारतीय समाज और सांस्कृतिक व्यवस्था में कालक्रम से आक्षिप्त हुई जड़ता, विकृतियाँ और आत्म-मुग्धता का प्रक्षालन भी करती है।

भारतीय सभ्यता के गौरवशाली अतीत के प्रति निष्क्रिय गौरवबोध को समकाल के वैश्विक संदर्भों में भारतीय ज्ञान-परम्परा की आत्म-चेतना का विस्तार भी करती है। दूसरे शब्दों में कहा जाये तो यह शिक्षा नीति 'एसेंशियल मॉडर्निटी' का प्रतिरोधी बनकर 'प्रोसेस मॉडर्निटी' के रूप में अपनी देशज आधुनिकता के माध्यम से विकास के स्वकीय लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने के प्रति संकल्पित है।

इस शिक्षा नीति के केंद्र में मनुष्य की वह भारतीय अवधारणा है जिसमें मानव महज एक जैविक इकाई नहीं अपितु समस्त चैतन्य सृजनाओं का स्रोत पशुवंश परम्परा के अधिभार से मुक्त (पश्चिम के जैविक- सामाजिक डार्विनवाद के विपरीत) एक आत्मचेतन सत्ता है और ज्ञान के समस्त अनुशासन उसी मनुष्य के आधिभौतिक, आधिदैविक और आध्यात्मिक आयामों को चतुर्दिग रूप से पुष्ट करते हैं। मनुष्य के इस ज्ञानात्मक अस्तित्व के सांभ्यतिक-सांस्कृतिक विस्तार के लिए यह शिक्षा नीति एक ओर हमें 'आनो भद्रा क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः' की भारतीय ज्ञान-संस्कृति का प्रति-स्मरण कराती है वहीं दूसरी ओर 'प्रतिप्रश्नेनसेवया' की ज्ञानमीमांसीय अभियान्त्रिकी के द्वारा ज्ञान और सत्य के प्रति उदारमना प्रवृत्ति को प्रखर आलोचनात्मकता के विमर्श से संपोषित भी करती है।

पश्चिमीकरण और राजनैतिक उपनिवेशीकरण से उपजे सांस्कृतिक हीनता के बोध ने भारतीय जन शिक्षा के उस सामर्थ्य और शक्ति का उत्तरोत्तर हास किया जो एक सृजनशील, ज्ञानशील, समतामूलक एवं लोकतान्त्रिक समाज की निर्मिति के लिए संचित निधि थी। यह शिक्षा नीति अपनी प्रस्तावना और उद्देश्यों में एक ऐसा संगठित वैचारिक उपक्रम और रणनीति है जिसके माध्यम से भारतीय मन, मानस और संस्कृति का ज्ञान-सम्पत विऔपनिवेशीकरण किया जा सके। महात्मा गाँधी की नई तालीम के संदर्भ 'सच्ची शिक्षा का आधार बालकों के आध्यात्मिक, बौद्धिक तथा शारीरिक विकास की प्रेरणा के अतिरिक्त स्वावलंबन और स्वराज की आध्यात्मिक चेतना' में देखे जाते हैं। यही कारण है कि नई शिक्षा नीति का स्वरूप 'जड़ से जगत तक, मनुष्य से मानवता तक, अतीत से आधुनिकता तक सभी बिन्दुओं का समावेश करते हुये तय किया गया है।

II

यह शैक्षिक दस्तावेज इस रूप में भी विशिष्ट है कि यह नीति, रीति और संदर्भ में स्वयं ही अपने क्रियान्वयन की रणनीतियों एवं प्रक्रियाओं के लिए मार्ग प्रशस्त करता है। इस आलोक में शिक्षा नीति के सफल सञ्चालन की जिम्मेदारी और जवाबदेही शिक्षा संस्थानों और शिक्षकों की हो जाती है। गौरतलब है कि विश्वस्तरीय गुणात्मक शैक्षिक संस्थाओं के अभाव से जूझ रहे भारतीय अकादमिक जगत के लिए यह एक सुअवसर है जहाँ वह अपने सम्पूर्ण कलेवर (संरचना, प्रक्रिया, विनियम, पाठ्यक्रम, अनुसन्धान, संसाधन आदि) को नए अर्थ-संदर्भों में पुनर्संरचित करते हुए और अधिक प्रासंगिक बना सके।

इस शिक्षा नीति ने शिक्षकों पर सर्वाधिक भरोसा किया है बावजूद इसके कि शिक्षक-शिक्षा के मूल्यांकन के लिए गठित न्यायमूर्ति जेएस वर्मा कमेटी (2012) की रिपोर्ट यह बताती है कि अयोग्य शिक्षक तैयार करके हम देश के 370 मिलियन से अधिक बच्चों को खतरे में डाल रहे हैं। देश में प्रतिवर्ष 19,78,346 शिक्षक तैयार हो रहे हैं। केंद्रीय शिक्षक पात्रता परीक्षा (सी-टीईटी-2019) के परिणाम से पता चलता है कि लगभग 85% शिक्षक, इस पात्रता परीक्षा (सी-टीईटी) को उत्तीर्ण करने में विफल रहे हैं।

शिक्षकों में सीखने के प्रति उपेक्षा, अपनी क्षमताओं का उचित मूल्यांकन न कर पाना और अपनी नेतृत्व क्षमता के प्रति अविश्वास के कारण ही शिक्षक स्वयं को एक 'सामाजिक परिवर्तनकर्ता' के रूप में प्रस्तुत नहीं कर सके हैं। मसलन अधिकांश शिक्षकों के पास स्व-मूल्यांकन के प्रति कोई व्यवस्थित, ज्ञानात्मक एवं संरचनात्मक दृष्टि नहीं है, जिसके आधार पर वे अपने उत्तरोत्तर विकास को देख सकें। शिक्षा संस्थानों में मौजूद 'संरचनात्मक जड़ता, बौद्धिक पदानुक्रम एवं सीखने की संस्कृति' का अभाव भी अक्सर शिक्षकों को सीखने से रोकता है। यह राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 शिक्षकों को उनकी वर्तमान पारम्परिक एवं जड़ कार्य-संस्कृति, असुरक्षित सेवा स्थितियाँ एवं अपर्याप्त वेतन देने जैसे विभिन्न प्रकार के उत्पीड़नों आदि से बाहर निकालने में समर्थ है।

भारतीय कक्षाओं में बेहतर नहीं सीख पाने की स्थितियों के लिए शिक्षकों को दोष देने के बजाय, यह शिक्षा नीति, शिक्षकों की गुणवत्ता और उनमें प्रेरणा की कमी के लिए शिक्षक-शिक्षा, असुरक्षित सेवा नियोजन, कार्य संस्कृति के अभाव, असम्मानजनक सेवा शर्तों आदि के परिणामस्वरूप विकसित हुई निराशाजनक कार्यात्मक संरचनाओं एवं स्थितियों को जिम्मेदार ठहराती है।

21वीं सदी केवल शिक्षार्थियों के लिए ही नहीं वरन शिक्षकों के लिए भी उतनी ही चुनौतीपूर्ण है। यह एक ऐसा अवसर है जहाँ शिक्षक और शिक्षार्थी दोनों ही ज्ञान की नूतन विषय-वस्तुओं एवं संदर्भों के साथ पहली बार अंतर्क्रिया कर रहे हैं। ऑनलाइन शिक्षा, मशीन-अधिगम और कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता की अवधारणा दोनों के लिए ही नवीन है।

वैश्विक स्तर पर पिछले कई दशकों से 'शिक्षक' और 'शिक्षण व्यवसाय' चिंता का विषय बना हुआ है। भारत में लगभग 9.7 मिलियन शिक्षकों की व्यावसायिक भूमिका और पहचान को स्कूली शिक्षा के विस्तार ने विविधतापूर्ण और चुनौतीपूर्ण बताया है (नो टीचर-नो क्लास, यूनेस्को रिपोर्ट-2021)। ऐसे में भारतीय शिक्षकों से 'पारम्परिक गुरु' और 'आधुनिक शिक्षाशास्त्र के ज्ञान' से संपन्न और समृद्ध होने की उम्मीद की जाती है।

वस्तुतः अध्यापकों के लिए व्यावसायिक मानकों को विकसित करने का प्रमुख उद्देश्य शिक्षण-अधिगम की गुणवत्ता को बढ़ाने के लिए उत्तरदायी मानकों का निर्माण करना है। इस क्रम में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 के पैरा क्रमांक 5.20 के आलोक में राष्ट्रीय अध्यापक शिक्षा परिषद् (एन.सी.टी.ई.) ने शिक्षकों के लिए व्यावसायिक मानकों पर एक प्रारूप तैयार किया है। यह शिक्षक गुणवत्ता का गठन करने वाला एक सार्वजनिक संकल्प-पत्र है। यह शिक्षकों की कार्य-संस्कृति को परिभाषित करता है। 21वीं सदी के शिक्षा संस्थानों में उच्च गुणवत्ता वाले, प्रभावी शिक्षण के मापकों को स्पष्ट करता है, जिनसे विद्यार्थियों के शैक्षिक परिणामों में अपेक्षित सुधार किया जा सके। इसका मुख्य उद्देश्य शिक्षकों के लिए एक राष्ट्रीय सामान्य मानक स्थापित करना है, ताकि ज्ञान, कौशल, स्वभाव, कक्षा अभ्यास आदि को मजबूत और प्रभावी बनाया जा सके।

बौद्धिक रचनात्मकता के इस माहौल में शैक्षिक संस्थानों, शिक्षकों और शैक्षिक नेतृत्व को अपने परंपरागत क्षेत्र से बाहर आकर व्यावहारिक अधिगम प्रणाली को विकसित करने के लिए आधुनिक व्यावसायिक मानकों को आत्मसात करना होगा। वैज्ञानिक अनुसन्धान और नवाचारों हेतु इस प्रकार के पारिस्थितिकी-तंत्र और कार्य-संस्कृति को विकसित और पोषित करना होगा जिससे संसाधनों के भागीदारीपूर्ण सृजन के साथ-साथ लोकतान्त्रिक एवं समतामूलक वितरण भी सुनिश्चित हो सके।

ऐसा करके ही 21वीं सदी का शिक्षक सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक परिवर्तन का माध्यम बनते हुए व्यक्ति, समाज और मानवता को सांभ्यतिक सार्थकता प्रदान कर सकेगा। शिक्षकों की यह नैतिक जिम्मेदारी है कि वे एक दूसरे से सीखते हुए स्वयं को समृद्ध, नवाचारी और जीवंत बनाये रखें ऐसा करके ही वे राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 के उद्देश्यों को पूरा कर सकेंगे।

'शिक्षक की अस्मिता एवं गरिमा' को स्वीकार करते हुए एनईपी-2020 ने भारतीय समाज में शिक्षकों के उच्च सम्मान तथा उनकी सामाजिक स्वीकार्यता को पुनर्स्थापित करने के उद्देश्य से कई व्यवस्थामूलक नवाचारी

सुधार किए हैं। जैसे, शिक्षा नीति इस बात पर सहमत दिखती है कि बेहतर शिक्षक पैदा नहीं होते, बल्कि प्रशिक्षणों के माध्यम से तैयार किये जाते हैं। इस तरह की वैचारिकी ही विलक्षण एवं चिंतनशील आधुनिक युवा पीढ़ी को शिक्षक-शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में कार्य करने के लिए प्रेरित कर सकेगी।

भारतीय शिक्षा व्यवस्था की चुनौतियाँ ही इस शिक्षा नीति की व्यावहारिक चुनौतियाँ भी है मसलन 2030 तक 2 करोड़ बच्चों को शिक्षा की मुख्यधारा में लाना, माध्यमिक शिक्षा तक सार्वभौमिक पहुँच और सौ प्रतिशत नामांकन के साथ-साथ, 2035 तक उच्चतर शिक्षा में 50 प्रतिशत नामांकन को सुनिश्चित करना तथा शिक्षा पर व्यय को सकल घरेलू उत्पाद के 1.7 से बढ़ाकर 06 प्रतिशत तक करना इस शिक्षा-नीति के सांख्यिकीय संकल्प हैं।

वस्तुतः भारतीय जन संस्कृति और सांभ्यतिक वांग्मय ज्ञान, न्याय और समता की साधना को अभीष्ट के रूप में आत्मसात करता है। हमें अपने इतिहासबोध को 'सांस्कृतिक पंगुता से मुक्ति' के वैचारिक आन्दोलन के रूप देखना चाहिए। क्योंकि यह हमें अपने सांभ्यतिक सह-अस्तित्व के उदात्त अद्वैतिक स्वरूप को 'सार्वभौमिक मानवतावाद' के रूप में एक नई वैचारिकी प्रदान करता है। इस संदर्भ में यह शिक्षा नीति इसी प्रेरणा को निष्ठा में बदलने का 'प्रशासनिक सर्कुलर' नहीं बल्कि 'जन संकल्प-पत्र' है। यही इसके अभीष्ट और क्रियान्वयन का 'प्रक्टिकम' है।

III

किसी भी देश-समाज की पत्र-पत्रिकाएं ज्ञान-उत्पादन और वैचारिक-विमर्श का सशक्त माध्यम हुआ करती हैं, इसीलिए पत्र-पत्रिकाओं में प्रकाशित सामग्री के माध्यम से किसी देश-समाज की वैचारिक रुझान और ताकत भी सहज ही पहचानी जाती है। पत्र-पत्रिकाओं के माध्यम से ज्ञान-उत्पादन की गुणवत्ता और बौद्धिक गतिशीलता संपादक के कठोर निर्णयों से निर्धारित नहीं होती बल्कि लेखकों की ज्ञानात्मक प्रतिबद्धता से रूपायित होती है।

मध्य भारती के इस विशेषांक के अतिथि सम्पादक के रूप में मुझे अपने स्वभाव के विपरीत संपादक की कठोरता को थोड़े समय के लिए अवाप्त करना पड़ा। इस कठोरता का वरण करने में मुझे मध्य भारती के प्रधान संपादक, संपादक, प्रबंध संपादक एवं संपादक मंडल से जो सहयोग और संबल प्राप्त हुआ उसके लिए उनके प्रति आभार व्यक्त करना भी कदाचित उनके योगदान को न्यून करना ही होगा।

मैं उन सभी लगभग एक सौ पचास लेखकों के प्रति कृतज्ञ हूँ जिन्होंने मेरे आवाहन और उसकी विषयगत उपादेयता का समादर करते हुए 'राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति: परिप्रेक्ष्य और परिवर्त्य की सैद्धान्तिकी' पर अपने आलेख प्रदान किये। मुझे खेद है कि पत्रिका की भौतिक सीमा में प्राप्त आलेखों को समाविष्ट करने की बाध्यता के चलते केवल 32 आलेखों को ही स्थान दे पाये। मैं इसे उल्लेखनीय और आत्मतोषीय मानता हूँ कि इस अंक में पद्मश्री जगमोहन सिंह राजपूत, प्रो. चाँद किरण सलूजा, प्रो. आर.के. मिश्र, प्रो. टी.वी. कट्टीमनी, प्रो. आर. एस. कुरिल, प्रो. फुरकान कमर, प्रो. चन्द्रभूषण शर्मा, प्रो. बनवारीलाल नाटिया, प्रो. पंकज अरोरा, प्रो. सरोज शर्मा, प्रो. विश्वनाथ, डॉ. राकेश सिंह आदि के सुविचारित आलेख समयबद्ध सीमा में प्राप्त हुए और उन्हें हम प्रकाशित कर पा रहे हैं। इस वैचारिक आयोजन का सम्पूर्ण श्रेय प्रो. नीलिमा गुप्ता, कुलपति, हरीसिंह गौर विश्वविद्यालय, सागर को दिया जाना चाहिए कि उन्होंने राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 पर केन्द्रित विमर्श को समालोचनात्मक रूप में समाकलित करने का संकल्प लिया और इसके अतिथि संपादक का दायित्व मुझे सौंपा। मेरे प्रति उनके इस अकादमिक विश्वास के लिए उनका आभार व्यक्त करना सर्वथा अपर्याप्त होगा। मैं उनके इस निर्णय और विश्वास पर कितना सफल रहा, इसके आकलन का दायित्व लेखकों और सुधी पाठकों पर छोड़ता हूँ।

सहायक प्राध्यापक

डॉ. हरीसिंह गौर विश्वविद्यालय, सागर (म.प्र.)

Holistic Paradigms in Education Ecosystem through Implementation of NEP-2020 : Suggestive Benchmarks

Neelima Gupta

“The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence”

- Rabindranath Tagore

Introduction

The Indian higher education system is one of the largest such systems in the World. Higher education significantly contributes towards sustainable livelihoods and economic development of the nation. As India moves towards becoming a knowledge economy and society, more and more young Indians are likely to aspire for higher education.

In India, since times immemorial, the emphasis has been on holistic development of the students leading to complete self realization and liberalization (Mittal, 2020). According to Swami Vivekanand, "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas." India has a rich heritage of great diversity manifested in intellectual wisdom, culture, multiple languages, varied dances and folk arts, music, pottery, cuisines, architecture, textiles, bio diversity, eco-variability and much more. It is time to re-imagine Indian higher education system and NEP 2020 is a milestone in this direction. The institutions have to come forward in order to fulfil the goals defined in the policy.

There are new challenges of management and regulation being faced by the institutions, both in the public sector and also in the private sector. As a result, the old structures of managing these institutions are now required to undergo drastic changes to satisfy the expectations of their students and the market. There has been a growing challenge of providing equal opportunities for quality higher education to ever-growing number of students, correcting sectoral and social imbalances, reviving institutions, crossing international benchmarks of excellence and extending the frontiers of knowledge. Fundamental reforms in the existing institutional structure of higher education and their governance is necessary so that the much needed dynamism can be

infused and a renewed sense of purpose in the higher education sector in India can evolve (Kumar 2018). During the Post Covid era, focus has shifted towards skill based education. India Skills Report (Wheebox, 2020) provides a preview of talent landscape in the country stating that 47% of the current employability is affected by changes in the demand for skills and changing nature of jobs. Gupta (2020) diverted attention towards the challenges faced by the Indian higher education system and how employability and entrepreneurship can be promoted to make education more productive.

There is absolutely no substitute to quality of higher education and the country should prepare itself to export the Indian brand of education to foreign countries. The National Education Policy has been long awaited and finally the NEP 2020 document seems to be a cure for many ailments in higher education and a way towards incorporating the changed global realities. As per NEP 2020, an effective education system is one which provides a safe and stimulating learning environment, possesses physical and other resources conducive to learning and provides varied positive learning experiences so as to build on the unique capabilities of each student. The policy is set to increase access, equity, and inclusion through a range of measures. It calls for continuous integration and coordination across institutions and across all stages of education. The policy is based on a wider purpose of higher education that focuses on holistic development of an individual, beyond the creation of greater opportunities for individual employment.

Challenges in Higher Education

The various challenges in the current ecosystem of higher education are:

- Need for wider Education ecosystem
- Need for tackling teacher demand-supply imbalance
- Need for linking learning and job prospects
- Need for transcending the traditional pedagogy
- Need for "Made for me" education
- Need for innovative models of funding
- Need for Vocational Education
- Need to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit amongst students
- Need to promote collaborative research
- Need for Gender parity in Education
- Need to develop stress coping abilities among students in higher education

Key features of the Policy

The NEP 2020 seems to have taken into account all these problems and much beyond and has offered an opportunity to revamp the quality of higher education system. The key features of the policy have been identified and they can broadly be classified into 5 domains of higher education:

1. The Structural Perspective
2. The Learning, Teaching and Pedagogical Perspective
3. The Research Perspective
4. The Regulatory and Governance Perspective, and
5. The Financial Perspective

Before putting the policy into practice, it is imperative to discuss the key features in various domains.

Perspectives of the Policy (Fig. 1)

1. The Structural Perspective

- A higher educational system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities, HEI clusters and colleges, with at least one in or near every district, each of which will aim to have 3,000 or more students to be set up, with special focus on underserved regions
- Single-stream HEI's, in particular, to add departments across different fields to become multidisciplinary by 2030
- Present nomenclature of HEIs such as 'deemed to be university', 'affiliating university', 'affiliating technical university', 'unitary university' to be replaced simply by 'university' on fulfilling the criteria as per norms
- Autonomous degree-granting College (AC) that grants undergraduate degrees and is primarily focused on undergraduate teaching, though not restricted to that, be developed through a stage-wise mechanism for granting graded autonomy to colleges and further evolve into Research-intensive or Teaching-intensive Universities
- Constituent college of a university would constitute to be fully a part of the university
- Gradually phasing out the system of 'affiliated colleges' over a period of fifteen years
- Each existing affiliating university to be responsible for mentoring its affiliated colleges so that they eventually become autonomous degree-granting colleges
- HEIs to shoulder other crucial responsibilities, like supporting 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
- Increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035
- Encouraging both public and private institutions, with a strong emphasis on developing a large number of outstanding public institutions
- Private institutions to run with a public-spirited commitment to high-quality equitable education
- High performing Indian universities to be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries and vice-versa
- Option to run Open Distance Learning (ODL) and online programmes, to provide opportunities for lifelong learning (SDG 4)

2. The Learning, Teaching and Pedagogical Perspective

- Call for holistic and multidisciplinary learning
- Institutional Development Plan (IDP) to be developed by every HEI
- Curriculum, pedagogy, continuous assessment, and student support to be cornerstones for quality learning

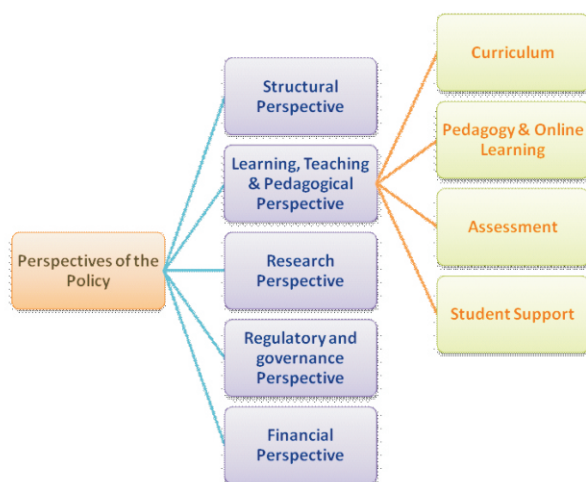


Fig. 1: Diagrammatic representation of the Perspectives of National Education Policy 2020

Curriculum

- Promoting a combination of fields such as 'scientific', 'vocational', 'professional' and 'soft skills'
- Curriculum for developing among the students a deep sense of respect towards the Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values
- At undergraduate level, similar to Banabhatta's description of a good education system in Kadambari, the notion of a 'knowledge of many arts' or 'liberal arts' must be brought back to Indian education by integrating the humanities and arts with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for consistently positive learning outcomes, with rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields.
- Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts, and Culture
- The undergraduate degree to be of either 3 or 4-year duration, with multiple entry and exit options, e.g., a certificate after completing 1 year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas, diploma after 2 years of study, Bachelor's degree after a 3-year programme
- The 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme focussing on the chosen major and minors and award of degree with research
- Internships with local industry, businesses, artists, crafts persons, etc., or with faculty and researchers at their own or other HEIs/research institutions
- Regular revision of curriculum to meet specified learning outcomes
- A 2-year Master's programme with the second year devoted entirely to research for those who have completed the 3-year Bachelor's programme
- A 1-year Master's programme for students completing a 4-year Bachelor's programme with Research
- Provision for an integrated 5-year Bachelor's/Master's programme

- Refurbishing vocational education in agriculture, law and healthcare
- Closer collaborations between industry and higher education in the area of technical education

Pedagogy and online learning

- Pedagogy to emphasise on communication, discussion, debate, research, and opportunities for cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking
- Initiation of topic-centred clubs and activities
- Blend of ODL, online, and traditional 'in-class' modes for learning
- A dedicated unit for the purpose of orchestrating the building of digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building
- An autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), to be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology
- A digital repository of content including creation of course work, Learning Games & Simulations, Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality to be developed
- Effective models of blended learning to be identified to have a blend of face to face and online learning
- Besides e-learning platforms such as DIKSHA, SWAYAM and SWAYAMPRAKASH, the possibility of providing suitable digital devices, such as tablets with pre-loaded content, to be considered and developed
- Learning materials to be made accessible and available to learners with disabilities
- Teachers to undergo rigorous training in learner-centric pedagogy and on how to become high-quality online content creator

Assessment

- Continuous formative assessment to move away from high-stakes examinations
- Credits to be given in all Bachelor's Degree programmes for these subjects done from such departments or through ODL mode when they are not offered in-class at the HEI
- Credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education to be incorporated along with Global Citizenship Education (GCED)
- Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) to be revised
- Operative Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) for digitally storing the academic credits

Student Support

- Academic and career counselling for physical, psychological and emotional well-being
- Faculty to be mentors and guides
- Promoting Internationalisation of education by having International Students Office
- Collaborations and faculty/student exchanges with high-quality foreign institutions
- National Scholarship Portal to be expanded to support, foster, and track the progress of students receiving scholarships

- Incentivise and support SEDG (socio-economically disadvantaged groups) education
- True philanthropic private and community participation scholarships by private/philanthropic universities for disadvantaged and underprivileged students
- Enhancing gender balance in admissions to HEIs
- Ensuring sensitization of faculty, counsellor, and students on gender-identity issue and its inclusion in all aspects of the HEI

2. The Research Perspective

- This Policy envisions a comprehensive approach to transforming the quality and quantity of research in India
- Ph.D. to require either a Master's degree or a 4-year Bachelor's degree with Research
- Promotion of Interdisciplinary Research since much of the very best research in the world has occurred in multidisciplinary university settings
- Research in the arts and humanities, along with innovations in the sciences and social sciences to be promoted
- All fresh Ph.D. entrants, across disciplines, to take credit-based courses in teaching/education/pedagogy/writing related to their chosen Ph.D subject during their doctoral training period
- Ph.D students to have a minimum number of hours of actual teaching experience gathered through teaching assistantships and other means
- Advancement of 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
- NRF to seed, grow, and facilitate research at academic institutions, particularly at universities and colleges where research is currently in a nascent stage, through mentoring of such institutions

3. The Regulatory and Governance Perspective

- Light but Tight' regulatory framework by a single regulator for higher education
- One umbrella institution, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) to replace multiple regulators of Higher Education with 4 independent bodies for managing regulation excluding medical and legal education (National Higher Education Regulatory Council, NHERC), graded accreditation (National Accreditation Council, NAC), funding disbursement of scholarships and developmental funds (Higher Education Grants Council, HEGC) and academic standard setting (General Education Council, GEC) for framing expected learning outcomes for higher education programmes ('graduate attributes')
- The National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) by the GEC to work in sync with the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) for integrating vocational education and higher education
- The existing professional councils, to be members of the GEC

- Board of Governors (BoG) having academic and administrative autonomy for effective Governance and Leadership in Higher Education Institutions
- Strengthening the Central Advisory Board of Education

4. The Financial Perspective

- Increasing the current public (Government - Centre and States) expenditure on education in India to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest
- Increased levels of public funding support for public HEIs raising private philanthropic funds to enhance educational experiences

Translating Policy into Action

Developing an action plan can help policymakers turn their vision into reality. Various stakeholders of higher education have made a beginning in implementing new initiatives for creating future ready workforce and positive outcomes will be observed with the new policy 2020 in hand. NEP 2020 contains much that is strongly desirable but its effective implementation still remains a big challenge. It is time to provide a future roadmap for barrier-free access to education by all sectors of the society, diverse in socio-economic aspects, geographical distribution and intellect. There should be free access for providing education in different languages, multiple entry and exit options, inclusion of disabled, minorities etc. The following ought to be taken into consideration for translation of the policy (Fig. 2) (Singh, 2018):



Fig. 2: Translation of National Education Policy 2020

1. Induction of Technology

Computer-based and high speed internet technology has to be adopted and universities should integrate and interlink with ICT. Technological infrastructure has to be improved.

2. Promotion of Innovation and Creativity

The evaluation systems should recognize original contributions, creativity, problem solving and innovation

3. Personalization of Education

It has to be realized that one uniform education system cannot be suitable to all. Tailor-made courses to identify every learner's latent ability should be designed.

4. Training the Trainers

Regular training of teachers as only when teachers are evolving can we expect the quality of teaching to evolve and improve the quality of student. Teachers can be good leaders when they are motivational and inspiring.

5. Imparting Character-based Education

India is known for character building and ethical values. They have to be imbibed in our curricula.

Although the universities are steadily adopting NEP 2020, however, the following action points are proposed for assisting in its proper implementation at the government and institution level.

Action Points

- The optimum size of any university should be determined taking into account factors like distance of colleges, optimum jurisdiction of universities and number of students enrolled in colleges
- In order to deliver the fruits of the new policy to all stakeholders, HEI's must consider Institution's vision-mission through the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) to be developed by every HEI for outcome based education
- In order to manage world class education in State Universities, both facilities and quality of education must be emphasised upon. Many state Universities still lack the basic facilities of technology integrated classrooms much essential for unfractured learning in contrast with most private HEI's. Effective systems cannot be put in place without basic infrastructure
- Not all reforms can be implemented in one go and therefore the non financial reforms like designing multidisciplinary undergraduate courses, implementing CBCS in accordance with existing courses in the campus and promoting blended learning to include online learning can make a difference
- Dr.Homi Bhabha State University (HBSU) created by the Maharashtra Government is the state's first cluster university that provides students' access to subjects across disciplines and campuses
- Higher education is set to transform with multidisciplinary courses and multiple entry and exit points. The willing Universities may take the lead in terms of non-financial reforms by redesigning undergraduate courses to include uniform courses based on Indian ethos and values, environmental education and Communication skills especially in the first year of undergraduate education and internship to be made an integral component. According to World Economic Forum, there is an urgent need for developing social and emotional skills in addition to Technological skills to add value to individuals
- Multidisciplinary system should allow for transfer of Credits earned at one institution to another institution as well
- Germany's dual-track vocational training program, known as the VET, is the route that around half a million apprentices in Germany take to a skilled profession every year. Under this system there are two components: classroom study in specialised trade schools and supervised, on-the-job work experience.

In their classes, students learn job-specific as well as general education subjects. Germany's vocational schools partner with around 430,000 companies, and more than 80 percent of large companies hire apprentices. The system of vocational education must go hand in hand with general education in India also

- New B.Voc courses must be designed and delivered under the NSQF and National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) schemes
- Due to social divisions and multidimensional inequalities in terms of population and geographies phased implementation of NEP 2020 is recommended. Universities located in class A cities can be identified as centers of implementation which will later act as mentors for other Universities located in backward areas
- Establishment of some very good colleges with a rich history, strong infrastructure and a large body of student scan be developed as model colleges
- Flipped Classroom to support student learning in HE and actively engaging students during lectures. These models are based on self-paced learning
- Pedagogy to emphasise on communication, discussion, debate, research, field visits and opportunities for cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking
- All courses should offer programs in entrepreneurship and have active incubation / entrepreneurship cells on campus to reflect the importance of self-employment and entrepreneurship in an economy. The Universities should allow students for experience in entrepreneurship abroad
- Ph.D. course work to take credit-based courses in teaching/ education/ pedagogy/writing with a minimum number of hours of actual teaching experience
- A scheme similar to the VAJRA (Visiting Advanced Joint Research Faculty) introduced by the Department of Science and Technology can recognize the value of collaborative research and enable NRI's and overseas scientific community to participate and contribute to research and development in India
- A separate State talent scholarship scheme can be administered after class 12 for meritorious students of all categories selected through a state level examination
- Online mode of education is now extensively used by most universities in India and this is transforming the country into a knowledge hub
- A corpus of funds can be created in Universities, partly funded by government, and partly through contribution from the private and corporate sectors and alumni, with appropriate tax and other concessions as incentives
- A model based on sharing resources can help weaker institutions to build up their capacities. Institutions facing financial constraints can benefit from pooled resources and their faculty and learners can access a larger variety of digital course materials, data and technologies that might be unavailable locally
- Engaging industry players to provide funding, mentoring research projects, and facilitate industrial visits can be crucial
- Promotion of Quality Circles in Universities and colleges for better Quality management in Education

Conclusion

The widening skills mismatch and unemployment requires increased integration of general education and vocational training in the academic curriculum. Challenges such as poor quality of education, lack of resources, weak socio-political system and others can be eliminated through public-private partnership and social inclusion. Skill development models from advanced countries can be studied and the rich legacies of World-class institutions of ancient India such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabhi can be given new directions to address the skill development and quality challenges in Indian education system. New dynamism can be injected in the higher education sector through competition and incentives for sustainable economic growth. The country should prepare itself to export the Indian brand of education to foreign countries and be a “Vishwa Guru” in the field of education.

Vice Chancellor
Doctor Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya
Sagar (M.P.)

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2022 Envisioning Education for Social Cohesion and Religious Amity

J.S. Rajput

The Context

Educationists and education policy makers world over are convinced that education systems must integrate and incorporate all that they could derive through research, studies and observations on 'understanding the mind of the child'. Most of the education systems –in practice - are offering 'education that burdens the innocent, lively, inquisitive young child with all that adults perceive useful, interesting and necessary'! Adults – in their wisdom -prescribe teaching learning strategies, construct and transact the curricula that are to be pursued in classrooms. Teaching learning practices generally restrict the child to certain strictly controlled boundaries laid down by the adult comprehension of age and stage of the learner. There are severe restrictions imposed by the evaluation and examination systems. These aspects are well-known. Eminent educationist and member of the Kothari Commission (1964-66) K.G. Saiyidain¹ had this to say: *“It is high time we learn to resist the temptation to force on the lively and growing mind of the child, all our pet subjects and studies. It is a naïve assumption, indeed, that he is as deeply interested in the 'bees in your bonnet' as you happen to be and a dangerous assumption that, if he is not, he ought to be!”* In most of the existing systems, the learner must adhere to the textual materials that have been declared suitable for him for a fixed duration. If someone could master it all in couple of months, he must wait till the year-end annual examination! It is universally agreed upon by all concerned that a conducive, joyful and happy environment is a natural right of every child. How many children are fortunate enough to get an effective and conducive learning environment that offers joy and happiness to them that encourages him to pursue his personal liking and interest and, in the early stages, inspires him to learn in his own way, partnered by the parents and teachers in a subtle way ? One must concede that huge efforts have been made by the learned scholars and researcher to comprehend the intricate nuances of the psychology of the learner at every stage, and attempts have been made to integrate the findings in the content and process of education. This is a continuing process, and is more productive now in view of technological support, and pursuit of multidisciplinary amongst experts and researchers. Sustained efforts to understand the child better have created a universal acceptance of focus shifting from teaching to learning; from teacher-centered education

to learner-centered education. The perception of the role of teacher has changed drastically over the last five-six decades. Educationally-advanced countries are conscious of the need to nurture talent, are taking concrete steps right from initial years of schooling to identify the inherent interests of the child, and take every step to nurture it. In a knowledge society, developing nations need to give priority to talent nurturance as they wish to move ahead on the path of growth and development. At the pragmatic level, the sharp distinction between teacher training and teacher education has been realized and appreciated. Further, education policies world over are accepting flexibility as their core element, the practice of prescribing rigid segments of subject combinations is being discarded. One of the most brilliant minds of 20th century, Albert Einstein had once mentioned that if he had the authority, children would begin their learning only with Music and Mathematics. Imagine how happy a child would feel in a school that permits him unrestricted dalliance with musical instruments and lets him count the fingers of his friend, prepare soil to put a seed in it and observe how 'his' plant grows. This is how seeds of social cohesion and working together are sown. At this stage multidisciplinary is the key transition that would sustain the dynamic nature of education policies. It is a key ingredient in the autonomy of the learner, and learning. The new challenge before policy makers is: how to prepare the young to 'learn to live together' in a strife-torn world ? Right from education policy formulation to the curricular transaction, this aspect has to remain in active conscience of everyone concerned.

Expectations from education have always been very high. A sufficiently educated society would never submit itself to the subjugation of alien intruders and authority. The imperial powers world over had realized that to sustain their hegemony, they must destroy the traditional education systems of the nations under their yoke, and India is the most glaring example of this destruction. India had a very robust system of offering education even in a remotest village, resources being no constraint, as these were respectfully assured by the society and the system of governance. It was debilitated by alien elements but could not be destroyed. Independent India inherited a transplanted system of education, that had a very limited objective of preparing educated Indians for the lower category government jobs; nothing more. It was not to prepare scholars and academics, researchers and innovators. As the number of newly independent nations grew, they were sharply termed as developing countries, and also, 'Low Developed Countries' (LDCs) and every effort was made to 'offer them assistance' of varied kinds! The motive behind was certainly not educational. For India and others in that category, the most plausible step at that stage was to replace the transplanted model by an indigenous system that was "rooted to culture and committed to progresses". It was not easy to do so as these nations stood severely squeezed of resources, both in fiscal and in adequately equipped manpower. India, suffering extreme poverty, hunger and ill-health and the tragedy of partition was confronting crises of varied kinds. All this changed the priorities and education could not get the attention it needed on the wider canvas of providing access and quality education throughout the vast country, ensuring universal participation that also had severe social anomalies to be remedied. Consequently, the transplanted in-vogue system of education was persisted with, and even the essence of the Basic Education philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi could not be appropriately integrated into the system.

Courage and Vision

India completes its seventy-five years of independence and it practically coincides with the completion of two years of National Education Policy NEP-2020. It was an occasion to have a look on the post-independence achievements and the role education has played in it. It may indeed inflict a shock on the young persons of today to paint a picture of India's bifurcation, with around two million dead and 200 million displaced for no fault of theirs. That the majority of Muslims preferred to stay in India was a historic testimony to their faith in the great Indian tradition of equal respect for all religions. Further, their rehabilitation was to be achieved at the earliest, against widespread poverty, hunger, ill-health; and an acute shortage of resources. But the spirit of resilience and presence of Gandhian values amongst leaders and the masses was a real asset against all odds. At the time of independence, one could meet and interact with numerous persons who were fully converted to Gandhian values, and were living a life adhering to these values. It was obvious to everyone how the message of Khadi and words of Gandhi were spread by the village teachers up to the remotest corners of the country. They came from all over the country, every caste, religion and faith. It may be tough for the millennials to imagine the spread of Gandhi's popularity and values in every nook and corner; home and hearth across the India, when there were not many educated people to read newspapers, which too were only scarcely available. No TV, no social media, no internet, no mobile, even a radio set was a luxury. The freedom struggle of India owes immense gratitude to Indian teachers—particularly those in schools - for their contribution in spreading not only Gandhian values, social cohesion and communal harmony but preparing the young and old to become part of the great unique and unprecedented battle that was being fought on the principles of Ahimsa under the leadership of Gandhi Ji, and fought by a cohesive society consisting of practically every religion of the world. Now, the challenge before education institution in India and also elsewhere is to work together to achieve social cohesion and religious amity.

In 1947, the scenario in education was in fact in tatters; with around 18 percent literacy, 43 percent enrolment in the age group 6-11 years, and that too with huge dropout rates. Only 40-45 percent school teachers had obtained a teacher training qualification. Number of schools was 2.10 lakh only, which has now crossed the 15 lakh mark with over 90 lakh teachers and an enrolment of around 26 Crores. The then gross enrolment ratio in 27 universities and around 500 colleges was only 0.7 percent of the appropriate age group. It rose to 27.1 per cent in more than 1043 universities and 44,000 colleges in 2020-21. Any assessment of the inadequacies of Indian education system and its growth over the 75 years must be viewed in respect of another very significant factor: four fold population growth. These are only some of the representative figures that give an idea of the enormity of the initially-encountered challenge which; in a way, persists, but appears well within control. Apart from providing access to the last child in remotest area, the issues of developing a national system of education was paramount. The dominance of English and the presence of a rich diversity of regional languages which should become the medium of instruction in schools were to be harmonized keeping in view the practical realities and sensitivities of the people. Liquidation of adult literacy, creating avenues for science and technology education and preparing trained teachers for these areas made

their presence felt early to the policy makers. Independent India was a nation divided on communal lines; it had to strive hard in the areas of social cohesion and religious amity, if it had to progress further with 'we, the people of India' as one entity. While governments at central and State levels were dexterously planning and executing their initiatives for immediate solutions, it was well established that the long-term and lasting solutions would flow only from education reforms; from curriculum and textbooks. Towards this, considerable attention had to be given to the inclusion of the 'spirit of patriotism and a sense of proper pride in the rich cultural heritage of India'². *“It should also instill an urge to build the greater India of our dreams and to wage a relentless war against the evils of poverty, inequality, ignorance and ill-health that affect our society. Moral and aesthetic education should receive adequate emphasis.”* Thus, it was a prerequisite to take all necessary steps to transform the learner from an innocent individual person to a personality. Every learner was to be brought under the umbrella of character building and cultivation of social, moral, and spiritual values was the prime requirement.

In such a backdrop, it must be considered a very courageous act on the part of the makers of Indian Constitution to have included Article 45 in the Directive Principles of State Policy concerning free and compulsory education of children: “The State shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.” After the Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act of 2002, it reads: “Provision for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six-years. The State shall endeavor to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six-years.” This amendment also led to the insertion of Article 21-A: “Right to Education. – The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.”. The shift from directive principles to fundamental rights deserves to be noticed. The NEP-2020³ takes note of both these provisions, and leaves enough indications to modify the Right to Education act once again, to include the age group 15-18 years as well. The proviso of universalizing elementary education within ten years was bold, courageous and futuristic. The challenge of going up to eighteen years of age is indeed equally; if not more; challenging as now the focus has to be on quality, skill development and readiness for lifelong learning. And in each of these endeavors value education, social cohesion and learning to live together have to be emphasized. The ray of hope emanates from our past experience, better and more pragmatic comprehension of the grassroots realities, and availability of expertise in our institutions at each stage. It has to be consistently strengthened. It is the institutional environment that sows the seeds of learning to work together, rise above petty provocations and develop traits of mutual respect, compassion and empathy.

Pivots of Transformational Educational Dynamics

Global expectations from India - and its young - are indeed very demanding. World bestowed respect and regard on India in ancient times, solely because of its knowledge quest and attainments, focus on Spirituality, thorough understanding of need to respect nature and take responsibility to maintain man-nature mutuality. India was respected for caring for others, its philosophy of '*Ekam sat Viprah Bahudha Vadantih*',

truth is one, and the wise ones put it differently. Further; '*Sarva Bhut Hite Ratah*' could pave the way for a peaceful world in which 'world is but one family'. Once this is pragmatically contextualized and internalized by all, and clearly indicates the need to practice '*Aparigraha*'; non-accumulation. In every education discourse world over, emphasis is being laid on the emerging necessity of 'lifelong learning', on learning, relearning and new learning. Could all this be better described than the succinctly encapsulated in "*Yavadjivait Adhiyate Viprah*" in ancient Indian texts! In the contemporary context, an all-inclusive philosophy of human advancement and sustainable development is contained in the three debts that every human being inherits at the time of his birth, and the ancient eternal wisdom enjoins upon every individual to dutifully discharge these obligations⁴: "These are *Deva Rina*, *Pitra Rina*, and *Rishi Rin*, for an initial understanding these could be put as debt to gods, debt to parents/teachers/learned ones., and debt to Rishis/teachers/learned ones. In the Mahabharata, the fourth element *Manav Rina*; *debt to humanity* was also included". The intent is very clear, acquire knowledge from the learned, use it and enhance it, for the welfare and happiness of all, be respectful to nature and its benevolence in sustaining human life on the planet earth.

One could cite numerous such pearls of wisdom from the ancient Indian knowledge tradition that puts the uninitiated under awe, how could these be comprehended in ancient times. This awe comes from the incorrect and deliberately contrived presentation of India and its heritage on global scenario. Over the last seventy-five years, perceptions about India and its social, cultural and education systems have changed, and changed mostly in the positive direction. One would ascribe primacy in this welcome transformation to the young of India who, after studying in Indian schools and universities, went to developed countries, and surprised their fellow being by their dedication, dexterity, wisdom and unquenchable thirst for new knowledge, and also a better understanding of the forces of nature and objectives of life. They came from different religions, regional and linguistic backgrounds but had learnt to work together as Indians. It also establishes that given the proper environment and support, Indian youth could outshine anyone anywhere. Education needs to prepare a generation that takes pride in its ancient heritage, examines it in the current context of fast-changing global scenario and puts forward the strategy for creating a world that is free of hunger, poverty and ill-health. So much could be derived from a thorough understanding of the aim of education in ancient India in which acquisition of knowledge was necessary to lead a good life, but much more was also to be accomplished. This was 'complete realization and liberation of the Soul.' This realization, once achieved, would reveal 'the eternal unity of all human beings' that remains unaltered by religion, caste, creed color, language or ethnicity. If one analyzes the way Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabhi and others conducted their teaching-learning, one would realize how multidisciplinary was put to practice in these places.

It is indeed encouraging that the NEP-2020 digests and harmonizes all such considerations these could be expressed in very simple – but all inclusive – terms: 'education in every country must be rooted to culture, committed to progress'. The NEP 2020 puts its vision in following words⁵: "*The National Education Policy envisions 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 policy envisages that the curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must develop among the students 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. The vision of the policy is to instill among the learner 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." Some twenty-five years before the formulation of the NEP 2020, the Independent Commission on Education for the Twenty-first century, appointed by the UNESCO, and popularly known as Delors Commission after its Chairperson, begins the first chapter of its Report under the title: 'Education the Necessary Utopia', which very amply hints at the enormous expectations from education, and huge impediments in efforts to fulfill them. This chapter begins with the elaboration⁶: *"In confronting many challenges that the future holds in store, humankind sees in education an indispensable asset in its attempts to attain the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice. As it concludes its work, the Commission affirms its belief that education has fundamental role to play in personal and social development. The Commission does not see education as a miracle cure or a magic formula opening the door to a world in which all ideals will be attained, but as one of the principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war."* The Delors Commission is also known for having emphasized four pillars of education: Learning to Know, Learning to do; Learning to Be, and Learning to Live together. Over the last twenty-five years, world has undergone unprecedented economic, cultural, social and demographic changes. Globalization, ease of mobility, economic avenues, need for professional manpower on one hand and availability of unemployed and untrained labor force on the other could inspire migration in search of a better life. But what has caused maximum demographic dislocation is involuntary, forced by poverty, violence and wars. It has created tensions amongst communities, because of differences in practices of faith, language, culture, and much more. Host countries to migrants of varied hues are learning how to maintain social cohesion and communal harmony in the face tensions rising by the day, as immigrants also bring their prized possessions of culture, language, tradition and religion. Education systems world over have to give primacy to preparing people to learn to live together, respect others, respect otherness and realize – and internalize – that diversities of varied kinds are the gift of God/ nature, human beings must live with them voluntarily and enthusiastically. There is no other alternative available to human beings to survive on earth. Yes, the planet is already facing serious challenges to its very survival, and any success in achieving sustainable development goals would be possible only when the humanity acts in total unison.

Social Cohesion

India's freedom struggle presents a revealing example of people rising against

the alien rule as one entity, forgetting all the diversities of ethnicity, cultural context, region, language, religion, color, and most prominently, even caste and creed. It was a shared upsurge, a rare national resolve, designed under a value-based strategy that was constructed under the over-arching presence of truth and nonviolence. This is what India needs one again to cement further, and consistently remain alert about it. Free people can never be complacent about freedom, it has to persistently nurtured and nourished. Very often, variations in beliefs, practices and culture need very sensitive handling at every level. The cementing force during the war of independence was the presence and aura of MK Gandhi. Though there are several ingredients that nurture and sustain social cohesion, most disturbing were the widespread presence of caste system and the practice of untouchability. Gandhi knew that in a poverty-ridden country, it would be impossible to achieve social cohesion in a society that persisted with such inhuman practices. What hurt Gandhi most was poverty, hunger and misery suffered by majority of Indians forced to live under inhuman restrictions, compulsions and social seclusion. He was very clear: *'Swaraj of my dreams is the poor man's Swaraj'*. He elaborated it further on several occasions⁸: *"My notion of Poorna Swaraj is not isolated independence but healthy and dignified independence. My nationalism, fierce though it is, is not exclusive, is not devised to harm any nation or individual. Legal maxims are not so legal as they are moral."* In this context, one could easily appreciate how deeply anguished he was at the prevalent social malaise of untouchability, how sincerely keen he was to see it eradicated in full⁹: *"Untouchability in its extreme form has always caused me so much pain, because I consider myself to be a Hindu of Hindus saturated with the spirit of Hinduism. I have failed to find a single warrant for the existence of untouchability as we believe and practice it today in all those books which we call Hindu Shastras today"*.

The third decade of the 21st century very clearly witnesses the consequences of the pace of social and cultural changes that have occurred during the first two decades. Internal migration including urbanization and international migration in search of greener pasture, and more than that, for mere survival has led to another massive concern before humanity: imbalance of social cohesion. Inequality is one of the major factors leading to this situation. In India, rural to urban exodus, loss of dreams in the glitter and glaze of urban life, issues of urban housing for the poor, and consequential breaking up of family ties, become prominent contributors to the tensions and social isolation. Loss of faith in the system, leads to frustration, dilution of moral values that generates anger, and sporadic violence. It also adversely impacts mutual trust and isolates people on avoidable trivia. Sense of exclusion, and falling prey to dubious elements that generate hatred amongst communities and people could not be ignored. Democracy and nationalist spirit are the two very significant factors that could help cement social cohesion. India understood this, and it chose – with all the firmness – to remain a secular democracy in contrast to its newly created neighbor. Not only this, the Constitution of India has several provisions that give special privileges to minority communities, most important being to run their own educational institutions. One must hasten to add that it does not mean India has a hunky dory story of social cohesion. There are elements that persistently engage – with internal and external support – to ignite the fires of communal disharmony. It does lead to riots, violence and more importantly; it reduces mutual trust. Even a peripheral

analysis of such tendencies and their survival even after the necessary Constitutional safe-guards, would reveal that there are deep-rooted prejudices that were fuelled by the alien rulers not only in India but in most of the Asian-African countries that were under the alien yoke. They used the transplanted systems of education to generate divisions amongst social and ethnic groups, delinked people from their own traditional systems which had serious bonds of mutual trust and harmony. All the experience gained in India and globally clearly indicates the well-established premise: Education for inclusion that responds to the diversity of individuals and communities with compassion and consideration has the necessary strength to cement the bonds of social cohesion in the face of diversities of varied dimensions. This is what India accepted, and firmly included in its Constitution, the equality of all before law, in every aspect. The rejection of caste system in its totality was a real visionary step. People now search for a system of education that is rooted to their culture, tradition, language, and relates itself to modern knowledge and advances in technology to fulfill their expectations and aspirations. It is well realized how tough and challenging a task it is in India.

The concerns of achieving social cohesion after independence attracted the attention of freedom fighters practically at every stage of the struggle. They had the credibility, acceptability and public respect because of which a great positive change of attitude towards rejecting caste system and the humiliating and inhuman presence of untouchability could be achieved even before independence. Traces of these still exist and do persist and; as such; India just cannot be complacent on these concerns. They adversely impact social cohesion. The divisive factors have not yet vanished from the minds of many. Further, as a most unfortunate development, politicians have over the years accentuated caste identities for narrow electoral gains. Further, the decline of moral quotient in post-Gandhian India is a matter of serious concern. Obviously, expectations from education even on this front are clear: prepare the young of India to shun divisive elements in social and cultural life.

Religious Amity

The partition of India purely on communal and two-nation theory inflicted unprecedented misery pain and anguish on the people displaced, and also all those who were proud of the great Indian heritage of equal respect for all religions and faiths. It happened in spite of the fact that Indians had learnt to 'live together, respect each other's religion on equal footing: mine is best for me and yours for you.' Eventually all paths lead to the same ultimate truth. 'Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudha vadantih' was not only preached but followed in word and spirit. Well, differences did occur once in a while, but were mostly resolved at the local level. However when powers that be came in the picture, they encouraged differences; and some vested interests even ignited hatred and violence, partition was the consequence of that perverted mindset. At this stage divisive elements are probably more active not only in India but internationally, leading to the serious concerns of fundamentalism, terrorism, wide-spread violence and insecurity. It is an irony of the times that young persons are being 'educated' to become terrorists and Fedayeen. India must take a lead and restore and spread the age old Indian tradition of religious amity that it practiced all along. India could present a model to the western nations presently experiencing demographic changes for the first time, and are in search

of ways and means to accept these changes without creating social and cultural tensions. India has a great global responsibility in this regard and the same has been acknowledged by international experts and well-meaning scholars like Arnold Toynbee¹⁰: *“It is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction of human race... At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way – Emperor Asoka's and Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions. Here we have an attitude and spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family – and in the Atomic Age, this is the only alternative to destroying ourselves.”* This respectful assertion about India was not new, it was an outcome of centuries of dexterous, persistent and single minded devotion of Indian saints, sages, scholars and wise men who were engrossed lifelong in one selfless pursuit to discover the secrets of nature for the welfare of people, without any discrimination of any kind. It is also a tribute to innumerable generations of Indians who had religiously practiced equality of all human beings and all religions. It would be relevant to reproduce a quote of one Abdul Razak, an Envoy from the Court of Persia to Indian States about the middle of the fifteenth century¹¹: *“The people of Calicut) are infidels; consequently, I consider myself in an enemy country, as the Mohammadans consider everyone who has not received Koran. Yet I must admit that I meet with perfect toleration, and even favour; we have two mosques and are allowed to pray in public.”* If one cursorily views the developments during the intervening period of around seven centuries, one would find unfortunate growth distrust, violence and wars on an increasing scale. The disturbing trend continues to expand and, hence, far greater responsibility comes on education and teachers. India could very rightly claim that right from ancient times, it has not practiced not mere toleration, it has firmly followed 'acceptance of one and all', which ensures equality of every kind, in accordance with the premise that needs to become the guiding light for the strife torn and violence beseeched world in search of a pathway: *Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam*; world is but one family.

The Path Ahead

To delineate the role of education in furthering social cohesion and religious amity, the first requirement is to accept that most of the violent divisive, fundamentalist and terrorist activities are conducted by people who do so in the name of their religion. It could be a deliberate misinterpretation of religions, but the social accountability of the men of letters and scholars of every faith enjoins upon them to present the right interpretations on religious prescriptions before the people, particularly the children and young persons in education. It must also be clearly accepted and ensured that education shall –in any way - preach hatred towards followers of any other religion. Medieval practices that clash with the concept of liberty, equality and fraternity just cannot evoke acceptance and continuity amongst the millennials anymore. Human civilization, growth and progress are all dynamic processes, and demand people must move with times. How could the civilized world accept the present position in the third decade of the 21st century that girls shall not go to schools! Dynamism in any society would depend on the capacity of its education systems not only to absorb the changes, but also to envision them for a better future. A major chunk of global population has to be persuaded to realize

the need for attitudinal transformation, and to universalize it in all communities and faiths, must revert to effective dynamism in its educational policies.

Followers of every major religion are present in India. The only way out for the growth, progress and development of India and its people is to act as one people, just as they did during the freedom struggle, the manner INA of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was constituted and organized. The contemporary context of global situation prioritizes the need to internalize that all religions lead its followers to same ultimate truth. It should also be accepted that religions are not the only source of inculcating human values, but these are major source to prepare a humane, caring and sharing global society and people to lead a value-based life. This has to begin in the initial years in education in schools and continue seriously in colleges and universities.

It would be relevant to refer to a practical initiative undertaken in India during 1999-2004. The national level-body established to advise central and state governments in all matters of school education, the NCERT, after serious and dexterous study of changes taking place all around, research findings on educational change and nationwide consultations proposed a new national curriculum framework for school education- NCFSE-2000 - which was released on November 14 of the year 2000. It made some recommendations of far reaching consequences, which it found conducive to strengthen social cohesion and religious amity¹². It was also intended to devise strategies that would strengthen secularism, and create greater trust among people belonging to different faiths. Some of the recommendations deserve a recall¹³: *“Another significant factor that merits urgent attention now is religion. Although it is not the only source of values, it certainly is major source of value generation. What is required today is not religious education but education about religions, their basics, the values inherent therein and also a comparative study of the philosophy of all religions. These need to be inculcated at appropriate stages in education right from the primary years. Students have to be given the awareness that essence of every religion is common, only the practices differ. He students should also be led to believe that differences of opinion in certain areas are to be respected.”* In view of the sensitivities involved, the NCFSE-2000 went on to further clarify the recommended approach, clearly indicating that¹⁴: *“all steps must be taken in advance to ensure that no personal prejudice or narrow minded perceptions are allowed to distort the real purpose of this venture and no rituals, dogmas and superstitions are propagated in the name of religions. All religions therefore have to be treated with equal respect (Sarva Dharam Sambhav) and that there has to be no discrimination on the ground of any religion (Panthnirpekshata).”* The idea was to initiate the future generations in the ethos of the 'Panthnirpekshata', as was being practiced in India in the past, and which every child observed right from his home to school every day. Further, majority of schools in India are multi-religious and this was a plus point for such initiatives. In fact majority of children witness celebrations of festivals of different religions in which everyone participates, including themselves and their friends. They see places of worship being visited by followers of different religions. They also witness minor irritants getting resolved by the elders in the family, of the community elders sitting together. The recommendations in the NCFSE-2000 were made with clear intentions to cement the practiced communal harmony which was getting disturbed with

increased decline in moral and ethical values in the electoral politics. Needless to say, these were contested on ideological ground and the matter taken to the Supreme Court of India. Technically it was challenged on pedagogical principles and what it said about value education, education about religions, Sanskrit and Vedic education and astronomy. What was ignored clearly indicated how biased the criticism was, Some of these are:

“Characterized as one of the longest surviving continuum of cultures, India is a multi-cultural and multi-lingual society with a perennial undercurrent of essential unity... Thus the heterogeneity in social structures is a distinctive feature of the Indian society. ...the large number of beliefs, faiths and races inhabit one of the geographically most diverse countries. India's various ethnic groups form interconnecting loops, competing and cooperating while forming complex webs of interaction. Indian culture thus is a living process assimilating various strands of thought and life style. The Process has created a rich collage of India exemplifying 'unity in diversity and diversity in unity'. ” (NCFSE, pp. 2-3)

“The curriculum, it may be reiterated, must create an awareness of the inherent equality of all with a view to removing prejudices and complexes transmitted through the social environment and the factor of birth. ” (NCFSE P.9)

“at no point of time can the school curriculum ignore the inclusion of specific content to forge national identity, a profound sense of patriotism and nationalism tempered with the spirit of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam', non-sectarian attitudes, capacity for tolerating differences arising out of caste, religion, ideology, region, language, sex, etc. It is also important that along with the contributions of other countries to the world civilization, India's contribution to world civilization be also incorporated. ” (NCFSE, P. 12)

A three-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India, in a judgment delivered on September 12, 2002 did not find any fault with the content and recommendations of the NCFSE-2000. On the issue of non-consultation with the CAGE - Central Advisory Board of Education - one of the three-judge found it as an inadequacy while the other two did not consider that a lacunae. The NCERT went ahead with the preparation of textbooks and other materials. All this effort was however junked in undue haste after the change of central government in May, 2004. There was an intense debate at practically every level between the release of the NCFSE-2000 and the Supreme Court of India judgment in 2002,

Could anyone contest the uniform endorsement of five eternal values - truth, Peace, Nonviolence, Righteous Conduct (Dharam) and Love – by all religions? This could become the core of creating a global cohesive society. The issue of social cohesion and communal harmony remains prominent on the agenda of education. The author is convinced that religions are a reality, that several national and global concerns, issues and problems have their roots somewhere in the deliberate misinterpretations of religious texts by vested interests and misinterpretation of diversity of religions. The Perceived superiority of one's own religion also causes clashes that often turn violent. It is only through education that children could be initiated in realizing that essentially all religions endorse global brotherhood of humanity on one hand and mutuality of man-nature relationship on the other. All of them just seek to reach the ultimate reality, following varied paths. There is no scope to differ on the final goal of all, hence peaceful

co-existence is possible, and is the only way of humanity surviving on the planet earth. Until children and young persons are made aware of these, global peace would just remain a Utopian dream. We have the knowledge; we have the experience, we must draw upon vivek, and just not miss its essence.

Former Chairperson, NCERT & NCTE
GOI, New Delhi

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Hopes for Higher Education at Hundred

Furqan Qamar

July 29 marks the approval and announcement of the National Education Policy (NEP 2020). The event is celebrated with great gusto blowing the trumpet that the nation could finally have a nationalistic new education policy deeply rooted in the ancient tradition and culture of the country. The first anniversary was marked by the address of the Prime Minister who recounted numerous progress in the implementation of the policy. He underlined that the 'generation that will reap benefits of NEP will lead the nation'. The occasion was used to launch or announce many new programmes and schemes, some stated in the policy some not. The zenith was the introduction of Engineering programmes in regional languages and the way in which Artificial Intelligence would overcome the paucity of technical literature in the Indian languages. Seamless mobility of students across institutions, programmes, and modes of delivery and the launch Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) has been another spotlight. National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR) and the National Technology forum (NETF) were also launched on the occasion. The idea of the Digital University was showcased as the most innovative reform in higher education. It was given to believe that the digital delivery of higher education would serve the deprived and downtrodden. Internationalisation of higher education enabling foreign universities to set up campuses in India has also been the flavour of the festivities. This was presented to the students as a mega opportunity to access world-class higher education at a fraction of the cost without travelling abroad.

Continuing high pitch tradition, the second anniversary of the NEP 2020 was inaugurated by the Union Home Minister, who underscored that the public education system was the basis of a vibrant democratic society. Discussions on the occasions were high on hopes. Much of the focus has been on what the policy prescribes and proscribes and how many benefits would it yield in the yonder. Structural and academic reforms were highlighted. Attaining expansion, equity, quality, and excellence in higher education through digital delivery were particularly eulogised.

Strangely, the anniversary festivities have been taciturn (silent) about the progress with regard to the implementation of the regulatory reforms and enhancement

of public investments in higher education, so vociferously argued by the NEP 2020 as well as by many other committees and commissions before. This article intends to highlight these two aspects where the practice so far has differed rather significantly from what the policy propounds.

The Regulatory Reforms:

The success of NEP 2020 rests on revamping the regulation and governance of education at all levels and across all sectors. It presents elaborate regulatory frameworks for school, higher education, Open Distance Learning (ODL), teacher education and enabling foreign universities to set up campuses in India. In the context of teacher education, the policy bemoans that the 'regulatory framework has neither been able to curb malpractices nor enforce basic standards for quality and has, in fact, negatively affected excellence and innovation.' It considers the revitalization of the regulatory system urgent to be able to raise standards and restore integrity, credibility, efficacy and high quality.

A 'light but tight' regulatory framework is one of the fundamental principles guiding the policy to 'ensure integrity, transparency and efficiency of the educational system'. It calls for immediate changes in governance and regulation. Speaking specifically of higher education, the NEP 2020 bewails that the ineffective regulatory system has been a major problem that higher education in India is currently faced with. It emphasizes that the 'regulation of higher education has been too heavy-handed...with too little effect.' It has been disempowering in nature leading to the concentration of power in a few hands and that too without any accountability. The regulatory system, in the words of the policy, 'is in need of a complete overhaul in order to re-energise the higher education sector and enable it to thrive.'

The policy pitches for establishing a new Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) with four verticals. The National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) is proposed to be a single common regulator for the higher education sector as a whole, except for medical and legal education. The National Accreditation Council (NAC) conceptualised as a meta-accrediting body is to recognise accrediting agencies whereas the Higher Education Grant Council (HEGC) would disburse scholarships and development grants and finance higher education with transparency. The General Education Council (GEC) is expected to frame academic standards by specifying learning outcomes, graduate attributes, higher education qualification framework, and norms and procedures for credit transfer and student mobility.

The existing professional councils are to become professional standards-setting bodies and are to be members of the GEC. Well aware that these would entail a relook and repeal of existing acts and restructuring of various existing regulatory bodies, the policy insists that they are necessary for the health of higher education. It was no surprise that two consecutive budget speeches promised to establish the proposed single regulatory body in higher education. It appears that changing the regulatory architecture for higher education is proving to be more challenging than one would have thought and expected. There would otherwise be no reason for not effecting this particular reform, particularly when the NEP 2020 considered it so essential. Besides, reforming the regulatory

framework for higher education has been a dominant theme for many commissions and committees over the past two decades.

The idea was first mooted by the National Knowledge Commission in its report to the nation in 2007. Its idea to establish an Independent Regulatory Authority (IRAHE) was scuttled by the Yashpal Committee report on the Revival and Rejuvenation of Higher Education which in its report argued for setting up the National Commission of Higher Education and Research (NCHER). At one point in time, the idea of a single regulatory body replacing all others was promoted as the Higher Education and Empowerment Authority (HEERA). None has so far fructified. Maybe surmounting the challenges of conceptualising and evolving the new gen regulatory body is proving all the more daunting.

Is it that the government has now decided to give up on the idea of regulatory reforms ? It appears that the thought of a single regulator has already been given a goodbye. Medical and legal education is now out of the purview of a single regulatory body. Within medical education, the national medical commission of India has been made confined to taking care of modern medicines. Separate commissions have been set up for homoeopathy and Ayush.

Enhancing Public Investment:

Inaugurating the second-anniversary celebration of the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) on 29 July 2022, the Union Home Minister (HM) reminded the education fraternity that the new education policy clarifies that the public education system is the basis of a vibrant democratic society. Less than a week later on 3 August 2022, replying to the debate on the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha, the Union Minister of Education (MoE), however, clarified that people should let go of the idea that universities must only be funded by the government. The MoE's statement echos the General Financial Rules (GFR), which, in 2017, had required autonomous bodies to maximise internal resource generation to attain self-sufficiency. The HM's statement, on the other hand, appears in sync with the text of the policy document.

The NEP 2020 expounds that various measures for enhancing access, equity and inclusion (in education) would include greater opportunities for outstanding public education. The policy even goes on to assure that the autonomy of public institutions will be backed by adequate public funding. The policy laments that the public expenditure on education was nowhere close to the 6% of GDP, as envisaged by the 1968 policy, reiterated in the policy of 1986, and reaffirmed in the 1992 review of the policy.

The repeated emphasis on the increasing role of the private sector in education notwithstanding, the NEP2020 feels forced to unequivocally endorse a substantial increase in public investment in education. It goes on record to assure that the Centre and the States would work together to increase public investment in the Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest. There has been no dearth of people in the country who felt that the promise of the enhanced public funding would prove to be no more than lip service for it does not gel well in the whole scheme of the policy. With the MoE letting the cat out of the bag, even the most ardent believers in the stated content, rather than finding

fault with the intent, now appear suspect about the possibility of enhanced funding for education. Their confidence is further shaken by the fact that there has been no headway on this count since the policy was promulgated.

Public Funding on Education:

The decline in public funding for education has been around for some time now. Lately, however, the speed of decline has only accelerated. The combined expenditure of the Centre and the States on education touched 3.1% of GDP in 2013-14. Since then the expenditure on education has remained stagnant at 2.8% of the GDP. The Revised Estimate (RE) and the Budget Estimate (BE) for 2020-21 and 2021-22, though put the figure at 3.1% of the GDP, it would be no surprise if it eventually turns out to be no more than 2.8% because the actual expenditure on education has been invariably lower than the budgeted figures (Table 1). The data further reveals that the expenditure on education as a percentage of the total combined expenditure of the centre and the states has consistently declined from 11.6% in 2012-13 to 9.7% in 2021-22 (BE). The share of education in social services has declined drastically from 47.5% in 2012-13 to 36.6% in 2021-22 (Table 2).

Should we take the expenditure on education by the education as well as other departments of the Centre and States, the figures look a bit better but the trend wise it states the same. The total expenditure on education by the education and other departments of the centre and the state has come down from 4.05% in 2010-11 to 3.87% of the GDP in 2017-18. The RE and BE data for 2018-19 and 2019-20, however, peg the figure at 4.17 and 4.39% of GDP. Contrary to the general perception that states do not invest enough in education, the data reveals that their total expenditure on education has gone up from 2.94% in 2010-11 to 3.27% in 2019-20 (BE). In contrast, the total expenditure on education by the central government has declined from 1.11% of GDP in 2010-11 to 0.98 in 2018-19, though the RE for 2019-20 estimates it to touch 1.12% (Table 3).

Public Funding of Higher Education:

Speaking of higher education, the NEP 2020 envisaged that it would promote increased access, equity, and inclusion through greater opportunities for outstanding public education. It also assured that the autonomy of public institutions would be backed by adequate public funding. It was touching to see the policy grouse that the public expenditure on education in India was nowhere close to the 6 per cent of GDP, as envisaged by the 1968 policy, reiterated in the 1986 policy, and reaffirmed in the 1992 review of the policy.

Against this backdrop, it sounded music to the ears, when the policy unequivocally endorsed a substantial increase in public investment and clearly stated that the Centre and States would work together to increase public investment in the Education sector to reach 6 per cent of GDP at the earliest. Elaborating on the reasons, the NEP 2020 spotlighted that this level of public funding was 'extremely critical for achieving the high-quality and equitable public education system, that is truly needed for India's future economic, social, cultural, intellectual progress and growth.'

Higher education in India is already highly privatised catering to about two-

thirds of the total enrolment. Most private higher educational institutions are run on a self-financed basis, a euphemism for full-cost recovering institutions. Besides, private tendencies have also penetrated deeply into public higher education. Thrust for resource mobilisation, internal revenue generation, cross-subsidisation, resource-use efficiency, cost-reduction, accelerated cost recovery and enhanced user charges may further exacerbate the trend. The most obvious consequence would be a substantial increase in fees and other charges from students.

The idea that higher education could be funded fully by the students or their parents out of their savings or through bank borrowings appear grossly misplaced in the Indian context. The NEP 2020 envisages that the enrolment in higher education has to be nearly doubled by 2035 to raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education from the present 27.3 to 50 per cent. Considering the fact that the social and economic elites, the rich and the affluents, have already crossed a GER of 100 per cent, the future growth in higher education has to come from, what the NEP 2020 refers to as the Socially Economically Deprived Groups (SEDG). Would these people be able to afford full-cost recovery from their higher educational institutions?

Disputes about the absolute and relative levels of poverty apart, it is now a harsh contemporary reality that 800 million or 62.5 per cent of our population have to be provided free rations to save them from destitution. Certainly, no nation would want to deprive such a vast section of its populace of accessing higher education during its Amrit Kaal. Higher education in India may have had its own failings but has served the nation rather well. It has played a critical role in sustaining the \$ 2.8 trillion economy that India has come to become today. But for enhanced investment in higher education, our vision of a \$5 Trillion economy and the aspiration of becoming a high-income developed country by the time we enter into the Amar Kaal, could be seriously jeopardised.

Alas, the higher education sector remains most neglected as far as public funding is concerned. Alas further, this aspect has, however, been least highlighted by the NEP 2020. It fails to allude to the fact that the total expenditure on university and higher education by the centre and the state has nosedived from 0.86% of the GDP in 2010-11 to a measly 0.52% in 2019-20. Worryingly, the neglect has been by the Centre and the State. The centre's expenditure on higher education dropped from 0.33% of GDP in 2010-11 to 0.16% in 2019-20. So has been the case with the expenditure on higher education by the states which has slid from 0.53% to 0.36% of GDP during the same period (Table 4).

In absolute terms, the centre's expenditure on higher education has gone up from Rs. 24,164 Crores in 2010-11 to Rs. 32,480 Crores in 2019-20, growing by the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of only 3%. Distinctively, the expenditure on higher education by the States has gone up from Rs. 38,490 Crores to Rs. 72,434 Cores, thus logging a CAGR of 6.53%. Education being in the concurrent list of the constitution is a joint and shared responsibility of the union and states. However, the union government falls short of the expectations when it comes to being a role model for promoting quality and excellence. Certainly not when it comes to public investment in education. During the past 10 years, the CAGR in the per-student expenditure on higher education by the central government has been a negative 0.41%. In comparison, the States have been

doing relatively better by increasing their expenditure on higher education by a CAGR of 3.0%. Juxtaposing the expenditure on higher education against the revenue and total receipts of the union government prove that an increase in revenue and receipts is no guarantee for enhanced allocation and expenditure on higher education (Table 5).

During 2011-12 to 2022-23, the revenue receipt of the union government shot up more than three times from Rs. 7.51 Lakh crores to 22.04 lakh crores recording a CAGR of 9.38%. So has been the case with the total receipts of the union government which too increase more than three times from Rs. 13.07 Lakh Crores in 2011-12 to 39.44 Lakh Crores in 2022-23 recording a CAGR of 9.64%. During the same period, the union government's expenditure on higher education declined from 2.60% of its revenue receipts to 1.85%. As a share of the total receipts too, the expenditure on higher education declined from 1.49% to 1.04% (Table 6). Obviously, the problem is the lack of will to accord due priority to education rather than the availability of resources. But are we not going to mend it even when the new policy so vociferously pitches for public investment in education?

In Conclusion:

The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) may have undermined the progress made in general, professional, and technical higher education in the country during the post-Independence period. The data on development, however, presents a picture of which every Indian must feel proud. As the 75 Years of Azaadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav usher the nation into the 25 years of Amrit Kaal, we can't help but recall the role played by higher education in the development of the nation. But for the strengths of our higher education system, would we be able to have the confidence to claim that the country would emerge as the most developed nation in the world in the next 25 years it enters into Anant or Amar Kaal.

India must take pride that starting from less than two dozen universities, 500 colleges and merely a lakh students enrolled in higher education on the eve of Independence, India is now credited to have the single largest system of higher education found anywhere in the world. As of now, the country has close to 1,100 universities, 40,000 colleges, and 11,000 stand-alone higher education institutions besides a large number of other institutions, like polytechnics, which many countries count among their tertiary education, a euphemism for higher education. With over 38.5 million students in 2019-20, which as per the prevailing rate of growth may have now crossed 40 million, the nation today can legitimately boast of being the second largest system of higher education. Notably, the higher education enrolment in India is more than the entire population of at least 160 countries in the world. Going by the changing demographics, the Indian higher education system is poised to become the largest in the world in this respect as well.

The participation rate in higher education has also gone up from less than a per cent in 1950 to 27.3 per cent in 2019-20 in the age cohort of 17-23 years. If we take the age cohort of 18-22 years, the GER in higher education would exceed 29.3 per cent. Going by the prevailing rate of growth in enrolment, the country would easily accomplish the targeted Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 50 per cent by 2035. Increasing

the minimum prescribed duration of the undergraduate programmes from three to four years, as provided for by the NEP 2020, may help achieve the target earlier than planned.

The most remarkable achievement has been in making the country's higher education equitable and inclusive. With only a few women at the time of Independence, they now constitute 49 per cent of total enrolment in higher education. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) in higher education in the country is now more than 0.94. So has been the case concerning the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the Other Backward Castes (OBCs). They now respectively constitute 14.7, 5.6 and 37 per cent of the total enrolment in higher education.

The nation has not only been able to provide opportunities to them but has also been able to create conditions to enable them the available opportunities. Undoubtedly, the nation needs to do a lot more as the participation of the SCs and STs is still far below the national average. Substantial increase in women enrolment notwithstanding, there is still a void in many disciplines, particularly in different branches of Engineering education. So is the case with Muslim minorities which constitute about 15 per cent of the population but are only 5.5 per cent in higher education.

It is often stated that accomplishments in expansion and equity are paled by the poor quality of our higher education institutions and programmes. Some are indeed excellent but they are few and far in between. They are akin to islands of excellence floating in the vast sea of mediocrity. Most critically, even our bests compare poorly with the best of the world. At the same time, the gap between the best and the rest must also be mitigated to ensure a decent quality of higher education for a larger section of the population.

This must, however, not construe that the quality of higher education in the country has declined since Independence. On the contrary, it has steadily improved on almost all performance parameters.

Undoubtedly, India is yet to realise its full potential as far as higher education is concerned. It can certainly do far better. To begin with, the nation must shed the dubious distinction of delivering maximum output per dollar of input in higher education. This is not something to be proud of. It is a sad commentary on the state of under investment in higher education. As the nation enters into its Amrit Kaal, it must commit to investing heavily in higher education.

*Former Secretary General, AIU New Delhi &
Former Vice Chancellor
Central University of Himachal Pradesh, HP*

Table 1
Expenditure on Education (Centre and State Combined) as a Percentage of GDP

Year	BY Education Department	By Education and other Departments
1951-52	0.64	0.64
1960-61	1.48	1.48
1970-71	2.11	2.11
1980-81	2.59	2.98
1990-91	3.37	3.84
2000-01	3.25	4.28
2010-11	3.22	4.05
2012-13	3.1	3.98
2013-14	3.1	3.70
2014-15	2.8	3.84
2015-16	2.8	4.07
2016-17	2.8	4.20
2017-18	2.8	4.24
2018-19	2.8	3.87
2019-20	2.8	4.17
2020-21 (RE)	3.1	4.39
2021-22 (BE)	3.1	3.98

Source: (1) 2012-13 to 2-13-14: Economic Survey 2017-18, Vol 2, p168
 (2) 2014-15 to 2021-22: Economic Survey 2021-22; Chapter 10, Table 1, p352
 (3) Expenditure on Higher Education: Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure of Various Years

Table 2
Expenditure on Education By Education Department
(Centre and State Combined) as a Percentage of

Year	Total Expenditure	Expenditure on Social Services
2012-13	11.6	47.5
2013-14	11.6	46.7
2014-15	10.8	46.1
2015-16	10.4	42.8
2016-17	10.2	41.8
2017-18	10.7	42.4
2018-19	10.4	41.2
2019-20	10.7	42.5
2020-21 (RE)	9.5	38.0
2021-22 (BE)	9.7	36.6

Source: (1) 2012-13 to 2-13-14: Economic Survey 2017-18, Vol 2, p168
 (2) 2014-15 to 2021-22: Economic Survey 2021-22; Chapter 10, Table 1, p352
 (3) Expenditure on Higher Education: Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure of Various Years

Table 3
Public Expenditure on Education By Education and Other Departments
(Centre and State Combined) as a Percentage of GDP

Year	Centre	States	Total
2010-11	1.11	2.94	4.05
2011-12	1.03	2.95	3.98
2012-13	0.90	2.80	3.70
2013-14	1.00	2.83	3.84
2014-15	1.07	3.00	4.07
2015-16	1.04	3.16	4.20
2016-17	1.09	3.15	4.24
2017-18	0.97	2.90	3.87
2018-19 (RE)	0.98	3.19	4.17
2019-20 (BE)	1.12	3.27	4.39

Source: GOI (2022), Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure for the year 2017-18 to 2019-20, Table 4, Page 16

Table 4
Public Expenditure on Higher Education
By Education and Other Departments
(Centre and State Combined)
As a Percentage of GDP

Year	Centre	State	Total
2010-11	0.33	0.53	0.86
2011-12	0.23	0.42	0.64
2012-13	0.19	0.44	0.53
2013-14	0.23	0.44	0.67
2014-15	0.18	0.38	0.57
2015-16	0.19	0.40	0.59
2016-17	0.18	0.38	0.57
2017-18	0.16	0.33	0.49
2018-19 (RE)	0.15	0.38	0.53
2019-20 (BE)	0.16	0.36	0.52

Source: Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure for various Years

Table 5
Public Expenditure on Higher Education
By Education and Other Departments
(Centre and State Combined)

	Total Expenditure on Higher (Rs in Crores)				Per Student Expenditure on Higher Education		
Year	Centre	State	Total	Enrolment in HE (Crores)	Centre	State	Total
2010-11	24,164	38,490	62,654	2.75	8,787	13,996	22,783
2011-12	19,056	34,845	53,901	2.92	6,526	11,933	18,459
2012-13	18,811	43,637	62,448	3.02	6,229	14,449	20,678
2013-14	26,254	48,958	75,212	3.23	8,128	15,157	23,285
2014-15	22,944	47,657	70,601	3.42	6,709	13,935	20,644
2015-16	26,129	55,367	81,496	3.46	7,552	16,002	23,554
2016-17	28,185	58,967	87,152	3.57	7,895	16,517	24,412
2017-18	27,449	57,127	84,576	3.66	7,500	15,609	23,108
2018-19	28,833	71,665	1,00,498	3.74	7,709	19,162	26,871
(RE)							
2019-20	32,480	72,434	1,04,913	3.85	8,436	18,814	27,250
(BE)							
CAGR	3.00%	6.53%	5.29%	3.42%	-0.41%	3.00%	1.81%

Source:

1. Data on expenditure on higher education from Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure for various Years
2. Data on Enrolment in higher education from All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) for various years

Table 6
Expenditure Higher Education in Union Budget
As per Demand for Grant of MHRD/MoE in relation to Government Receipts
(Rs. Cores)

Year	Expenditure on HE as per Demand for Grants for MHRD/MoE	Total Revenue Receipts of Union Government	Total Receipt of Union Government	Expenditure of HE as a % of Revenue Receipts	Expenditure of HE as a % of Total Receipts
2011-12	19,505	7,51,437	13,07,225	2.60%	1.49%
2012-13	20,423	8,79,232	13,74,419	2.32%	1.49%
2013-14	24,465	10,14,724	15,52,772	2.41%	1.58%
2014-15	23,152	11,01,473	15,85,921	2.10%	1.46%
2015-16	25,439	11,95,025	17,92,099	2.13%	1.42%
2016-17	29,026	13,74,203	19,84,089	2.11%	1.46%
2017-18	33,614	14,35,233	21,37,882	2.34%	1.57%
2018-19	31,904	15,52,916	23,16,434	2.05%	1.38%
2019-20	36,916	16,84,060	26,81,360	2.19%	1.38%
2020-21	32,378	16,33,918	35,17,025	1.98%	0.92%
2021-22	36,032	20,78,935	35,95,813	1.73%	1.00%
(RE)					
2022-23	40,828	22,04,422	39,44,157	1.85%	1.04%
(BE)					
CAGR	6.35%	9.38%	9.64%	-2.77%	-3.00%

Source:

1. Data on expenditure on higher education from Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure for various Years
2. Data on Revenue and Total Receipts from the Union Budgets of respective years

National Education Policy and the Role of A Teacher

Ashok Modak

It was on 29th July 2020 that the Indian Parliament approved the present National Education policy; the period of almost two years is thus over. This very period, however witnessed massive spread of Covid-Pandemic throughout the world. The government of India, nonetheless launched several initiatives with a view to strengthening five pillars of the education policy such as access equity, quality, affordability and accountability. The Education Ministry of India held a meeting on 7th May 2022 under the chairmanship of P.M. Narendra Modi for reviewing the outcomes of these initiatives. These initiatives are as follows:-

- i. Developing a hybrid system of online and offline learning to avoid overexposure of technology of school-going children,
- ii. Formulating a National Curriculum Framework under the guidelines of the National Steering Committee,
- iii. Efforts to track out-of-school children and bringing them back into the mainstream,
- iv. Introduction of multiple entry and exit points in higher education in actuality issuing of do's and dont's in this connection,
- v. Launching of academic bank of credit on Digi locker platform, and so on.

It is interesting to refer to certain innovative and useful suggestions made by educationists in connection with implementation of the new National Education Policy. Ritika Chopra has thus stated that a civil engineer must be made aware of environmental and social impact of building the dam. She has in fact invited our attention to the fact that certain IIT's have already opted for multiple disciplines: if IIT-Delhi has a humanities department and set up a public policy department, IIT-Kharagpur has a school of Medical Science and Technology. She has asserted in this context that a focus on multiple disciplines would not dilute the character of a single-stream institutions such as IIT's. As per one report, IIT-Delhi and the JNU in Delhi are thinking of joint collaboration with a view to imparting simultaneous training in social sciences as well as in engineering to their students. Prof. Jagadesh Kumar, the new Chief of the University Grants Commission has suggested recently that students studying the subject of international relations will get in the near future an opportunity to learn nuances of foreign policies of

various nations from the seasoned diplomats such as Kuldeep Nayyar, Rajiv Sikri, Bimal Prasad, Maharaj Krishna Rasgotra, etc. He has further stated that accordingly such professors of practice as well as industry experts and professionals would also be roped in universities as faculty members. No wonder, 'Ph.D. is no longer mandatory to teach at central universities.-thus runs the news-item. The suggestion made by Dr. Bhushan Patwardhan, the present Chief of NAAC is equally significant. Dr. Patwardhan has actually prescribed nine steps to be taken by all universities for coping with the new National Education Policy. The eighth step is quotable here:- “Remove blue-collar and white collar divide by ensuring equal weightage to skill mastery and degree education, ensuring equitable recognition to skill providing accountability linked autonomy and encouragement to deserving organizations to innovate new India-centric university models integrating ancient and modern approaches”.

It is gratifying to note that a number of educationists, well-known personalities and elites have shown deep interest in proper and due implementation of the new national education policy. The Kasturirangan Committee which has framed this policy has no doubt taken into account various developmental imperatives of our nation and recommended due reforms in education. The new education policy has thus acquired notable Unique Selling Points, which need to be listed now as the principles or the salient features of the new education policy will be elaborated in the next sections of this essay. The first U.S.P. of the present education policy is its claim that it caters to the needs of the 21st century. Secondly, it pays its attention to India's demographic dividend and plans to provide high quality educational opportunities to the young Indians on the war-footing. Thirdly, it sets before us the global education development agenda mirrored in the Goal No 4 of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. This goal is quite ambitious as it expects us to provide inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030.

Policy Draft and Teacher's Role.

Laudatory references to teacher's role one comes across in the draft of the new National Education Policy deserve a special space in this write up. Thus the Introductory part of the education policy underscores the necessity to help re-establish teachers at all levels as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly shape our next generation of citizens. (page 5) Part I of the policy-draft, titled School-education reminds readers not only how the teachers shape the future of our children, but also conveys to us that ancient India always offered respectful place to the teachers. One and the same paragraph of the Part I however, notes that at present, the quality and motivation of teachers do not reach the desired standards. The following remark in this connection articulates a due concern through the apt wording:- “The high respect for teachers and the high status of the teaching profession must be restored so as to inspire the best to enter the teaching profession”. (page 21)

New Education Policy is determined to give teachers continuous opportunities for self-improvement. This is why, it informs us that each teacher “will be expected to participate in at least 50 hours of continuous Professional Development opportunities every year with a view to covering the latest pedagogies”. (page 23) Part II of the policy draft pertaining to Higher Education contains a special paragraph for emphasising how

the faculty needs to be motivated, energized and capable of shouldering new responsibilities. The candid assessment reflected in the same paragraph is, however quite revealing. It runs as follows:- 'despite various improvements in the status of the academic profession, faculty motivation in terms of teaching, research and service in higher education institutes remains far lower than the desired level'. (page 42)

As the new National Education Policy is eager to reach sustainable development goals by 2030 and as it is aware of the hurdles on the path, a loud thinking on the salient features of this policy and on the role of a teacher in the field of implementation of this policy is quite relevant and timely. We intend to devote the former half of this paper for elaborating notable features of this policy and the latter half for highlighting the role of a Teacher. One cannot of course have a watertight compartment, as the elaboration of the features of the new education policy is bound to refer to the expectations from the teacher as well. We cannot avoid the narration of challenges faced by teachers while concretizing innovative ideas pertaining to the new education policy.

Salient features of the New NEP-2020

The new National Education Policy aims at creating an equitable and vibrant knowledge society in India. The vision of this policy is in consonance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by India in 2015. One finds therefore a categorical mention that this policy intends to produce productive and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive and plural society. Uniqueness of this policy, however lies in the fact that while it plans to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action; it seeks to nurture among students divine tendencies, such as compassion, empathy, sacrifice and inclination to engage oneself in unattached involvement. This policy moreover wants to inculcate in students' minds genuine pride in Indian culture and civilization. The salient features of the education policy have been presented as fundamental principles as they are expected to guide individual educational institutes. This is why, each teacher is also supposed to transact with students in the light of very principles. Hence elaboration of every feature or principle of this policy is bound to deal with the related expectations from the teachers concerned. The present education policy spells out in all twenty-two principles. Ten principles out of them mirror the crux of this policy. Hence, it is appropriate to explain them in the following lines in certain details.

1. The first principle of feature happens to be its student centric nature. This is not of course the unique or exclusive specialty of the 2020 educational policy as our leaders and educationists have been insisting on making our education learners' centric since years together. If we undertake a succinct review of the 1986 policy as well an assessment of the post 1986 steps on the part of the government of India, we observe vivid specimens of the insistence on student centric education! We nonetheless find it desirable to delineate this feature, as we cannot afford to ignore this urgency in view of the peculiar 21st century challenges such as remarkable advances in science & technology, major climate changes and the catastrophic spread of Covid pandemic on the global level. What hurts everybody most is the fact that, despite decades long insistence on making Indian education student

centric, teachers continue to treat students as depositors and themselves as depositors of information. That huge amounts of money have been spent so far on salaries of teachers, as well as on infrastructures of school-buildings is a fact and the outcome of learner-centric education still eludes us. Suzana Brinkmann has rightly pointed out that Twenty-Two years are over after our leadership has approved Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and still “the chalk and talk” or teacher instruction continues to dominate our classrooms. The urgency with which the new National Education Policy pleads for imparting students-centric education is thus highly appreciable.

2. Second feature of the present education policy is linked with recognizing, identifying and fostering the unique capabilities of each student. If the first feature elaborated above deals with macro-level of the student-world at large, the second one underscores the indispensability of micro level transactions, as it asks teachers and parents to pay attention to every student with a view to blossoming capabilities of each one. As per the new education policy, a student can show his or her aptitude during his childhood years only. Therefore, in the 5+3+3+4 design chalked out by this policy when child finishes five years of the foundational stage and enters first the preparatory stage of three years and later undergoes the subsequent middle stage of further three years, he or she can opt for the pursuit of profession of the respective choice. Thus during school years (5+3+3) only a student is expected to begin his march towards, the profession of choice. Such a unique approach of the present education policy makes it possible for us to search born plumbers, carpenters, singers, and so on. And if the Child-Labor Act of 1986 prohibits a child from blossoming his capabilities, some educationists have come ahead to seek required amendments in this Act. Successful implementation of this feature of the education-policy expects parents and teachers to collaborate with each other.
3. Third feature or principle of the current education policy expects educational institutes to be flexible, so that learners have the ability to choose their trajectories, of course learning trajectories and programmes and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests”. It is obvious that all the principles of the current policy are in full consonance with student-centric education; which mirrors India-centric holistic thought. We have believed so far in the so-called Descartes-sponsored compartmentalized or fragmentary approach. The education policy in the past accordingly showed interest in making our students experts in specific, narrow fields. The 2020 policy has however realized that Indian students need to be versatile and skilled enough in several walks of life. Its emphasis on multi disciplinarity and on holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities and sports for a multidisciplinary world is thus quite logical. Framers of the new Education Policy seem therefore determined to open new avenues of development even to the school-going children as well. Their insistence on breaking the binaries in the field of higher education between STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and humanities

subjects is also in full agreement with the holistic and integral approach. Multiple entry points as well as exit points offered to students of colleges and universities are again due reflections of the very approach.

4. Forth feature favouring conceptual understanding on the part of students in the place of rote learning and learning for exams is equally noteworthy. It is a fact that विद्यार्थी has become परीक्षार्थी ! No wonder, even after passing the examination in flying colours, a student remains diffident and suffers from inferiority complex. A learner is supposed to acquire ability of deep, critical thinking; he is expected to articulate his thoughts in a logical, cogent manner; he must face the problems boldly enough. Mere rote learning with a view to securing good percentage of marks in terminal tests hardly enables a learner to be self-dependent, to be capable of entering the depth of a subject

Murari, a great Sanskrit poet informs us through the following lines how the acquisition of a deep knowledge is thousand times superior to the gaining of shallow information in the life! Hence, learning for exams needs to be replaced by learning the subject thoroughly. The lines penned by Murari run as follows:-

“अब्धिलंघितएववानरभटैर्किम्वस्यगंभीरता ?

आपातालनिमग्नपीवरतनुर्जानातिमन्दाचलः ।”

(The army of warrior monkeys did cross the ocean and arrived at Sri Lanka. Did it, however realise the depth of the ocean? It was the Mandar mountain, however, rooted in 'patala' at the bottom of the ocean which knows the depth of the water”) The new National Educational Policy aspires, in short to create students immersed in the ocean of knowledge.

5. Fifth feature of the new Educational Policy suggests a remedial measure in this connection. It asks us to focus on regular formative assessment for learning rather than the summative assessment that encourages today's coaching culture! Teachers are thus asked by the framers of this policy to be extra ordinarily alert and attentive throughout the academic year, as they are expected to assess students' performances in all transactions. They must be moreover impartial and just. Prof. Jagadesh Kumar, the U.G.C. Chairman has endorsed the idea of conducting Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for Central Universities, as according to him, “the entire focus on high scores must go away”. Teachers are thus given to understand that emphasis on 'coaching culture' is no longer relevant for the future life of a student. The recommendation relevant in this context made by the booklet titled “Brainstorming Retreat”, - edited by Dr. Bhushan Patwardhan and his team is worth quoting here:- “To improve the quality of Indian higher education and its expected outcomes, the system needs to be transformed into a continuous assessment one based on a pragmatic, formative, functional, real-time technology-enabled, outcome based approach.....”
6. Sixth feature of the present Educational Policy is quite innovative, as it suggests to an educational institute to render respect for the local context in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy always keeping in mind that education is a

concurrent subject. New Education Policy 2020 informs us that ancient Indian literary work such as Banabhatta's *Kadambari* described a good education as knowledge of the 64 Kalas or arts, and among these 64 kala, 'arts' were not only subjects, such as singing and painting but also scientific fields, such as chemistry and mathematics, vocational fields such as carpentry and cloths-making, professional field such as medicine and engineering, as well as soft skills, such as communication, discussion and debate. (page 38) The New Policy further adds a paragraph to emphasise that a holistic and multi-disciplinary education to be imparted to students henceforth would be in line not only with the just described ancient Indian knowledge system but also with the 21st century requirements. The educational institutes must therefore shape or design new courses for students whereby skills pertaining to local clinics, fast food centres etc will be developed in new generations. Such institutes are thus bound to look into the multidimensional well being of learners. They will accordingly succeed in enhancing employability as well as educatedness of students.

7. The feature number Seven can legitimately be called a very unique principle of the National Educational Policy, as it asks us to pay special attention to provide access for socially and economically disadvantaged groups of children to the field of education. This approach of the framers of the education policy is in full tune with the Government resolve to achieve the goal of sustainable development of all citizens. Let us admit frankly that there are discriminations of various types on the grounds of caste, creed, religion, gender, etc. That this sort of discrimination creates hurdles in achieving sustainable Development Goals is also a fact. The present education policy spares two chapters (Six and fourteen) of its draft exclusively for underscoring the indispensability of implementing special measures for bringing socially and economically disadvantaged groups of children to schools and colleges. A succinct delineation of these measures is 'a must' in this context.

One may thus refer to targeted scholarships, and cash transfers to parents of under represented and disadvantaged groups of children. There is provision of bicycles to very children with a view to goading such boys and girls to come to schools regularly, of course for learning.

Students belonging to Scheduled Castes, Tribes and other Backward classes do get reserved seats and scholarships. No sane person would oppose schemes and policies pertaining to this category. Students residing in remote village, suffering from geographical conditions, children facing vulnerable situations, orphans and children of beggars as well as children facing physical disabilities do require special facilities and the framers of the present education policy have endorsed all such measures.

The idea of creating Special Education Zones is quite novel. One may, for example come across certain geographical areas accommodating huge proportions of Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups. Let such areas be called Aspirational localities and let the education be provided on war footing to them – thus runs the idea of SEZs (Special Education Zones).

As women, get under represented in the Disadvantaged groups, New Educational Policy aims at providing a quality education specially to them. One cannot afford to ignore the RPWD Act of 2016, as the present Educational Policy shows intense interest towards guarding Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The statement quoted below from the NEP 2020 is quite noteworthy:- “The RPWD Act of 2016 defines inclusive education as a system of education wherein students with and without disabilities learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities.” (page 28)

Realising that all stakeholders in the education system must welcome the idea of equitable and just as well as inclusive education, the framers of the present policy have placed great emphasis on sensitising very stakeholders to the requirements of disadvantaged groups of students.

8. Eighth feature of the present education policy mirrors the desire of the framers to grant graded autonomy to colleges and to invite faculty members of colleges and universities to frame syllabi of courses to be taught to students. This policy has classified Higher Educational Institutes into five categories, such as. 1. Affiliated Colleges (AFC), 2. Autonomous Colleges (AUC), 3. Teaching Universities (TU), 4. Research Universities (RU), and 5. Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU). Framers of this policy expect every affiliated college to develop itself into an Autonomous (degree granting) college. Such a college would be encouraged and mentored to get the status (in due course) of an autonomous college.

As per the NEP-Road-map, single-stream HEIs are to be converted gradually into multidisciplinary institutions or parts of multidisciplinary HEI clusters as the framers of this policy finally aim at encouraging high quality, multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary teaching and research throughout India. An autonomous college, duly developed is a step in that direction.

The new education policy has got certain expectations from an affiliated college. The latter must, for example develop in its students ability to know and also the social, ethical as well as emotional abilities and inclinations. The ability to know has two parts; basic or foundational and that of higher order. A student must thus acquire command over literacy and numeracy as a mark of foundational ability and must also show his capacity to think independently and to resolve problems. A student who gets a degree from this college must, of course go beyond this range; he must be capable of getting social, ethical and emotional capacities and tendencies to implement his knowledge in practice for altruistic causes as well. A college student must go, in other words, beyond the mere or exclusive pursuit of employability. He must try to acquire genuine educatedness. If an affiliated college trains its students in this direction and succeeds in creating such army of students, it will be able to get the status of an autonomous educational institute. Teachers play crucial roles in the life of an educational institute, they are the major stakeholders; in the sense that they shape the lives of students. And it is

through the transactions of students that the world grasps the potentialities of the teacher concerned. Do we not judge the potentialities of seeds through the tasting of a fruit?

Faculty members of such a college deserve to get the assignments of framing syllaby of various courses. This is the road-map of the present education policy and the elaboration of the Eighth principle attempted here has, hopefully thrown adequate light on this map.

9. It is through the ninth principle or feature that the framers have appealed to students to undertake socially useful research projects. The education policy seeks to nurture vibrant research culture in higher educational institutes. This is why; it urges students and teachers to engage themselves in the continuous expansion of the horizon of knowledge with a view to serving larger interest of society through the application of that knowledge. Teachers are supposed to guide students in the pursuit of research projects; where by a unique or a novel contribution would be made to the treasury of knowledge at the command of society. The new education policy insists that the research conducted in higher educational institutes must be socially useful. It does not; of course deny the significance of intrinsically beneficial research-pursuits. There is, however a legitimate thrust on socially beneficial studies and projects.

One comes across thus in the Human Development Report 2016 a revealing reference to Poverty-Environment nexus almost everywhere in all nations of the world. The exact statement is as follows:- “Environmental damage almost always affects people living in poverty the most. These people become the major victims of air and water pollutions; experience drought and desertification and generally live nearest to the dirty factories, busy roads, waste dumps and ecologically fragile lands.....Even though poor people bear the brunt of environmental damage they are seldom creators of it. The rich pollute more generate more waste and put more stress on the nature”.

If a student of a college or university decides to study the implications of environment-poverty nexus observable in a slum area of his a city, the findings of this study will definitely be socially beneficial. An academic pursuit can thus go hand in hand with a socially useful enterprise. Such sort of innovative and 'out of the box' research project undertaken by an autonomous college will surely get full encouragement from the farmers of the present education policy.

10. Last feature or principle of the new NEP aims at inculcating among Learners a rootedness and pride in India. This year, when all of us are eager to celebrate 'Azadi ka Amrit-Mahatsav', a decision of our Education Ministry to put in conscious efforts to awaken our students and to instil in their minds an attachment for our culture and civilization is undoubtedly laudable!

While presenting this policy, our Ministry of Education has rightly called it the policy of the 21st century and has proposed to revise and revamp our education structure which is built on India's traditions and value systems and determined to make us reach the aspirational goals of 21st century education. The present

educational policy indeed seems confident to provide 21st century education to our students through the structure built on India's traditional value system. We must therefore inform our new generations of the unique peculiarities of the Indian ethos. We Indians are thus known for integrated thinking, as we believe in the integral unity of the entire cosmos. A human being from our perspective happens to be a physical, mental-intellectual-spiritual being. We logically try to attain or achieve a balance between the four aims:- Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Mahatma Gandhi rightly calls our civilization superior to the European counterpart. He actually challenges Westerners through the following argument:- “When you concentrate your full attention on obtaining material prosperity (Artha) and on satisfying sensual urges (kama) and throw into oblivion two lofty aims such as Dharma (sustaining society) and Moksha (liberating one-self from all bonds) how can you call your life as civilized and cultured?”

If the Indian choice in favour of integrated and balanced thinking has received global welcome at present, India's decision to worship Daridra-Narayan a (marginalized and vulnerable destitute) and to deny Darwinian principle of “Survival of the fittest has also obtained full world-approval. Our tendency to honour human interest in preference to Marx-sponsored class interest is again a world-acclaimed reality!

According to Dattopant Thengadi, “the Twenty-first century is rightly questioning the disillusioned and perplexed mankind in general and the Western World in particular:-Quo Vadis?”

Role of A Teacher

I have already mentioned in the lines above that whereas 21st century challenges and problems require a new type of education for our students, we continue to indulge in imparting education through old, obsolete ways and methods. I have referred there to “the chalk and talk method”. Suzana Brinkman, whose write-up has accordingly been alluded to has actually accused teachers of being barriers to India's educational reforms. Suzana's attack on teachers is more than explicit. I am tempted to give here a verbatim quotation from Suzana's write up:- “The barriers may lie deeper, in our hearts and minds. They lie, perhaps in a prevailing cultural mind set that does not necessarily support the vision presented in policy frameworks, a dominant world view of which teachers are both victims and vehicles”.

This quotation informs us quite rightly that teachers whom it calls barriers in the path of educational reforms, themselves happen to be victims of the perverted world view. Suzana's line of thinking is worth deep reflection. As per this line, when the society at large opts for a perverted jaundiced world view and sanctions discriminations by calling them as religiously ordained, all members, including teachers implement the same view in practice. There arises accordingly a discrepancy between the worldview held and mirrored in the Indian constitution on the one hand and that shared as well as honoured by the society at large. The Indian constitution, for example, believes in the principle of equality and asks us to treat everybody as equal stakeholder in society. We,

however think on different lines and comply with hierarchy in our practice. The Indian constitution believes similarly in the tenet of liberty and expects us to let each one act freely within the limits of constitution. We, however, honour bans and shackles on professions as well as on transactions like marriage, dining, travels, and so on. The Indian constitution believes in the same vein in the canon of fraternity and advises us to be just and egalitarian while dealing with others. Our transactions are, however unjust and inhuman.

As teachers are surrounded and groomed in this social setup, they deviate rather spontaneously from the lofty principles of equality, liberty and fraternity. They thus become victims of the jaundiced world view and when their teaching percolates and reflects one and the same world view, they become vehicles to carry forward injustice and inhumanity.

The new NEP wants to facilitate the emergence and growth of egalitarian equitable and inclusive society in India. It expects naturally from teachers to be vehicles of the unfoldment and development of the just and egalitarian society wherein will blossom 'Insaaf and Insaaniyat!' Teachers are, in short, expected to rise over and above deep-rooted social conventions sponsoring discriminations in human transactions. They must assimilate the world view reflected in our constitution sponsoring the causes of equality, liberty and fraternity. They should become vehicles to inculcate in students' mind sets the sublime principles of constitution.

It is essential to explain here the concept of world view. We do share a set of assumptions, rather subconsciously about the world. Such a set makes me feel, think and act in predictable patterns. This very set is denoted by the concept of world view. Suzana Brinkmann has picked up certain assumptions or beliefs on the part of the teachers. Teachers' beliefs about ontology (the nature of reality) epistemology (knowledge) and teleology (purpose) have, for example been selected by Suzana. The entire argumentation is quite interesting and instructive, as it informs us how the perverted or wrong beliefs of teachers come in the way of educational reforms, how do they affect student-centric education. I intend to paraphrase this argumentation in the following lines. Teacher's role does play a crucial role in the life of a student. Hence the world views or beliefs held by teachers deserve our special attention. Teachers' beliefs about ontology; about epistemology and teleology will be elaborated in the lines below in the same order.

Teachers' beliefs about Ontology (the nature of reality)

A mention has already been made above that Indian constitution sponsors the sublime principles of equality, liberty and fraternity and expects all of us to implement such principles in practice. Members of our constituent Assembly endorsed these principles unanimously; there emerged spontaneous consensus in favour of these tenets, because Indian philosophy had taught them spirituality and faith in the tenet of self-articulation. (आत्मोपमय-सूत्र) In the words of Lokamanya Tilak, "anybody who considers that all created things are in mine and I am in all created things" always conducts himself in life by identifying others with himself". Honest and transparent transactions in the light of the tenet of self-articulation are bound to be genuinely democratic. We however

opted for hierarchical transactions in practice, allowed unjust and unhuman conventions to dominate our mind sets. All members of our Constituent Assembly therefore decided to put an end to undemocratic, hierarchic conventions and to revive the transparent pursuit of self-identification principle. All education policies adopted and implemented in post freedom years advocated the indispensability of pursuing 'Insaaf and Insaaniyat'. They also naturally pleaded for the same pursuit. The new NEP 2020 and the categorical imperative of 2022, the Amrita-Mahotsavi Year of our freedom make it mandatory for all of us in general and for teachers in particular to give a concrete shape to the principle or tenet of self-identification. No teacher in a school, college and university should discriminate on the ground of colour, caste, creed, religion and gender. No teacher should cast aspersion on a student on the ground of caste, colour or creed or gender. As the world view or the mind set motivates a person to undertake according action, a teacher must share and articulate an authentically democratic world view!

Teachers' beliefs about Epistemology (knowledge)

Teachers must believe in democratic relations in the place of hierarchical ones. Their beliefs regarding knowledge are also quite significant. Teachers generally believe in formal knowledge transmitted from themselves and from textbooks and guides to students, as they consider students as mere receptacles to be filled in by information from external agencies. The new NEP like all previous documents appeal to teachers to look at knowledge from the different perspective; teachers are expected to honour practical knowledge gained by students from their experiences in the world. One must here elaborate the peculiarities of the Indian knowledge-system. The extract given below from the write up of Kapil Kapoor is quite useful in this regard, as it highlights the uniqueness of our knowledge system:-

“Knowledge that is argued to be the means of dharma is understandably an altogether different paradigm from that of knowledge, that is an instrument of power in the Western tradition. *Knowledge in this tradition is not a synonym for information, is not sensory in its source and is not an instrument for promoting man's comforts or for enabling him to exercise power over Nature and men.* This knowledge is the knowledge of what it means to be a human being, a knowledge that is rooted in deep meditation on the nature of human condition, a knowledge that seeks to promote happiness, not comfort and a knowledge that enables man to free himself- (from the narrow bounds of his own small, self) rather than to limit the freedom of the other”. (Emphasis is added)

The underlined portion of this extract is immensely valuable, as it informs us that

- i. Knowledge does not mean information
- ii. Knowledge is not obtained merely through sense organs
- iii. It is not an instrument for gaining power, prestige or position.

I intend to elaborate details of each of these peculiarities in the following lines.

- i. Knowledge does not mean information.

Swami Vivekananda has explained how knowledge must not be treated as equivalent to information in his speech titled “The Future of India” delivered at Madras in 1897. The paragraph from this speech is worth quotation here:-

“Education is not the amount of information that is put into brain and runs riot

there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas”. Swamiji informs us in this context of the most appropriate Sanskrit line which is as follows:

“यथाखरश्चन्दनभारवाहीभारस्यवेत्तानुचन्दनस्य” (The ass carrying its load of sandalwood knows only the weight and not the value of the sandalwood”).

Swamiji's comment on the line is equally thought provoking:- “If education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages in the world and encyclopedias are the Rishis”

The framers of our education policy convey to the teachers that the latter should not remain confined and satisfied in providing mere pieces of information to the learners, they thus follow Swami Vivekananda only. If the teachers take pleasure in giving doses of information to students, their lectures will cause adequate irritation to the listeners. They are supposed to have healthy interactions and delightful dialogues with students. Most of the teachers however engage themselves in monotonous monologues in the classes. I have thus made two valid points so far. First education or real knowledge expects students to assimilate ideas with a view to shaping their lives. Knowledge obtained by students must get mirrored vividly in their transactions. Thus, the outcome of teaching is quite sublime and lofty. Secondly, the practice on the part of the teacher to give such information through boring monologue is also disastrous and damaging. A teacher is bound to fail in his duties if he considers a docile or a submissive student as ideal. Real education or knowledge is imparted by that teacher who welcomes dissent on the part of his listeners. One can in short observe that neither provision of information is education, nor the practice on the part of the teacher to indulge in one way traffic of boring monologue is teaching. Suzana Brinkmann's comment regarding certain tendencies on the part of teachers is equally revealing and therefore noteworthy. This comment is as follows:- “Teachers tend to equate knowing and intelligence with memorising facts from a textbook, best achieved though didactic repetition.....This mind set has resulted in Indians regarding themselves as consumers rather than producers of knowledge”. The practice of considering information as synonymous with knowledge must be discontinued as early as possible- such is the crux of narration attempted just now.

ii. Knowledge is not obtained merely through sense organs

This peculiarity of our knowledge system is in full consonance with spiritual philosophy sponsored in India since Upanishadic years. Indians are aware of the functions of the external cognitive sense such as eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. They also know that mind which is an internal cognitive sense also has a role to play. One must, however meditate and reflect; one must try to identify oneself with the object of knowledge. Then and then only he or she gets the knowledge. The extract quoted above from Kapil Kapoor's work¹³ conveys to us that a knowledge is rooted in deep meditation on the nature of human condition and it enables man to free himself from the narrow bounds of his own small self. Rajiv Malhotra

substantiates the same point by referring to the well known story of the elephant and the six blind man, who represent five external cognitive senses and the mind, an internal cognitive sense. Rajiv Malhotra's comment is quotable here:- “The men touch different parts of the elephant and come up with entirely different conclusions as to what the object might be, with none identifying it correctly-the moral being that perspectives are relative and the whole truth is beyond any one perspective. The blindness of the men represents the relative and partial nature of all such perspectives and their number symbolizes the five senses plus the mind, none of which alone is capable of ascertaining the truth”.

Acquisition of knowledge from the viewpoint of Indian Knowledge System, in short expects a student to rise over and above the boundaries of our senses. No teacher should ignore or belittle such a peculiarity of our knowledge system. Every teacher must help his students in pursuing the trajectory of going beyond the compound of his little self.

iii. Knowledge is not an instrument of gaining power, etc.

Euro-Americans measure the worth of anything through the yardstick of material gains. This is why they proclaim that knowledge is power, health is wealth and honesty is policy. We Indians however refuse to apply such materialistic yardsticks, In the Fourth Chapter of the Gita, one comes across the following line:- “न हि ज्ञानेन सादृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते” (“There is nothing indeed in this world so holy as knowledge”). Indian knowledge system informs us that just as the kindled fire reduces to ashes all fuel, the knowledge-formed fire reduces to ashes all Action. It is the knowledgeable person whose actions are desireless. Such a person liberates or emancipates himself.

The purpose of acquiring knowledge from the perspective of the Indian Knowledge System is thus sacred. You and me should succeed in liberating oneself from the clutches of six enemies like desire, anger, greed, temptation, insolence and jealousy! Teachers at large, however hold different purpose-beliefs. They argue that students must get posts, positions and power in the lives and the education imparted to them must enable learners to secure such gains. I have already elaborated in the lines above that educatedness is more important than employability. One cannot, of course, ignore the employability factor, as human survival is crucial. But those teachers who teach students to serve others are the models.

Teachers' world view beliefs regarding ontology (nature of reality) epistemology (knowledge) and teleology (purpose) are undoubtedly quite significant.

*Chancellor
Guru Ghasidas Central University,
Bilaspur, C.G.*

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15. See the note no. 4, p. 53.
16. Rajiv Malhotra, *Being Different* (Noida, U.P. India, 2013), p 127.

शिक्षण : सतत सीखते रहने की कला सिखाना

चान्दकिरण

“बच्चे, जो कुछ सिखाया जा रहा है, उसे तो सीखें ही और साथ ही वे सतत सीखते रहने की कला भी सीखें।” (राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति, 2020)

हमारी नूतन राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (2020) के ‘परिचयात्मक’ अध्याय के अन्तर्गत उल्लिखित यह कथन वस्तुतः सम्पूर्ण ‘शिक्षण-अधिगमन’ की प्रक्रिया को केवल चिन्तन के विभिन्न आयामों हेतु ही प्रेरित नहीं करता अपितु ‘शैक्षिक प्रक्रिया’ के सम्पूर्ण ‘ज्ञान-मीमांसात्मक’ स्वरूप को पुनः उस प्राचीन गौरवमयी ‘भारतीय’ शिक्षा की प्रक्रिया की ओर उन्मुख भी करता है। भारतीय शिक्षा परम्परा में ‘स्वाध्यायात्मा प्रमदः’ के सिद्धान्त को भिन्न-भिन्न सन्दर्भों में भिन्न-भिन्न रूपों में व्यक्त किया जाता रहा है। भारतीय परम्परा में इस तथ्य को पुनः पुनः अनुभूत कराने का निरन्तर प्रयास किया जाता रहा है कि बुद्धिमान् व्यक्ति को निरन्तर अध्ययन में लीन रहना चाहिए। यहाँ यह भी स्पष्ट होना चाहिए कि यहाँ ‘अध्ययन’ शब्द का प्रयोग सामान्य ‘पठन-पाठन’ की प्रक्रिया तक सीमित न होकर किसी भी तत्त्व के अत्यन्त सूक्ष्मता से, गहनता से परीक्षण एवं विवेचन करने के साथ-साथ प्राप्त परिणामों पर भी सूक्ष्मता से मन्थन करने के भाव को अभिव्यक्त करता है।

‘तैत्तिरीय उपनिषद्’ की शिक्षावल्ली में विद्या प्रदान करने (शिक्षण) की प्रक्रिया हेतु प्रयुक्त ‘प्रवचनं सन्धानम्’ से यही भाव व्यक्त होता है। ‘सन्धान’ नए तत्त्वों को खोजने की निरन्तर चलने की विकासात्मक प्रक्रिया का ही आभास कराता है। स्पष्ट ही है कि निरन्तर विकासशील ज्ञान को आबद्ध नहीं किया जा सकता। नूतन तत्त्वों का ‘अन्वेषण’ ज्ञान की प्रकृति में ही समाहित है। वर्तमान में घटने वाली प्रक्रियाएँ भविष्य के परिणामों की आधारभूमि का रूप लेती चलती हैं। भविष्य के अन्वेषण की दिशा का संकेत देती चलती हैं। यहाँ यह कहना अनिवार्य भासित होता है कि प्राचीन भारतीय शिक्षा व्यवस्था केवल काल की दृष्टि से प्राचीन मानी जा सकती है, अपने प्रभाव व प्रक्रिया की दृष्टि से नहीं। अपने प्रभाव व प्रक्रिया की दृष्टि से तो यह भावी शिक्षा की रूपरेखा ही प्रस्तुत करती है। भारतीय दर्शन की प्रत्येक शाखा शिक्षा की सम्पूर्ण प्रक्रिया को प्रस्तुत करती है। फिर, प्रत्येक दार्शनिक प्रक्रिया की अपनी विशिष्ट शब्दावली अथवा ज्ञान प्राप्ति की विशिष्ट प्रक्रिया है। अपने विशिष्ट सूत्र हैं। अपने विशिष्ट सिद्धान्त हैं। अपनी सु-विचारित ‘ज्ञान-मीमांसात्मक प्रणाली’ है। ज्ञान को प्रमाणित करने के इसके अपने ‘प्रमाण’ रूपी विशिष्ट साधन हैं। ‘ज्ञान व प्रमा’ में भेद करने व सिद्ध करने हेतु अपने सिद्धान्त हैं। इन सिद्धान्तों को सूत्रात्मक शैली में प्रस्तुत किया गया है। सूत्रात्मक शैली में प्रस्तुत ये सिद्धान्त ही मूल रूप से ‘कैसे सीखा जाए ?’ की प्रक्रिया के विशिष्ट तत्त्वों को प्रतिपादित करते हैं। ज्ञान के ‘नैरन्तर्य’ को उद्घाटित करते हैं। एक ही ‘ग्रन्थ’ अथवा ‘दर्शन’ आदि के सूत्रों पर लिखी गई विभिन्न टीकाएँ अथवा भाष्य अथवा वार्तिक आदि वास्तव में ‘ज्ञान कैसे प्राप्त किया जाए ?’ अथवा ‘कैसे सीखा जाए ?’ की प्रक्रिया के भाव को ही अभिव्यक्त करते हुए इसके

विभिन्न तत्त्वों को ही प्रकट करते चलते हैं। तार्किक प्रज्ञा के साथ सूक्ष्म चिन्तन ही इस ज्ञान प्रक्रिया की निरन्तरता का आधार रहा है। भारतीय दार्शनिक चिन्तन की परम्परा की चर्चा करते हुए श्री अरविन्द लिखते हैं कि -

‘यह चिन्तन ऊँचे-से-ऊँचे तथा कठोर-से-कठोर बौद्धिक ढंग का था। यह प्रवृत्ति बहुत प्राचीन काल से ही आरम्भ हो चुकी थी और इसने बौद्ध धर्म, जैन धर्म तथा महान् दार्शनिक संप्रदायों को जन्म दिया था, यह उसकी तत्त्वचिन्तक प्रज्ञा का प्रयास था जिसका उद्देश्य अंतर्जन्मात्मक अध्यात्म-अनुभव से उपलब्ध सत्यों को तर्कबुद्धि के समक्ष निरूपित करना था तथा उन्हें युक्ति पूर्वक एवं कठोर न्यायशास्त्रीय तर्क-अनुमान की सूक्ष्म कसौटी पर कस कर उनसे वे सब फलितार्थ निकालना था जिनकी खोज विचारशक्ति कर सकती है। छठी एवं तेरहवीं शताब्दियों के बीच के युग की प्रचुर दार्शनिक रचनाओं में यह प्रवृत्ति किंवा प्रयास अपनी सुविस्तृत एवं सावधानीपूर्ण तर्कणा, सूक्ष्म समीक्षा एवं मीमांसा और प्रबल तार्किक रचना एवं क्रमबद्धता की शक्ति की चरम सीमा पर पहुँच जाता है। दक्षिण के महान् विचारकों, शंकर, रामानुज और मध्व, की कृतियाँ इस युग के विशेष चिह्न हैं।’ (भारतीय संस्कृति के आधार, 368) यहाँ यह अत्यन्त स्पष्ट है कि भारतीय प्रज्ञा व्यक्ति को स्वाभाविक तौर पर ‘चेतनायुक्त’ मानती हुई चलती है। ‘सत्यता’ विद्यमान है परन्तु अदृश्य है।

हिरण्यमेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम्।

तत्त्वं पृषन् अपावृणु सत्यधर्मं दृष्टये(ईशोपनिषद्)

इस सत्य के दर्शन हेतु जिज्ञासा के साथ विशिष्ट अन्तर्ज्ञान चाहिए, अन्तःप्रज्ञा चाहिए, अन्तःचक्षु चाहिए। श्री अरविन्द लिखते हैं -

‘सत्यता की जाँच कोई भी व्यक्ति कर सकता है यदि वह आवश्यक उपायों का अवलम्बन करे तथा एकमात्र संभवनीय कसौटियों का प्रयोग करे। भारतीय मानस इस बात को स्वीकार नहीं करता कि वस्तुओं का मूल्य या उनकी वास्तविकता बाह्य या वैज्ञानिक परीक्षा ही से, अर्थात् भौतिक प्रकृति की सूक्ष्म छानबीन की कसौटी ही से जांची जा सकती है, न वह यह मानता है कि हमारा जो स्थूल मनोविज्ञान विशाल, गुप्त, अवचेतन और अतिचेतन ऊँचाइयों, गहराइयों और विस्तारों पर होने वाली केवल एक क्षुद्र गतिमात्र है उसके प्रतिदिन के सामान्य तथ्य ही एकमात्र कसौटी हो सकते हैं। इन अधिक साधारण या वस्तुगत सत्यों की कसौटी भला क्या है? स्पष्ट ही है कि ये हैं ‘अनुभव, परीक्षात्मक विश्लेषण और संश्लेषण, तर्क और अन्तर्ज्ञान’। क्योंकि मेरी समझ में आधुनिक दर्शन और विज्ञान आजकल अन्तर्ज्ञान का महत्त्व स्वीकार करते हैं। इस अन्य सूक्ष्मतर श्रेणी के सत्यों की कसौटियाँ भी यही हैं, अनुभव, परीक्षात्मक विश्लेषण और संश्लेषण, तर्क और अन्तर्ज्ञान।’ (भारतीय संस्कृति के आधार, 75)

भारतीय परम्परा यह मानकर चलती है कि प्रत्येक व्यक्ति इस ‘अन्तर्ज्ञान’ की क्षमता से युक्त है। प्रश्न इसकी रचनात्मक क्षमता को ‘पहचानने, स्वीकार करने एवं उपयोग में लाने’का है।

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (2020) ‘प्रत्येक व्यक्ति में निहित रचनात्मक क्षमताओं के विकासपर विशेष बल’ देने की बात करती है। यह उक्ति सहज रूप से ही नीतिज्ञ चाणक्य की इस नीति का स्मरण करा देती है कि कोई भी मनुष्य अयोग्य नहीं है, आवश्यकता केवल कुशल योजक के अन्वेषण अथवा निर्माण की है।

‘अयोग्यो पुरुषो नास्ति, योजकस्तत्र दुर्लभः’

प्रस्तुत राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (2020) शिक्षक को इसी रूप में रूपायित करने का प्रयास करती दृष्टिगत होती है।

स्पष्ट ही है कि ‘प्रत्येक बच्चे’ के रूप में ‘प्रत्येक व्यक्ति’ की योग्यता की ‘पहचान, और फिर इसे मान्यता देते हुए, इसके विकास एवं संवर्धन के दायित्व’ का निर्वहण करने हेतु ‘शिक्षक एवं अभिभावक’ ही अत्यन्त सहज, सरल एवं स्वाभाविक क्षमता से युक्त माने जा सकते हैं। सम्भवतः यही कारण भासित होता है कि प्रस्तुत शिक्षा नीति अपने आधारभूत सिद्धान्तों के अन्तर्गत अत्यन्त स्वाभाविक रूप में इन दोनों को ही यह दायित्व सौंपती है ‘शिक्षकों और अभिभावकों को इन क्षमताओं के प्रति संवेदनशील बनाना जिससे वे बच्चे की अकादमिक और अन्य क्षमताओं में उसके सर्वांगीण विकास पर भी पूर्ण ध्यान दे सकें।’ (राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति, 2020)

सर्वांगीण विकास की यह प्रक्रिया अनवरत रूप से निरन्तर चलती रहे इसके लिए अनिवार्य हो जाता है कि अनौपचारिक रूप से 'गृहस्थली' एवं औपचारिक रूप से 'विद्यास्थली' अर्थात् घर एवं शिक्षण संस्थाएँ बच्चे में बीज रूप में समाई उनकी योग्यता के 'प्रस्फुटीकरण एवं विकसन' हेतु अनुकूल परिवेश निर्माण हेतु उनमें विद्यमान योग्यताओं का सम्मान करें। नूतन राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (2020) के अनुसार -

‘एक अच्छी शैक्षणिक संस्था वह है जिसमें प्रत्येक छात्र का स्वागत किया जाता है और उसकी देखभाल की जाती है, जहाँ एक सुरक्षित और प्रेरणादायक शिक्षण वातावरण उपलब्ध होता है, जहाँ सभी छात्रों को सीखने के लिए विविध प्रकार के अनुभव उपलब्ध कराए जाते हैं और जहाँ सीखने के लिए अच्छे आधारभूत ढांचे एवं उपयुक्त संसाधन उपलब्ध रहते हैं। ये सब प्राप्त करना प्रत्येक शिक्षा संस्थान का लक्ष्य होना चाहिए।’ (राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति, 2020) और इसके लिए नीति की अपेक्षा है कि-

‘विभिन्न संस्थानों के बीच तथा शिक्षा के प्रत्येक स्तर पर परस्पर सहज ‘जुड़ाव और समन्वय’ होना आवश्यक है।’ ताकि शैक्षिक प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से व्यक्ति की भीतरी ऊर्जा को अंकुरित, पल्लवित व पुष्पित किया जा सके। स्पष्ट ही है कि यह एक सामूहिक कार्य है, एक सामूहिक उत्तरदायित्व है। शिक्षा की प्रक्रिया व्यष्टि व समष्टि में समन्वय की प्रक्रिया है, परस्पर सार्मजस्य की प्रक्रिया है। अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर सन् 1996 में इक्कीसवीं सदी की शिक्षा के स्वरूप हेतु गठित ‘डेलोर्स आयोग’ के प्रतिवेदन में वर्णित शिक्षा के चार आधारभूत स्तम्भों में ‘मिलकर रहने हेतु शिक्षा’ (Learning to LIVE TOGETHER) इसी ‘समन्वय’ के भाव को ही इंगित करता है। यह शिक्षा का यह स्तम्भ अत्यन्त सहज रूप में ही ऋग्वेद के ‘सङ्गच्छध्वं, संवदध्वम्’ के भाव का स्मरण करा देता है। यूनेस्को द्वारा प्रकाशित इस आयोग के प्रतिवेदन का नाम है - ‘LEARNING: THE TRESURE WITHIN’

अर्थात् सीखना व्यक्ति की अन्तर्निष्ठ की निधि है। इस आयोग का यह सिद्धान्त शिक्षा को ‘व्यक्ति के भीतर ही अधिनिष्ठ ऊर्जा’ को उद्घाटित करने की प्रक्रिया के रूप में ही निहारते हुए स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी के इस भाव में विश्वास व्यक्त करता हुआ-सा दिखाई देता है कि ‘शिक्षा मानव में अन्तर्निहित क्षमताओं की जागृति का ही पर्याय’ है और इसे जागृत करने के लिए स्वामी विवेकानन्द उपनिषद् की वाणी में कह उठते हैं।

‘उत्तिष्ठत! जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान् निबोधत’

हिन्दी में अनूदित अपनी एक पुस्तक में, हिलेरी क्लिंटन ‘बच्चे: हमारा भविष्य’ में अफ्रीकी लोकोक्ति को उद्धृत करती हुई पुनः-पुनः इस भाव को व्यक्त करने लगती हैं कि बच्चे को पालने के लिए पूरा गाँव चाहिए।

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (2020) अपने इस लक्ष्य को पाने के लिए बहुत ही स्पष्टता के साथ भाषा की शक्ति को पहचानते हुए कहती है- ‘Promoting multilingualism and the power of language in Teaching and Learning.’

इसी प्रकार राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (2020) के द्वारा 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 के अन्तर्गत भारतीय शिक्षा व्यवस्था में किए गए मौलिक परिवर्तनों, विशेषतः ‘प्रारम्भिक स्तर की पांच वर्षों की शिक्षा’ का सम्बन्ध भी मूलतः ‘भाषा की शिक्षा’ के साथ ही दृष्टिगत होता है। इस के अन्तर्गत सभी बच्चों के लिए तीन से आठ वर्ष तक की आयु हेतु बाल्यावस्था की शिक्षाका प्रावधान किया गया है। नीति के मूल सिद्धान्तों के अन्तर्गत बिन्दु 2 में अत्यन्त स्पष्टता के साथ उकेरा गया है कि इस अवस्था में कहानियों, कविताओं, नाटकों, बातचीत, पहेलियों, खेलों, पुतलियों आदि के द्वारा आंगनवाड़ियों, बालवाटिकाओं तथा आदिवासी क्षेत्रों में आश्रमों में दी जाने वाली शिक्षा का सम्बन्ध बुनियादी साक्षरता और संख्या ज्ञान प्राप्त करने से होगा। यह अनुभूत सत्य है कि व्यक्ति की सम्पूर्ण चिन्तनरूपी ऊर्जा का स्फुटीकरण का माध्यम भाषा ही है। इस तथ्य को बहुत पूर्व ही भारतीय परम्परा में भाषा-दार्शनिक भर्तृहरि के द्वारा भाषाई दर्शन के रूप में स्पष्ट कर दिया गया था- न सोऽस्ति प्रत्ययो लोके यः शब्दानुगमादृते। अनुविद्धमिव ज्ञानं सर्व शब्देन भासते(वाक्यपदीयम्)

इसी प्रकार काव्यादर्शकार आचार्य दण्डी का कथन है

इदमन्धतमः कृत्स्नं जायते भुवनत्रयं ।

यदि शब्दाद्वयं ज्योतिरासंसारं न दीप्यते ।।

ध्यातव्य है कि मनुष्य की यह क्षमता उसे सहज रूप से जन्म से ही प्राप्त है। यह सार्वकालिक एवं सार्वभौमिक सिद्धान्त ही प्रतिभासित होता है। आधुनिक भाषा वैज्ञानिकों ने भी, विशेषतया इसी शताब्दी के 'नोएम चाम्स्की' ने इस सिद्धान्त को मूलतः इसी रूप में ही अभिव्यक्त किया है।

अतः यह भी चिन्तनीय पक्ष है कि भारतीय सन्दर्भों में शिक्षा का माध्यम क्या हो? इस प्रश्न की सार्थकता इस तथ्य में निहित है कि भारत के संविधान में अनुच्छेद 350(क) में शिक्षा के माध्यम की चर्चा केवल प्राथमिक शिक्षा तक ही परिसीमित है। इसके पश्चात् की शिक्षा का माध्यम क्या हो? इसका कोई स्पष्ट संकेत नहीं है। वस्तुतः इसे व्यक्ति के लिए सर्जनात्मक काल का अभ्यास काल माना जा सकता है! गहराई से सोचने पर यह स्पष्ट रूप ही जाना व समझा जा सकता है कि भारत में शिक्षा के स्तर की गिरावट का एक मूल कारण 'सामान्यजन की शिक्षा हेतु उनकी भाषा को माध्यम न बनाने में ही निहित रहा है।

इस प्रसंग में प्रस्तुत नीति के अनेकानेक कथन भारतीय भाषाओं की स्थिति को समुचित गति देने के संकेत देते हैं। यह भी स्पष्ट है कि 'सतत सीखते रहने' की शर्त के रूप में एक 'पढ़ने की संस्कृति' का विकास भी अपेक्षित रहता है। इस सन्दर्भ में नीति का मानना है कि-

पैरा 2.8 सभी भारतीय और स्थानीय भाषाओं में दिलचस्प और प्रेरणादायक बाल साहित्य और सभी स्तर के विद्यार्थियों के लिए विद्यालयी और स्थानीय पुस्तकालयों में बड़ी मात्रा में पुस्तकें उपलब्ध करायी जाएँगी जिसके लिए आवश्यकतानुसार उच्चतर गुणवत्ता के अनुवाद (आवश्यकतानुसार तकनीकी सहायता से) भी करवाए जाएँगे। देश भर में पढ़ने की संस्कृति के निर्माण के लिए सार्वजनिक और विद्यालयी पुस्तकालयों का विस्तार किया जाएगा। डिजिटल पुस्तकालय भी स्थापित किए जाएँगे। गांवों में विद्यालयी पुस्तकालयों की स्थापना से समुदाय को भी लाभ होगा जो विद्यालयी समय के पश्चात् उसका लाभ ले सकते हैं। बुक क्लब के सदस्य इन विद्यालयी/सार्वजनिक पुस्तकालय में मिल सकते हैं जिससे पढ़ने की संस्कृति को प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा। एक राष्ट्रीय पुस्तक संवर्धन नीति तैयार की जाएगी और सभी स्थानों, भाषाओं, स्तरों और शैलियों में पुस्तकों की उपलब्धता, पहुँच, गुणवत्ता और पाठकों को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए व्यापक पहल की जाएगी।

यद्यपि शैक्षिक विकास के साथ-साथ सांस्कृतिक संरक्षण, संवर्धन अथवा विकास की चिन्ता सम्पूर्ण शिक्षा-नीति में विभिन्न सन्दर्भों में अत्र-तत्र 'बिखरी हुई-सी' दीख पड़ती है, तथापि नीति के भाग तीन में अन्य विचारणीय मुद्दे के अन्तर्गत (अध्याय 22) भारतीय भाषाओं, कला और संस्कृति का संवर्धन के अन्तर्गत भाषा सम्बन्धी विशिष्ट चर्चा है।

वस्तुतः शिक्षा-नीति के निर्माण के आधारभूत सिद्धान्तों के अन्तर्गत भाषा को एक सर्वाधिक महत्वपूर्ण एवं विशिष्ट आधार के रूप में लिया गया है। चाहे वह अत्यन्त प्रारम्भिक अवस्था में आधारभूत भाषीय क्षमता के निर्माण के रूप में है अथवा सभी प्रकार अथवा स्तर के संस्थानों को बहु-भाषीय स्वरूप देने के सन्दर्भ में। इनके संरक्षण व संवर्धन को विशिष्ट महत्व देने का प्रश्न बार-बार उठाया गया है।

'सतत सीखते रहने' की कला सीखने का रहस्य मूलतः भाषा में ही निहित है, उसके बच्चे की 'घर की भाषा' में निहित है। यही इसकी पूर्व शर्त है। इसे ही पल्लवित व पुष्पित करना होगा। इसी में ही अंकुरित होगा राष्ट्रीय विकास और शिक्षाका स्वप्न कि 'राष्ट्र का निर्माण कक्षाओं में हो रहा है'। (शिक्षा आयोग, 1964-66)

Multidisciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity in NEP - 2020

Pankaj Arora

Introduction

Education Departments across Indian Universities thrive in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity of subject areas. If you glimpse into any classroom of the education department, one would find a pedagogue specializing in Botany while having expertise in the foundational subject of History of Indian Education. This educational mosaic of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary subjects form the core of the classroom practice in teacher training institutes. As an student of the discipline education, it therefore gladdens me to see NEP 2020 focusing on strengthening the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity education across courses. This focus stems from the need to pay attention to holistic education of the Indian youth. The Prime Minister of India, in an NEP related address on 28th July, 2021, has attributed NEP 2020's holistic education as a way to change the whole scenario of education.

Now, I would like cite an extract from the Supreme Court judgment (1994) as quoted by Professor Saluja in his chapter Language, Education and Language Policy of Education, in an edited book 'National Education Policy 2020: Paving Ways for Transformational Reforms', "At Cambridge University, a Professor was drowned deep into his studies in his room. An English soldier arrives in the room, and straightaway accuses the Professor of not contributing in the ongoing war against the Germans, in which the soldier and his colleagues were taking part. With a calm composure, the Professor asks the soldier- "Who is he fighting for?" The soldier replies rather quickly that he is fighting for his nation. The scholar then asks- "the nation for which you are shedding your blood, what that nation actually is?" The soldier replies that the country is the land and its people. On further inquiry, the soldier reveals that he wishes to save his culture too. The Professor says that he too is contributing to the culture of the nation. The conciliated soldier respectfully salutes the Professor and retreats from the room avowing to defend the cultural heritage of his nation with greater might.

Holistic Indian Education

The nation is not only known by its physical geography, but also by its cultural milieu. A nation's identity is the identity of its people; the life style, its glorious history,

the rich traditions that enshrine its value system; and this identity is further shaped in the expanse of the classroom and the education system. The NEP 2020 recognizes the uniqueness of the Indian cultural milieu and the value of “Indianness”. Using the constructs of holistic education and multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary education, it aims to weave the future of its youth with the threads of Indianness, modernity and constitutional values. It is essential to understand that Indianness is in itself a concept. It is a mixture of multiple culture, inclusion of multiple language, inclusion of multiple religion and regions. One of the easiest ways to understand the richness of one of the threads of Indianness is to look at the festivals of the country. On 13/14 January (depending on the Lunar calendar) Lohri is celebrated in Punjab, Makar Sankranti in the North Indian states, Hadaga in Maharashtra, Bihu in Assam, Bhogi, Kanumu, Thai Pongal and Poki festival in the southern states of country. All these festivals celebrate the harvest season, therefore whichever part of the country one might be in, the harvest festival has a reason for celebration for all. This rich Indianness that may vary from place to place, yet have the same root is worth sustaining in the country. Education and its policies has the ability to ensure the sustainability of this cultural heritage.

Our national identity – Indianness – Bharatiyata -is holistic, and inclusive in its totality. It imbibes the political diversity, religion diversity, regional diversity, economic diversity among other diversities within itself - a holistic view of India. This diversity is our strength – India is synonymous to cultural diversity and therein lies its uniqueness and identity. Similarly when we talk about holistic education we are talking about developing the pillars of that makes us unique – body, mind, and spirit.

Holistic education aims at developing the learner. It focuses on providing opportunities to the learner to experience the world with different perspectives and different lenses. In order to provide a holistic learning experience, the NEP 2020 has brought a policy on ABC – Academic Bank of Credits . The Academic Bank of Credits is one of the easiest ways to give the agency of choice and voice to the students. These Regulations may be called the UGC Establishment and Operationalization of Academic Bank of Credits Scheme in Higher Education regulations, 2021. This regulation is paving the way to present a clear understanding on this area. Basically the academic bank of credits breaks the rigid walls of streams. As a student, one will be free to choose their own area of study, create their own stream. The Academic Bank of Credits allows a student of Physics study Art with the same passion, while allowing a student of Art to study Philosophy. The rigid walls of streams that has stifled the achievement of many students, is been broken down by ABC – instead a student has to have 120 credits across courses to graduation with subjects of their choice. Further, 148 credits will qualify him/her to be a graduate with research degree after four years, it just means, that as a student if I have interest in Political Science, I can also my love for Mathematics – which wasn't possible pre NEP2020 days. Just as the NEP2020 is empowering the students, it is also empowering institutes. Institutions will be multidisciplinary institutions. Policy says that the institutions will not work towards promoting any one discipline but will be multidisciplinary. For example in teacher education there are many B.Ed. colleges that are known as standalone institutions as they run only one degree programme. The policy

says the institutions should not be standalone institutions but multidisciplinary. Institutes should offer courses that comprise of arts, science, literature, language and so on. Scholars have questioned about the advantage of this multidisciplinary of an institute. They have raised questions about specialized institutes vs generic institutes. Answers to these questions is not possible as one is yet to witness the implementation of NEP 2020 in letter and spirit, but what one is able to gather is that multidisciplinary in institutes will strengthen student autonomy and in the process teacher and institutional autonomy.

Multidisciplinary Education and NEP 2020

The NEP 2020 aspires to develop an individual's intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, ethical, and moral qualities in a holistic manner, while directly contributing to the country's development and making India a global knowledge superpower. The NEP 2020 also defines what comprises a HEI, such as a university or a college. One of the most important recommendations in the NEP 2020 is to construct large interdisciplinary HEIs in or near every district by 2030. A multidisciplinary institution should not only contain several departments, but also imaginative and adaptable curricular structures that allow for new study combinations. Innovative multi- and interdisciplinary programmes assist learners broaden their thinking and learning capabilities and prepare them to meet emerging challenges.

Let us understand how NEP 2020 fosters student autonomy. Policy says that the student has the autonomy to choose from its interest areas of specialization as major and as minor. Academic bank credit will allow the student to keep adding to its account in different disciplines. While meeting the requisite number of credit the student will be declared qualified for a certificate or for diploma or for graduation degree and at the end graduate with research. We might question the need for students to have this freedom to decide their learning path. We might even question the ability of students to know their strengths and weaknesses. Incidentally, these questions are contrary to the faith the Constitution of India places on the youth above 18 – for it allows them to vote and elect officials to the Government. Giving students the agency of autonomy is the NEP 2020's greatest strength and challenge; and unless we give it an opportunity to see the light of day, one will not be able to fathom the benefits students reap by learning in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary learning environment.

Another advantage that multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary would provide is breaking the artificial hierarchy of subject areas – the genesis of this hierarchy is unknown, but often students from Engineering or Management background seem to get more traction within a college community than a student of a local language. But, thanks to this policy, now students across disciplines can share their viewpoints, learning paths and learning goals while working towards a common goal.

Autonomy in Education

Thus so far we have seen how the NEP 2020 fosters student and institutional autonomy via the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach. If we look deeper, NEP 2020 also offers greater opportunities to foster teacher autonomy. Let us understand this with an example – say there is a professor who specializes in hydroponics (the branch of Science that deals with growing plants without and instead uses substitutes that enrich

the plant growth) and there is a student who is studying Geography and Economics. NEP 2020 fosters Teacher Autonomy by allowing the professor to offer a credit based course in Hydroponics; and the professor in his part can create a course structure that can help enrolled students to develop vocational skill sets or even learn the science of hydroponics for the pleasure of gardening; while the student of Geography can enroll in this course of Hydroponics without a pure Science background – this autonomy also allows the student to develop her autonomy. In the whole process, there is a knowledge discipline that develops and students can benefit from such micro level credit courses and have the opportunity to convert it into a major credit course basis on the institutional policies.

Let us now take a broader view how these autonomies – students, teachers and institutional – can shape the future of our youth. Pre NEP 2020, the Universities, affiliated institutes and colleges following the same curriculum – almost having a factory model of education. Teachers, Institutes and colleges did not have the autonomy to create their own courses and curriculum based on either the needs of students or the society or industry, instead there was a rigid structure that was expected to be followed. This tight control over the curriculum and syllabus by the parent Universities allowed the mushrooming of affiliated colleges because in order to start a college all one needed was the minimal physical infrastructure and not the academic capability and wherewithal to conceptualize and execute academic curriculums. There have been news articles where a university had nearly 800 affiliated colleges. This number itself speaks volumes about the quality of education, state of students and teachers. The NEP 2020 therefore gives autonomy and more importantly responsibility to institutes to develop and maintain academic standards that help students (and ultimately the country in the process). The NEP 2020 is creating a process where institutes are expected to share in the public domain their curriculum, parameters for maintaining academic excellence, enrolment processes for courses. This important information is expected to be available for public viewing and not just inspecting committees that grade institutes on Quality Parameters.

Learning Outcome Based Curriculum Framework

By introducing the Learning Outcome Based Curriculum Framework, the NEP and UGC are paving the way for institutes to create curriculum and learning paths for students that can draw from local culture / indigenous knowledge / local language. From the culinary science to local sustainable agricultural practices, knowledge worth sharing can now be formally documented and recognized. When we talk about local culture and local knowledge, we also acknowledge the local art and craft which also provide opportunities for creating vocational courses; also NEP 2020 provides opportunities to create credit courses that help sustain indigenous knowledge of herbs and medicines that are locally sourced. In the year 2020, during one of the informal discussions with The Vice Chancellor of the Indira Gandhi Tribal University at Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh has said local people still prefer locally sourced herbs to cure the common ailments and Ayurveda remedies before seeking assistance from allopathic doctors. Many can argue regarding this, but the point that needs our attention is that there are local medicinal practices that are effective, low cost and locally sourced. As an educationist and researcher in the field, one could argue that for learning outcome based curriculum

framework to succeed it needs the scaffold of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity – This in turn would help create a more holistic education. To develop disciplinary integration among all these is the objective of the holistic education and that is one of the primary objectives of the education policy 2020.

Let us look at another example that explains the need to develop a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach in the courses offered by higher institutes. A student studying fashion design is interested in creating a fashion cloth line – apart from having the skill sets to plan, conceptualize and develop designs for the clothline; the student also needs to know where can she source the best material from? Which type of material would be best suited for her design? Which factory manufactures it? Which area produces the raw material? Is the raw material production heavily dependent on natural factors like rain, humidity, temperature? How scalable is the design? Is the design to be produced for a few exclusive clients or would it go into mass production? Economics, Geography, Sustainable Development, Marketing, E-commerce all areas come into play while the student is busy planning and conceptualizing the cloth line. A multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge base created by various courses that the fashion design student takes would help her make her cloth line a reality and probably even create a sustainable business to generate employment.

Let us take another example that has great social implications – sex education. Sex education gets its theoretical framework from biology, sociology, gender theory and practices, medical sciences and psychology. These five disciplines play their role in understanding the concepts be it reproductive health, substance abuse, growth and development of the children, adolescent issues. Examples from different domain can be taken to explain the concept of reproductive health, contraceptive or population control or substance abuse. Developing an understanding on these issues can help students and teachers create a safe living environment.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) has been formulated in response to the need to harness full human potential and develop well-rounded competent individuals by providing the right environ to enable access to inclusive and equitable quality education. Such education should have provision for lifelong learning, awareness of new areas of knowledge, skilling to meet industrial demands for economic development, multidisciplinary studies to develop a comprehensive view of issues from a realistic paradigm, holistic approach to education, rootedness to the cultural ethos and moral values, cultivating scientific temperament and problem-solving attitude. The policy also focuses on promoting critical thinking, innovation and creativity to enable the use and promotion of higher order thinking skills. Indeed, NEP is set to revolutionize the education system in the country right from school to higher education. (Source: Foreword by Professor Yogesh Singh, UGCF-2022, University of Delhi)

The Preamble of the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework-2022, as prepared by NEP Cell of the University of Delhi underlines the historical perspective, philosophical basis, and contemporary realities of higher education as enshrined in the National Education Policy 2020 and endeavors to synchronize these cornerstones while

charting the road ahead for the state of higher education. The University of Delhi, a premier seat of teaching, learning, and research in higher education, acclaimed nationally and internationally, has nurtured the quest for reaching the peak in every sphere of education, in its true sense, in the process of its contribution to the nation-building. Being a Central University, mandated to act as the torch-bearer in expanding the horizons of human resource development through expansion of higher education, it has always paid adequate premium towards constructive and meaningful innovation as a regular feature in its undergraduate curriculum development over the years (Source: Preamble, UGCF-2022, University of Delhi).

Plan of Action to achieve Multidisciplinary Education

So far we have seen various examples of how multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary education help create holistic learning experiences for students. Let us now see how the NEP 2020 plans to achieve this.

UGC (2022) has presented Draft Guidelines for transforming HEIs into Multidisciplinary Institutions; First line of the document says “Let noble thoughts come from all directions. This profound concept from the Rigveda illustrates the recognition of limitless learning in the Vedic Period. India has a rich tradition of the multidisciplinary approach since ages, as exemplified by the ancient institutions such as Nalanda and Takshashila. These higher learning centres of ancient India were known for teaching every branch of knowledge, such as singing, painting, chemistry, mathematics; vocational fields such as carpentry, clothes-making; professional fields such as medicine and engineering; and soft skills such as communication discussion and debate. Over the centuries the broader learning opportunities got narrowed, and gradually, in recent years the focus moved to specialization in particular subjects resulting in the growth of single-stream institutions. To reboot the legacy of multidisciplinary education, the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), suggests several policy directions for offering multidisciplinary education.”

Shuriah Niazi (2021) in University World News has presented article 'Plan for 35 multidisciplinary research universities' Niazi says India has devised a bold plan to construct world-class "multidisciplinary education and research universities," or MERUs, by upgrading 35 publicly financed universities around the country.

The project's draft plan, which will be submitted to the cabinet for approval soon, calls for an initial investment of INR one billion (about US\$13.8 million) each university to expand the choice of courses available.

The acceptance of the MERUs will kick off the process of multidisciplinary higher education, which is a fundamental element in the National Education Policy (NEP) established last year. According to the NEP paper, all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational subjects, should strive towards a more holistic education in the long run. By grouping institutions into 'clusters,' some transdisciplinary programmes will be provided across institutions.

Engineering institutes, including as the country's top-ranked Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), would shift to a more holistic and multidisciplinary approach, with

more arts and humanities degrees provided alongside engineering degrees, as the NEP envisions.

In Assam, for example, IIT Guwahati is establishing a medical school, a management school, and currently provides undergraduate design degrees. IIT Delhi is establishing a public policy school. According to IIT Gandhinagar, it already has design and environmental science schools.

IIT Madras in Chennai has announced that its students can take courses in Indian history, psychology, and economics from other departments and authorised schools. In addition to the undergraduate major discipline, some can be combined together to form a 'minor.'

Educational Framework for Global Citizenship in Higher Education by UGC (2021) states that "the flexible and innovative curricula of all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education" in order to achieve a holistic and multidisciplinary education. Climate change, pollution, biological diversity conservation, biological resource and biodiversity management, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development and living are all anticipated to be covered in environmental education. Humanistic, ethical, constitutional, and universal human values of truth, righteous conduct, peace, nonviolence, and love, citizenship values, and life skills are expected to be developed through value-based education; lessons in service and participation in community service programmes are considered an integral part of holistic education.

Conclusion

UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) defines Multidisciplinary as an 'approach' to curriculum integration bringing different disciplines together to illustrate a topic, theme or issue from different perspectives. It further explains that in a multidisciplinary curriculum the same topic is studied from perspectives of more than one discipline.

Teaching is currently confined to subject-specific silos, leaving students unprepared to make realistic correlations. When students discover connections across diverse subject areas, learning becomes more interesting and meaningful. As a result, it is preferable to move beyond distinct disciplinary zones and develop co-taught transdisciplinary courses.

In a multidisciplinary plan of study, the underlying idea is that no subject exists as a separate field of study. As a result, in order to comprehend the fundamental structures of knowledge, one must consider how discrete subjects link in a larger context. Multidisciplinary education's overarching purpose is to teach students in a way that is relevant to their lives.

While the aforementioned example is just one of many that may be thought of in the context of a multidisciplinary approach to education, it is critical to develop successful teaching-learning strategies in order to attain the aforementioned goals. Students' school learning experiences should always be viewed as an integrated learning experience rather than a subject-by-subject segmentation of knowledge. Instead than

being an end in itself, completing the core curriculum in all areas should be the starting point for more advanced learning.

Multidisciplinary teaching is one way for assisting students in connecting several strands of school curriculum. This teaching-learning method can be used for two purposes. For starters, it allows students to work on real-world problems while applying knowledge from many topic fields. Second, it promotes collaboration among students by fostering a sense of learning communities. On the one hand, it develops a scientific attitude and analytical skills in learners, but on the other side, it makes learners more welcoming and humanistic.

*Dean, CIE
Faculty of Education
University of Delhi, Delhi*

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NEP - 2020 and Neighborhood Skills

T. V. Kattimani

NEP 2020 is for integrated education and development of quality education, communication and research related to challenges of our neighborhood. Till now there is no relation between textbooks and society, research and societal challenges. There is no coordination between the language of the people and classroom textbooks. NEP has taken up these big gaps very seriously to attend the same through quality education. From preschool education to sixth standards, NEP is in the opinion that mother tongue should be the medium of instruction to reach the students as well as parents. The approach of NEP 2020 is holistic and realistic also, because India is a country of villages. Sixty percent of our population depends upon the agricultural activities and production. Our student folk are heterogeneous. They are from many religion, multilingual background and multi economic layers. The text books and teachers are expected to address the student community. The problem is more complex in tribal and hilly areas. Many students face learning barriers because of language. Many of them are first generation learners to reach the heterogeneous student community. The teacher has to be multifaceted personality and lifelong learner also. The unpredictable technology of modern world has made the world, always to be on the toes. The students especially from rural background will be having one or other skills in their DNA. Before school, they will be cleaning their houses, facilitating their cows and buffalos, collect grass, drinking water for their family and going to school. They will also attend domestic jobs of the family and many times they actively participate in their family skills like pottery, carpentry, blacksmith, goldsmith and so on. But there will be no coordination between text books and their family skills. NEP debates on textbooks include our agriculture, our water bodies, pokhar, water resources, cows, buffaloes, sheep, goat and poultry. The environment of the society and the classroom should be conducive. The skills of the society, if they will become part of school and college skills, supported by tools, Wi-Fi and training, the students will become more perfect skill practitioners because they have been finely tuned up by the trainers and machines. The modern Wi-Fi, which is a strongest platform to learn, to sell, to purchase will be helpful to the first generation learners.

We are the best agricultural producers of the world. We are exporting our wheat and rice, our sugar is in great demand, our organic jaggery is the finest quality export commodity. These agricultural strength of our society should be supported by our textbook and classroom deliberations. If fine-tuned by our research on pre - harvest and post-harvest technologies, scientific and organic packaging materials marketed by our own retail system, online system will become added value and fetch more profit and training.

NEP is vocal on research, marketing and local production. If we mitigate the import and enhance the export, the farmer's income will be naturally double and profitable. The home Industries, the small Industries, the khadi and village industries, pottery industries have a big market on the global scenario. To make them more artistic, attractive, organic, we need to have the support of Wi-Fi and marketing skills. The Gond art, The Pithora art of Madhya Pradesh should enter into the classrooms of chemistry department as well as management department. So that the students of chemistry and management will be able to learn, to know the dynamics of the Gonda art. The sharp curves, flowers, fruits, birds, snakes, tigers, elephants, the water body, the land, the sky life which are part of a small piece of Gonda art will become hot cake of the global market. We need to work on research on the natural colors used in the Gonda art. The minute description supported by research and science will attract the global consumers who are very much health-conscious. The organic apparels prepared by Baiga tribe are economical, attractive and healthy. Also, the Arabia coffee of Araku (Andhra Pradesh) is famous for its wild aroma. The famous Etikoppaka toys (Andhra Pradesh) are exported to European world because of their ethnicity and organic nature. If the dynamics of our Araku coffee, or Etikoppaka toys will enter into our high class research supported by labs and Wi-Fi will make a big economic zone of the area. The laboratory research should attend the challenges of the land; the strength of land should be tested, wetted scientifically by our labs. Then only the gap between Academia and Society will be mitigated.

When there will be no gap between academia and society, the industries automatically will be very much interested to enter into the big game of education, research and innovation. Through this out of box intervention academia can connect to the industries and to the society. Then there is no question of unemployment, poverty or economic imbalance in the society. Job Seekers will turn into job creators. The dynamics of academia are more vibrant and inclusive. We teachers have to understand the power of education. The quality education will make a sensitive civic society and it leads to innovations in society, technologies, agriculture and social sciences.

The Indian Society is a society of festivals and *Melas*. The traditional practices of our society are scientific and psychological too. The indigenous knowledge system has to be dealt by scientists and labs, marketed by B - schools and proved by world-class regulations. If we understand nature friendly healthcare Ayurveda, the timeless rhythm of our Indian music, our most modern temple architecture, the aroma of our Indian Cuisine who are soft power of our Indian Society. Unfortunately, our academia has neglected our own strength and soft power. If we rethink on our neighborhood yoga, ayurveda, music, our herbals, our spices will boost our economy by another ten years. So we need to teach our children the life skills, social skills, personal hygiene, communication skills, working with groups, power of partnership, strength of sharing and caring, skills of consultation, skills of patient hearing and constructive engagement shall lead to collective working culture.

These skills are not new to India. They were part of our social values. Caring and sharing is a common practice of Indian Society. Before to teach Global platform, we need to look at our own neighborhood which is an evergreen *Ratnagarbha Vasundhara*.

Vice Chancellor
Member, NEP-2020 draft Committee
GOI, New Delhi

School Education Commission : The Decision Much Awaited

Chandra Bhushan Sharma

RAISON D-ETRE OF AN ALL-INDIA COMMISSION

In the course of our interviews the question arose as to the necessity for the Central Government to appoint an All-India Commission on Secondary Education since, under the Constitution education is a responsibility of the State Government. This is an important issue and we consider it necessary to state clearly the *raison d'être* of such a Commission. We recognise that Secondary education is mainly the concern of the States but, in view of its impact on the life of the country as whole, both in the field of culture and technical efficiency, the Central Government cannot divest itself of the responsibility to improve its standards and to relate it intelligently to the larger problems of national life. The aim of secondary education is to train the youth of the country to be good citizens, who will be competent to play their part effectively in the social reconstruction and economic development of their country. The Central Government is, therefore, naturally concerned about the type of education to be given to the youth of the country. It must make sure that secondary education will prepare young men for the various vocations that are open to them. Moreover, it is directly charged with the responsibility of maintaining proper standards in higher education. This cannot be done, unless careful consideration is given to the level of efficiency attained at the secondary stage. (P.4-5)

Report of the Secondary Education Commission, Mudaliar Commission Report (1953), Ministry of Education, Government of India.

The Context

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), a landmark decision of the Narendra Modi Government was released on the 29th of July 2020, nearly 34 years after the previous policy on education was brought by the Rajiv Gandhi government in 1986. The Policy has two major sections - one on school education and the other on higher education, besides two other smaller sections. The higher education section emphasizes on revamping the regulatory framework. The University Grants Commission (UGC) will be revamped and named the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) and it

will subsume the powers given to different statutory bodies created to regulate different sectors of education except medical and legal. The changes will be brought through a new Act of Parliament and the powers of the existing statutory bodies will be subsumed in the four verticals, which will be 'light but tight' of the HECI by repealing the existing acts through which these bodies were created. However, there is no such recommendation for school education. The Central and the State Governments will continue to control school education. All decisions in higher education are taken by the Statutory Bodies which consist of experts from higher education and which is autonomous and independent of the Government; which means (largely) independent of political interference. This is perfectly justified as education has to be a national concern and it cannot be left to the state governments as justified by the Mudaliar Commission (quoted above). It is rightly said "politicians can do anything to remain in power, even think for the nation." Politicians will not spare any tool in their hands to use to remain in power. School education in India has been used extensively by different political parties and governments to remain in power. We must consciously and honestly analyse and decide to keep education out of the hands of the politicians. This will be greatly in the national interest. Nations which have handed over education into the hands of the professionals and experts have done much well.

UGC as a national body is well placed to rationally decide on how higher education should be imparted. The issue at hand is that if higher education, which caters to nearly six crore learners can be regulated by a Statutory body created by the Parliament, and the decisions of the UGC are mandatory for all state universities created through Acts of the State, then why it is often mentioned that we cannot have a Central body for school education, which caters to nearly 35 crore children (besides 4 crore out of school children) because Education is in the Concurrent List ?

The demand for a Statutory Body for school education has been raised for some time now but as the decision has to be taken by the Central Government and the officials at the Ministry do not want to let this slip out of their hands, this is often brushed below the carpet on the grounds that education is in the Concurrent List. Macaulay through his Minutes of the 1835, deliberately brought education under the control of the East India Company so that the 'mind' of the Indians could be controlled, and the British rule be prolonged in India, but even after Independence we have not been able to design a pro-children, nationalist school policy. Not many stakeholders of school education know that all bodies deciding on the form, content of school education have no legal standing. The three major bodies of the Central Government, namely the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE) and the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) are Societies and the apex bodies of all the three institutions are chaired by the Minister for Education, Government of India. If the Central Government designs and develops the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), which is the blueprint for content of schooling education, then why would the States follow it if they have the freedom to make their own ? Why would States even follow the recommendations of the national policy on education if it is a document of the Central Government ? We have instance (of Central

Government under Manmohan Singh) when Arjun Singh became the Minister for Human Resource Development (MHRD) he rejected the NCF of the previous Government. The NCF was framed in 2000 and normally the life of a NCF is ten years but Arjun Singh decided to have a new NCF as soon as he became the Minister for HRD. The curriculum was revised and the textbooks rewritten. It is apparent school education and the content is seen as a political tool which can help or hinder the objectives of the party and ideology in power.

Education of the children of our nation has to be a central concern and it must be under an apolitical, expert body which is independent of political influence and control. We definitely need a body like the Election Commission to decide on issues related to school education, which has experts on its decision making bodies.

Re-examining the Regulatory System of Indian Schools

Besides the Central and the State governments, private providers are sharing the responsibility of providing schooling facility to the children of the country. So, both the government as well as private providers are competitors in the business of schooling. However, the government is the regulator as well. The question that most stakeholders are raising is that the government is not providing level playing field. It changes the goal-post as per its convenience. There is a strong demand from the parents, teachers and private school owners that government either be a regulator or a player. It cannot be both. Private participation will increase in school education and we should also be prepared to face global partners as we are a signatory to the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and we will be forced to open our 'education market' to international partners for which there is no professional body of experts. An expert body is urgently required for school sector. The government does not have the expert knowledge to handle the global partners. The best performing nations in education have nearly no government interference. The school sector is managed by experts.

Why we need an independent Statutory and Autonomous body

All stakeholders want an independent and reliable data on schools in the country. This will help them choose the best schools for their children. There are two major providers of education in the country – the government (i.e. public) and the private providers. The private providers are mostly 'not for profit' organisations who promise to provide education without making any profit. No one believes the private providers that they are not making profit – either for someone or an organisation. Most of the schools are established through a Trust or a Society, established and registered through a deed approved by the Registrar of Societies. Ask anyone who has anything to do with schooling and he/she will say private schools are making huge profits which is siphoned off for the benefit of individuals or organisations. If the majority perception is so then why have the Governments not regulated to halt this malice? Most believe the rich and the powerful own the educational institutions and they exert such powers that the ministers and officials buckle under their pressure. They get decisions manipulated in their favour.

Government is a major provider of school education and it is the regulator as well. The power to regulate school education is entirely with the governments – Central and States. As education is in the Concurrent list both the governments have right to regulate education. The Central Government regulates for the institutions established by the Ministry of Education, GoI and the State Governments legislate for the institutions established in their respective state. But the Governments are education providers too. It has been observed and questioned as well that every time the Government defaults it changes rules and regulations. Let's take the example of the Right to Education Act 2009. The Act promised to provide a trained teacher to all children in five years i.e. 31st March 2015. This promise was not fulfilled till 2017 because the government did not provide adequate facilities to in-service teachers to get trained. The major reason was that a large number of private schools where untrained teachers were teaching were with schools said to be opposed to the ideology of the government of the time i.e. Congress. The Government in 2017 went to the Parliament and amended the Act and said we will provide training opportunities to all teachers, teaching in public or private schools to acquire a Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed) by 31st March 2019. Nearly thirteen lakh in-service teachers were trained through distance mode by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) during 2nd October 2017 to 31st March 2019. This was passed in supersession of the Justice J. S. Verma Commission (a commission established by the Hon'ble Supreme Court) report which was accepted by the government, saying first teacher education degree cannot be acquired through distance mode. The decision of the Government in 2017 was a great relief to the thirteen lakh teachers but what is important for our case here is the erroneous manner in which governments regulate based on political considerations. We also need to ask why was the RTE Act passed in 2009 if the Government did not have the will to undertake training of teachers ? And why did the Government supersede the J. S. Verma Commission recommendations if the recommendations were in the interest of the students and school system. All the decisions are questionable. It can be summarised that the decisions are apparently political and/or hasty without considering larger pedagogic issues. Children and their welfare and learning is nowhere a matter of concern for the decision makers.

It is suggested that an autonomous body by the name of School Education Commission (SEC) be established through an Act of Parliament. This will have the same status for school education that of the University Grants Commission has for higher education.

The Organisational Structure of SEC

The SEC will be a small body with a very slick staff structure. Unlike the existing statutory bodies it should remain away from inspections and accreditation. Bodies which have been given the powers to regulate and accredit both, have slipped into corruption very fast. The case of National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is in point. The NCTE was created in 1993 and started functioning in 1995. The NCTE developed norms and regulations for establishing teacher training colleges and frequently changed the norms, obviously on the instructions of the government or some strong pressure. The NEP 2020 has to agree with the observation of the Justice J. S. Verma Commission

(2012) that "... - over 10,000 [colleges] in number are not even attempting serious teacher education but are essentially selling degrees for a price. Regulatory efforts so far have neither been able to curb the malpractices in the system, nor enforce basic standards for quality." (NEP 2020, Section 15.2). The job of the SEC will be to continuously interact with the stakeholders of the school sector and design regulations for school education. So a major activity of SEC will be to research on various areas of schooling for developing regulatory framework for school education. SEC will hire services of researchers through research grant funding to feed it with latest trends, to make researched and considered decisions. The existing bodies like the CBSE and state boards will keep accrediting schools as per the norms and regulations developed by SEC. Disputes will be settled by the government departments or the courts but SEC will not get into dispute settlement as well.

The Organisational Structure of SEC

The Governing Council

The Executive Council

Chairperson SEC

Vice Chairperson SEC (Three)

Administrative Officer; Finance Advisor; Directors (Five)

The position of Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons, Administrative officer, Finance Advisor and the Directors will be filled on deputation basis to be decided through the Statutes. The position of Directors will be Director Academic, Director Research, Director Vocation Education, Director Quality Assurance and Director Teacher Education. The Academics department will have five verticals each looking after Early Childhood education, Middle Level Schooling, Secondary Schooling, Special Education and Teacher Education. The Vice-Chairpersons will be nominated by the Chairperson on the pattern practiced in the Indira Gandhi National Open University in the appointment of Pro-Vice-Chancellor. Each of the departments will have a structure decided by an expert committee.

Funding SEC

What really makes a difference in education is not merely funding but the human effort. We have spent billions through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan and the Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan but the quality of education that was expected could not be provided. The pyramid has been turned upside down. Major emphasis has been on higher education since independence. It has only been after 1990 (the Jomtien Conference) that India shifted its focus to school education. Substantial budget was allocated to school and especially elementary education. However in the absence of proper understanding and planning a large proportion of budget was spent on infrastructure creation which was not utilised. Had we spent on teacher education and material production for curriculum transaction the scene would have been different. Schools in India were always part of the society and supported by the society. It was the British policy to cut the roots of schools from the society so that 'the beautiful tree' which was nurtured by the society dried. Gandhi ji criticises the British policy in his Chatham House public speech on 20th October 1931 which had triggered long public debate on education during the British rule but

after Independence we forgot what Gandhi ji had pleaded for. We neither changed the regulatory mechanism nor the curriculum. We still teach our children how the British helped us become a nation and we would not have been a nation if the British had not come to India.

Another glaring case is of funding of the Madars as during the time Arjun Singh was the Minister. He extended liberal funding through the Special Program for the Quality Enhancement of Madars as (SPQEM) but it has slowly been reduced since the NDA Government came to power in 2014. A closer examination of SPQEM reveals it did not do great benefit to the Muslim students. Similarly the Gurukuls were not recognised as an academic system. These are the most glaring case of politicians managing education. There is so much knowledge in the Indian Knowledge System but it has not been given due because the political masters wanted to appease the minority community and the bureaucrats could not be 'devil's advocate'. Politicians decided and the officials justified the decisions.

A major tool of arm twisting institutions funded by government is to cut the budget or release the budget so late that institutional head has to run from pillar to post for grants. While establishing the Indira Gandhi National Open University the government had made a conscious effort to free IGNOU of this constant irritation and made a provision through which the annual budget of IGNOU comes directly from the Ministry of Education and the audited report of IGNOU is placed before the Parliament. There are examples from other parts of the world where institutions funded by the government have exercised complete autonomy from government pressure in spite of the budget coming from the public exchequer. Governments like to make acts and Memorandum of Association of institutions which put institutions in a subservient position and ultimately fail to perform. Public funds should be allowed to flow to public institutions without obstacles from the party in power and the government of the day. One method can be to fix a pre-agreed amount with five percent increase every years or the amount be fixed by the CAG on the basis of annual audit report. It may not be a bad idea that every school student be asked to pay five rupees a year as SEC charges. Every two years one rupee may be added to the charge. We can ensure transparency through rigorous audit mechanism.

Quality Maintenance in Schools

The SEC will also undertake design and development of 'learning outcomes' and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for school education. The NCERT had developed learning outcomes and also conducted the National Assessment Survey (NAS). For a transparent and rigorous process the learning outcomes should be developed by an agency other than the one which designs the curriculum for inculcating the competencies which are identified. The schools are assigned with the task to transact the curriculum. A third party should assess whether the competencies as identified in learning outcomes are reflected in the text books are properly transacted and the competencies developed. Identification of the agency to conduct NAS should be left to the SEC. The score of the NAS will give the SEC feedback to review and revise the learning outcomes.

SEC	NCERT	Schools	Third party
Develop leaning	Develop text	Transact	(Private)
outcomes and	books	curriculum	Conduct NAS
National Curriculum Framework (NCF)			

The Governing Council

The following may be the members of the Governing Council of the School Education Commission

i.	Chairman SEC	Chairman
ii.	Secretary, SE & L, Ministry of Education,	Member
iii.	Vice-Chairman University Grants Commission	Member
iv.	Member CABE, Expert in School Education (To be nominated by the MOE)	Member
v.	FICCI Representative	Member
vi.	CII Representative	Member
vii.	Chairman CBSE/NIOS (Alternatively to be invited by Chairman SEC for a period of 3 years)	Member
viii.	Director, NCERT	Member
ix.	Chairman of a State School Board (To be nominated by the Chairman SEC for a period of 3 years)	Member
x.	Professor of Education (Eminent Educationist) (To be nominated by the Chairman SEC for a period of 3 years)	Member
xi.	Vice-Chairman SEC (One of the Vice-Chairmen to be nominated by the Chairman SEC for a period of 3 years)	Member
xii.	Director Academic, SEC	Member Secretary

Executive Council

The Executive Council of SEC may have the following Members:

i.	Chairman SEC	Chairman (One)
ii.	Representative of Secretary SE & L	Member (One)
iii.	Vice-Chairman SEC	Member (up to Three)
iv.	Directors SEC	Member (Five)
v.	Representatives of Govt./Public Schools: Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Army/Sainik Schools, State Govt. Schools, Central Tibetan School Association (CTSA), Railway Schools,	Members (Three)
vi.	Representatives of Private Schools: Network of schools with more five hundred schools: DPS/DAV/Vidya Bharti	Member(Three)

vii.	Eminent Educationists	Members (Three)
viii.	Media specialist (Expertise in Educational Media)	Member (One)
ix.	Psychologist (Child psychology/Counsellor)	Member (One)
x.	Special Educator (Representative of RCI & MoSJ)	Member (Two)
xi.	Vocational Education (Rep of Min. of Skill)	Member (Two)
xii.	Sports specialist	Member (One)
xiii.	Artists (Creative areas: Painting, Dancing etc.)	Member (Two)
xiv.	Finance Expert (Experience of auditing school/Board)	Member (One)
xv.	Finance Officer, SEC	Member (One)
xvi.	Administrative Officer SEC	Member Secretary (One)

[Eminent educationists: Professor of Education (serving or retired); Awarded School teachers/principals to be invited.]

Location of SEC

The SEC will be an autonomous organisation continuously working in isolation, without the political interference of the government, on improvement of the school system of the country. The office of SEC will be a residential campus which may be situated in a town like Ranchi or Raipur which are upcoming and can provide one hundred acres for the establishment of the SEC.

In Conclusion

The NEP 2020 informs that only 26.3% (2018) of the relevant age group is in higher education. Can it not be concluded that school education has got only 26.3 % marks; it has failed 73.7% in spite of the understanding as reflected through the debates and discussions of the Congress before Independence that primary education needs greatest government support. When the Sargent Commission promised to attain complete literacy in 40 years the Congress did not agree but in 75 years of Independent planning and efforts we have not been able to provide decent schooling opportunities to all. On the 11th June 2014 the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi made his maiden speech in the Parliament and made clear that the focus and direction of Indian education will change. Here was a Prime Minister from a humble background who had his agenda clear. Education must be every citizen's right rather than a privilege of the rich and the affluent. This can happen only if the educational decisions are taken by those who have no axe to grind through manipulating decisions.

The Government reimburses school fees of its employees. Common person is questioning this decision of the government. On the one hand we pay education cess to subsidise primary and secondary education on the other hand employees who get salary from public exchequer are reimbursed for getting their children educated in private schools. Should it not be compulsory for all those who get salary from public fund to send their children to government schools ? Government servants will continue to take irresponsible decisions for government schools until it becomes compulsory for them to send their children to government schools. Let an impartial, autonomous and statutory body decide on such issues and frame regulations.

Every political party which is in power and the Government of the day defends the

existing structure but all parties in opposition and out of power support this idea. For once all political parties must sit together and agree on the proposal of SEC and establish it. This will be in the larger national interest.

We either let experts decide on school policies or if the government wants to continue with the same structure of school governance then it should be made compulsory for all those who get paid from public fund to send their children to government schools. The number of children going abroad for education which was in the 1960's and 70's confined to higher education has now more school children studying abroad. If we do not take this decision now we will be doing it at the national cost. Political parties will take more irrational decisions with regard to structure and content as well to use education as a tool. It may be now or never.

Former Chairperson, NIOS
New Delhi

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राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 : शिक्षा विमर्श के बदलते प्रतिमान

बनवारी लाल नाटिया

तत्कर्म यन्न न बंधाय सा विद्या या विमुक्तये।

आया साया परं कर्म विद्याऽन्या शिल्पनैपुणम्।।

विष्णु पुराण से लिया गया उपरोक्त श्लोक विद्या के संबंध में स्पष्ट मत व्यक्त करता है कि विद्या वह है जो मनुष्य को मुक्त करें। विद्या अर्थात् शिक्षा सभी प्रकार के भय से, अज्ञान से, दासता से, कुविचारों से व सभी प्रकार के बंधनों से मुक्त करती है, जो अध्ययन ऐसा नहीं करता वह मात्र कारीगरी है। यह हमारी पौराणिक मान्यता शिक्षा के प्रति है वर्तमान में भी हम देखें तो स्वामी विवेकानंद के शिक्षा के बारे में विचार सर्वाधिक सटीक हैं शिक्षा मनुष्य में स्थापित निहित गुणों को प्रकट करती है मनुष्य में तो प्रेम, आनंद, करुणा, शांति, खुशी, ईमानदारी, मानवता आदि नैसर्गिक गुण होते हैं। शिक्षा के माध्यम से इन स्वाभाविक गुण उसके व्यवहार में प्रकट होने चाहिए।

शिक्षा जीवन के लिए होती है, केवल आजीविका के लिए नहीं। शिक्षा के इन दो अंतिम लक्ष्यों को न केवल भ्रमित किया गया अपितु दूसरे लक्ष्य को ही पहले स्थान पर रख दिया गया और पहला लक्ष्य गौण होता चला गया और धीरे-धीरे शिक्षा का उद्देश्य केवल आजीविका हो गया। जबकि तथ्य यह है की यदि व्यक्ति ने जीवन की शिक्षा ग्रहण कर ली तो आजीविका की व्यवस्था तो स्वतः ही हो जाएगी। यदि आर्थिक भाषा में कहा जाए तो आजीविका जीवन की शिक्षा का सह-उत्पाद है।

वर्तमान समय में शिक्षा का उद्देश्य केवल रोजगार स्थापित हो जाने के कारण ही, वर्तमान की शिक्षा प्रणाली मनुष्य को मुक्त करने के बजाए नौकर बनाने का कार्य कर रही है जो शिक्षा जितना बड़ा नौकर बना सके वह उतनी ही अच्छी मानी जाती है तथा यदि शिक्षा प्राप्त करके भी नौकर नहीं बन पाया तो ऐसी शिक्षा को व्यर्थ कहा जाने लगा है। पूर्व में प्रायः सभी विद्यालयों के बाहर भवन पर एक प्रेरणादायक वाक्य लिखा हुआ होता था 'ज्ञानार्थ प्रवेश-सेवार्थ प्रस्थान'।

इस वाक्य में शिक्षा का संपूर्ण सारांश लिखा है। धीरे-धीरे मैकाले शिक्षा पद्धति व शिक्षा व्यवस्था के कारण उपरोक्त अर्थ बदलते गए व शिक्षा केवल और केवल रोजगार, वह भी केवल सरकारी व कॉरपोरेट सेक्टर के लिए ली व दी जाने लगी। मनुष्य को रोजगार तो चाहिए इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं है लेकिन शिक्षा केवल रोजगार के लिए हो यह समाज में विकृति उत्पन्न करने वाला विचार है। यदि मनुष्य के स्वाभाविक गुणों का विकास शिक्षा के माध्यम से करते हैं, उसे जीवन जीने की कला सिखाते हैं तो उसके समक्ष जीवन यापन की कोई समस्या उत्पन्न नहीं होगी।

वर्तमान संदर्भ में शिक्षा के माध्यम से दो कार्य हो रहे हैं पहला ज्ञान का सृजन, दूसरा सृजित ज्ञान को शिक्षा के माध्यम से अगली पीढ़ी तक पहुंचाना। इस हेतु मुख्य रूप से पुस्तकों का व आजकल डिजिटल माध्यमों का

सहारा लिया जाता है, इसे किताबी ज्ञान कहा जा सकता है व वर्तमान शिक्षा में अधिकतर यही कार्य हो रहा है इसमें इस ज्ञान अथवा जानकारी के माध्यम से रोजगार अच्छा कैसे मिले इसी बात का ध्यान रखा जाता है व इसी के अनुरूप अध्ययन किया व कराया जाता है। आजादी के प्रारंभिक वर्षों में रोजगार की समस्या बहुत अधिक नहीं थी क्योंकि शिक्षा का विस्तार बहुत कम था और शिक्षा ग्रहण करते ही रोजगार मिल जाता था इस हेतु कोई नियोजक परीक्षाएं भी आयोजित नहीं करता था और विश्वविद्यालय व स्कूली शिक्षा के प्राप्तांक ही महत्व रखते थे।

धीरे-धीरे यह दृश्य परिवर्तित होता गया शिक्षा का विस्तार हुआ, शिक्षित युवक बड़ी मात्रा में तैयार होने लगे और रोजगार उतनी मात्रा में बढ़ नहीं पाए। हमारे देश में रोजगार का अर्थ मुख्य रूप से सरकारी सेवा से लिया जाता है। किताबी ज्ञान में छात्र की परीक्षा होती है और उसमें प्राप्त अंक ही उसके ज्ञान का आकलन करते हैं। यदि कोई छात्र बहुत अच्छे अंको से उत्तीर्ण होता है तो वह मेधावी कहा जाता है चाहे उसे अंक किसी कारण से मिले हो और जो छात्र सब कुछ ज्ञान रखते हुए भी किसी कारण से अच्छे अंको से उत्तीर्ण नहीं हो पाता तो उसे असफल विद्यार्थी कह दिया जाता है। कई विषयों के अंको को साथ में जोड़कर उत्तीर्ण, अनुत्तीर्ण की बात की जाती है व सभी विषयों में उत्तीर्ण होना आवश्यक माना जाता है, जो अपने आप में सही विचार नहीं है। इस धारणा को राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में परिवर्तित करने का प्रयास किया है, उसका स्वरूप क्या होगा यह तो सामने आने वाला है।

इसी प्रकार राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में स्वरोजगार का भी बहुत बड़ा महत्व स्थापित करने का प्रयास किया गया है व शिक्षा के माध्यम से आत्मनिर्भर बनने का भी प्रयास हो यह परिवर्तन भी देखने को मिलेगा।

देश में वर्तमान स्थिति यह है कि रोजगार चाहने वाले युवकों की संख्या में अत्यधिक वृद्धि हुई है और सरकारी रोजगार इतनी मात्रा में नहीं हैं अतः रिक्तियों की संख्या की तुलना में बहुत बड़ी मात्रा में आवेदन आते हैं उनमें से छात्रों का चयन बहुत मुश्किल होता जा रहा है। इसलिए रोजगार के लिए नियोजित परीक्षाएं आयोजित करने लगा और इन परीक्षाओं के माध्यम से मेरिट के आधार पर चयन होने लगे। एक तरह से इस प्रक्रिया को चयन प्रक्रिया नहीं कह कर चयन से बाहर करने की प्रक्रिया कहा जाना चाहिए (it is not a process of selection but it is a process of elimination) इसमें छात्र के मूल अध्ययन के अंकों का महत्व समाप्त होता गया और इस कारण छात्रों का ध्यान मूल अध्ययन से हटने लगा व केवल और केवल रोजगार प्राप्त करने के तरीकों पर केंद्रित होने लगा। इस स्थिति का लाभ उठाने के लिए पहले छोटी मात्रा में ट्यूशन आदि प्रारंभ हुई और धीरे-धीरे यह बड़े-बड़े कोचिंग संस्थानों का रूप लेती गई और राजस्थान में तो कोटा एक ऐसी नगरी बन गया जहां संपूर्ण देश से लाखों की संख्या में युवक युवतियां कोचिंग हेतु आते आते हैं।

सरकारी नौकरियों के अतिरिक्त इंजीनियरिंग, मेडिकल, प्रबंध, शिक्षक शिक्षा, आदि व्यावसायिक कार्यक्रम में भी प्रवेश मूल परीक्षा (माध्यमिक, उच्च माध्यमिक, स्नातक आदि) में प्राप्त अंकों के आधार पर नहीं अपितु प्रवेश परीक्षा में प्राप्त अंकों के आधार पर होने लगे। इससे कोचिंग संस्थाओं का कार्यक्षेत्र व स्वरूप बढ़ता गया और राजस्थान में तो यह माफिया के रूप में विकसित हुए। कोचिंग संस्थान केवल परीक्षा की तैयारी ही नहीं करवाते अपितु पेपर आउट कराने का, पेपर का पता लगाने का, परीक्षा में गड़बड़ी कराने का, संदेह भी इन संस्थाओं पर है। इस तथ्य को राजस्थान विधानसभा में नेता प्रतिपक्ष गुलाबचंद कटारिया ने बहुत ही भावुक रूप से रखा था तथा सदन को बताया था कि किस प्रकार गरीब मां-बाप परिवार का पेट काटकर, अपनी जमीन बेचकर, अपने मकान बेचकर, अपने जेवरात बेचकर लड़के की पढ़ाई में पैसा खर्च करते हैं, इस आशा से की पढ़ने के पश्चात उसे नौकरी मिल जाएगी। लेकिन वर्तमान कोचिंग व्यवस्था के कारण अधिकतर गरीब युवक नौकरी प्राप्त करने से वंचित रहते हैं। इन संस्थानों पर सरकार का अथवा समाज का कोई नियंत्रण नहीं है और वे बहुत मोटी फीस लेते हैं। इनमें पढ़ाने वालों की योग्यता व प्रवेश की संख्या, कितनी फीस लेनी है, कैसी पढ़ाई करानी है, किस-किस को करानी है, किसको नहीं करानी है, इन सब पर भी कोई पारदर्शिता नहीं है। धीरे-धीरे सारी शिक्षा व्यवस्था इन कोचिंग संस्थानों के कारण बहुत गहरी चोट खाती जा रही है। आज कॉलेजों विश्वविद्यालयों में तो प्रवेश लेकर छात्र

-छात्रा कक्षाओं में बहुत कम आते हैं उसका बहुत बड़ा कारण कोचिंग संस्थान हैं। यह स्थिति विद्यालयों में भी शुरू हो गई है, कोचिंग संस्थान सातवीं कक्षा में ही प्रवेश दे देते हैं तथा बोर्ड की परीक्षा भी यहीं से दिलाते हैं कुछ विद्यालयों को अनुबंध के आधार पर ले लेते हैं तथा उनके नाम से परीक्षाएं दिलाते हैं।

एक बहुत बड़ा तथ्य भी है की यहां छात्र बहुत दबाव में रहते हैं, वातावरण बहुत बोझिल होता है व बहुत से विद्यार्थी इस दबाव को सहन नहीं कर पाते इसलिए मानसिक रूप से बीमार हो जाते हैं तथा उनमें से कई आत्महत्या भी कर लेते हैं। हर वर्ष छात्र आत्महत्या करते हैं। गत 3 महीने में ही 9 छात्रों ने आत्महत्या की है। जो युवक इन कोचिंग संस्थानों में पढ़ते हैं व जिन्हें वांछित नौकरी नहीं मिलती अथवा वांछित संस्थाओं में प्रवेश नहीं मिलता वह 3 या 4 साल का या अधिक समय खराब कर घर चले जाते हैं, उनमें ज्यादातर युवकों का परीक्षा व पढ़ाई से मोहभंग हो जाता है व शारीरिक श्रम या अन्य स्वरोजगार करने की इच्छा भी उनकी मर जाती है, नहीं रहती, हीन भावना से ग्रसित हो जाते हैं। ऐसे युवक युवती बहुत मुश्किल से कहीं रोजगार में व्यवस्थित हो पाते हैं।

हमारी वर्तमान शिक्षा प्रणाली में मध्यमवर्ग व निम्न वर्ग का छात्र बहुत कठिनाई महसूस करने लगा है और अब शिक्षा केवल उच्च वर्ग के लिए रह गई है। निजी क्षेत्र के लिए शिक्षा संस्थानों को स्थापित करने की छूट देने के कारण शिक्षा महंगी हो गई जिनमें साधारण व्यक्ति को झांकने का मौका भी नहीं मिलता। सरकारी विद्यालयों के प्रति समाज के हर वर्ग का विश्वास उठ गया है तथा यह आम धारणा बन गई है की सरकारी विद्यालयों में पढ़ाई नहीं होती, इसलिए उसमें पढ़ने वाले लड़के का कोई भविष्य नहीं है। इस कोढ़ में खाज का काम अंग्रेजी भाषा करती है। हमारे सारे व्यवसाय नौकरियां अंग्रेजी के ज्ञान पर निर्भर करने लगे हैं। प्रायः सभी नौकरियों में अंग्रेजी भाषा का ज्ञान आवश्यक हो गया है जबकि देश के 10% लोग अंग्रेजी पढ़ लिख सकते हैं। इस प्रकार वर्तमान में 90% युवकों को आर्थिक व भाषाई कारणों से अच्छी शिक्षा व अच्छे रोजगार से वंचित रहने की आशंका रहती है।

इस समस्या के समाधान के रूप में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 में मातृभाषा में शिक्षा पर जोर दिया है तथा प्राथमिक कक्षाओं के लिए मातृभाषा में पढ़ाई आवश्यक कर गई है। यह एक बहुत स्वागत योग्य व सही कदम है तथा सभी स्तरों पर मातृभाषा में पढ़ाई प्रारंभ हो इसका प्रयास किया भी जा रहा है और इसमें सफलता भी मिल रही है। लेकिन जहां तक कोचिंग संस्थानों का प्रश्न है इस बारे में कुछ भी शिक्षा नीति में नहीं कहा गया। जबकि यह बहुत गंभीर प्रश्न है अब हम सब शिक्षाविदों का दायित्व है की किस प्रकार इस कोचिंग के मकड़जाल से छात्र को बाहर निकालें, किस प्रकार मध्यमवर्ग, गरीब वर्ग का लड़का उसी प्रकार की शिक्षा प्राप्त कर सके जिस प्रकार उच्च वर्ग के लोगों के लिए उपलब्ध है। अधिकतर विकसित देशों में शिक्षा की व्यवस्था प्रायः निःशुल्क है। क्या हमारे यहां ऐसा हो सकता है? क्या हमारे देश में निकटतम विद्यालय में प्रवेश अनिवार्य हो ऐसा नियम संभव है? क्या हमारी नियमित कक्षाएं चलाने वाली विश्वविद्यालय व कॉलेज, छात्र को भविष्य की कंपटीशन की परीक्षाओं के लिए भी तैयार कर सकते हैं? यह सब प्रश्न समाज के सामने हैं। जब तक इन कोचिंग संस्थान के बारे में विचार कर कोई ठीक दिशा में निर्णय नहीं लिया जाता तब तक यह प्रश्न तो समाज के सामने रहेगा ही इसलिए इस बारे में विचार किया जाना चाहिए।

अध्यक्ष

उ.क्षेत्रीय राष्ट्रीय शिक्षक शिक्षा परिषद्
नई दिल्ली

Transforming Indian Classrooms : NEP - 2020 on Equity and Inclusion

Sunita Joshi Kathuria and Saroj Sharma

A person's ability to succeed in life depends on how well his/her mind is developed, and the best way to do that is through receiving the appropriate education. As Swami Vivekananda stated:-

“Education is the manifestation of the perfection already present in man”,

It would not be unjust to say that the worth of an individual is enhanced by education and to deny education to someone is to disallow him from realizing his entire worth and potential. Globally, most educational systems are undergoing a complete transformation as they begin to embrace the idea of inclusive education. It is commonly acknowledged that inclusive teaching and learning enhance students' learning opportunities. The main goal of inclusive education is to help students to realize their potential and pursue their ambitions (Kathuria, 2018 & 2019). It argues that developing a learner's strengths should take precedence over improving areas of weakness (Masataka, 2017).

India is also witnessing a huge change in its educational system from being based on segregation to the principle that every child and adult, with their own strengths and limitations, aspirations, and potential, has the right to education (RTE Act, 2009). The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006) emphasizes that Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) are valuable human beings who can make major contributions to the advancement of the country. The "17 Sustainable Development Goals, 2030 (SDG)" were endorsed by all United Nations members in 2015 as part of a global collaboration. The main agenda is to 'promote world peace and prosperity'. The SDGs were created with the intention of 'Leaving no one behind', which was also the goal of the Millennium Development Goals (2000). As a result, the majority of the SDGs focuses on making the resources available to the undeserved and unreached population like SDG4 talks about equitable and accessible quality education to everyone, SDG6: inclusive economic growth, SDG10: full and productive employment, emphasizing the inclusion of people with disabilities in society, SDG11: the economy, and politics, building accessible cities and water resources, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transportation systems, and SDG17: government and non-government partnerships at

the national and international levels that cover the wide and narrow aspect of mainstreaming people with disability in the society.

Data on Disability in India

Eight different forms of disability were counted in the census of 2011, compared to five in the census of 2001. According to the Census-2011, 2.68 billion people—or 2.21 percent—of India's 121 billion people are discovered to be disabled. Out of the 2.68 billion disabled persons, 44 percent of them were women, 56 percent were men, and 69 percent of them lived in rural regions (Table 1)

Table 1: Percentage of People with Disability in India (based on area setup)

Percentage of Disabled to total population in India, 2011			
Residence	Persons	Males	Females
Total	2.21	2.41	2.01
Rural	2.24	2.43	2.03
Urban	2.17	2.34	1.98

Source: http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Disabled_persons_in_India_2016.pdf

The PwD population who are older than 7 years, 52.2 percent were recorded as being literate, and of them, 19.3 percent were enrolled in schools beyond the secondary stage. 10.1% of PwDs between the ages of 3 and 35 had participated in a pre-school intervention program. According to their search by NHFDC (2021), 62.9% of PwDs had attended regular schools. Also, when the 2011 Census data was analyzed further, it was found that in the age range of 0 to 19 years, 1.7% of children were disabled. Additionally, it was also noticed that 24% of CwDs in the age range of 0 to 14 years fell into the category "Any other," which did not fit into any of the categories listed in the census 2011 data gathering procedures, such as autism, etc. Further, hearing impairment was reported as the second-highest disability, followed by vision impairment (19%) and orthopaedic impairment (11%). The data so far available to the public on disability captures the population, rural-urban setup, literacy disparity etc. but the complete and valid data on attendance, retention, completion, drop-out and successful transition of CwDs seems to be unavailable in the public domain, if at all it exists with the concerned departments. Therefore, a reliable explicit analysis of the success rate of CwDs and the current status on mainstreaming of CwDs still possess lot of ambiguity in government documents and data on public domain.

NPE 1986 on Education of CwDs

In part IV (Education for Equality) of the National Policy on Education (1986), the policy recommended that education is the best tool to remove disparity and bring opportunities for those who have been denied equal treatment. To have democratization on education, education for women's equality, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other

backward sections, minorities, adults and the handicapped were highlighted. With regard to the education of CwDs, the policy had a vision:-

"to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence."

NPE 1986 suggested the establishment of special schools for CwDs, vocational training centres, teacher trainings, training for professionals, training for vocational teachers, modification and adaptation in the curriculum, flexibility in the examination, use of technology and effective supervision of schools. The policy was clear in terms that as per the feasibility the CwDs may be integrated into regular schools. Also, for a high degree of impairment, residential special schools may be set up at the district headquarters. The policy also mentioned the voluntary efforts to improve and enhance the educational status of CwDs. The policy also suggested designing appropriate formal and non-formal programmes for technical education of women, economically and socially weaker sections and physically handicapped.

Challenges in the path of creating Inclusive Schools in India

Despite the fact that the idea of inclusion has been widely embraced for over two decades, numerous barriers still stand in the way of educational inclusion of CwDs'. If we see the structure of inclusive schools in India, we may find that it represents a model of partial arrangements of resources, institutions, attitudes, and cultures (Sharma & Deppler, 2005). Many pieces of research indicate that there is a significant gap between policy and practice. Such gap needs to be bridged in order to serve CwDs with equality and equity. Further more, considering the limited resources and stigmatized culture, achieving full inclusion appears to be a long way off at present in India (Kathuria & Chauhan, 2021) and majority of the challenges are observed when the class is full of diversity as it introduces difficulty in handling the teaching-learning process. Not only this, the research suggests that the socio-economic background of CwDs also creates a complex situation. It has been noted that in certain instances, parents from low socio economic background are compelled to put an end to their children's education because they cannot afford the costs associated with sending them to school.

The researches examining problems and challenges in the mainstreaming of the disabled community revealed a number of barriers, ranging from fewer options to attitudinal problems. The research exposed that the negative and indifferent attitude of the class fellows generally makes CwDs an easy target for being bullied (Shirin & Kreimeyer, 1996). And, if in case any learner faces any psychological issue, which is likely to be more with the CwDs, there is little or no provision of psychological assistance in the schools of India. At the end, when children are given little to no support, their propensity to quit school increases. Therefore, it is stated in most of the newspaper articles and research findings that the majority of schools in India are still not prepared to include children with a range of diversities. Inclusion is still viewed as a diktat from the top (policy-level changes) and not acceptable completely from the bottom level fellows.

Additional difficulties on India's journey to inclusion include a conflict between the general education objective and inclusion agenda, curriculum load and learning

demands, traditional and universal design approaches, and the roles of special and normal schools and instructors. In addition to this, it has also been noted in India that laws and policies lack clarity. It is observed that even though India had periodically passed numerous laws, there were discrepancies in how they were interpreted and put into practice. India pledged to practice inclusiveness at the international level and is a signatory to the UNCRPD (2006). But regrettably, the RTE Act of 2009's policy statement does not even define inclusive education in detail. This indicates the Indian government's lack of coordination in its efforts. According to the RPwD Act (2016), educational institutions must "provide reasonable accommodations in accordance with the individual's needs and provide the necessary support, individually or otherwise, in environments that maximize academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion," but it doesn't specify the parameters, levels, or criteria for what constitutes "reasonable accommodations," "individually tailored support," or "full inclusion." As a result, the objective of inclusive education is only partially met.

Also in India, Students with Disabilities (SwDs) share challenges exclusively in transitioning process, i.e., the transition of a CwD from a special school to an Inclusive school and also from school education to higher education. Not only have this, transitioning from educational institutions to workplaces also found to be one of the major concerns. Most of the SwDs reported the following difficulties in making a successful transition:-

- i) Insufficient Financial support/ funding
- ii) Lack of mentors and peer tutoring opportunities
- iii) Different Academic requirements and Academic Standards
- iv) Differences in Study Skills but assessment at the same level.
- v) Lack of services given to disabled students (Gap in policy and practice)
- vi) Lack of Disability Advocacy Support/ Escalation Resolution Mechanism

Now, let us see what is required to make Inclusion happen?

The inclusion requires following:-

- Understanding the needs of the learners.
- Preparing self (teacher) to fulfil the needs (like learning of basics of sign language through a free online dictionary and videos or learning of Braille reading etc.).
- Being sensitized toward dealing with low-level disruptions in the class.
- Creating opportunities for all children to be heard.
- Preparing everyone to understand the relevance, value and participate.
- Conducting classes in ISL, and make classes interesting.
- Involving everyone with no comparison.
- Promoting Peer learning and group activity.
- The learners must be provided with multiple means of getting engaged in the classroom, and multiple ways to express themselves. Also, the content must be presented in multiple means to cater to different learning styles i.e. visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile.

Hence, it is clear that some basic components are required to make the world Inclusive. The components are accessibility, acknowledging the existence of all, respect for diversity, participation, equity in the distribution of resources and acknowledging everyone's rights (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Components required for making an Inclusive world



How does NEP 2020 guides for 'Inclusion'

The National Education Policy, which superseded the previous education policy, NPE 1986, was approved by the Indian Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020. NEP 2020, prepared and submitted under the leadership of *ISRO Chief Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan*, is considered to be an updated version of policies that came into existence now and aims to upgrade the education system by 2040. NEP 2020 targets the increase in the enrolment ratio from 26.3% to 50% by 2035 and to achieve this, its objective is to increase the admission and tap on the dropouts. In addition to this, special attention is given to the children coming from marginalized sections of society. The equity and inclusive guidelines are advisory in nature in the policy and final decisions are left to be made by the institutions, schools and state for its accomplishment. The policy proposes a zero rejection policy and admission of children with disabilities in the nearest regular neighbourhood schools. Also, it affirms that the admission and participation of CwDs would be taken care of from the foundational stage to higher education. It endorses all the recommendations about school education of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016 and caters to all the aspects of a 'barrier-free environment' as mentioned in RPwD Act, 2016. In addition, it recommends extensive networking and collaboration with national institutes of DEPD. NEP 2020 laid special focus on 4 major areas i.e. school complex, teacher preparation, accessibility and assessment. It addresses the importance of modifications to be brought into the setup of school complexes to make the school and school complex reachable and accessible to the CwDs. Also, it stresses the preparation of special educators for specific and cross disabilities. Catering to the diversity and teaching a class having children with different abilities and disabilities would be made part of the regular teacher training programme. The in-service and pre-service teacher preparation programme would have disability inclusion as an integral

part of the teacher preparation process. A synergy is proposed to be created between NCTE and RCI curricula to ensure the adequate training of well-qualified teachers. The teachers would be oriented toward new pedagogical practices. Furthermore, it emphasizes on one on one teachers' and peers' support. Restructuring the teacher education programmes to cover all the aspects of the transaction and pedagogical changes to include children with disabilities in the classrooms. It also covers the requirement of recruitment of counselors and special educators with cross-disability training. The rehabilitation, educational and vocational needs of children with severe to profound disabilities and multiple disabilities would be taken care by resource centers and special educators. In order to provide barrier-free learning, NEP 2020 also highlights the need and use of technological interventions and assistive devices. It also talks about involving counselors and social workers to improve attendance and enhance learning outcomes. The policy also put forward the possibility of exploring and enrolling students in the open schooling system. The policy demands to ensure the participation of CwDs in early childhood care education. Also, children with a higher degree of disabilities were ignored in previous policies and schemes. NEP 2020 mentions the education and training of children with different degrees of disabilities from severe to profound. It stresses on the education of CwDs in special setup, regular setup and also in home-based education setup. To ensure equity and equal opportunities in teaching, learning and assessment, NEP 2020 proposed the establishment of PARAKH. PARAKH would formulate the guidelines for conducting assessments from foundational to higher education. PARAKH would also cater for the needs and concerns of children with learning disabilities in the entrance exams. NEP 2020 endorses language, age and need-based teaching-learning material (learning content in accessible format like Braille books, large print for children with visual impairment and high-quality modules in Indian sign language to teach children with severe to profound hearing impairment. School complexes would be provided to create resource centers and support centers for creating an inclusive learning space for CwDs. Safety and security of CwDs are also made a focused concern. Adaptation, accommodation and support to children with disability as per their individual needs. Learning through peer involvement is stressed in the policy. The policy endorses the engagement and involvement of CwDs in all subjects including Art, Sports and vocational education. Home schooling and home-based education would also be given equal weightage as it is for regular schooling. And, a special audit system would assess the quality and efficiency of home schooling. Orientation of parents and sharing of learning material to enable them to assist their kids. Early identification of the learning needs of the students must be done so that early intervention may be provided to the children. The policy also recommends having scholarships and various opportunities to be placed in a single window so that everyone is aware of the current and upcoming opportunities. NEP 2020 also stresses on bringing change in school culture and suggests sensitization programmes on 'inclusion, respect, dignity, diversity, equity and privacy of all persons' for all the stakeholders of education. It is hoped that such a culture would in turn sensitize the students and hence everyone would understand and practice empathy, tolerance, equality and acceptance.

A Survey Research focusing on the Expectations from the Indian Education System

To know the expectations from the Indian Education System, the authors carried out a survey and interviewed 58 parents of children with disabilities. These parents were selected for the study on the basis of following criteria:-

- Having children with different disabilities like visual, hearing, orthopaedic, and multiple disabilities
- Their children enrolled in Delhi government schools (regular schools)

The interview consisted of two major questions:-

What do you know about inclusion?

and

What are your expectations from the Indian Education System?

On asking about inclusion, 60% (35/58) of the parents were not aware of 'inclusion' terminology but they knew that their children can study in the nearest government school. On asking further, it was revealed that they were not aware of the benefits and possibilities of getting admission done in Inclusive schools. They got admission to regular schools as they were not able to afford the fees of Special schools and were suggested by the teachers of special schools to get admission done to government schools. Some of the parents sounded disappointed and expressed their concern about the misinterpretation of the concept of inclusion. One of the parents who have a child with severe hearing impairment (studying in VI-grade of Government school of Delhi) said:- Inclusion is taking place only in papers and news, not in reality. Where do we see inclusion in schools ? At least, I can say about the school where my child is studying.

Another parent (having a child with mild intellectual disability, studying in VII grade of one of the private schools of Delhi) stated that “The school administration themselves is not clear about inclusion. Earlier they denied giving admission to my child. But, after putting lots of efforts, I got my child's admission done. Now, every now and then, they call me, almost every week and tell me that my child needs tuition and extra support. He is too weak to cope with other students. Now, with little salary how would it be possible for me to arrange tuition for him ? And if the tuition madam would also say the same where would I take my child to ?”

It was revealed from the interview that most of the parents do not have clarity about inclusion. Moreover, they are not even aware of the government schemes and disability rights. All they understand about inclusion is that the government had made provisions to allow children with disability to study in regular government schools. Hence, it is interpreted that still there is a huge gap in gaining a clear understanding about having inclusion in schools and thus ultimately in society.

What are your expectations from Indian Education System ?

On asking this question, most of the parents 77% (45/58) seemed to be hopeful and expected a positive impact of the execution of governmental policies. But, approximately 20% of the parents were disheartened and expressed no expectations from the education system.

Understanding Inclusion from the field :-

- *No denial in Admission:* Out of their previous experience of being denied admission to some of the private schools, they expect the system to be open to all children irrespective of being able-bodied or disabled-bodied.
- *Special focus on their child:* Some of the parents shared that they expect the Indian education system to give extra attention to their children as they believe that their children require extra support with respect to understanding the content and appearing in the exam. Hence, the expectation of parents for special focus was observed to be high.
- *Change in the assessment system:* Few of the parents expressed their concern about bringing change in the assessment criteria and procedure. The parents revealed that as per the individual's ability, the assessment may take place. One of the parents stated that:- "If the child is able to explain the concept better verbally, the child should be assessed orally only and no paper-pencil test should take place."

Another observation is- I have observed that most of the children with disability fail in 9th grade. I want to ask our education system why it happens. Why do we have more failures in 9th grade? This is the major reason why there are fewer enrollments of CwDs in the secondary and senior secondary stages. Both of my sons are having a severe hearing impairment. My elder son failed in 9th last year and is sitting at home doing nothing. God knows what would happen to my son!

- *Need for some skill-based courses:* Most of the parents shared their concern about making provisions for having skill-based subjects right from the primary stage. It was observed that parents are more interested in getting their kids trained in some vocational subject from grade I. One of the parents shared that:- "My son is with 80% visual impairment. I myself do not want to put much pressure on my child. I want him to live a happy and successful life. Therefore, I want the education system to place some provisions where I prepare my child for the job world right from the start."
- *Good behaviour of the teachers with parents and their children:* Most of the parents expect the representative of the education system i.e. teachers to be polite to them. It was acknowledged by all the parents that the teachers are not empathetic toward them. Hence, they request and expect the teachers to understand their situation and maintain a harmonious relationship with them.

Conclusion

In order to address the diversity of Indian classrooms, NEP 2020 highlights the need to change the educational system and restructure the partially or non-inclusive curriculum, half-hearted inclusionary practices, ignorance of culture, and lack of resourcefulness in schools. The large learning gap for the marginalized population at the secondary and higher school levels was also noted by the policy. It also acknowledges the significance of interventions that must be planned to re-enrol and retain children from the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Group. It is believed that the recommendations made by the NEP 2020 are found to be promising in nature and presumed to have a wide impact on society as a whole, only if these recommendations would be honestly executed at the ground level and the services are reached to the unreached marginalized population of India.

Suggestions:

For the execution of the recommendations laid down by NEP 2020, the author suggests the following:-

- Robust Data on the count of people with disability and admission status of children all over the country must be maintained to keep track of the execution of the recommendations and follow-up process.
- Special focus on a baseline assessment of CwDs to be conducted at national and state levels is required.
- A thoughtful strategy must be planned and adapted to identify and enroll the CwDs from the special education zones of India, to reverse the under-representation of people with disabilities.
- To observe the changes at the ground level, it is imperative to define explicitly the roles of all the stakeholders like teachers, special educators, counsellors, parents, institutions, non-profit organizations and the child itself.
- Collaboration and networking must be focused on a priority basis to run things in urban and rural setups both.

Consultant (Research & Evaluation),
National Institute of Open Schooling, Noida, Delhi
Chairperson
National Institute of Open Schooling, Noida, Delhi

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Leadership Enhancement for Vocational Education and Training : Stepping Stones for NEP-2020

Aarti Srivastava and Babita Balodi

In India, since the advent of globalisation post 1991 reforms, the skills requirement in the labour market are constantly evolving. Further, the advent of technological revolution around the world with emergence of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, block chain, and many more, there has been tremendous increase in the demand for specialized labour force. More than 62 percent of India's population is between the ages of 15 and 59, making it one of the world's youngest countries. Further, around 12.8 million individuals enter the Indian labour market annually (MEHROTRA et al., 2012). The large labour force presents a one-of-a-kind opportunity in terms of "demographic dividend." However, putting this demographic dividend to good use in the country is a major task. The increasing labour supply must be put to productive use in order to enjoy the "demographic dividend," which involves the development of human capital through adequate education and training. Despite the huge proportion of labour force, there is a persistent issue of skill gap which is the major impediment in employment and growth in the country. There has been greater consensus regarding the ineffectiveness of the general education to prepare youths for the future work due to possible delink between theoretical knowledge and the actual work. In this regard, vocational education and training has been seen as an alternative to develop the workforce as per the industries requirement.

The government of India in order to address the skill issues has taken numerous steps in the field of vocational education and training so as to develop skilled workforce in the country. Vocational education and training plays a critical role in preparing young people for employment, developing adult skills, and reacting to the economy's labour market demands. Vocational education and training help to bridge the skill gap in the economy and helps in addressing the problem of employment among youth since it has closer and direct link with the economic and professional development as compared to general education. Technical and vocational education with adequate and effective curriculum, helps in preparing individuals for employment in a trade or industrial occupation or enables employed persons in the same sectors to enhance their qualifications through further training, such as for life learning. Vocational education

and training programmes are often seen as an alternative to skill development in the country as it bridges the skill gap among the labour force. It aids in building the human capital resource in the country which in turn leads to higher economic growth rate and improved standard of living. It is widely accepted that equipping individuals with right knowledge and skills ensures overall national progress and economic growth. In this regard, role of vocational education and training assumes importance as the primary objective of vocational education and training is to develop individuals for a specific trade or profession. It is aimed at increasing the employability of the individual in the market so that transition to labour market becomes smoother.

In many countries around the world, vocational education and training are used interchangeably, but in India they are different. On the one hand, vocational education forms the part of formal system of education in which courses are offered in class 11 and 12 under the centrally sponsored scheme named “Vocationalisation of School Education”. Moreover, the government has initiated new courses namely Bachelors of Vocational Education and Master of Vocational Education in order to provide vocational education degrees at undergraduate and post graduate level. On the other hand, vocational training comes under the purview of The Indian Directorate General for Employment and Training (DGE&T), part of the Ministry of Labour wherein certificate level crafts training is provided to the students who leave school after completing grades 8-12. It has different modes such as craftsman training scheme, apprenticeship training scheme. And in informal sector, modular employable skills has been initiated to provide training to the workers in informal sector in order to equip them with necessary skills.

Vocational Education and Training in India: Issues and Solutions

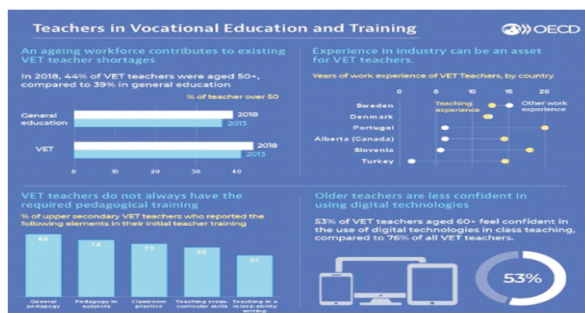
There has been substantive work initiated as well as bases laid by the government of India on skill development additionally by reforming existing vocational education and training systems. Accordingly, the country's current vocational education and training system had to face a variety of issues. Out of many the most important issue is the negative impression of vocational education and training, which is frequently thought to be intended for students with bad grades. This very perception about vocational education and training being inferior to general education has been influential in student choice and later results in poor participation. Moreover, also, according to a study (Mehrotra, Gandhi, & Sahoo, n.d.) based on the goal of analysing the challenges and current status of education and skills in the Indian labour force, the number of people receiving vocational training is lower than the total number of people in the Indian labour force, and there is a problem with quality of skills because those who are trained do not have the competencies for employment, and there is a skill mismatch between what is demanded and what is available. Additionally, the actual requirement is less than the 500 million set out in the skill development agenda, necessitating a new training approach. Further, the participation of the marginalised groups such as scheduled caste in vocational education and training programmes is also very low.

The existing system of vocational training and education in the country is poor to say the least. It has variety of problems such as unsatisfactory quality of practical training as machines and tools are outdates in most of the ITIs, unqualified teachers and shortage of

teachers, gap between skills demanded by industries and supplied by institutions, leading to unemployment. In their research study based on primary data assessed the status of infrastructure, internal and external efficiency, instructor quality and insights into CoEs and MSE courses for ITIs and private ITIs. The results revealed that enrolment in these ITIs is lower than the sanctioned capacity. There is also a problem with dropouts, which is more prevalent in government ITIs than in commercial ITIs. Furthermore, while the machinery is adequate, the CoE, or Centre of Excellence, lacks qualified personnel. Despite the fact that MES courses promote employability, 33 percent of ITI graduates are unemployed.

The corporatization of vocational education and training sectors has brought number of issues such as employee casualization and the ensuing management problems, as well as a lack of continuity in corporate expertise, which have created increased hurdles to implementing VET programmes successfully, described vocational education as, "expensive, meagre and insufficiently funded." He advocated for thorough planning of vocational training and education, whether it is delivered through a formal education system or through on-the-job training. In addition, detailed manpower analysis must be accompanied by vocational education strategies. Achieving the goal of successful vocational education implementation necessitates adequate funding, qualified teachers, and appropriate equipment. If existing difficulties are not handled in a deliberate manner, youths may experience double deprivation. Moreover, extensive manpower analysis must be preceded by the plans of vocational education. The goal of successful realization of vocational education requires sufficient allocation, trained teachers, relevant equipment. There is an acute shortage of teachers and trainers in vocational education and training. Further as highlighted in the figure below, the teachers in vocational education and training are mostly aged who are less confident about using technology. The pandemic has further necessitated the needs for the teachers to not only update their knowledge and practise in order to adapt to changing skill needs, but also to take advantage of innovative teaching methods, such as the usage of virtual/augmented reality. Moreover, the teachers in VET programmes do not always have required pedagogical training.

Fig: Teachers in Vocational Education and Training



Source: Teachers and Leaders in Vocational Education and Training, OCED (Methrotra & Ghosh 2014) have explored the many approaches that can be taken to address the issues of inadequate funding for vocational education and training. The establishment of national training funds, levies from organised and medium-large enterprises for training,

the adoption of both revenue raising and levy disbursement schemes, and demand side financing of vocational training through the payment of stipends to trainees are all examples of these measures. Research by also looked into the issue of vocational education in the country. The following policy recommendations were made as a result of the study: Vocational education should be given outside of the mainstream educational system; nevertheless, vocational education should not be utilised to correct general education distortions. According to, vocational education needs to be revamped at the school level to make it more effective and efficient in line with labour market expectations. They went on to say that vocational education and training should not just be provided to new workers, but also to existing workers, and that vocational courses should be directed toward dropouts. (Mehrotra, 2014) in his research emphasised the reforms needed to address the difficulties of vocational education and training. In order to address the quantitative and qualitative issues in vocational education and training, he proposed adopting a new National Skill Qualification Framework, re-engineering existing public institutions, reforming the apprenticeship system, a new vocational education and training act, the establishment of a national training fund, and a robust labour market information system.

Education Policy and Vocational Education and Training

The latest National Education Policy has emphasised the issue of low level of prevalence of vocational education among the country's youth. The country's general vocational training and education scenario is disappointing in terms of participation of labour force in these programmes considering the presence of large skill gap. According to the Five-Year Plan (2012–2017), formal vocational education was received by only a small percentage of the Indian workforce aged 19–24 (less than 5%). In countries such as the United States, the figure is 52%, in Germany, 75%, and in South Korea, it is as high as 96 percent. In case of vocational training, the numbers are not any different. According to the NSSO 68th round data, only 2.2 percent of people in the working age range of 15–59 years have obtained formal vocational training, while 8.6 percent have received non-formal vocational training. According to the NSS 68th round (2011–12) and 61st round (2004–05), the proportion of people aged 15 to 29 who had formal vocational training was virtually the same.

The strategy goes on to explain why only a small percentage of young people in the country pursue vocational education, and one of the reasons is a lack of vertical mobility. Previously, vocational education in the country was limited to dropouts from upper primary and high school. Students who studied vocational education subjects later found it difficult to continue with these subjects in higher school. However, the government has more or less remedied the problem by introducing Bachelors of Vocation and Master of Vocation degrees. These new higher education channels for students of vocational topics in schools have opened the window of opportunity in terms of vertical mobility. Another explanation for this is the society's perception of vocational education as substandard. This can be addressed by re-imagining how vocational education is delivered to prospective students in the future. The concept promotes a progressive integration of vocational education across schools, as well as early vocational education exposure to pupils beginning in elementary school. Other options for overcoming the

social status hierarchy associated with vocational education include measures such as clearing up misunderstandings about vocational school positioning and creating an influential brand culture of vocational schools, meeting students' employment needs, developing new enterprise school cooperation with multiple modes, and establishing and implementing vocational school curriculum.

In order to realize the anticipated demographic dividend, the policy intends to increase the exposure of vocational education among learners in schools and higher education to at least half of the learners by 2050. The policy suggests that parallel vocational education courses be offered alongside academic courses in schools and colleges, with vocational education being phased into all school and higher education institutions, with collaboration from ITIs, polytechnics, local industry, industry, and NGOs. The expansion of vocational education in the country is urgently needed in the country given the presence of huge skill gap among the new and the existing labour force. However, the suggested policy, as outlined in the framework above, appears to place a heavy emphasis on the supply side while paying little attention to the demand side gap. The policy is nearly deafeningly silent on the growing need for vocational education graduates in the labour market, the existing skill gap among vocational education and training graduates, and the unemployment and low salary challenges that vocational education and training graduates face.

There are numerous challenges in vocational education and training in India at the moment, including the cost of vocational education and insufficient funding, the issue of skill quality as those who are trained do not possess the competencies for employment and a skill mismatch between what is demanded and supplied, issues related to ITIs such as higher dropout rates, unemployment among graduates (33 percent of ITI graduates are unemployed), and a lack of infrastructure. The quality of practical training is inadequate since most machinery and tools are obsolete, teachers are unqualified and there is a teacher shortage, and there is a gap between the skills sought by industries and the skills offered by institutions, resulting in unemployment. Blind expansion of vocational education without proper consideration to demand-side issues will exacerbate the current situation, resulting in the formation of a new class of skilled and trained unemployed adolescents in the country.

Leadership for Improving Vocational Education and Training

Leadership is an important factor to address the challenges of vocational education and training in the country. Leadership is a critical aspect in determining an organization's effectiveness. The nature, value, and ethical conduct of effective leadership are frequently linked. The ability to persuade a group toward a common purpose is characterised as leadership. In the fast-changing technological world, the responsiveness to ongoing change is relevant for technical and vocational education which in turn requires teachers and schools to be adaptive to such changes. In order to fulfil the objective of skilling labour force through vocational and training programmes, it is imperative for the leaders and educators in technical and vocational education to continuously develop themselves so as to fulfil the needs of the trainees as well as society. The importance of teachers and leaders in vocational education and training cannot be overstated. Leaders in vocational education and training are expected to steer

the change in such a way that a dynamic, relevant, and accessible system can be established. The role of leaders in strategic planning in vocational education and training is important which entails the creation of an organisational framework that supports the systematic improvement of teaching and learning. A major area in vocational education and training where the role of leadership assumes utmost important is the development of cross-sectional collaborations and partnership with the industry. Community organisations, VET employers, industry groups, local government and economic development agencies, as well as learners themselves, make up this expanded variety of collaborations in the sector. Most importantly, the industry academia collaboration in vocational education and training is inevitable for realizing the objectives of these programmes. Vocational education and training teachers, must have dual knowledge, consisting of both pedagogical and industry knowledge in order to prepare young people and adults for the labour market. Institutional leaders in VET have a variety of responsibilities, including training and supporting instructors, involving many stakeholders, and improving the quality of VET through resource allocation and instructional supervision. Teachers and leaders in vocational education and training can have an immediate and beneficial impact on students' skills, employability, and career development.

Vocational education and training teachers must have a combination of pedagogical abilities as well as occupational knowledge and experience, and they must keep these up to date to reflect changing labour market skill needs as well as changing teaching and learning contexts. Moreover, leaders must have ethical values as ethical leaders have strong moral ideals and goals, which motivate them to act in ways that support ethical policies, procedures, and processes inside their institutions. Following that, ethical leaders serve as high ethical role models or moral exemplars, encouraging followers to develop their own internal set of moral principles and ideals, which serves as a foundation for follower moral identity and, eventually, moral action. There are three primary characteristics that influence leadership ability in employees and lecturers. The first is student or other lecturers' leadership, such as that of a facilitator, coach, mentor, trainer, curriculum specialist, novel approach designer, or study group leader. The second aspect is leadership of operational activities that keep the school structured and advancing toward its goals, which can be accomplished through roles like head of department, dean, and task force member. The third aspect is decision-making or partnership leadership. Participant in school improvement teams, committees, and the formation of partnerships with businesses, higher education institutions, and the parent-lecturer association. According to some data, university department heads may have a similar influence on teaching and learning in post-secondary education. discovered a link between how university department heads and subject coordinators think about and report on their job as teaching leaders, and how their followers perceive that leadership. emphasised the necessity for leaders to focus on the educational aspect of their work in the context of VPE, and stated that the shift to management responsibilities is affecting leaders' ability to assure excellent educational programming discovered that university professors' experiences of academic leadership (teaching leadership) is related to their teaching method. Department heads such as school principals, may have an indirect impact on teaching and learning in post-secondary

education, according to these studies. Another research by shows how departmental heads involve themselves in curriculum development and program assessment activities so as to develop leadership for learning. Moreover, there is a need for a systemic approach to improve education in Community Colleges, as well as the relevance of institute-level leadership for teacher professional development.

Conclusion : To fulfil the country's goal of skill development, it is critical to address the issues facing vocational education and training. There is a need to remove misunderstandings about vocational school positioning and creating an influential brand culture of vocational schools, meeting students' employment needs, developing and implementing vocational school curriculum, and developing new enterprise school cooperation with multiple modes all contribute to making vocational education more popular among individuals. The acceptance of vocational education and training is essential for overall progress and development in the country. In the near term, this necessitates boosting quality in order to increase the appeal and demand for VET, while in the long run, it necessitates changing cultural views (Pilz & Regel, 2021).

The role of leaders such as institutional heads, teachers and trainers in vocational education and training assumes importance for addressing the various challenges of vocational education and training sector in the country. The success in the VET sector in this decade, at the start of the VET new millennium, will be determined by how well leaders understand and operate across various areas, including their organisational roles and functions, the leadership processes in which they are involved, and their own, their organisations', local communities', and regions' shared values and visions.

Leaders in vocational education and training institutions must be well-prepared. Firstly, they must be familiar with the VET sector and the labour market. Secondly, they must possess the organisational and pedagogical leadership abilities required to improve teaching and learning. To guarantee that leaders in vocational education and training can effectively carry out their complex and varied activities, countries should specify their roles and tasks and provide access to basic training and professional development as part of a cohesive skills development strategy. Leaders, especially those who are just starting out in their careers, should be encouraged in their roles. It's also critical to make VET leadership roles more appealing by creating middle management roles and leadership teams to help leaders with their tasks, allowing qualified external applicants access to the profession, and providing peer learning opportunities for VET leaders.

Department of HPE, NIEPA, New Delhi
Research Scholar, NIEPA, New Delhi

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राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति कथ्य और तथ्य : एक विमर्शीय रेखांकन

विश्वनाथ मिश्र

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति, 2020 के परिचय खंड में कहा गया है कि प्राचीन और सनातन भारतीय ज्ञान और विचार की समृद्ध परंपरा के आलोक में यह नीति तैयार की गयी है। इसी में आगे कहा गया है कि ज्ञान, प्रज्ञा और सत्य की खोज को भारतीय विचार परंपरा और दर्शन में सदा सर्वोच्च मानवीय लक्ष्य माना जाता था। प्राचीन भारत में शिक्षा का लक्ष्य सांसारिक जीवन अथवा स्कूल के बाद जीवन की तैयारी के रूप में ज्ञान अर्जन नहीं बल्कि पूर्ण आत्म-ज्ञान और मुक्ति के रूप में माना गया था यह एक अति सरलीकृत या गंभीर विचार के बिना जल्दबाजी में लिखा गया कथन है। जिससे यह प्रतिध्वनित होता है कि इस शिक्षा नीति के प्रपत्र का निर्माण करते हुए अन्विक्षकी और त्रयी पर तो ध्यान दिया गया है किन्तु वार्ता और दण्डनीति की उपेक्षा की गई है। आचार्य कौटिल्य ने अनेक पूर्वाचार्यों का उल्लेख करते हुए सनातन परंपरा की चार विद्याओं का उल्लेख किया है। जिसमें अन्विक्षकी और त्रयी आत्म ज्ञान, मुक्ति और परम सत्य की उपासना की विद्यायें हैं और वार्ता तथा दण्ड नीति भौतिक तथा सामाजिक जीवन में संचालन की विद्यायें हैं। इससे भी महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य यह है कि सनातन परंपरा में लोक जीवन और आध्यात्मिक जीवन को बायनेरी अर्थ में नहीं समझा गया है बल्कि आत्म ज्ञान और मुक्ति को लोक जीवन का ही अंग माना गया है। अतः राष्ट्रीय महत्व के शिक्षा नीति विषयक प्रपत्र में यह कहना कि प्राचीन भारत में शिक्षा को स्कूल के बाद के जीवन की तैयारी के लिए ज्ञान अर्जन नहीं बल्कि आत्म ज्ञान और मुक्ति के रूप में माना जाता था, एक गंभीर दोष है।

वस्तुतः जिसे आत्म ज्ञान और मुक्ति कहा जाता है, वह शास्त्रीय अर्थ में न तो पश्चिम में और न ही भारत में कोई एकल अवधारणा नहीं रही है। दोनों ही परंपराओं में इसकी शरीर धर्मी और आत्मधर्मी व्याख्यायें विद्यमान रही हैं। भारत में चार्वाक परंपरा और पश्चिम में सोफिस्ट परंपरा भौतिक सुख की प्राप्ति और उस सुख को येन-केन प्रकारेण संवर्धित करने को ही ज्ञान और मुक्ति मानते रहे हैं। दूसरी ओर शरीर की सीमाओं को जानने और शरीर के जैविक बंधनों के अतिक्रमण के लिए आवश्यक ज्ञान और तदनु रूप मुक्ति की व्याख्या पश्चिम में सुकरात और भारत में चार्वाक को पूर्व पक्ष बनाने वाले सभी दर्शन संप्रदाय करते रहें हैं। किन्तु इस जद्दोजहद में जिस वर्तमान तक हम पहुँच गये हैं, वह एक ऐसी अन्तर्यात्रा की पटकथा है जिसमें चार्वाक और सोफिस्ट ही विजयी हुए हैं, इस तथ्य से इंकार नहीं किया जा सकता है।

नई शिक्षा नीति में जिसे आत्म ज्ञान और मुक्ति कहा गया है, उसे न तो परिभाषित किया गया है और न ही शिक्षा के पाठ्यक्रम में इसे आत्मसात करने हेतु कोई दिशा निर्देश दिया गया है। आत्म ज्ञान एक विषय है परन्तु श्रीमद्भागवतगीता में इसे बड़े आसान शब्दों में व्यक्त किया है।

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यबुद्धेः परतस्तु सः॥

इसका तात्पर्य यह है कि इन्द्रियों को स्थूल शरीर से श्रेष्ठ, मन को इन्द्रियों से श्रेष्ठ, बुद्धि को मन से श्रेष्ठ और मन से आत्मा को श्रेष्ठ माना गया है। गीता में इसी ज्ञान को परम ज्ञान और इस ज्ञान के अनुरूप अस्तित्व को मुक्ति कहा गया है। कृष्ण ने यह भी बताया है कि यह शुद्ध, नित्य विवेक और आत्म ज्ञान जीवात्मा के निमोहित रहने की अवस्था में प्रकट नहीं होता है।

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवेरिणा ।
काम रूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥
इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्या विषट्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥

संक्षेप में अपने चैतन्य अस्तित्व को स्वीकार करना, अपने शरीर की सीमाओं को जानना और यतपिण्डे तत्त्वद्वाण्डे का आचरण करना आत्म ज्ञान और मुक्ति है। ऐसा नहीं करना स्वयं अपने प्रति, प्रकृति के प्रति और मानवता के प्रति हिंसा है। हिंसा क्या है और कैसे हिंसा को निर्मूल किया जा सकता है, इसकी सही समझ के बिना यदि शिक्षा नीति का निर्माण किया जाता है, तब वह चाहे किसी भी देश की शिक्षा नीति हो वह अपेक्षित बदलाव नहीं ला सकती है। उल्लेखनीय है कि 1986 की शिक्षा नीति के प्रपत्र में हिंसा (वायलेंश) शब्द का उल्लेख दो बार हुआ था और यह कैपस में होने वाली हिंसा के रोक-थाम से संदर्भित था। इसी तरह 2020 की शिक्षा नीति में हिंसा शब्द का उल्लेख चार बार हुआ है। जिसमें दो बार वायलेंश एकल चर है और दो बार नान-वायलेंश संयुक्त चर हैं और इन चारों ही उल्लेख का संदर्भ 1986 की शिक्षा नीति की ही तरह कैपस में होने वाली हिंसा को रोकना केन्द्रीय विषय है। जबकि नये सकारात्मक और मानवीय बदलाव के लिए हिंसा को व्यापक फलक पर समझने और उसे शिक्षा के माध्यम से दूर करने की योजना भी 21वीं सदी के प्रथम शिक्षा नीति में अवश्य होनी चाहिए थी।

आधुनिकता के प्रति व्यामोह और इसके पार्श्व प्रभावों से छुटकारा पाने की छटपटाहट इस शिक्षा नीति को ऐसे दो राहे पर खड़ा कर देती है जहाँ यह बार-बार अतीत की शरण में जाना चाहती है। परन्तु आधुनिकता के व्यामोह को त्यागना भी नहीं चाहती है। इस तथ्य का संधान हम तब कर पाते हैं जब इसमें दस बार एनशिऐन्ट शब्द का संदर्भ और नौ बार मार्टन शब्द का संदर्भ पाते हैं। किन्तु किसी भी संदर्भ में यह जाँचने-परखने और समझने की कोशिश नहीं की गयी है कि प्राचीन सावयवी समाजों के नैसर्गिक साहचर्य, संयम एवं प्रेम को आधुनिक यान्त्रिक समाजों में रहते हुए प्राप्त किया भी जा सकता है या नहीं। ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि इस प्रपत्र में संस्कृति को कोई जड़ वस्तु मान लिया गया है और अपेक्षा की गयी है कि किसी भी सामाजिक, आर्थिक, राजनीतिक एवं तकनीकी परिस्थिति में शिक्षा के माध्यम से प्राचीन मूल्यबोध को जिया जा सकता है। यह ठीक ऐसे ही है जैसे कोई उद्योग लगाने के लिये जंगलों को काटा जाना हो और कटाई शुरू करने से पहले वन देवता या वन देवी की पूजा कर ली जाय। परन्तु यही आज की वास्तविकता है और यह चार्वाक तथा सोफिस्ट मार्ग ही है।

हिंसा और आधुनिकता में एक गठजोड़ है और उस गठजोड़ को हम गीता एवं हन्ना आरेंट के संदर्भ से समझ सकते हैं। गीता में जिसे जीवात्मा को मोहित करने वाला कारक बताया गया है प्रकारान्तर से वह आधुनिकता ही है जिसके मूल में आर्थिक मानव की धारणा है। ऐसा नहीं है कि प्राचीन समाजों में आर्थिक मानव और आध्यात्मिक मानव के बीच कोई द्वैत या वायनेरी जैसा संबंध था। किन्तु, पश्चिमी ज्ञानोदय ने जिस मानव की अवधारणा को मूल में रखकर भौतिक एवं तकनीकी विकास यात्रा की आधुनिकता जनित यात्रा शुरू की उसमें आध्यात्मिक मानव विलुप्त हो गया। इस संदर्भ को समझाने के लिए हन्ना आरेंट ने ज्ञानोदय के बाद के विचारकों की एक श्रेणी को आधुनिक सोफिस्ट कहा है। प्राचीन सोफिस्टों और आधुनिक सोफिस्टों के बीच अन्तर करते हुए वह कहती है कि प्राचीन सोफिस्ट जहाँ सत्य की कीमत पर तर्क में विषय से संतुष्ट हो जाते थे, वहीं आधुनिक सोफिस्ट सत्य की कीमत पर अधिक स्थायी विजय चाहते हैं। जहाँ प्राचीन सोफिस्टों ने विचारों की गरिमा को नष्ट किया वहीं आधुनिक सोफिस्ट कर्म की गरिमा को नष्ट करते हैं। जंगल काटने से पहले वन देवी या वन देवता की पूजा का ऊपर जो उल्लेख आया है, उसमें भी कर्म की गरिमा को नष्ट करने का संदर्भ अभिप्रेरित है।

हन्ना आरेंट इस बदलाव के लिए चयापचयी (मेटाबोलेस्टिक) आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति के लिए किए जाने वाले 'लेबर' और घरेलू आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति के लिए किए जाने वाले वर्क के द्वारा सामूहिक जीवन के 'कर्म' को विस्थापित कर देने की आधुनिक योजना को उत्तरदायी बताती है। इस कथन का सार यह है कि आज व्यक्तिगत (प्राइवेट) सार्वजनिक हो गया है और सार्वजनिक परिदृश्य से गायब हो गया है या होता जा रहा है। इस तथ्य को आनुभविक संदर्भों से समझना आवश्यक है। मसलन यह है कि मुहल्ले के नुककड का दुकानदार आपके 'कर्म' में भी आपका साथी होता है। आप उसके साथ खुशियाँ और दुख भी बांटते हैं। उसका और आपका संबंध सिर्फ आर्थिक संबंध नहीं होता है। किन्तु, अमेजन, फ्लिपकार्ट या वालमार्ट के डिलेवरी व्वाय के साथ आपका वैसा संबंध नहीं होता है न ही उस संबंध की अपेक्षा आप पेट्रोल पम्प के रिफिलिंग पर्सन से करते हैं।

वस्तुतः आधुनिकता में हम आर्थिक संबंधों से घिरते चले जाते हैं। क्या आज यह शिक्षा दे पाने की स्थिति में हैं कि आप दो जोड़ी कपड़ों से ही संतुष्ट रहें। फ्रिज, एसी, मोटरगाड़ी, को घर में रखने से बचें। और साफ्ट और हार्ड ड्रिंक का बिल्कुल इस्तेमाल न करें। मितव्ययी बनें और कम से कम उपयोग करें। कहने के लिए तो यह कहा जा सकता है कि हमने भले ही इन विषयों को पाठ्यचर्चा के हिस्से के रूप में पाठ्यक्रम में शामिल भले ही न किया हो किन्तु इन लक्ष्यों को हम एक्सट्राकैरिकुलर कार्यक्रमों के जरिए हासिल करने का प्रयास करते हैं। इस शिक्षा नीति में भी एक्सट्राकैरिकुलर शब्द का चार बार उल्लेख हुआ है। किन्तु इन संदर्भों पर एक दूसरे तरीके से विचार करने की जरूरत है और वह यह कि यह सब यदि वास्तव में आचरण में उतर जाये तो आज के उद्योगों के बाजार का और इसमें लगी पूँजी तथा तकनीक का क्या होगा?

हकीकत यह है कि यह शिक्षा नीति मैडनेश एवं सिविलाइजेशन में कूनों द्वारा उल्लिखित एक कथन की ओर सहसा ही ध्यान ले जाती है। साडे और गोया की चर्चा करते हुए कूनों लिखते हैं कि आधुनिकता के एक कालखंड में (उत्तर आधुनिकता का संदर्भ) तर्कहीनता एक निर्णायक कारण बन गयी है। वस्तुतः इसी तर्कहीनता से यह विचार बनता है कि संस्कृति, मूल्य, निष्ठा आदि ऐसे स्वायत्त विषय हैं जिन पर अर्थव्यवस्था के स्वरूप, तकनीकी, विकास का स्तर और जन संचार माध्यमों का प्रभाव नहीं पड़ता है। इसी कारण तकनीकी विकास के किसी भी स्तर और अर्थव्यवस्था के किसी भी स्वरूप में कोई भी संस्कृति, मूल्य और निष्ठा व्यवहृत हो सकती है।

एक बार उस तर्क को मान भी लेते हैं, तब भी इस शिक्षा नीति में यह उल्लेख तो आवश्यक ही था कि हम किन पद्धति शास्त्रीय बदलावों के जरिये आधुनिक काल में आधुनिकता के साथ सनातन परंपरा के अमीवर को प्राप्त कर पायेंगे। इस शिक्षा नीति मेथडोलॉजी शब्द का प्लुरल रूप में सिर्फ एक बार प्रयोग हुआ है, वह भी कृषि तकनीकी के संदर्भ में। इम्पीरियल शब्द का भी एक ही बार प्रयोग हुआ है किन्तु उस पर काफी फोकस किया गया है। प्रश्न यह है कि जिस अतीत के भारत का आधुनिक काल में यह शिक्षा नीति उत्थान चाहती है, अथवा विश्व गुरु पदावली को साकार करना चाहती है, उसके लिए इसने सनातन परंपरा के लिए पद्धतिशास्त्र को अपनाया है। अथवा सनातन परंपरा के किन पद्धतिशास्त्रों को यह पाठ्यक्रम में शामिल करना चाहती है। इसमें सांख्य, न्याय वैशेषिक मीमांसा या वेदांत के किसी भी उस पद्धतिशास्त्र का उल्लेख नहीं है, जिसने अतीत में भारत को महान बनाया था। हालांकि, जिस शब्दावली का इसमें सम्भवतः सबसे अधिक प्रयोग हुआ है, वह शब्द है क्रिटिकल। क्रिटिकल शब्द का इसमें 44 बार उल्लेख हुआ है। किन्तु ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि इस शब्द को आस्था की तरह लिया गया है। अन्यथा, सनातन परंपरा की पद्धतिशास्त्रों का उल्लेख या उनके साथ वैज्ञानिक अथवा आधुनिक कही जाने वाली पद्धतिशास्त्रों के तार्किक समायोजन की बात अवश्य की गई होती। उल्लेखनीय है कि इस शिक्षा नीति के प्रपत्र में साइंटिफिक शब्द का प्रयोग 18 बार हुआ है 18 और प्रायः अधिकांश संदर्भों में यह शब्द साइंटिफिक के साथ जुड़ी पश्चिमी बौद्धिकता का ही परिचय देता है।

वस्तुतः जब से मैक्स लेबर ने प्रोटेस्टेंट इथिक्स एण्ड द स्पिरिट ऑफ कैपिटलिज्म लिखी है तब से दुनिया भर में नकल की एक प्रकृति चल पड़ी है। वह नकल यह है कि जिस तरह से मैक्स लेबर ने प्रोटेस्टेंट धर्म को पूँजीवाद और भौतिक तथा तकनीकी विकास का मूल स्तम्भ बताया वैसे ही हम भी स्थापित करने की कोशिश

अपने-अपने धर्मों के माध्यम से करें। जबकि, विज्ञान निष्ठा को अध्यात्म निष्ठा से सनातन परंपरा में सदैव निम्नतर माना गया है। मसलन हम योग विद्या से परिगमन और वायुयान से परिगमन को एक ही नहीं मान सकते हैं। किन्तु यह समालोचनात्मक दृष्टि इस शिक्षा नीति में अनुपस्थित है। ऐसे में कोई फर्क नहीं पड़ता है कि हमारा विद्यार्थी 10+2+3 की संरचना में पढ़े या हमारा विद्यार्थी 5+3+3+4 की संरचना में पढ़े।

प्राथमिक स्तर तक मातृभाषा में शिक्षा देने की बात नई शिक्षा नीति में रखी गयी है। 20 सरकारी प्राथमिक विद्यालयों में यह पहले से ही न्यूनायिक रूप से व्यवहृत है। किन्तु नई शिक्षा नीति के क्रियान्वयन के दो वर्ष बाद भी कान्वेंट स्कूलों, एवं प्राइवेट स्कूलों में अभी भी यह दूर की कोड़ी है। ड्रॉप-आउट रेशियो को कम करने का दबाव सभी सरकारों पर रहा है और इस नयी शिक्षा नीति में इसके लिए एक अनोखा प्रयोग किया गया है। वह यह कि स्नातक स्तर पर भले ही विद्यार्थी ने त्रिवर्षीय या चतुर्वर्षीय पाठ्यक्रम में प्रवेश लिया हो किन्तु वह एक या दो वर्ष में भी सर्टिफिकेट और डिप्लोमा लेकर छोड़ सकता है। बशर्ते सर्टिफिकेट के लिए उसने विधिवत साल भर का और डिप्लोमा के लिए दो वर्ष का पाठ्यक्रम सफलतापूर्वक पूरा कर लिया हो। यह प्रावधान उन विद्यार्थियों के लिए बचाव जैसा हो सकता है जिन्हें किन्हीं कारणों से बीच में ही पढ़ाई छोड़नी पड़ती है। किन्तु पुनः किसी प्रवेश या रोजगार में इनका मुकाबला पूरी डिग्री धारकों के साथ होगा तब वे अपने को शायद वहीं पायेंगे जहाँ वे इस शिक्षा नीति के लागू होने से पहले थे।

शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता में सुधार पर इस शिक्षा नीति में पर्याप्त जोर दिया गया है। इसकी झलक हमें इस तथ्य से मिलती है कि छियासठ पन्ने के प्रपत्र में क्वालिटी शब्द का प्रयोग 156 बार हुआ है। जाहिर सी बात है कि गुणवत्ता का यह सुधार भारतीयता के अनुरूप ही होना है और इस प्रपत्र में भारतीयता (इंडियन) शब्द का भी 91बार इस्तेमाल हुआ है। इसी में प्राचीन (एनशियन्ट) को भी जोड़ लिया जाय तो यह बारम्बारता 101 तक पहुँचती है। किन्तु शिक्षा में इस तरह का सुधार टेक्स्ट बुक का कंटेंट सुधारे बिना कठिन है। टेक्स्टबुक का भारतीयकरण 22 भाषाओं में हो इसके लिए पहले रिफ्रेश बुक का निर्माण करना होता है और उन संदर्भ ग्रन्थों से फिर टेक्स्टबुक बनते हैं। यह सब कैसे होगा और इसके लिए किस तरह के शिक्षकों एवं शोधार्थियों का चुनाव किया जायेगा, यही सब इस नीति की दशा और दिशा तय करेंगे। किन्तु जो बात शीशे की तरह साफ है, वह यह है कि शिक्षा नीति का यह प्रपत्र भारत के विश्वगुरु (रा.शि.नीति-2020 :39) पद की याद जरूर दिलाता है। देखना यह है कि नये भारत को गोस्वामी तुलसीदास जी के द्वारा वर्णित गुरु पसंद होते हैं या सत्ता तथा उद्योगों के अनुगामी गुरु। क्योंकि आज विद्या और अविद्या का फर्क घटता जा रहा है और अविद्या को विद्या बताने की प्रकृति बढ़ती जा रही है।

प्रोफेसर, राजनीति शास्त्र विभाग,
आर्य महिला पी.जी. कॉलेज
(काशी हिन्दू विश्वविद्यालय)
चेतगंज, वाराणसी

संदर्भ -

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Multidisciplinary Curriculum and National Policy on Education - 2020

Nahar Singh

Introduction

For the attainment of comprehensive and in-depth knowledge or it becomes necessary that the student should have the freedom to choose the subjects according to his interest and need at the school level itself. In this context, it has been clearly mentioned in the National Education Policy 2020 that according to the changing global conditions and need, the highest quality and skillful education should be made available to the young generation. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to provide the students with flexibility in the subjects of their interest at the secondary level itself. This will encourage creative and logical thinking, logical decision making and innovation and develop skills needed for the future like analytical thinking, leadership, complex problem solving, reasoning, creativity etc. It is challenging to regulate the availability and flexibility of a wide range of subjects on a practical level in a diverse India, but the challenges can be overcome with the autonomy of schools and the choice of visiting faculty. The objective envisaged in NEP-2020 can be achieved only by ensuring the participation of all the stakeholders in education.

National Policy on Education - 2020 and Utility of Multidisciplinary Curriculum

Education is such a medium through which a person attains his perfection and provides his fundamental role in human life to the fullest potential. Education is a means which separates human beings from other living beings of the animal world. All round development of human being takes place through education and progress of society takes place. It is a fundamental requirement for achieving the fullness of human potential, for the development of a just and just society and for promoting national development. In the coming decade, India will be the country with the youngest population of the world and the future of India will depend only on providing high quality educational opportunities to these youth.

To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all and promote life-long education opportunities in the world by 2030 as reflected in the Global Education Development Agenda, as reflected in Goal 4 (SDG 4) of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, adopted by India in 2015 will need to be restructured to achieve the all-

important goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs). The resulting social issues in the changing environment increase the need for multidisciplinary learning.

As India is poised to become a developed country as well as one of the three largest economies of the world, the demand for humanities and arts will increase which can be met through multidisciplinary learning. Due to the rapid changes in employment and the global environment, it is imperative that the child (student) not only learns what is being taught, but also learns the 'art of learning continuously'. Therefore, instead of increasing the content in education, there is a need to emphasize that children should learn to problem-solve and think logically and creatively, be able to see the interrelationships between different subjects, get new thinking and learn new information in new and creative ways. Be able to use in changing conditions or areas. The goal of the education system for India by 2040 should be such that it is second to none in quality and an education system where the highest quality of education is available equally to the learners belonging to any social and economic background.

Focus of Multidisciplinary Education:

- Flexibility in multiple disciplines will allow students to choose between learning processes and programs so that they can choose their own path in life according to their talents and interests.
- The freedom to choose multiple subjects will lead to holistic development of the student.
- To establish synergy in the education curriculum at all levels from school education to higher education.
- Rote method and focus on conceptual understanding, not just studying for the exam.
- To encourage creative and logical thinking, logical decision making and innovation.
- There should be no clear separation between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc., thereby removing harmful hierarchies and mutual distances and disharmony between knowledge areas.
- Specific skills and values in different areas will be identified for integration at each level from pre-school to higher education.
- Empowering students through flexibility in subject choice options.
- To provide students with more flexibility and choice of subjects to study, especially in secondary school. Including physical education, arts and crafts and vocational subjects so that the student is free to design his own path of study and plan of life.
- At the secondary level, the student should be empowered to such a level so that he can use the time of his school life properly by choosing the course according to his interest and need.
- Due to the availability of courses or subjects according to the interest of the student, the student will have a deep knowledge of that particular subject, which will help him to become proficient in that particular field.

Providing students with a wide choice of subjects and courses year after year will be the new distinguishing feature of secondary school education. Considering what is interesting and safe for students at each stage of age and what is not; the entire curriculum of the school will cover subjects such as physical education, arts and crafts, and vocational skills in addition to science, humanities and mathematics.

Multidisciplinary Pedagogies and Curricular Load

Yash Pal Committee Report 1993 suggested that “*learning should be burden free*” and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 also support this approach. It was also emphasized that instead of heavy curriculum in learning, there should be a more engaging, holistic, experiential and analysis based curriculum and learning engagements. The National Education Policy 2020 states that the high school level will consist of 4 years of multidisciplinary courses which will be based on the subject oriented learning styles and competencies attainments. It will be accompanied by depth, critical thinking, more focus on life aspirations and more flexibility in the choice of subjects by the students. In particular, if one so desires, the option of choosing other courses after grade 10 in vocational or in a specialized school in grade 11 -12 will continue to be available to the students.

The principle of basic education given by Mahatma Gandhi seems to be realized through multidisciplinary education in NEP 2020 because in NEP 2020 also it has been asked to include employable subjects at the school level itself. Mahatma Gandhi also believed that the aim of education should be the holistic development of the body, mind and soul of the people. Gandhiji called such education as basic skill training across all subjects. This education is related to the art of living and inculcating dignity of labour. Along with vocational education, basic history, geography and arithmetic education should also be given to the all students. Self-supporting work should be taught in skill centered education. The lessons of self-reliance and dignity of labor should be taught to the students along with school subjects. Gandhi believed that education is more than the textbooks. In times of unemployment, there is a great need for employment-oriented education.

Utility of Multidisciplinary Courses:

An important dimension of NEP 2020 is also to reduce the number of dropouts. The GER for classes VI to VIII is 90.8% while for classes 9-10 and 11-12 it is only 79.3% and 56.5% respectively. These figures show how a significant proportion of students enrolled after class 5 and especially after class 8 dropout of the education system.

If we have to reduce the number of dropout children, then multidisciplinary curriculum can play an important role. The main reason for dropout is probably due to unproductive systems of education and the parent and student find the basic knowledge i.e. writing-reading and numeracy are taught in very monotonous approach and are not aligned with the common life that have passed-used daily. The education system of class VIII to XII does not appear to fulfill the wishes and needs of the student. If we include employment-oriented or student's interest based subjects after class VIII, then its result will appear positive somewhere in the school life of students. The students who dropouts are mostly belong to the poor section, if these students are provided with the opportunity to learn employment and earn some income from it, then the dropout rate can be reduced. Employment-oriented education will also lead to economic development of women and gender inequality will also come down. Women represent half the population of the country, the goals of inclusive development can be achieved only by developing this half of the population. Economically empowered women will also be able to empower themselves in educational, social and political fields.

With multi-disciplinary education, if the student gets the opportunity to study the subjects of employment along with education, then there will be no mental stress for

getting employment because it will ensure the certainty of employment. Due to which an inclusive and integrated society will be created and the standard of living will improve and the rate of poverty will be reduced.

Multidisciplinary education will end the rote process and develop logical and analytical ability. By doing this the process of learning and continuous learning will be encouraged. Along with this, the trend of labor will also develop.

Classrooms will become more interesting and enjoyable when the option of selecting subjects in a multidisciplinary course is available. This will give the right direction to the abilities of the students so that they will be able to make full use of their potential.

The Future of Jobs Report 2018 published by the World Economic Forum (WEF) covers statistics analysts, AI experts, sales and marketing professionals, IT security experts, digital marketing experts, e-commerce and social media experts among others. Roles such as resource professionals, finance and investment advisors, university as well as emerging ones have been identified and higher education teachers as well as other IT related jobs have been identified as stable options.

Along with this, analytical thinking, leadership, complex problem solving, reasoning, creativity etc. have been shown as essential skills for the future in this study. In the context of the above report, the need of the hour is to create skilled human resource for the changing job roles at the global level. India has the largest youth population in the world, the biggest challenge is to provide them employment. For this we need to include these skills in the curriculum right from the school education level.

And this is possible only due to the flexibility in the selection of different subjects and their availability. Only then can we engage in skilling competition at global standards.

Suggestion:

- Subjects should be selected according to the current context and requirements.
- If there is a selection process of subjects according to the specific ability and requirement of the area, such as the painting of Madhubani region is famous, then this art can be taught to the students at the school level in that particular area. For this schools can be given autonomy.
- Students belonging to a specific background should have the freedom to choose subjects according to their interest and need, such as a student belonging to a carpenter community, if he wants to learn carpentry, then he should have the freedom to choose this subject.
- Appointment of skilled teachers should be ensured to employ multi-disciplinary courses in schools. Along with this, adequate infrastructure such as laboratory, adequate space etc. should also be ensured for efficient implementation of traditional and employable subjects.
- Flexibility in the selection of the subject (the student can choose the subject according to his ability and interest).
- Agreement should be made with the local market for the sale of finished products in the schools so that the students can also get some financial assistance.

In present school education also choice of subjects are available but at practical level very limited options are available which may be due to different reasons like

hiring teaching faculty for all or most of the options by a school is not practically feasible or even finding quality faculty for science subjects in semi-urban areas is also a big challenge. If the flexibility of choice needs to be implemented in the true sense, then this is a major hurdle before the government. This may be allowed for visiting teachers who can teach in multiple schools and conduct workshops for some elective subjects at specific times of the year. This will ensure that schools are relieved of the burden of having dedicated faculty for various subjects.

In Indian society, science and to a lesser extent commerce/management related subjects are still considered for providing better employment prospects. This approach proves that the parents as well as the schools are ignorant about the various employment options available in the fast changing world. For this, it becomes important to identify emerging careers and develop the necessary skills through a variety of subject options during the secondary school level. Along with this, students and parents should also be made aware or educated in this direction that engineering and there are various career options available beyond the traditional choice of medicine. It is also necessary to ensure the participation of the students only then they will be able to fulfill the objective envisaged in NEP-2020.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it can be said that education is such a means by which the biggest change can be brought in the society. Education makes the society strong from the root and a strong building can be built only on a strong foundation. By implementing multidisciplinary curriculum at the school level, new options will be available to the students to choose the subjects and the student's ability and ability will get the right direction. With this, the feeling of self-reliance and self-reliance will start developing in the students from student life itself. Multidisciplinary curriculum can play a supporting role in achieving the goal of inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030. Along with this, high level of reasoning abilities will also be developed in the students, which is very necessary for a harmonious society or nation. The flexibility and freedom of choice in the multidisciplinary curriculum will make the learning process enjoyable and interesting in the classrooms. In order to acclimatize with the various employment options available in the rapidly changing world, it is imperative to start the process of skill building at the school level itself, for this, the availability of multi-disciplines and flexibility in their choice is implemented at the secondary level itself. It is necessary only then that we can ensure our place in the context of changing employment patterns and new skills at the global level. Ultimately, education is a means by which we can peacefully prepare the society for new changes.

*Joint Director (Academic)
SCERT, New Delhi*

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Financial and Administrative Autonomy in Higher Educational Institutions as per National Educational Policy

Rajiv Nayan and S.P Aggarwal

INTRODUCTION

The higher education system in India is the third highest in the world in student's enrollment and it is also large and complex in nature with various kinds of colleges and universities. India is one of the major higher educational centres in the world in near future and it has experienced an incredible increase in the quantum of colleges, universities and autonomous institution since its independence. There are 49964 educational institutions including 39050 colleges, 10011 individual institutions and 903 universities. As on date, the gross enrollment is 36.62 million students for higher education and Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) is 25.81 per cent.

Among it, 29.06 million students have enrolled in under graduate programmes and it is distributed across various disciplines namely science (17.1%), arts and humanities (36.4%) and engineering and commerce (14.1%). The Gross Enrollment Ratio is anticipated to grow around 33% in the year 2025; at the same time considerable quantum of higher secondary school students are facing different difficulties to access higher education in India. The existing enrollment in under graduate programme will expand five times and it is anticipated to expand capacity of higher educational institution by three times in the forthcoming years.

The participation of private sector in higher education makes remarkable changes and it has larger than 60% higher educational institutions. The private sector accelerates the growth of enrollment of students in higher educations and makes India as the highest higher educational institutions in the educational map of world and India is in the second place in terms of enrollment of students in higher educational institutions. In spite of these developments, India is not able to make universities at par with world educational standards and quality. Though, the rural India has 60.48% of colleges and 47.01% of universities, there is a wide gap in enrollment of students among urban and rural population. The rate of dropout of students from higher education is higher in rural as compared to urban population because of lack of support and family situations.

Majority of educational institutions in rural area are totally failed to provide quality of higher education to students because of poor and inadequate infrastructure facilities, shortage of talented faculty members and insufficient financial support. Thus, there is an urgency to increase public expenditure on improvement of higher educational system in India and improve participation of communities and it also needs efficient and focused education policy for achieving inclusive growth. For attaining this goal, autonomy and accountability is necessary for higher educational institutions.

NEED FOR AUTONOMY

Autonomy is connected with freedom and dynamism that the higher educational institutions will require to change structure of courses and syllabus as per demands of industry and market. At the same time, the autonomy in higher educational institutions in India is not to be limited to the academic liberty only. The notion of autonomy of higher educational institutions are the liberty of then to carry out their academic affairs without influence and or directives from the government at any level. The autonomy in higher educational institutions will provide them enough time to concentrate on attaining maximum educational excellence and also on par with global standards.

The recent past changes in the higher educational system in India makes to revisit the idea of autonomy including diversity dimension higher educational institutions. The existing regulation based autonomy in higher educational system has omitted compositional and demographic transformation in education, slow adoption of changes at state level and inter connectivity among administrative, academic, financial and managerial dimensions of autonomy. The present regulations are focusing on affiliation aspects of higher educational institutions, but not aspirational values in terms of diversity and quality. Therefore, it is essential to provide real autonomy to higher educational institutions in India.

AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The limited funds are allocated to central universities in a skewed manner, whilst state universities are facing the problem of scarcity of funds. The present system of control and command is not helpful for promotion of accountability of higher educational institutions. The higher educational institutions are usually functioning under the governmental pressures and decisions are made on the basis of non academics. Academic Councils, University Courts and Vice Chancellor are largely put off the decision making dynamics and there is no transparency in the functioning of Academic or Executive Bodies and Governing Councils of the universities and colleges. Therefore, all the universities in India must be reviewed and modern and efficient technologies must be adopted for efficient administration and transparency.

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) are set up in the year 1994 that looks accreditation of higher education institutions in India. The process is mandatory recent times and the University Grants Commission (UGC) is funding for few schemes that is connected with accreditation process of management, governance and leadership. The institutional leadership, vision, strategic development, empowerment of faculty members, mobilization of resource, management of financial resources and

quality assurance and performance assessment systems are the main criterion for accreditation of higher education institutions.

So far, 364 universities 8,159 colleges are accredited and still two third of higher education institutions are not accredited in India. The restricted accreditation capacity and assessment of the NAAC and NBA is the main hurdle in connecting the performance of higher education institutions with funding and autonomy.

Accountability of higher education institutions needs a pan-India move to incorporate all types of institutions whether, they are accredited or not and it must be the vision and mission of accreditation agencies and regulatory bodies which should be reflected beyond mere procedural compliance and good autonomy can demonstrate higher degree of accountability in the long run by means of improving and delivering the best quality of education to students.

Furthermore, governments have to ensure the public that higher education institutions are accountable for their outcomes and there must be proper balance between autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions. Higher level of accountability can stop innovation and under value the objective of autonomy of higher education institutions and accountability is very important particularly in financing to higher education.

FINANCIALAUTONOMY

The financial autonomy is the liberty of higher educational institutions for planning, organizing and utilizing financial resources for priority activities. Government has a responsibility to meet up financial requirements based on their reasonable justification. The political or statutory bodies have no right to use discretionary powers and justification. Financial autonomy includes method for determining fees for various courses, providing funds to higher educational institutions for ensuring larger level of liberty and giving scholarships for meritorious students belonging to economically poor background and sponsored research projects and consultancy services.

The public funds are allocated to higher educational institutions in the mode of grants and it is or is not based on performance or outcome criterion or targets. Higher educational institutions are permitting to collect fees from their students and this is varying from nominal to cost based amount that is depending on the kind of higher educational institutions. Universities and higher educational institutions are facing problem of generating finance as they are limited to function in the financial market and this kind of constraint is also applicable for using buildings and land that have social, historical cultural and traditional values and relevance. The another aspect of financial autonomy is the way of raising and investing money that are largely open to legal entities or sponsoring bodies of the higher educational institutions.

Further, the financial autonomy is the approach of giving financial assistance to higher educational institutions and allowing them to generate addition funds to utilize for their educational purposes. The higher educational institutions are getting multilateral funds from government budgets, research projects funded by various national and international agencies and local bodies. The higher educational institutions are raising funds from the sources of endowment funds, corpus funds, alumani association, grants

from UGC, ICSSR, DST and so on, special courses, hostel fees, education cess and donations from industrial houses.

The efficient operation of higher educational institutions is highly depending on adequate financial resources and financial autonomy. Furthermore, the financial autonomy is the governance of higher educational institutions by their own and they must function with no intervention from outside. In order to attain financial autonomy, governments should give financial assistance and flexibility to higher educational institutions in the areas of student programmes, promotions and research requirements. In addition, they have to adopt decentralization of financial powers and improvement of those powers that exist presently is imperative at the UGC level and decentralization of financial powers should be in horizontal and vertical directions at higher educational institutions. Conversely, financial autonomy of higher education institutions is subjected to their accountability.

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY

Administrative autonomy is the liberty to determine all the problems associated with the academic activities namely value addition to curriculum, development of syllabus, teach methods, evaluation of performance of students, learning and teaching materials, development of content of courses based on demand of industry and research activities. Administrative autonomy is the liberty to higher educational institutions to deal with their affairs in relation to general and academic administration and it is liberty to deal academic affairs which encourages and stimulates growth and development of individual personals working in the higher educational institutions and also themselves.

Higher educational institutions must be relived from the control of bureaucracy and they must hold a concrete foundation of intellectual integrity and educational excellence. Administrative autonomy must adopt a mechanism through which all the stakeholders of higher education should team up and participate but not in controlling administrative practices. Higher educational institutions must frame rules and adopt efficiently and faculty members are playing a significant role in administration of higher educational institutions and they are energetic forces of the higher education system and they involve in strengthening rules and regulations and their institutions.

Administrative autonomy and educational excellence are determined and ensured by faculty members of higher educational institutions. Administrative autonomy of higher educational institutions is including admitting students, fixing fees for various courses, setting up a governing body, appointing teaching and non teaching staff and taking action against employees who are not performing their job and delivering responsibilities.

FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY UNDER NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN INDIA

The national educational policy in India envisages a whole structure and re-energizing the higher education system to conquer the problems and thus deliver high quality of higher education with inclusion and equity. The national educational policy emphasizes reasonable and effective level of institutional and faculty autonomy along with financial and administrative autonomy for higher education and it suggests

revamping of pedagogy, curriculum and support for students to enhance their learning experiences. The national educational policy reaffirms institutional leadership and integrity of faculty members by means of appointment through merits and career advancement of faculty members based on their teaching, services and research activities.

The national educational policy suggests to create a National Research Foundation for funding outstanding research projects and to improve research activities in higher educational institutions and universities and it also recommends that higher educational institutions may be governed through independent and highly qualified boards with administrative and academic autonomy and it also emphasizes a single regulation body for higher educational institutions and it also suggests that in order to increase access, inclusion and equity of students, higher educational institutions should give merit scholarships to underprivileged and disadvantaged students and they must provide open distance learning and online education and learning materials and all infrastructure facilities available and accessible to students with disabilities.

The core push of the national educational policy is to close the fragmentation of higher education through transformation of higher education institutions into multi disciplinary and large universities, knowledge hubs, higher education cluster that will have 3000 or more students. Under this policy, colleges will be supported, mentored, encouraged and incentivized in order to reach minimum benchmarks needed at each and ever level of accreditation and over the period of years, it is visualized that each and every college will be an Autonomous degree-granting College, or a constituent college of a university. With proper accreditations, Autonomous degree-granting Colleges want will be Research-intensive or Teaching-intensive Universities if they want.

Higher educational institutions will have the autonomy and liberty to move gradually from one category to another on the basis of their plans, actions, and effectiveness. All higher educational institutions will be multi disciplinary institutions and have higher student enrolments in the thousands by the end of year 2040. After attainment of eligible accreditations, all higher educational institutions will move towards administrative and academic autonomy.

The autonomy of public institutions will be supported by adequate public financial support and stability and each existing affiliating university will be accountable for mentoring its affiliated colleges, they can develop their capacities and attain minimum benchmarks in curricular and academic matters, financial robustness, governance reforms, teaching and assessment and administrative efficiency. The national education policy of India recommends that the UGC must function as independent body and it should be separated from institutions and government that are highly accountable for higher education. Those bodies should have control on operational and funding problems of higher education system.

CONCLUSION

In order to achieve the ultimate goal of higher education with excellence and creating multiple benefits to the nation, the national education policy of India envisages a considerable increase in public investment in higher education system by Central and

State governments. The national education policy suggests giving all kind of financial support and autonomy to higher educational institutions to provide and ensure equitable, inclusive and high standard and quality of higher education to all section of students and it recommend giving financial support for revamping universities and colleges for excellence through financial autonomy. The national education policy suggests regulatory regime through transparent, clear rules and regulations, empowerment of stakeholders and administrative autonomy of higher educational institutions and appointing qualified and efficient leaders in order to ensure quick and smooth flow and efficient utilization of fund through financial autonomy. The national education policy permits all higher educational institutions to take initiative for raising private charitable funds to improve educational excellence through financial autonomy.

*Department of Commerce
Ramanujan College, University of Delhi, Delhi*

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जैन बहादुर

प्रस्तावना

विकास और सामाजिक प्रगति में शिक्षा की व्यापक और महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका होती है। शिक्षा हमें दुनिया को समझने, सूचना सम्पन्न जीवन जीने दूसरे से संवाद स्थापित करने और जो कुछ घट रहा है उससे जुड़े रहने की हमारी स्वाधीनताओं को प्रभावित करती है। दूसरी बात, हमारे आर्थिक अवसर और रोजगार की संभावनाएँ बहुत कुछ हमारी शैक्षिक योग्यता और हूनर पर निर्भर करती है (ट्रेज. सेन.2020)। भारतीय समाज में शिक्षा व्यवस्था असाधारण रूप से विविधतापूर्ण है। शिक्षा तक पहुँच, गुणवत्ता जैसे पहलुओं के संदर्भ में शिक्षा के विभिन्न स्तर मौजूद हैं। स्कूल शिक्षा से लेकर उच्च शिक्षा तक ये असमानताएँ समाज में सर्वव्याप्त हैं। जिसकी पुष्टि का एक आधार उत्तरोत्तर शिक्षा की ओर बढ़ने पर नामांकन दर में कमी से समझा जा सकता है। उच्च शिक्षा के संदर्भ में ये स्थिति और भी सोचनीय हो जाती है। उच्च शिक्षा से लोगों को इस बात के अवसर मिलते हैं कि वे मानव जाति की सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, आर्थिक, आध्यात्मिक क्षेत्र में उत्पन्न समस्याओं के प्रति विचार कर सकें।

स्वतंत्रत भारत की शुरुआत गणतान्त्रिक संविधान की स्वीकारोक्ति से होती है जिसमें असमानता के सिद्धांत के स्थान पर समानता, समानता, बंधुत्व, अवसर की समानता जैसे मूल्यों को शामिल किया जाता है। इन्हीं सवैधानिक मूल्यों के आधार पर देश में सार्वजनिक हितों से संबंधित नीतियों, कार्यक्रमों का क्रियान्वयन किया जाता है। उच्च शिक्षा जैसे बुनियादी आवश्यकता का विस्तार संवैधानिक मूल्यों के तर्ज पर किया जाता है। उच्च शिक्षा के महत्व को देखते हुए विभिन्न आयोगों, नीतियों और एजेंसीज का गठन किया गया, जिसका मकसद न केवल तत्कालीन समस्याओं का समाधान करना था बल्कि समाज में लोकतान्त्रिक मूल्यों की स्थापना करना था। भारतीय समाज में व्याप्त असमानता के कारण एक बड़ी चुनौती सभी सामाजिक वर्गों की उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँच को सुनिश्चित करना भी था। जिसके लिए समय-समय पर विभिन्न शिक्षा संबंधी दस्तावेजों में उच्च शिक्षा के संख्यात्मक, गुणात्मक सुधार और विशेष प्रावधान करने का सुझाव दिया जाता रहा है जिससे उच्च शिक्षा को समावेशी बनाया जा सकें। पंचवर्षीय योजनाओं में उच्च शिक्षा के संरचनात्मक विकास के लिए कई सुझाव दिए गये, जिसमें प्रमुख तीन वर्षीय डिग्री कोर्स, उच्च शिक्षा तक लोगों के पहुँच को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए इसकी क्षमता का विस्तार करना, अनुसूचित जाति, जनजाति, लड़कियों सहित वंचित तबके के विद्यार्थियों को गुणवत्तापूर्ण जिम्मेदारी सुनिश्चित करना। प्रथम तीन पंचवर्षीय योजनाओं में उच्च शिक्षा के संरचनात्मक विकास और नामांकन दर में वृद्धि पर बल दिया गया। 1964 में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा आयोग की सिफारिश पर पहली शिक्षा नीति को लाया गया। शिक्षा नीति, शिक्षा संबंधी एक दस्तावेज होता है जिसमें शिक्षा की संरचना, पाठ्यक्रमों, कार्यक्रमों और अन्य सह-गतिविधियों के क्रियान्वयन संबंधी दिशा-निर्देश होता है। पहली शिक्षा नीति 1968 में आती है जिसका उद्देश्य

राष्ट्रीय एकीकरण, समतावादी समाज की स्थापना, आर्थिक विकास, समन्वयवादी विजन, जीडीपी का 2% हिस्सा केवल उच्च शिक्षा पर खर्च करना इस नीति का प्रमुख सुझाव रहा है (थोरात.)।

दूसरी शिक्षा नीति पहली शिक्षा नीति के लगभग बीस साल बाद 1986 में आती है। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 1986 की शुरुआत राष्ट्रीय विकास में उच्च शिक्षा के महत्व से होती है। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति इस बात को स्वीकार करते हुए आगे बढ़ती है कि 'सबके लिए शिक्षा' हमारे भौतिक अध्यात्मिक विकास के लिए एक बुनियादी आवश्यकता है, जो लोगों में वैज्ञानिक सोच समझ के विकास, संवेदनशीलता का प्रसार, लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों, साझा सांस्कृतिक विरासत को लोगों में स्थापित कर सकें। समाज में व्याप्त असमानता के स्थान पर समतामूलक समाज की स्थापना हो सकें इसके लिए नीति अपने उद्देश्यों, प्रक्रियाओं में इन मूल्यों को धारण करती है। अनुसूचित जाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति के शैक्षिक विकास पर बल दिया जाएगा जिससे वे गैर- अनुसूचित जाति के लोगों की बराबरी कर सकें। यह बराबरी सभी क्षेत्रों, सभी स्तरों पर इन चार आयामों में होनी जरूरी है - ग्रामीण पुरुष में, ग्रामीण महिलाओं में और शहरी महिलाओं में, शहरी पुरुष में (राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति.1986)।

इसी क्रम में नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 आती है। इस शिक्षा नीति का परिचय, शिक्षा को एक न्याय संगत, न्यायपूर्ण समाज के विकास और राष्ट्रीय पहचान को बढ़ावा देने के मूलभूत आवश्यक तत्व के रूप में होती है। गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा तक सभी तबकों की सार्वभौमिक पहुँच वैश्विक मंच पर सामाजिक न्याय, समानता, वैज्ञानिक उन्नति, राष्ट्रीय एकीकरण में देश की प्रगति एवं विकास के प्रति नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 तत्पर प्रतीत होती है। नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 सतत विकास एजेंडा 2030 के लक्ष्य को ध्यान में रखते हुए सभी के लिए समावेशी और समान गुणवत्तायुक्त शिक्षा पर बल देती है। नीति सामाजिक-आर्थिक रूप से वंचित समूहों के लिए शिक्षा की चुनौतियों, समस्याओं पर विशेष ध्यान आकृष्ट करती है। नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 ऐतिहासिक रूप से हाशिए पर रहने वाले समुदायों, वंचितों और अल्प प्रतिनिधित्व वाले समूहों पर विशेष बल दिए जाने की बात करती है। स्तरीकृत समाज में व्याप्त असमानता को कम करने या समाप्त करने के लिए नीति शिक्षा को एक माध्यम के रूप स्वीकार करती है जो समानता, समावेशन जैसे मूल्यों को समाज में स्थापित करने में सहायक होगी (नई शिक्षा नीति. 2020)।

नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 उच्च शिक्षा को मनुष्य और सामाजिक कल्याण के लिए महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका के रूप में स्वीकार करती है। संविधान में भारत को लोकतान्त्रिक, न्यायपूर्ण, सामाजिक रूप से सचेत सांस्कारिक और मानवीय राष्ट्र जहाँ सभी के लिए न्याय, स्वतंत्रता, समानता और भाईचारे का भाव हो, एक ऐसे राष्ट्र के रूप में विकसित करने की कल्पना की गई है। एक राष्ट्र को आर्थिक विकास और आजीविकाओं को स्थापित करने में उच्च शिक्षा की महत्वपूर्ण योगदान होता है। शिक्षा नीति उच्च शिक्षा के माध्यम से अच्छे, चिंतनशील, बहुमुखी प्रतिभा वाले रचनात्मक नागरिकों का निर्माण करना चाहती है जिससे विभिन्न विशिष्ट क्षेत्रों में गहन स्तर पर विशेषज्ञता हासिल करने सामाजिक उत्पादन कल्याण में योगदान कर सकें। सामाजिक स्तर पर उच्च शिक्षा का उद्देश्य देश को प्रबुद्ध, सामाजिक रूप से जागरूक बनाना, सक्षम बनाना जो परिस्थितियों के अनुसार न केवल समायोजित कर सकें बल्कि उसमें बदलाव भी कर सकें जिससे राष्ट्र के प्रतिनिधित्व में योगदान दे सकें (नई शिक्षा नीति. 2020)। इसके अलावा नीति उच्च शिक्षा के संदर्भ में कई समस्याओं को स्वीकार करती है लेकिन उनमें से एक प्रमुख सामाजिक-आर्थिक रूप से वंचित तबके की उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँच से संबंधित है।

इससे पहले की शिक्षा नीतियों द्वारा उच्च शिक्षा को समावेशी बनाने के लिए कई सुझाव एवं प्रावधान किए गए लेकिन फिर भी उच्च शिक्षा में कमियाँ रह गयी है। उच्च शिक्षा में विभिन्न सामाजिक समूहों की पहुँच अभी भी सरकारी नीतियों एवं शिक्षा प्रणाली के अनुसार चुनौतीपूर्ण बनी हुई है हालाँकि सुधार हो रहा है जो कि धीमी गति से हो रहा जिसकी पुष्टि उच्च शिक्षा संबंधी आँकड़ों से भी होती है। नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 उच्च शिक्षा की सामाजिक संरचना को ध्यान में रखते हुए कई तरह के सुझाव, कार्यक्रम रखती है।

उच्च शिक्षा की सामाजिक संरचना

सामान्तया उच्च शिक्षा को लेकर आम धारणा यही प्रचलित है कि उच्च शिक्षा की शुरुआत स्कूली शिक्षा (इंटरमीडिएट) के पश्चात् होती है जिसे कोई भी व्यक्ति अपनी क्षमता, रुचि के अनुसार किसी भी कोर्स में दाखिला ले सकता है। प्राथमिक शिक्षा की तरह उच्च शिक्षा 'मौलिक अधिकार' की श्रेणी में नहीं आती है। व्यक्तिगत तौर पर किसी जाति या समुदाय विशेष को ही केवल डॉक्टर या इंजीनियर बनने का अधिकार नहीं है, कोई भी व्यक्ति जो इस प्रकार की हैसियत, प्रतिष्ठा वाला ओहदा प्राप्त करने की आकांक्षा रखता है वह एक समान, निष्पक्ष दाखिले की प्रक्रिया के तहत प्राप्त कर सकता है (देशपांडे.2006)। उच्च शिक्षा की संरचना का स्वरूप एवं प्रक्रिया ऊपरी तौर पर अपने आपमें एक आदर्शवादी प्रतीत होती है लेकिन स्तरीकृत भारतीय समाज में सभी वर्गों के बीच संसाधनों का असमान वितरण होने के कारण उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँच समस्यात्मक रही है। उच्च शिक्षा तक सभी सामाजिक वर्गों की पहुँच सुनिश्चित हो सके इसके लिए नीतिगत स्तर पर समय समय पर विशेष प्रावधान करने का सुझाव दिया जाता रहा है। आजादी के पश्चात् कई दशकों के दौरान शिक्षा संबंधी किए गये विभिन्न स्तर पर सकारात्मक प्रयासों के बाद उच्च शिक्षा की सामाजिक संरचना संबंधी उपलब्धियों/समस्याओं को नजर अंदाज करके उच्च शिक्षा के विकास को नहीं समझा जा सकता है। शिक्षा नीति 1968, राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 1986 और अब नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 तक उच्च शिक्षा की सामाजिक दशा-दिशा किस तरफ करवट ले रही है इसका विश्लेषण नीतिगत संदर्भ में करना आवश्यक हो जाता है। भारत को जनसंख्याकीय आधार पर समझे तो देश की जनसंख्या 1.21 अरब है जिसमें 62.37 करोड़ पुरुष और 58.64 करोड़ महिलाएँ हैं (जनगणना. 2011)। कुल जनसंख्या का 16% अनुसूचित जाति और 8% अनुसूचित जनजाति जनसंख्या है। आल इंडिया सर्वे ऑन हायर एजुकेशन की रिपोर्ट (2020) के अनुसार उच्च शिक्षा में कुल नामांकन दर 3.85 करोड़ है जिसमें 1.96 करोड़ पुरुष और 1.88 करोड़ महिलाएँ अनुमानित है। कुल नामांकन में 49% महिलाएँ हैं। भारत में उच्च शिक्षा में सकल नामांकन अनुपात 27.1% है जिसमें 26.9 पुरुष और 27.3% महिला है। उच्च शिक्षा में साल 2014 से लेकर 2020 की सकल नामांकन दर के आँकड़े बताते हैं कि उच्च शिक्षा स्थिति सोचनीय बनी हुई है -

उच्च शिक्षा विभिन्न सामाजिक समूहों का सकल नामांकन दर (GER)

सत्र	जीईआर	महिला	पुरुष	एससी	एसटी
2019-20	27.1	27.3	26.9	23.4	18.0
2018-19	26.3	26.4	26.3	23	17.2
2017-18	25.8	25.4	26.3	21.8	15.9
2016-17	25.2	24.5	26	21.1	15.4
2014-15	24.3	23.2	25.3	19.1	13.7

Source— All India survey on higher education report 2014- 2020 ministry of education

उच्च शिक्षा को लेकर विभिन्न आयोगों शिक्षा नीतियों के सकारात्मक पहल के बावजूद भी उच्च शिक्षा में सकल नामांकन दर 18 से लेकर 23 वर्ष तक आयु वर्ग के बीच केवल 27.1 प्रतिशत तक पहुँची है जो कि बहुत कम है। आँकड़ों के अनुसार 2014 से लेकर 2020 के उच्च शिक्षा में नामांकन दर में वृद्धि की रफ्तार बहुत धीमी रही है, हालाँकि नई शिक्षा नीति इस बात को स्वीकार करती है कि उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँचने की चुनौतियाँ, समस्याओं की शुरुआत स्कूली शिक्षा से होती है। देश की कुल जनसंख्या का केवल 27.1 प्रतिशत जनसंख्या ही उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँच पाती है जो दुनिया के अपेक्षाकृत कई देशों से बहुत कम है। संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका (यूएस) का उच्च शिक्षा में सकल नामांकन दर 88.2 प्रतिशत, जर्मनी 70.3%, फ्रांस 65.6%, यूके 60.6%, ब्राजील का 51.3%, चीन का 49.1%, इंडोनेशिया का 36.6% है (शर्मा.2020)। इन आँकड़ों से पुष्टि होती है भारत में उच्च शिक्षा में नामांकन

दर दुनिया के टॉप विकसित देशों की तुलना में बहुत कम है। देश की बड़ी जनसंख्या जिसकी आयु 18 से 23 वर्ष के बीच है, उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँचने की योग्यता से वंचित है। ऐसी स्थिति में उच्च शिक्षा से वंचित होने के कारण देश के विकास में सभी लोगों की भागीदारी/योगदान पूर्णतया नहीं हो पा रहा है। नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 के समक्ष बड़ी चुनौती उच्च शिक्षा तक लोगों की पहुँच को सुनिश्चित करना है। आँकड़े बता रहे हैं कि उच्च शिक्षा के सकल नामांकन दर में विभिन्न सामाजिक समूहों की भागीदारी प्रत्येक साल बढ़ रही है लेकिन इस वृद्धि की रफ्तार बहुत धीमी है जो उच्च शिक्षा के संदर्भ में नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 की चुनौतियों को उजागर करती है।

उच्च शिक्षा में सकल नामांकन दर के साथ विभिन्न कोर्सों में दाखिले का विश्लेषण करे तो उच्च शिक्षा के सामाजिक संरचना की स्थिति और स्पष्ट हो जाती है। निम्नलिखित आँकड़ों के आधार पर विभिन्न सामाजिक समूहों की उच्च शिक्षा के विभिन्न कोर्स में भागीदारी को समझा जा सकता है

Students admitted (1st year admission) in all courses during the academic session 2020-21

Course	No of University	Total seat approved	Students admitted 1st year	UR	SC	ST	OBC	EWS	Total
UG	20	83224	86223	50159	10110	4093	18664	3197	86223
PG	20	30371	22521	8681	3187	4600	4829	1224	22521
M.PHIL.	20	1683	1153	451	166	168	300	68	1153
PH.D.	20	4366	2820	1238	342	385	688	167	2820
Diploma	20	17164	6744	4596	593	219	1190	146	6744
Total	20	136808	119461	65125	14398	9465	25671	4802	119461

Students admitted percentage (1st year of admission) in all course during the academic session 2020-21

Course	No of university	Total seat approved	Students admitted 1st year	UR	SC	ST	OBC	EWS
UG	20	83224	86223	58.17%	11.72%	4.74%	21.64%	3.70%
PG	20	30371	22521	38.54%	14.15%	20.42%	21.44%	5.43%
M.PHIL.	20	1683	1153	39.11%	14.39%	14.57%	26.01%	5.89%
PH.D.	20	4366	2820	43.90%	12.12%	13.65%	24.39%	5.92%
Diploma	20	17166	6744	68.14%	8.79%	3.24%	17.64%	2.16%
Total	20	136808	119461	54.51%	12.05%	7.92%	21.48%	4.01%

Source – UGC Annual report 2020-21

उपरोक्त आँकड़े बीस केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय के अंडरग्रेजुएट, पोस्टग्रेजुएट, एमफिल, पीएचडी और डिप्लोमा के कोर्सों में विभिन्न सामाजिक समूहों के दाखिले को दर्शाते हैं जिसमें सामाजिक-आर्थिक रूप से वंचित समूहों की पहुँच अपेक्षाकृत कम है। एससी वर्ग की सभी कोर्स में कुल भागीदारी 12.05%, एसटी वर्ग की सभी

कोर्स में कुल भागीदारी 7.92% ओबीसी वर्ग की सभी कोर्स में कुल भागीदारी 21.48% है। ये आँकड़ें आरक्षित वर्ग के निर्धारित आरक्षण के प्रतिशत से भी कम हैं जो कहीं न कहीं वंचित तबके के उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँच में आने वाली बाधाएँ एवं चुनौतियों के कारण हैं। उपरोक्त आँकड़ों को इस तरह से भी समझा जाना चाहिए कि शैक्षिक उपलब्धि संबंधी असमानताएँ भी अपने आपमें महत्वपूर्ण हैं जो वर्ग, जाति, लिंग संबंधी असमानताओं को भी प्रतिबिंबित करती हैं। भारतीय समाज में व्याप्त असमानता से जुड़े लोकाचार और मूल्य उच्च शिक्षा की सामाजिक संरचना के निर्मिती को प्रभावित करते हैं, भले ही आधुनिक मानदंडों, कानूनों और शिक्षा नीतियों के सकारात्मक पहल से कम होती या दबी हुई नजर आती है। जिसके समाधान के लिए नई शिक्षा नीति द्वारा एसईडीजी के लिए विशेष सुझाव प्रदान करती है।

शिक्षा व्यवस्था और सरकारी नीतियों ने उच्च शिक्षा के सभी स्तरों पर विभिन्न सामाजिक समूहों के अंतरालों को कम करने का प्रयास किया है। जिसे स्वतंत्रता के पश्चात् शिक्षायी एवं नीतिगत संदर्भों में समझा जा सकता है किन्तु विडंबना यह है कि इस तरह की उच्च शिक्षा में असमानता अभी बनी हुई है। स्कूली शिक्षा से लेकर उच्च शिक्षा तक क्रमशः नामांकन दर घट रहा है, नामांकन में यह गिरावट सामाजिक आर्थिक रूप से वंचित समूहों में अधिक है।

उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँच/प्रतिभागिता को प्रभावित करने के कई कारक हैं जिसमें से एक प्रमुख कारक स्तरीकृत समाज है जो उच्च शिक्षा को चुनौतीपूर्ण बनाता है। कई समाजशास्त्री भी इस बात को स्वीकार करते हैं कि स्तरीकृत समाज शिक्षा को प्रभावित करता है। मदान (2015) के अनुसार 'व्यक्ति की सामाजिक हैसियत उसके जीवन में बहुत से अवसरों को मुमकिन बनाते हैं बहुतों को नामुमकिन। शिक्षा के अवसर भी इससे अछूते नहीं हैं। धर्म, जाति, लिंग एवं वर्ग के आधार पर बंटे समाज में बहुतों को शिक्षा का अवसर नहीं मिल पाते हैं। मदान अवसरों/असमानता की पड़ताल अनुवांशिकता, समाज और व्यक्तिगत गुणों के संदर्भ में करते हैं और पाते हैं कि सामाजिक स्तरीकरण की व्यवस्था अवसरों की असमानता का प्रमुख कारण है। समाज में कुछ समुदाय को अपेक्षाकृत अच्छे मौके, संसाधन प्राप्त होते हैं जिसका प्रभाव उनके शिक्षा की उपलब्धियों पर पड़ता है। उच्च शिक्षा के संदर्भ में ये विभाजन और भी गहरा हो जाता है। इस तरह के तथ्य को नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 भी मानती है कि सामाजिक- आर्थिक रूप से वंचित तबके के पास संसाधनों का अभाव होने के कारण उच्च शिक्षा उनके लिए चुनौतीपूर्ण है। इसके अलावा उच्च शिक्षा के अन्य कारक भी जैसे उच्च शिक्षा का पाठ्यक्रम, शिक्षणशास्त्रीय संदर्भ, शिक्षक छात्र संबंध, संस्थायी माहौल, संस्थानों का अभाव, भाषा, गरीबी, परिवार में शैक्षिक वातावरण का अभाव इत्यादि हैं, जो हाशिए के तबके के लिए उच्च शिक्षा को मुश्किल बनाते हैं। शिक्षा व्यवस्था अपने आपमें असमानता से ग्रसित है। एक तरफ विशेषाधिकार प्राप्त कुछ बच्चों हैं, जिन्हें उच्च एवं असाधारण स्तर के शैक्षणिक अवसर उपलब्ध हैं तो दूसरी तरफ एक विशाल आबादी है जिसे कई तरह के खराब शैक्षणिक व्यवस्था ही उपलब्ध है। छात्रों को जो सुविधाएँ उपलब्ध हैं वे उनके स्कूल के दिनों से लेकर विशिष्ट शिक्षा तक काफी अलग-अलग स्तर की हो सकती हैं और वे कुछ छात्रों को हालांकि अपने आपमें उनकी संख्या बड़ी होती है- सबसे ऊँचे पायदान पर पहुँचा देती हैं जबकि दूसरे तमाम छात्र निचले पायदानों पर रह जाते हैं। ऐसा लगता है भारतीय समाज जिस तरह 'विशेषाधिकार प्राप्त तबका तथा बाकी सभी' के खाँचे में बंटा है, उसी तरह भारतीय शिक्षा पद्धति सामाजिक, आर्थिक, सांगठनिक तत्वों समेत यही व्यवस्था करती है (ट्रेज.सेन.2020)। उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँच की संभावनाएँ इन्ही समाजशास्त्रीय विशेषाधिकारों के तहत सुनिश्चित होती हैं और ये विशेषाधिकार वर्ग, लिंग, जाति, स्थान और सामाजिक, आर्थिक असमानताओं के तहत निर्मित होता है।

नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 और उच्च शिक्षा में समता एवं समावेशी संबंधी प्रावधान

नई शिक्षा नीति के समक्ष जहाँ सम्पूर्ण शिक्षा व्यवस्था की संरचना में सुधार करना, पुनर्विचार करना है वहीं शिक्षा को समावेशी बनाना भी है, उच्च शिक्षा के संदर्भ में ये चुनौती और भी बढ़ जाती है। नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 उच्च शिक्षा से वंचित होने वाले अपेक्षाकृत समूहों के लिए अनेक कारणों को स्वीकार करती है, नीति में ऐसे समूहों

को सामाजिक-आर्थिक रूप से वंचित समूह (एसईडीजी) कहा गया है। इस समूह के वंचना के कारणों का संबंध शिक्षा नीति विद्यालयी शिक्षा से ही स्वीकार करती है जो उच्चतर शिक्षा की समता, समानता एवं समावेशी प्रक्रिया को भी प्रभावित करता है। उच्च शिक्षा लोगों के लिए संभावनाओं के द्वार खोलती है लेकिन समाज में व्याप्त असमानता के कारण बहुत सारे लोग इस संभावनाओं से वंचित हो जाते हैं। नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 ऐसे सामाजिक-आर्थिक रूप से वंचित समूहों को गुणवत्तापूर्ण उच्च शिक्षा उपलब्ध कराने के लिए विशेष प्रावधान का भी सुझाव देती है जिससे वंचित तबके के लोग न केवल उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँच सकें बल्कि बनें भी रहें। नई शिक्षा नीति द्वारा उच्च शिक्षा को समतामूलक एवं समावेशी बनाने के लिए निम्नलिखित कारण एवं सुझाव बताए गए हैं जो इस प्रकार हैं -

1. नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 के अनुसार सामाजिक- आर्थिक रूप से वंचित समूह(एसईडीजी) के उच्च शिक्षा से बाहर हो जाने के कई पहलू हैं जो स्वयं में कारण और प्रभाव दोनों हैं। इन्हें उच्चतर शिक्षा से विशेष रूप से दूर किया जाना चाहिए, और इसके अंतर्गत उच्चतर शिक्षा के अवसरों की जानकारी का अभाव, उच्चतर शिक्षा ग्रहण करने के दौरान के समय में शामिल आर्थिक अवसरों की हानि, आर्थिक बाधाएँ, प्रवेश प्रक्रियाएँ, भौगोलिक बाधाएँ, भाषायी अवरोध, बहुत अधिक उच्चतर शिक्षा कार्यक्रमों की सीमित रोजगार क्षमता और विद्यार्थियों के लिए उपयुक्त सहायता तंत्र की कमी से जुड़ी चुनौतियों को शामिल किया जाना चाहिए।

2. सभी सरकारों तथा उच्चतर शिक्षण संस्थानों द्वारा उच्चतर शिक्षा को विशिष्ट अपनाए जाने वाले कुछ अतिरिक्त कदम इस प्रकार हैं

- एसईडीजी की शिक्षा के लिए समुचित सरकारी निधि का निर्धारण।
- उच्चतर जीईआर तथा एसईडीजी के लिए स्पष्ट लक्ष्यों का निर्धारण।
- उच्चतर शिक्षण संस्थानों की प्रवेश प्रक्रिया में जेंडर संतुलन को बढ़ावा देना।
- विकास की ओर उन्मुख जिलों में उच्चतर गुणवत्तायुक्त उच्चतर शिक्षण संस्थान बनाकर और बड़ी संख्या में एसईडीजी लिए हुए विशेष शिक्षा क्षेत्र बनाकर पहुँच को सुधारना।
- उच्चतर गुणवत्तायुक्त ऐसे उच्चतर शिक्षण संस्थानों का निर्माण और विकास करना जो स्थानीय/भारतीय भाषाओं में या द्विभाषी रूप से शिक्षण कराएँ।
- सार्वजनिक और निजी दोनों ही तरह के उच्चतर शिक्षण संस्थानों में एसईडीजी को अधिक वित्तीय सहायता और छात्रवृत्ति प्रदान करना।
- एसईडीजी के बीच उच्चतर शिक्षा के अवसरों और छात्रवृत्ति से जुड़ी जागरूकता के लिए प्रसार करना।
- बेहतर भागीदारी और सीखने के परिणामों के लिए प्रौद्योगिकी का निर्माण और विकास।
- एसईडीजी (सामाजिक आर्थिक रूप से वंचित समूह) के लिए उच्चतर शिक्षण संस्थानों द्वारा कुछ विशेष तरह के कदम उठाये जाने का सुझाव शिक्षा नीति में दिया गया है।
- सामाजिक- आर्थिक रूप से वंचित छात्रों को अधिक वित्तीय सहायता और छात्रवृत्ति प्रदान करना।
- उच्चतर शिक्षा के अवसरों और छात्रवृत्ति से जुड़ी जागरूकता के लिए प्रचार-प्रसार करना।
- प्रवेश प्रक्रियाओं को अधिक समावेशी बनाना।
- पाठ्यक्रम को अधिक समावेशी बनाना।
- उच्चतर शिक्षा कार्यक्रमों को अधिक रोजगारपरक बनाना।
- वंचित शैक्षिक पृष्ठभूमि से आने वाले विद्यार्थियों के लिए ब्रिज कोर्स निर्मित करना।
- ऐसे सभी विद्यार्थियों को उपयुक्त सलाह और परामर्श कार्यक्रमों के जरिए सामाजिक, भावनात्मक और अकादमिक सहायता और सलाह प्रदान करना।
- पाठ्यक्रम सहित उच्चतर शिक्षण संस्थानों के सभी पहलूओं द्वारा संकाय सदस्यों, परामर्शदाताओं और विद्यार्थियों को जेंडर और जेंडर- पहचान के प्रति संवेदनशील और समावेशित करना।
- भेदभाव और उत्पीड़न के खिलाफ बने सभी नियमों को सख्ती से लागू करना।

एसईडीजी से बढ़ती भागीदारी को सुनिश्चित करने से जुड़े विशिष्ट योजनाओं को शामिल करते संस्थागत विकास योजनाओं का निर्माण करना, जिनमें उपरोक्त बिन्दु शामिल हो लेकिन इन्हीं तक सीमित न हो।

उपरोक्त प्रावधानों के अलावा उच्च शिक्षा को समावेशी बनाने के लिए नई शिक्षा नीति द्वारा कई बातें कही गयी हैं। उच्च शिक्षा में नामांकन दर को बढ़ाने के लिए उच्चतर शिक्षा संस्थानों(एचईआई) को बहुविषयक संस्थानों के रूप में स्थापित किया जाएगा जिसके माध्यम से बहु विषयक समुदायों के निर्माण के लिए छात्रों का नामांकन किया जाएगा।

शिक्षा नीति वंचित तबकों को उच्च शिक्षा से जोड़ने के लिए, उच्च शिक्षा की उपलब्धता, न्यायसंगतता और समावेश के लिए 2030 तक प्रत्येक जिले के समीप बहुविषयक उच्चतर शिक्षा संस्थान स्थापित करने का सुझाव देती है जिसे सार्वजनिक एवं निजी दोनों स्तर पर पहल किया जाएगा। इसके दिशा निर्देश का माध्यम स्थानीय/शास्त्रीय या द्विभाषिक होगा। इसका उद्देश्य सकल नामांकन दर को 2018 में 26.3% से बढ़ाकर वर्ष 2035 तक 50% करना होगा। सामाजिक-आर्थिक रूप से वंचित पृष्ठभूमि के विद्यार्थी उच्च शिक्षण संस्थानों तक पहुँच सकें और वहाँ उन्हें किसी प्रकार की समस्या न हो सके इसके लिए विश्वविद्यालय और कॉलेज स्तर पर उच्चतर गुणवत्ता वाले सहायता केंद्र स्थापित किया जाएगा, पर्याप्त धन और शैक्षणिक संसाधन दिए जाएँगे। सभी छात्रों के लिए व्यावसायिक आकादमिक और कैरियर परामर्श उपलब्ध होगा, साथ ही उनके शारीरिक, मानसिक और भावनात्मक कल्याण को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए भी परामर्शदाता होंगे जिससे सामाजिक- आर्थिक रूप से वंचित विद्यार्थी किसी अवसाद का शिकार न हो सकें(नई शिक्षा नीति. 2020)।

वित्तीय रूप से कमजोर विद्यार्थियों का आर्थिक सहयोग किया जाएगा। अनुसूचित जाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति, अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग एवं आर्थिक रूप से कमजोर वर्गों के अन्य विद्यार्थियों की योग्यता को प्रोत्साहन करने के लिए छात्रवृत्ति या अन्य आर्थिक सहयोग किया जाएगा (नई शिक्षा नीति. 2020)।

निष्कर्ष -

उपरोक्त विश्लेषण से स्पष्ट होता है कि उच्च शिक्षा में सामाजिक संरचना में असमानता बरकरार है जिसके समाधान के लिए पहले की शिक्षा नीतियों, सरकारी नीतियों में प्रयास किया जा चुका है जिसके परिणाम स्वरूप इसके अन्तराल में कमी भी आयी है। नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 द्वारा सामाजिक- आर्थिक रूप से वंचित समूहों की उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँच को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए विशेष प्रावधान करने के सुझाव दिए गये हैं। नीति में वंचित तबके के लिए विभिन्न संसाधन, शैक्षणिक सुविधाएँ, मानसिक, संवेदनात्मक भावनात्मक समस्याओं को दूर करने के लिए उच्च शिक्षण संस्थानों में परामर्श केंद्र जैसे अन्य केंद्र स्थापित करने पर बल दिया गया है। इसके साथ ही उच्चतर शिक्षण संस्थान और बहुविषयक संस्थान को प्रत्येक जिले के समीप स्थापित किया जाएगा जिससे सभी सामाजिक वर्ग के लोगों के लिए उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँचना सुगम होगा।

नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 उच्च शिक्षा के समावेशी बनाने के सुझावों में विरोधाभास भी लिए हुए है जो उच्च शिक्षा के समता, समावेशी बनाने के प्रयासों के लिए चुनौतीपूर्ण होगा, नीति अपने कई सुझावों का क्रियान्वयन सार्वजनिक और निजी दोनों पहल से करने की बात करती है ऐसी स्थिति में उच्च शिक्षा तक सामाजिक-आर्थिक रूप से वंचित समूह के लोगों के लिए पहुँचना कठिनाई भरा होगा जो नई शिक्षा नीति के 2035 तक उच्च शिक्षा में 50% नामांकन के लक्ष्य को प्रभावित कर सकता है। किसी भी नीति की समीक्षा उसके परिणामों के आधार पर ही किया जा सकता है। इस तरह नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 उच्च शिक्षा को समता, समावेशी बनाने में कितना सफल हो पाएगी ये उसके क्रियान्वयन के पश्चात् ही पता चलेगा।

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Parity in Regulatory Regimes : Realizing Equitable Access in Private Higher Education

Soumini Ghosh

Introduction

The New Education Policy, 2020 has brought in a new enthusiasm for developing a knowledge society in tune with the needs and aspirations of 21st century. As far as higher education is concerned, the policy (as per clause 9.3) envisions a complete overhaul and re-energising of the higher education system in order to deliver high-quality higher education, with equity and inclusion. The policy also aims at an overhaul of the regulatory system, whereby (as per clause 18.13) all public and private - shall be treated on par within the regulatory regime.

But this quest for a parity in regulatory regimes between public and private higher education make the concerns of equitable and inclusive access questionable, given the current situation, whereby very less attention is given to holding private higher education more accountable in this respect. This paper delves into the NEP, 2020 from the point of view of its vision of regulatory parity between public and private higher education, calling for the State to devote greater focus on implementing parity more effectively, through its regulatory framework, by also looking at the differentiation within the private higher education sector, in order to enable substantive access.

New policy enthusiasm

On equitable and inclusive access

The NEP, 2020 brings in new enthusiasm, after a three-decadal gap since the last policy, and in the wake of significant growth and expansion of the education sector as a whole. It becomes important to begin with what the NEP, 2020 envisions in terms of inclusive access. The NEP, 2020 (pg.3-5), is aimed at fulfilling the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015, to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030, by producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged in the Constitution.

The NEP, 2020 (as per clause 9.3) envisions a complete overhaul and re-energising of the higher education system in order to deliver high-quality higher

education, with equity and inclusion, the approach to which (as per clause 14.2) must be common across school and higher education. With the aim of making quality higher education opportunities available to all individuals as the highest priority and the firm belief (reflected in clause 14.1) that entry into quality higher education can open a vast array of possibilities which can be instrumental in lifting individuals as well as communities out of the cycles of disadvantage.

The policy (as per clause 6.16) also states how efforts to enhance participation in school education, special hostels in dedicated regions, bridge courses, and financial assistance through fee waivers and scholarships will be offered to talented and meritorious students from all Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) on a larger scale, especially at the secondary stage of education, to facilitate their entry into higher education. Apart from also recommending (as per clause 14.4.1) for Governments to: earmark suitable Government funds for the education of SEDGs; set clear targets for higher GER for SEDGs; enhance access by establishing more high-quality HEIs in aspirational districts and Special Education Zones containing larger numbers of SEDGs; provide more financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs in both public and private HEIs, etc., as well as for higher education institutions to (as per clause 14.4.2.): conduct outreach on higher education opportunities and scholarships; and make admissions processes more inclusive; etc.

The policy thus clearly lays out the expectations in terms of inclusion and equity. But this goal needs to be also read along with the recommendations with regard to the overhaul of the regulatory system as well.

On regulatory parity

While the policy (through clause 18.2) recommends for the regulatory system of higher education to ensure that the distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standard setting to be performed by distinct, independent, and empowered bodies, set up as four independent verticals within one umbrella institution, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), with the expectation of multiple mechanisms with checks and balances to combat and stop the commercialization of higher education (as per clause 18.12), the one aspect which becomes worth noting is in the way the policy (though clause 18.13) calls for all HEIs - public and private - to be treated on par within this regulatory regime.

That such a regulatory regime (again as per clause 18.13) shall encourage private philanthropic efforts in education, there will be common national guidelines for all legislative Acts that will form private HEIs, which apart from other things will cover good governance, financial stability and security, educational outcomes, and transparency of disclosures. At first glance, the need for parity is well-intentioned. At second glance, it is not but something new. For, Indian higher education, especially through its aided system has in a sense already attempted to ensure similar treatment to public and private higher education institutions.

But what makes the comprehension slightly difficult is given the increasing enrolment in private higher education, with very little known about how it has really fared at responding to the call for equitable access. Add to that is the growing variance

within the private sector too. Thus, any expectation of parity in regulatory framework would need to address these realities.

Private higher education in India

Meeting increased demand and witnessing increased enrolment

Private higher education is not new to the Indian context, what with most of it being led by private initiative at independence. But it is in the growth of the more profit-oriented private higher education taking place alongside the massification of the entire sector, involving what N. V. Varghese (2015) states (taking from Martin Trow's classification of stages of development of higher education) as one where the Gross Enrolment Ratio is between 15 and 50 per cent that the new streak of private higher education is seen.

In other words, when one looks at the trajectory of private higher education in India, there has been a shift from the philanthropic to for-profit orientation, the rise of privatization (through blurring the lines) as well as a differentiated private sector, the over-regulation of private colleges in some cases in the wake of economic reforms, as well as literally passing on the responsibility to meet the excess demand to the private sector, in the wake of a massified system.

Varghese (2015) in fact also considers massification in the Indian context to be a market mediated process, facilitated (and not just taking place alongside) through private institutions and financed by the households, apart from also categorizing the growth and expansion of higher education in India since the post-independence period into three stages: i) a stage of high growth and limited access (1950-70); ii) a stage of declining growth in enrolment (1970-1990); and iii) a stage of revival and massive expansion of enrolment in higher education 1990 and after.

The massified sector has also led to increased demand for higher education. Which, as pointed by Jamshidi Laleh and others (2012), was offered by the private sector (with the public sector not being able to meet the required supply) and providing access to applicants excluded from public higher education. As regards Indian higher education, while Daniel C. Levy (2008) points to explosive private growth as one led by soaring demand for higher education, alongside less than adequate public supply; Devesh Kapur and Pratap Bhanu Mehta (2017) also emphasize on the rapid expansion of private colleges (and increasingly private universities) as being the supply response to the increasing demand for the rapid growth of higher education, led by factors such as : demographic (more than 5million people entering 15-24 age group annually); demographic bulge prepared for higher education; India's rapid economic growth and greater integration into the global economy, raising the demand for people with knowledge and skills; and, aspirations of the population and state policy.

R.V.V. Ayyar (2015), adding more justification on the part of the state governments to establish new institutions such as self-financing engineering and medical colleges, in order to meet the huge demand (which was left unmet by the unwilling central government, be it to fund or to expand), points to how it was because a policy of selective admissions could not be adopted as no democratic polity could persevere with unpopular policies and peg down the demand for higher education as a

command– control polity could. Whereas Pawan Agarwal (2009), linking the emergence of private higher education and the growth of private finance, that began in the early 1980s, to the changing in economic policies and the growing demand for people with a variety of skills (again left unmet by the public institutions) considers it to have been a viable preposition.

Thus, private higher education appears to have taken the dominant role in meeting the demand for higher education, in response to the massified system, as well as the political and economic changes, requiring increased access, as well as specific skills.

When one looks the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher education in India, it stands at 27.1, as per the All India Survey on higher Education (AISHE) (2019-20). The increasing role of the private sector to meet the demand is evident also from the increased enrolment, reflected in the AISHE (2019-2020) statistics, with 78.6 % colleges being privately managed (65.2 % Private-unaided and 13.4% Private-aided), catering to 66.3% of the total enrolment. With states such as Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have constituting about 80% private-unaided colleges and Uttar Pradesh having 78.5% private-unaided colleges, and Chandigarh including only 8.0%.

Public good nature equally applicable to private higher education

It is at this very juncture that the role of the State becomes all the more important, to ensure the private sector equally upholds the public good nature of higher education, in the interest of the students, the society, as well as providing the conducive space for the well-intentioned private providers. However, the focus somewhat veers around private colleges, be it in terms of the transition from philanthropy to profits, or even enrolment percentages reflecting the share of private aided and unaided colleges mainly and not so much the differentiated private sector, taking proportions of private universities, which have witnessed significant proliferation. Thus, the regulatory framework cannot be a case of over-regulation (seen quite often in the case of private colleges), for, a private university, apart from reflecting differences of ownership and funding, also involves a certain level of autonomy to decide the course of its higher education transaction, and thus may not necessarily agree to excessive regulatory intervention.

But the regulatory rationale emanates from the fact that private higher education at large, and private universities in specific too have a public good component. Thus, the regulatory framework of the State must maintain the non-rivalrous and non-excludable nature, as suggested by Paul A. Samuelson (1954) through enabling a level playing field for access by any potential student, and ensuring that the private universities are not only transparent and accountable of conduct after being a part of the higher education market, but also enable equitable access for those wanting to select it.

Equitable access an equally important role of private higher education

But exactly what constitutes equitable access ? While Gaelle Goastellec (2008) considers access through equity to be the consequence of; the demographic pressure, the economic pressure (comprising of the diffusion process within the higher education systems' concept of efficiency), and the political pressure (which calls for the diversification of the student body, especially when it comes to the selection of an elite); Patrick Clancy and Gaelle Goastellec (2007), point to how despite a move from inherited

merit towards the notion of equality of rights and the dominant norm governing access being characterised by an emphasis on equality of opportunity, it is necessary to go beyond formal equality of rights and take account of differences in the opportunity structure, whereby merit-based admission needs to be augmented by some form of affirmative action.

Discussing the case of equity in the case of Indian higher education, N.V. Varghese, Nidhi S. Sabharwal and C.M. Malish (2018), point to how not only are inequalities in higher education influenced by inequalities in the preceding levels of education, but in a country where basic and secondary education facilities are not equally distributed, it is very difficult to attain equality of opportunity in higher education. The Indian context nullifies Gregory A. Jackson's (1982) understanding of higher education choice, when stating how four factors (family background, academic experience, location, and college costs) have strong effects on student choice, while three (information, college attributes, and job attributes) have moderate effects and one (social context) has only a weak effect. For, the social context matters in a big way in the Indian context. Especially social- category based reservation, which constitutes the core affirmative action initiative, and holds great relevance in enabling equitable access. But the understanding of equitable access through social- category based reservation is at best limited when one looks at private higher education.

So while the likes of Varghese, Sabharwal and Malish (2018) discuss strategies of affirmative action, such as 'quota' systems in Brazil and India, (which set a fixed share of slots that can only be held by the members of the target group), preferential boosts in the United States and South Africa, (giving such candidates additional points to boost their scores to help compete for positions), targeted interventions such as relaxing admissions criteria and extending financial support to students and schools to allow them to continue in the system, in an effort to enrol students from disadvantaged groups, and thus creating an environment conducive for them to continue their studies, and establishing specialized institutions; the likes of Rajan Gurukkal (2018) caution against mistaking the growth of intake capacity for the improvement of equity, (with the inflation of seats proving to be an inescapable trap for the socio-economically and academically backward students, not only failing to complete the programme, but also losing their academic career); and Padma Velaskar (2018) further stating how even as access to higher education has grown multi-fold, the claimed positive egalitarian and excellence effects are illusory, and 'real' educational gain in terms of equitable quantitative and qualitative attainment is completely unassured.

Velaskar (2018) also suggests how in a system dominated by the private sector, state efforts to regulate access policies of the different types of higher education institutions in the favour of those without money, power, and/or with social disadvantage/ disability are weak and ineffective, favouring those with superior economic, social and cultural capital the most, perpetuating old inequalities and generates multiple new ones based on wealth, prestige and power.

Variance within private higher education

When one looks at the aspect of access through social category reservation in private higher education then, while Sukhadeo Thorat and Khalid Khan (2018) point to

how the SC/ST/OBC experienced a double blow, for their entry-level access through reservation has been significantly reduced due to the absence of reservation in private sector education institutions, there have been legislative attempts too, as described by Asha Gupta (2008), in the successful passing of the 104th Amendment Bill (93rd Amendment Act), 2005, rolling back the Supreme Court judgment against caste-based admissions in private un-aided higher educational and professional institutions; clause 15(5) inserted into the Indian Constitution for guaranteeing the “right to equality” and “equal protection before law” to all citizens without discrimination, allowing the government to reserve seats for the SCs, STs and OBCs in private unaided educational institutions except in the minority institutions.

Despite these developments, Thorat and Khan (2018) point to how disparities emerge quite clearly in access to private unaided education institutions for the SC and ST. As against 33 percent share of students in private un-aided institutions at all-India level, the share of ST was 19 percent, followed by 28 percent for SC. The share of these two groups being lower compared with OBC (37 percent) and others (31 percent), the share of OBC being the maximum. Thorat and Khan (2018) further elaborate how in the case of private aided institutions also, the share of ST and SC was relatively lower, compared to OBC and others, and all India average. That since the ST and SCs access to private aided and unaided was low, they fall back on government institutions in greater magnitude than OBC and others. Of the total students in higher educational institutions, the share of government institutions was 59 percent for ST, 49 percent for SC, much more than 37 percent for OBC and 40 percent for others, and 41 percent of all-India average.

While Thorat and Khan's analysis is helpful in terms of making some headway in understanding access in terms of social category reservation, it is restricted to the unaided private sector. It does not fully address the variance within private higher education, which is often missed out. Thus, there also emerges the need to look into concerns of access with regard to the more recent development in private higher education, i.e. the private universities.

But when one looks at private universities, there is hardly much known about access through reservation. Except for the likes of Anirban Sengupta (2020) who points to how, leaving aside exceptions in certain tribal majority states of North East India there is a clear tendency for private universities to have lower proportion of SC and ST students when compared with the public universities, and how, in comparison to SCs and STs, the proportion of OBC students in private universities was much greater. Sengupta though also points to how irrespective of the proportion, absolute number of students from these disadvantaged social groups is increasing—and sometimes sharply like in Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Punjab, and Rajasthan—at private universities across the country.

Even when one looks at the UGC Regulations as well as clauses of state private university acts, the need for ensuring social-category based reservation is clearly stated. So while clause 2.2 of the UGC (Minimum Standards of Instruction for the Grant of First Degree through Formal Education) Regulations, 2003, states how admission shall be made taking into account the reservation policy issued by the government concerned,

several private university acts also state that the University(ies) shall be open to persons of all classes and creeds, i.e. to persons of either sex, of whatever race, creed, caste or class, and reservation of seats for admission in any course of study in the university for the students belonging to the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes of citizens shall be regulated by the laws and orders of the State Government for the time being in force. But despite the provisions being laid out, the scope of reservation based on social category seems to be limited.

Some state governments even attempt to even go further beyond the usual regulation or act clause, in an attempt to enable access. Seen in the case of Assam, where by the endowment requirement as per the Assam Private Universities Act, 2007, is lesser in tribal areas, compared to other areas, apart from reserving seats for admission in the university of the students belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and other backward classes as per the policy of the state government; in Gujarat, whereby the Project Report must include among other things, the proposed fee structure and free-ships and scholarships to the poor students from economically poor or socially backward families, including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other backward Classes and handicapped students; in Haryana, whereby, as per the Haryana Private Universities Act, the private universities are required to reserve a minimum of 25% seats for admissions in the university for students of the State of Haryana, out of which 10% seats shall be reserved for students belonging to Scheduled Castes of the State of Haryana (STs and OBCs not mentioned), etc.

Even though there has been occasional clamour for reservations based on social category in private universities, there is a resistance on the part of the institutions, and in some states like Haryana, there seems to be more focus on domicile reservation, and not so much social-category based reservation. The missing equitable access makes the private universities detrimental to the idea of the public good. Thus, calling for the need for much more regulatory focus.

Conclusion

What emerges from the above discussion is that despite the NEP calling for inclusive and equitable access, the envisaged parity in regulatory regimes between public and private higher education does not correspond to this vision given the current private higher education scenario. For parity to emerge, there is a need for greater regulatory focus on the part of the State towards not only clearly stating the requirements for equitable access expected from public and private higher education institutions, but also addressing the variance within private higher education, through more empirical evidence reflecting the extent of gaps in equitable access, adding more teeth to the regulations of the regulatory bodies as well private university act provisions in this regard, to hold the private institutions equally accountable, but most importantly involving the private higher education institutions' stakeholders (who have a different ownership, governance and funding, especially in the case of private universities) through discussions (and not forceful impositions which might lead to resistance from them) relating to enabling equitable access. It is only when the private sector is equally involved, yet also held equally accountable that one can truly consider the move towards hoping for equitable access to become a reality to some extent even in private higher

education and fulfill the vision of regulatory parity more substantively. Whereby, the intent of the State in policy implementation will be key.

Centre for Political Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

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National Education Policy - 2020 : A New Dawn for ECCE in India

Savita Kaushal

Introduction

Recently conducted several studies provide sufficient evidence which indicates that India is experiencing a learning crisis: children are enrolled in schools but are not learning even the fundamentals. This crisis could start even before the children enter their class I. The truth is that Early Childhood Care and Education is essential and very important for the later years. International research has evidently shown that by the age of five years, 90 percent of the brain maturation occurs. Various studies have found that Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has a beneficial effect on participation and inclusion and achievement in primary school and beyond. As a result, much emphasis is being placed around the world on improving the quality of ECCE services development, communication/early language development, and literacy development.

This means that a child's environment, as well as the inputs and support they receive in their early years, will have a significant impact on their future – both in school and beyond. A well-designed ECCE programme can also improve children's physical-motor, cognitive, socio-emotional, ethical, cultural/artistic, numeracy, communication/early language, and literacy development, according to the National Education Policy-2020. However, in terms of discussions on the quality aspects, the emphasis is primarily on academic aspects, with little emphasis on age/developmentally appropriate pedagogy/activities, enabling environment classroom atmosphere, suitable teaching material, appropriate curriculum, proficient teachers, surveillance system, safety, security, and nutrition. The National Policy on Education -2020 has given directions on each of these issues.

National Education Policy 2020: Directions

The National Education Policy 2020, stresses ensuring quality ECCE for each and every child of 3 to 6 years age group by 2025. In fact, quality aspects are a deciding strategy to improve and sustain ECCE for all children. It is critical that all efforts have to be directed toward improving the quality of ECCE services for all children. The NEP-2020 has prioritized quality ECCE and acknowledged the need to work on

implementation strategies. It has emphasized universal access to high-quality ECCE for all children (0 to 8 years), especially those from low-income families, throughout the nation by equipping ECCE centres with high-quality infrastructure, play equipment, and well-trained teachers (MHRD, 2020).

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 suggests changing the existing 10+2 structure in school education to a 5+3+3+4 pattern, covering the age group of 3 to 18 years. The current 10+2 structure begins for the children at the age of six years in Class I. The NEP 2020 lays emphasis on building a robust foot hold for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from the age of three years, with the goal of promoting better overall learning, development, and well-being. This means that in a 5+3+3+4 model, there will be three years of curriculum framework for Anganwadi/preschool and twelve years of schooling. Children aged 3-6 are currently not covered by the 10+2. Thus a case inclusion of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and thereby of the children of the three years is deeply embedded within the new 5+3+3+4 structure. It will comprise of the Foundational Stage covering ages three to eight years. This stage can be divided into two parts, that is, three years of Anganwadi/pre-school and two years of primary schooling in Grades 1 and 2.

ECCE will be provided through a diverse range of institutions. These institutions will be stand-alone Anganwadis, Anganwadis within a primary schools, pre-primary schools/sections that cover at least children of 5 to 6 years, and also stand-alone pre-schools. The have workers/teachers in these institutions will be having dedicated training in the curriculum and pedagogy for ECCE. Anganwadi Centres will ensure universal access to ECCE. Before the age of five years, every child will be enrolled in a "Preparatory Class" or "Balavatika" (earlier to Class 1). Here the children will learn basic skills.

Anganwadi Centres will be strengthened to ensure universal access to ECCE. Before completion of five years age, each child will be assigned to a "Preparatory Class" or "Balavatika" (that is, before Class 1), which will be taught by an ECCE-qualified teacher.

Current Anganwadi workers/teachers will be trained: those with 10+2 qualifications and above have to undergo a certificate programme of 6-month duration in ECCE, while those with lower educational qualifications will have to undergo one-year diploma programme. These programmes can be delivered in a digital/distance mode, allowing teachers to obtain ECCE qualifications while continuing to work.

The Road Map

Availability to pre-school education must be enhanced because the first years of a child's life are critical for the holistic development. Every child must participate in a one-year preparatory class or Bal Vatika prior to the age of five (that is, before entering class 1). One of the most pressing issues concerning access is the provision of space for pre-school education in primary schools, which necessitates the establishment of new early childhood education centers/preschools or the incorporation of pre-school sections or AWCs into existing school settings.

Following the existing norm of opening primary schools, each primary school must have an ECCE or pre-school facility (integrating AWs or opening a new pre-school section. Demography and proximity guidelines for establishing new pre-primary schools/sections/relocation, etc., must be devised to ensure seamless spread of ECCE/pre-school amenities in accordance with the regional backgrounds of the states. An assessment of the current pre-school access conditions must be made using statistics gathered through surveys. It is also necessary to create an EMIS at the pre-school stage at the school, cluster, block, and district level which can be integrated at the state level. It is necessary to identify areas where new pre-schools will be established, as well as the organizational structures for these provisions. This assessment will also assist in determining locations with a high concentration of marginalized groups in order to create good ECCE infrastructure for them.

To evaluate the accessibility of ECCE amenities at the various levels i.e. regions/clusters/blocks/districts, a mapping exercise must be carried out. It is also critical to identify and assess the readiness of existing primary schools to begin pre-school education by 2021. This would aid in determining if separate establishment have to be set up or if the current pre-schools can also be unified with the primary schools in their proximity. It has been outlined in the NEP 2020, the pre-school facilities by various agencies (such as NGOs, anganwadi, government and private schools,) must be connected to school clusters as clearly specified in the NEP 2020 and may be included in SCMC plans.

A contextual framework can be developed to facilitate the synchronization and convergence of inter-ministerial activities in various ECCE or pre-school events at the local level.

The framework would aid in the coordination of inter- and intra-departmental functions, as well as the integration of Anganwadis with primary schools. School complexes will indeed aid in the integration of Anganwadis and primary schools, as well as the establishment of new pre-school sections and the surveillance of their quality.

Early Childhood Education Teacher Appointment

Skilled and experienced and trained teachers must be selected in accordance with school needs, and training for pre-school teachers must be prioritized. One more aspect is that the teacher-pupil ratio has to be a fixed standard for teacher recruitment and deployment at the level of preschool. Training of the teachers in setting up of an enabling environment which involves activity-based teaching-learning and therefore child friendly has to be an essential component of the training programme.

Needs of the children have to be taken into consideration while selecting the resources for play, books, and other teaching learning materials. In order to address the need of the divyang children the infrastructure and teaching learning materials has to be disable friendly so that the classroom environment is able to meet their special requirements. Moreover there is a need that the special teachers should be appointed for them.

Teachers teaching pre-school and early grades should keep track of the admission, attendance, and learning outcomes of the children so that they can acquire

knowledge about their areas of interest, learning requirements, and the support they require to enhance the proficiency. The attendance, grade advancement, and progression to the next level of the children can also be tracked. This committee can also offer a variety of other services to schools.

They may interact with parents to raise awareness of the significance of pre-school education for development of their children. In addition to this they will provide support to parents who are not able to make a provision for the pre-school education of their children and so on. In taking initiatives in this direction distinct attention must be given to the needs of divyang children as well as the disadvantaged children who might be encountering manifold and cumulative disadvantages. School clusters by the means of their SCMCs, may work together with these committees and make available support that may be needed by the small schools.

Role of Different Organizations.

Local government authorities (such as district education officers, block education officers, block resource centre coordinators, cluster resource centre coordinators), in alliance with school clusters, community-based organizations and non-government organizations can be assigned the task of establishing pre-schools for young children in each neighbourhood in accordance with the norms and standards specified.

An inter-ministerial/inter-departmental 'convergence committee' may be formed for provisioning of pre-school education, ensuring its effective functioning on regular basis. The committee will comprise officials from Ministries/Departments related to Women and Child Development, Ministry of Education, Labour, Health and Nutrition, Social Justice and Empowerment/Social Welfare, Food and Civil Supplies, and Water.

It is possible to conduct social mapping of schooling facility availability as well as access and participation of children in a disaggregated way (based on gender, social, and income categories). Social auditing may also be carried out on occasion. A special committee comprising of SMC members may also be formed at the institution level (school/anganwadi).

Though it is stated in the new policy that ECCE will be given its due, there are a number of unanswered questions in this regard. First and foremost, if ECCE is being formalized through this policy, why has no action been taken to amend the RTE act to include ECCE as a fundamental right? One silver lining is that it is stated in the policy that suitable resources will be kept aside for the advancement of ECCE. In continuation with this sincere initiatives has to made to make it a justiciable right so that its implementation can be demanded by the citizens and hold the State accountable in the event of any lapses in implementation.

Inputs For Quality of Experiences

A brief mention of the RTE has been made at one of the places in the RTE document. Another thing that needs to be delved upon carefully is that the strategy of implementation of ECCE is to be visualized. There is another point which needs to be thought upon more is that how ECCE is to be hypothetically implemented. The unifying inclinations of the policy can be seen obviously NCERT is entrusted with the

developing of the "National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education" (NCPFECCE) in two portions as per the guidelines in the Policy .

It will be meant for the children up to the age of 8 years . It will comprise of sub-framework for children aged 0 to 3 years, and an alternative framework for children aged 3 to 8 years. Both of these are aligned with the guidelines, the most recent researches conducted in ECCE, and also national and international best practices.

The diverse local traditions of India that have been gradually established over generations in the context of ECCE, relating to art, fiction, poems, games, melodies, and other activities, will be suitably integrated. The framework will assist the parents and early childhood care and education centres and will serve as a guide for them. Although it does not appear to be much wide of the mark with providing a National guiding framework, how this envisioned policy is executed on the ground level will be critical. However we have to take caution, the national framework should not imply a reduction in autonomy and flexibility at the local level. The framework should be able to give pedagogical space and more liberty and voice in the formulation and design of the curriculum to the teachers.

Another important thing is that a clear-cut variance has to be made between the children in the age groups of 0-3 years and those in the age group of 3-6 years. It should be profusely clear that it will not be mandatory for children who are in age group of 0 to 3 years to attend any ECCE provisions in formal setting underneath this policy. Any type of guiding framework planned for children in this age group will only be for strengthening the capacities of parents/care providers at home/non-institutional settings. In this regard, a clear cut framework has to be laid out so that it leaves no room for ambiguity.

Another aspect that needs to be closely examined is that the anganwadi workers/teachers need to be empowered so that they are able to get their equitable place in the structure of the school and also in the society, as this is an important area of concern and cannot neglected. A great deal of consideration and improvement is required to be brought in this context. The policy does not provide a befitting or hopeful roadmap for enabling and empowering the workers/teachers – several facets linked to their education, training, remuneration, and so on – that will allow them to live a dignified life.

In order to achieve this overarching goal, the policy has set the targets to work on the implementation strategies such as development of Balavatika / Preparatory Class (before class 1), Vidya Pravesh a Three-month Play-based School Preparation Module for Grade-I children, Certificate programme in ECCE, Teacher Training Courses, National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for ECE (NPFECE), Foundational Learning Curriculum, Holistic progress card, and Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission, etc. Many of the activities have already been initiated . Such initiatives are going to be the guiding resource for the effective implementation of quality ECCE programmes in India. As suggested in the policy document a strengthened system of early childhood educational institutions, comprising of Anganwadi, pre-primary schools/sections with in the prevailing primary schools, and stand-alone pre-schools will be engaging workers/teachers specifically well accomplished in transacting the course and pedagogics of ECCE.

Few Steeplechases

At present the Right to Education (RTE) Act guarantees compulsory education for all children in the age of 6 to 14 years. The State has the responsibility to enable achievement of this Act. As it is a fundamental right it is the responsibility of the Courts to guard this fundamental right. In the case of the violation of this right, the State is answerable to the court. Despite the evident need to change the age group of children for whom compulsory education was implemented still remains restricted to only 6 to 14 years age group.

Limitation of inadequate funds been cited by the States as a pretext to exclude both –under the age of six years from the RTE act. The lack of willingness of the state to take up this ownership has also adverse influence on ECCE.

Footsteps in the Direction

Being a nodal agency for school education NCERT since its conception has a history of work in ECCE. Lot of work has already been done lot new to happen. Currently in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the State Governments and other national institutions like CBSE, NIOS etc. The NCERT is heading towards bringing in the quality if the education of young children and also the better implementation of NEP 2020. The status of the initiatives for the implementation of ECCE including Foundational Stage is as follows:

- The Preschool Curriculum (both Hindi and English version is available)
- Guidelines for Preschool Education ((both Hindi and English version is available)
- Resource Package for Awareness in ECCE (Hindi and English version is available)
- Vidya Pravesh- A Three-month Play-based School Preparation Module for Grade-I Children (Launched by the Honorable Prime Minister on 29.08.2021)
- Nipun Bharat- Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission- Guidelines for Implementation
- FLN Nishtha under FLN Mission
- Toy Based Pedagogy
- Collection of Best Practices and Researches
- National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for ECE (NCPFCE)
- Teacher Training Module
- Teacher Training Framework

As Samagra Shiksha has been extended up to 2025-26, the scheme has been completely aligned with the recommendations of NEP 2020. In order to achieve the desirable outcomes and objectives, it has been decided by the Government of India that states/UTs need to prepare a comprehensive long-term action plan covering all interventions and outcomes to be achieved with yearly targets and measurable outcomes. While preparing the perspective plan, states/UTs may also identify outcomes to be achieved. The States/UTs should also formulate an action plan laying down time lines for implementation of various activities in 2022-23. National mission of 'National initiative for proficiency in reading with understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat)' aims at

ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational Literacy and Numeracy by the end of Grade 3 by 2026-27. This mission has been setup under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha, and will focus on the following areas; providing access and retaining children in foundational years of schooling; teacher capacity building; development of high quality and diversified student and teacher resources/ learning material; and tracking the progress of each child in achieving learning outcomes. With this backdrop, it has been felt that it is a right time to conduct a national webinar for state /UTs, involving their officials from Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), District Institute for Education and Training (DIET) and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) to discuss their action plans/interventions and achievable outcomes with respect to the recommendations made in NEP 2020.

*IASE,
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi*

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राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति - 2020 : भारतीय भाषाओं में शिक्षण-अधिगम

राकेश कुमार सिंह

भारतीय भाषा के संदर्भ में ध्यान आते ही जो बात सबसे पहले मस्तिष्क में आती है, वह उसका बहुभाषिकता और एकात्मकता वाला चरित्र है। भारतीय संस्कृति का विकास, साहित्य और कलाओं की समृद्धि का प्रमाण भारतीय भाषाओं में निहित है। विविध भाषाओं के बावजूद जनमानस स्थानीय भाषाओं में ही अपना दैनिक काम-काज अच्छे से चला रहा है। आम जन को किसी तरह की कोई समस्या नहीं दिखाई देती। समस्या तब खड़ी होती है, जब आप स्थानीय भाषाओं को औपचारिक संदर्भ देने का प्रयास करने लगते हैं। इसके मूल में भी अतीत से जुड़े कई कारण रहें हैं। जिसमें एक कारण औपनिवेशिक शासन के दौरान शिक्षा की भाषा और बोलचाल की भाषा में अलगाव रहा है। अपने इसी चरित्र के कारण हमारे औपचारिक शिक्षण केन्द्रों के लिए मातृभाषा या स्थानीय भाषा बड़ी चुनौती रहा है। आज हमें इस चुनौती को स्वीकार कर आगे बढ़ना होगा तभी भाषा और शिक्षा को लेकर हमारी नासमझी और दोहरेपन वाली मानसिक स्थिति बदल सकेगी। क्योंकि सीखने-सिखाने के मनोविज्ञान के विरुद्ध हमारी सोच पर मन की दुविधा, सामाजिक दिखावा और राजनैतिक मजबूरी अधिक हावी रही है। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 इस दुविधा से कुछ हद तक निपटने का रास्ता खोजने का प्रयास करती है।

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति की भाषा-दृष्टि

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 मातृभाषा या घरेलू भाषा को लेकर स्पष्ट है। शिक्षा की भाषा को समझने के लिए हमें राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के तीन अनुच्छेदों को ध्यान से पढ़ना होगा-

अनुच्छेद - 2.8. सभी स्तरों पर छात्रों के लिए आनंददायक और प्रेरणादायक पुस्तकें विकसित की जाएंगी, जिसमें सभी स्थानीय और भारतीय भाषाओं में उच्च गुणवत्ता वाले अनुवाद (आवश्यकतानुसार प्रौद्योगिकी सहायता से) के माध्यम से, स्कूल और स्थानीय सार्वजनिक पुस्तकालयों दोनों में व्यापक रूप से उपलब्ध कराया जाएगा।

अनुच्छेद- 4.11. यह अच्छी तरह से समझा जाता है कि छोटे बच्चे अपनी घरेलू भाषा/मातृभाषा में सामान्य अवधारणाओं को अधिक तेजी से सीखते और समझते हैं। घरेलू भाषा आमतौर पर मातृभाषा या स्थानीय समुदायों द्वारा बोली जाने वाली भाषा के समान होती है। हालाँकि, कई बार बहुभाषी परिवारों में, परिवार के अन्य सदस्यों द्वारा बोली जाने वाली एक घरेलू भाषा हो सकती है जो कभी-कभी मातृभाषा या स्थानीय भाषा से भिन्न हो सकती है। जहाँ भी संभव हो, शिक्षा का माध्यम कम से कम ग्रेड 5 तक, लेकिन अधिमानतः ग्रेड 8 और उससे आगे तक, घरेलू भाषा/मातृभाषा/स्थानीय भाषा/क्षेत्रीय भाषा होगी। इसके बाद, जहाँ भी संभव हो, घर/स्थानीय भाषा को एक भाषा के रूप में पढ़ाया जाना जारी रहेगा। सार्वजनिक और निजी दोनों तरह के स्कूल इसकी अनुपालना

करेंगे। विज्ञान सहित उच्च गुणवत्ता वाली पाठ्यपुस्तकें घरेलू भाषाओं/मातृभाषा में उपलब्ध कराई जाएंगी। यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए सभी प्रयास जल्द से जल्द किए जाएंगे कि बच्चे द्वारा बोली जाने वाली भाषा और शिक्षण के माध्यम के बीच मौजूद किसी भी अंतर को पाट दिया जाए। ऐसे मामलों में जहां मातृभाषा/मातृभाषा पाठ्यपुस्तक सामग्री उपलब्ध नहीं है, शिक्षकों और छात्रों के बीच लेन-देन की भाषा अभी भी जहां भी संभव हो वहां की घरेलू भाषा/मातृभाषा ही रहेगी। शिक्षकों को उन छात्रों के साथ द्विभाषी दृष्टिकोण का उपयोग करने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया जाएगा, जिनमें द्विभाषी शिक्षण-अधिगम सामग्री शामिल है, जिनकी घरेलू भाषा शिक्षा के माध्यम से भिन्न हो सकती है।

अनुच्छेद- 5.4. शिक्षक पात्रता परीक्षा (टीईटी) को सामग्री और शिक्षाशास्त्र दोनों के संदर्भ में बेहतर परीक्षण सामग्री विकसित करने के लिए मजबूत किया जाएगा। टीईटी को स्कूली शिक्षा के सभी चरणों (फाउंडेशनल, प्रिपरेटरी, मिडिल और सेकेंडरी) के शिक्षकों को शामिल करने के लिए भी बढ़ाया जाएगा। विषय शिक्षकों के लिए, भर्ती के लिए संबंधित विषयों में प्राप्त टीईटी या एनटीए परीक्षा के अंकों को शामिल किया जाएगा। शिक्षण के लिए जुनून और प्रेरणा का आकलन करने के लिए, साक्षात्कार या कक्षा में पढ़ाने का प्रदर्शन करना, स्कूलों और स्कूल परिसरों में शिक्षकों की भर्ती का एक अभिन्न अंग बनाया जाएगा। इन साक्षात्कारों का उपयोग स्थानीय भाषा में शिक्षण में सहजता और दक्षता का आकलन करने के लिए भी किया जाएगा, ताकि प्रत्येक स्कूल/स्कूल परिसर में कम से कम कुछ शिक्षक हों जो छात्रों के साथ स्थानीय भाषा और अन्य प्रचलित घरेलू भाषाओं में बातचीत कर सकें। निजी स्कूलों के शिक्षकों को भी टीईटी, एक प्रदर्शन/साक्षात्कार, और स्थानीय भाषा (ओं) के ज्ञान के माध्यम से इसी तरह उत्तीर्ण होना चाहिए।

इस प्रकार हम देखते हैं कि राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति भाषा शिक्षा के विषय में अपनी नीति को स्पष्ट करती है, जिससे निम्न बिन्दु निकल कर सामने आते हैं-

- सभी स्तरों पर छात्रों के लिए आनंददायक और प्रेरणादायक पुस्तकों का स्थानीय और भारतीय भाषाओं में उच्च गुणवत्तापूर्ण अनुवाद।
- स्थानीय और भारतीय भाषाओं की पुस्तकों का स्कूल और स्थानीय सार्वजनिक पुस्तकालयों दोनों में व्यापक रूप से उपलब्धता।
- कक्षा आठ या उससे आगे की कक्षाओं में बच्चों को उनकी अपनी घरेलू भाषा/मातृभाषा/स्थानीय भाषा/क्षेत्रीय भाषा में शिक्षा।
- राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति द्वारा स्वीकृत भाषा नीति सरकारी और निजी दोनों स्कूल में लागू होगी।
- भाषा शिक्षण का अर्थ सिर्फ भाषाओं का शिक्षण नहीं है बल्कि भारतीय भाषाओं/मातृभाषा में शिक्षण का अर्थ विज्ञान सहित उच्च गुणवत्ता वाली शिक्षा माध्यम से भी है।
- विज्ञान-तकनीक सहित सभी विषयों में पाठ्यपुस्तकें घरेलू भाषाओं/मातृभाषा में सुनिश्चित उपलब्धता।
- बच्चे द्वारा बोली जाने वाली भाषा और शिक्षण के माध्यम के बीच मौजूद किसी भी अंतर को पाटना।
- ऐसे मामलों में जहां मातृभाषा/मातृभाषा पाठ्यपुस्तक सामग्री उपलब्ध नहीं है, शिक्षकों और छात्रों के बीच संवाद की भाषा जहां तक भी संभव हो वहां की घरेलू भाषा/मातृभाषा के रूप में हो।
- शिक्षकों को उन छात्रों के साथ द्विभाषी दृष्टिकोण का उपयोग करने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया जाएगा, जिनमें द्विभाषी शिक्षण-अधिगम सामग्री शामिल है, जिनकी घरेलू भाषा शिक्षा के माध्यम से भिन्न हो सकती है।
- शिक्षक पात्रता परीक्षा (टीईटी) को सामग्री और शिक्षाशास्त्र दोनों के संदर्भ में बेहतर परीक्षण सामग्री विकसित करने के लिए मजबूत किया जाएगा। इन साक्षात्कारों में स्थानीय भाषा में शिक्षण सहजता और दक्षता का आकलन किया जाए।
- प्रत्येक स्कूल/स्कूल परिसर में कम से कम कुछ शिक्षक हों जो छात्रों के साथ स्थानीय भाषा और अन्य प्रचलित घरेलू भाषाओं में बातचीत कर सकें।

- निजी स्कूलों के शिक्षकों को भी टीईटी, एक प्रदर्शन/साक्षात्कार, और स्थानीय भाषा (ओं) के ज्ञान के माध्यम से इसी तरह उत्तीर्ण होना चाहिए।

मातृभाषा में शिक्षण क्यों ?

यूनेस्को (1953) ने प्राथमिक शिक्षा में मातृभाषा को लेकर पहले से ही दिशा निर्देश जारी किए थे। उनकी रिपोर्ट में कहा गया था कि “मातृभाषा में शिक्षण के भरपूर प्रयास होने चाहिए.. शैक्षणिक दृष्टि से हम यह सिफारिश करते हैं कि शिक्षा में जहाँ तक संभव हो मातृभाषा को आधार बनाया जाना चाहिए।”²

हम सभी जानते हैं कि छोटे बच्चे अपनी घर की भाषा जिसे मातृभाषा भी कह सकते हैं (बहुभाषी परिवारों में यह घरेलू भाषा भी हो सकती है), उसमें सार्थक अवधारणाओं को अधिक अच्छी तरह से सीखते हैं। इसी को ध्यान में रखते हुए नई शिक्षा नीति इस बात की सिफारिश करती है कि माध्यमिक स्तर तक नहीं तो कम से कम प्राथमिक स्तर तक शिक्षा का माध्यम, घर की भाषा/मातृभाषा/स्थानीय भाषा/क्षेत्रीय भाषा होनी चाहिए। इसके साथ ही स्थानीय भाषा को जहाँ तक संभव हो एक भाषा के रूप में पढ़ाया जाता रहेगा। इस भाषा नीति का अनुपालन सार्वजनिक और निजी दोनों तरह के स्कूल करेंगे। भारत में शिक्षा का व्यावहारिक इतिहास स्पष्ट करता है कि निजी शिक्षा संस्थानों में भाषा विशेष को लेकर दिये जाने वाले दवाब के कारण शिक्षा दोषपूर्ण और भटकाव वाले रास्ते पर निकल गई है। यही कारण है कि भाषा का शिक्षण और भाषा के द्वारा शिक्षण दोनों विवाद का कारण बनते रहते हैं।

शिक्षाविदों का स्पष्ट रूप से यह मानना है कि यदि हम ज्ञान-विज्ञान में उच्च गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा की बात करते हैं तो पाठ्यपुस्तकों सहित विद्यालय की भाषा को घरेलू भाषाओं/मातृभाषाओं में होना चाहिए। यह सुनिश्चित करना हमारी जिम्मेदारी है कि बच्चे द्वारा बोली जाने वाली भाषा और शिक्षण के माध्यम के बीच दूरी है तो उसे जितनी जल्दी हो समाप्त या कम कर दिया जाए। विद्यालय और शिक्षक के स्तर पर बच्चे के साथ किया जाने वाला संवाद उसकी अपनी भाषा में ही होना चाहिए तभी शिक्षण संस्थानों के वातावरण की त्रिमता को समाप्त किया जा सकता है।

भारत जैसे देश में मातृभाषाओं में शिक्षण की बात करना कोई छोटी बात नहीं है। धरातलीय आधार पर इसे देखें तो भारत में दस हजार से अधिक बोलने वालों की संख्या के आधार पर 270 के आसपास मातृभाषाएँ हैं। इसलिए हमें भाषा शिक्षण के संदर्भ में एक नीति बनानी होगी कि किन भाषाओं से में शिक्षण प्रारंभ किया जाए। यह कोई कठिन काम नहीं है क्योंकि 100 से अधिक भाषाओं में किसी न किसी रूप में पठन-पाठन चल रहा है। इसी सूत्र को लेकर आगे बढ़ाया जा सकता है। कुछ बातें व्यावहारिक और नीतिगत दोनों रूप से तय होनी चाहिए, जैसे-

कितनी और कौन सी भाषाओं को पहले पढ़ाना शुरू करना चाहिए ?

कितनी और कौन सी भाषाओं के माध्यम से पढ़ाना शुरू करना चाहिए ?

यदि कोई विद्यालय/संस्थान भाषा विशेष में स्वयं पढ़ाने का दायित्व लेने को तैयार हो तो उस पर कौन निर्णय लेगा ?

संविधान की आठवीं अनुसूची की भाषाओं के अतिरिक्त यदि किसी भाषा को माध्यम के रूप में पढ़ाने के लिए संस्थान तैयार हों और उस भाषा की तय लिपि न हो तो, उसे तय करने का दायित्व किसके पास होगा ?

बहुभाषिक समाज में माध्यम

भारत बहुभाषिक समाज वाला देश है। एक घर में ही कई भाषाओं को बोलने वाले भी देखे जा सकते हैं। ऐसे देश में माध्यम के रूप में भाषा एक चुनौती के रूप में दिखाई देती है। जबकि यदि हम सही और रचनात्मक तरीके से बहुभाषिकता का उपयोग करें तो प्राथमिक स्तर तक के बच्चों के लिए यह किसी खजाने से कम नहीं होगी। बच्चे के संज्ञानात्मक विकास में बहुभाषिक संस्कृति का प्रभाव देखा जा सकता है। बहुभाषिकता से मतलब दो बिल्कुल अलग-अलग भाषाओं से ही नहीं हैं। इसे हिंदी के संदर्भ में समझा जा सकता है। हिंदी भाषी क्षेत्र में

पाठ्यक्रम तैयार करते हुए सभी हिंदी भाषी क्षेत्रों को एक प्रकार और एक ही श्रेणी से नहीं देखा जा सकता। हिंदी के साथ उसकी अन्य सहायक भाषाएँ जो बच्चे की सही अर्थों में मातृभाषा है उसे भी आपको संबोधित करना होगा। उदाहरण के लिए राजस्थानी, बांगरू, मारवाड़ी, मेवाड़ी, हरियाणवी, ब्रज, अवधी, भोजपुरी, मगही, गढ़वाली, कुमाँउनी आदि को समझे और स्थान दिए बिना आप हिन्दी की पाठ्यपुस्तक रचना नहीं कर सकते। यही स्थितियाँ अधिकतर भारत की बड़ी भाषाओं के साथ हैं, इसलिए पाठ्यक्रम बनाते हुए बड़ी भाषाओं के साथ-साथ उसकी सहायक भाषाओं या बोलियों का भी ध्यान रखना होगा। या उस संदर्भ में कोई निर्णय तक पहुँचना होगा।

जहाँ तक शिक्षण के माध्यम का प्रश्न है तो नीति स्पष्ट रूप से भारतीय भाषाओं में शिक्षण हो यह सुनिश्चित करना चाहती है। भारत जैसे भाषाओं से भरे देश में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति इस चिन्ता का समाधान इस रूप में करती है कि शिक्षकों (निजी और सरकारी दोनों) के साक्षात्कारों का उपयोग स्थानीय भाषा में शिक्षण में सहजता और दक्षता का आकलन करने के लिए किया जाएगा, जिससे प्रत्येक स्कूल/स्कूल परिसर में कम से कम कुछ शिक्षक हों जो स्थानीय भाषा और छात्रों की अन्य प्रचलित घरेलू भाषाओं में छात्रों के साथ बातचीत कर सकें।¹ यानि अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से नीति कहना चाहती है कि शिक्षक कक्षाओं की भाषा स्थानीय रखने का प्रयास करें।

संविधान की आठवीं अनुसूची और मातृभाषाओं का विस्तार

भाषा शिक्षण में यदि बड़ा कदम उठाना है तो कम से कम संविधान की आठवीं अनुसूची में दी गई सभी भाषाओं पर निवेश और काम करना पड़ेगा। कम से कम प्रयोग के रूप में संविधान की आठवीं अनुसूची की सभी भाषाओं में/के द्वारा शिक्षण सहज सुलभ हो सके। संविधान की आठवीं अनुसूची में असमिया, बांग्ला, गुजराती, हिंदी, कन्नड़, कश्मीरी, कोंकणी, मलयालम, मणिपुरी, मराठी, नेपाली, ओडिया, पंजाबी, संस्कृत, सिंधी, तमिल, तेलुगू, उर्दू, बोडो, संथाली, मैथिली और डोगरी भाषाएं आती हैं। इनमें से कई भाषाएं एक से अधिक राज्यों की राजकीय भाषा हैं। इसका अर्थ यह हुआ कि उन भाषाओं में राजकाज की स्थिति अच्छी होगी, तो कम से कम इन भाषाओं को माध्यम के रूप में स्वीकार कर आगे बढ़ने में कोई समस्या नहीं होनी चाहिए। इसके लिए बस राज्य नेतृत्व की इच्छा शक्ति का होना पर्याप्त है।

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति यह बदलाव भी ला पाई तो इसका प्रभाव समाज के निचले स्तर तक देखा जा सकता है। इससे लोकज्ञान को मुख्यधारा से जोड़ने में भी मदद मिलेगी। यह बदलाव सोशल मीडिया के साथ लोक भाषा में ज्ञान की सकारात्मक पहुँचके रूप, में भी देखा जा सकता है। गाँव-कस्बे-देहात का वह ज्ञान जिसे अभी हम जुगाड़ कह कर मुख्य मीडिया में अक्सर देखते हैं, वह क्षेत्रीय कुशलता और नये तरह के अविष्कारों को जन्म देने का कारण बनेगा। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में इस बात को बहुत अच्छी तरह से स्पष्ट किया है-“केंद्र और राज्य दोनों सरकारों की ओर से देश भर की सभी क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं, और विशेष रूप में बड़ी संख्या में भाषा शिक्षकों में निवेश का एक बड़ा प्रयास होगा। राज्य, विशेष रूप से भारत के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों के राज्य, अपने-अपने राज्यों में त्रिभाषा फार्मूले को अपनाने के लिए, और साथ ही देश भर में भारतीय भाषाओं के अध्ययन को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए बड़ी संख्या में शिक्षकों को नियुक्त करने के लिए आपस में द्विपक्षीय समझौते कर सकते हैं। विभिन्न भाषाओं को सीखने के लिए और भाषा शिक्षण को लोकप्रिय बनाने के लिए तकनीक का बृहद उपयोग किया जायेगा।”²

भाषा को पढ़ने-पढ़ाने की रुढ़िगत जकड़ से बाहर निकालने का प्रयास

भाषिक अभिव्यक्ति के शैक्षिक-मनोवैज्ञानिक प्रभाव की अभी तक हमने जानबूझ कर अनदेखी की है। आशा है, इस दिशा में भारतीय समाज सही तरह से सोचना प्रारंभ करेगा। हमारे सामने कई विकसित देश उदाहरण के रूप में हैं। अपनी भाषा से जुड़ाव के कारण सांस्कृतिक, शैक्षिक, सामाजिक, आर्थिक और तकनीकी सभी क्षेत्रों में उन्हें इसका लाभ भी मिला है।

भाषा शिक्षा के दृष्टि से यह नीति अलग तरह से भी विचार करती है। भाषा की शिक्षा को सिर्फ पाठ्यक्रम तथा किताबों तक सीमित रखने की बात ही नहीं करती बल्कि वह प्रत्येक विद्यार्थी के लिए पढ़ाई के दौरान-‘द लैंग्वेज ऑफ इंडिया’ पर ‘एक भारत श्रेष्ठ भारत’³ पर प्रोजेक्ट या गतिविधि में भाग लेने को सुनिश्चित करना

चाहती है। इससे भाषा के व्याकरणिक, व्यावाहरिक, वैज्ञानिक, भौगोलिक आदि स्वरूपों की जानकारी के साथ-साथ अन्वेषण, राष्ट्रीय एवं सांस्कृतिक एकता की ओर भी अग्रसर होने में मदद मिलेगी।

इस नीति में भाषा चिन्तन की दृष्टि से भी एक और कदम उठाया गया है। भारत की शास्त्रीय भाषाओं और साहित्य की प्रासंगिकता को शिक्षा का अंग बनाने की बात नीति करती है। भारत के व्यापक और सुंदर शास्त्रीय साहित्य की समृद्ध विरासत के रूप में संस्कृत, तमिल, तेलुगु, कन्नड़, मलयालम, ओडिया, पाली, प्राकृत सहित फारसी आदि भाषाएं भी व्यापक रूप से स्कूलों में विकल्प के रूप में उपलब्ध होंगी। इसी क्रम में भाषा-अध्ययन के स्वरूप को बदलने की बात भी कही गई है जैसे ऑनलाइन, अनुभव लेकर सीखना, नई-नई प्रणालियों से जोड़ कर सीखना आदि है।

शिक्षा की भाषा नीति की सबसे बड़ी विशेषता यह कही जा सकती है कि भाषा को पढ़ने-पढ़ाने की रुढ़िगत जकड़ से बाहर निकालने का प्रयास हुआ है। किसी भी एक भाषा को पढ़ाने या जबरदस्ती थोपने की बात यह नीति नहीं करती। भारतीय भाषाओं और अंग्रेजी भाषा में शिक्षा के साथ माध्यमिक स्तर से ही कोरियाई, जापानी, थाई, फ्रेंच, स्पेनिश, पुर्तगाली और रूसी जैसी महत्वपूर्ण विदेशी भाषाओं को पढ़ाने की व्यवस्था करने की बात भी कही गई है।¹ वैश्वीकरण के इस दौर में इस सुझाव का आर्थिक दृष्टि से भी महत्व है।

समग्रतः राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति की भाषा सम्बन्धी अनुशंसाओं में संवैधानिक प्रावधानों का पूरा ध्यान रखा गया है। साथ में भारतीय भाषिक परिवेश के संतुलन को बनाये रखने के लिए त्रिभाषा फार्मूले से भी कोई छेड़-छाड़ नहीं की गई है। भाषा माध्यम के संदर्भ में किसी राज्य और क्षेत्र विशेष की महत्वकांक्षाओं का पूरा ध्यान रखते हुए काफी लचीलापन रखा गया है। इससे बच्चों के सीखने के वातावरण निर्माण में विशेष लाभ होगा। व्यावाहरिक रूप से देखे तो शिक्षा नीति की भाषा सम्बन्धी सोच को लागू करने के लिए भागीरथ प्रयास करने की आवश्यकता है। जिसके लिए इन भाषाओं में बड़ी संख्या में शिक्षकों की नियुक्तियां, विशेष प्रशिक्षण, तकनीक का विकास, पाठ्यक्रम तथा सामग्री का निर्माण आदि विशेष कदम उठाने होंगे। इन सभी प्रयासों के लिए सही समझ रखने वाले विशेषज्ञों के साथ-साथ आर्थिक दृष्टि से भी विशेष सहयोग की आवश्यकता होगी, और हाँ, अंत में सबसे आवश्यक सकारात्मक राजनैतिक सहयोग के बिना भारतीय भाषाओं का उद्धार संभव नहीं है।

वरिष्ठ सलाहकार

भारतीय भाषा उच्च समिति,

शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली

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निशीथ राय

भूमिका :

केंद्रीय मंत्रिमंडल ने हाल ही में स्कूल और उच्च शिक्षा दोनों में बड़े पैमाने पर परिवर्तनकारी सुधार लाने के लिए नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 को मंजूरी दी है। देश के लिए नई शिक्षा नीति करीब 34 साल बाद आई है। 29 जुलाई, 2020 को केंद्रीय मंत्रिमंडल द्वारा अनुमोदित राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में कहा गया है कि “जहां भी संभव हो, ग्रेड V तक स्कूलों में शिक्षा का माध्यम - अधिमानतः ग्रेड VIII तक - मातृभाषा या स्थानीय या क्षेत्रीय भाषा होनी चाहिए जिसे सुनिश्चित करने के लिए सभी प्रयास जल्द ही किए जाएंगे ताकि बच्चे द्वारा बोली जाने वाली भाषा और शिक्षण के माध्यम के बीच मौजूद किसी भी अंतर को पाटा जा सके”। यह राष्ट्र निर्माण में दीर्घकालिक प्रभाव पैदा कर सकता है। मातृभाषा या क्षेत्रीय भाषा में स्कूली शिक्षा प्रदान करने से मानव संसाधन विकास की चल रही प्रक्रिया में भारी बदलाव आ सकता है। क्षेत्रीय भाषाएं मानवीय मूल्यों और भावनाओं को विकसित करने में मदद करती हैं और मातृभाषा सीखने से आने वाली पीढ़ियों को अपने सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक ताने-बाने के साथ संबंध बनाने में सहायता मिलेगी।

जैसा कि राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति, 2020 में सिफारिश की गई है, बच्चे की मातृभाषा में प्रारंभिक स्कूली शिक्षा अधिगम में सुधार कर सकती है, विद्यार्थियों की भागीदारी बढ़ा सकती है और शालात्यागी (ड्रॉप आउट) विद्यार्थियों कि संख्या को भी कम कर सकती है। हालांकि, इसके लिए नई पुस्तकों, नए शिक्षक और प्रशिक्षण हेतु अधिक धन की आवश्यकता होगी। इसके अलावा, भारत में भाषाओं और बोलियों की बहुलता को देखते हुए, किसी एक क्षेत्र में शिक्षा के माध्यम के रूप में उपयोग किए जा सकने वाले किसी एक भाषा या बोली का चयन करना मुश्किल कार्य होगा। बुहमैन, डी., और टुडेल, बी. (2008) अपने अध्ययन के निष्कर्ष में लिखते हैं कि प्रारंभिक स्कूल के वर्षों में जिस भाषा के साथ बच्चा सबसे अधिक सहज होता है, उसका उपयोग करने से उपस्थिति और अधिगम के परिणामों में सुधार होता है, और नई भाषाएं सीखने की क्षमता में सुधार होता है। यह कक्षा की भागीदारी को बढ़ाता है, छोड़ने वालों की संख्या और ग्रेड पुनरावृत्ति को कम करता है।

अमेरिका के शिक्षा आयोग (2016) की रिपोर्ट का अनुमान है कि निम्न और मध्यम आय वाले देशों में सभी बच्चों में से आधे बच्चों को उनकी भाषा में नहीं पढ़ाया जाता है। माता-पिता अपने बच्चों को शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता की परवाह किए बिना ‘अंग्रेजी-माध्यम’ स्कूलों में भेजना पसंद करते हैं क्योंकि उनमें यह धारणा है कि अंग्रेजी भाषा की महारत बाद के जीवन में सफलता सुनिश्चित करती है। 2017-18 में सेंट्रल स्क्वायर फाउंडेशन (CSF) (2020) की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, भारत के ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में निजी स्कूलों में नामांकित लोगों में से लगभग 14% और शहरी क्षेत्रों में 19.3% माता-पिता ने निजी स्कूल का चुनाव इसलिए किया क्योंकि वहाँ अधिगम का माध्यम अंग्रेजी था।

धीर झिंगरान (2009) (एक पूर्व भारतीय प्रशासनिक सेवा अधिकारी और लैंग्वेज एंड लर्निंग फाउंडेशन के संस्थापक, जो राजस्थान, छत्तीसगढ़ और हरियाणा में राज्य सरकारों के साथ काम करने वाली संस्था है, जो स्थानीय भाषा में अध्ययन सामग्री तैयार करती है और शिक्षकों को इसका इस्तेमाल करने के लिए प्रशिक्षित करती है) लिखते हैं कि “अंग्रेजी शिक्षा हमेशा सर्वोत्तम नहीं होती है। आप जिस भाषा को जानते हैं उसमें आप सबसे अच्छा पढ़ना और लिखना सीख सकते हैं। यदि आपको ऐसी भाषा में पढ़ाया जाता है जिसे आप नहीं समझते हैं तो वह समझ नहीं आती है जिसके परिणामस्वरूप रटकर याद किया जाता है और इसे कॉपी करके लिखा जाता है”। तथा “अच्छी शिक्षा तब होती है जब बच्चों में उच्च आत्म-सम्मान हो तथा सकारात्मक और निडर वातावरण हो। अगर बच्चे को ऐसी भाषा में पढ़ाया जाता है जिसे वे नहीं समझते हैं, तो ऐसा कुछ नहीं होगा।”

शिक्षा की वार्षिक स्थिति रिपोर्ट (ASER) 2019 में यह देखा जा सकता है की ग्रामीण भारत में, ग्रेड I में नामांकित केवल 16.2% बच्चे ग्रेड I-स्तर का पाठ पढ़ सकते थे, जबकि केवल 39.5% ही मौखिक रूप से एक अंक की संख्या जोड़ सकते थे। भास्करन (2017) के अध्ययन के अनुसार जनगणना 2011 ने 270 मातृभाषाओं को सूचीबद्ध किया गया था परंतु इनमें से, भारतीय कक्षाओं में अधिगम के माध्यम के रूप में मात्र 47 भाषाओं का उपयोग किया जा रहा है। ASER सेंटर की निदेशक सुमन भट्टाचार्य (2020) आगाह करती हैं कि कम सीखने के परिणामों की समस्या को हल करने के लिए मातृभाषा में पढ़ाना कोई सरल कार्य नहीं है। वे समझती हैं कि “यदि शिक्षक अभी भी पाठ्यक्रम को पूरा करने पर ध्यान केंद्रित कर रहा है, तो किसी स्तर पर, भाषा चाहे जो भी हो, अधिगम सामग्री अभी भी उस स्तर पर नहीं है जिसे बच्चा समझ सकता है”। भट्टाचार्य (2020) का मत है कि बहुभाषा शिक्षा (एमएलई) को सफल बनाने के लिए शैक्षणिक परिवर्तन और प्रशिक्षित शिक्षकों के साथ होना चाहिए जो कक्षा में कई भाषाओं से निपट सकते हैं और बच्चे की मातृभाषा में पढ़ा सकते हैं।

मातृभाषा में अधिगम का विचार पुराना परंतु कार्यान्वयन नगण्य : प्राथमिक विद्यालय में शिक्षा के माध्यम के रूप में मातृभाषा का उपयोग करने का विचार भारतीय शिक्षा प्रणाली के लिए नया नहीं है। भारतीय संविधान के अनुच्छेद 350 में स्पष्ट उल्लेख है कि प्रत्येक राज्य और स्थानीय प्राधिकरण को “भाषाई अल्पसंख्यक समूहों के बच्चों को शिक्षा के प्राथमिक स्तर पर मातृभाषा में शिक्षा के लिए पर्याप्त सुविधाएं” प्रदान करने का प्रयास करना चाहिए। शिक्षा और राष्ट्रीय विकास पर, कोठारी आयोग (1964-66) की रिपोर्ट ने सुझाव दिया था कि जनजातीय क्षेत्रों में, स्कूल के पहले दो वर्षों के लिए, शिक्षा और पुस्तकों का माध्यम स्थानीय जनजातीय भाषा में होना चाहिए। क्षेत्रीय भाषा को अलग से पढ़ाया जाना चाहिए और तीसरे वर्ष तक शिक्षा का माध्यम बनना चाहिए। शिक्षा का अधिकार अधिनियम, 2009 में भी यह उल्लेखित किया गया है कि जहां तक संभव हो, स्कूल में शिक्षा का माध्यम बच्चे की मातृभाषा होनी चाहिए।

मोहंती (2015) अपने शोधपत्र में बताते हैं की ओडिशा ही एकमात्र ऐसा राज्य है जिसने औपचारिक रूप से बहुभाषीय शिक्षा (एम.एल.ई.) को अपनी शिक्षा प्रणाली में शामिल किया है, और वह भी केवल अपने जनजातीय क्षेत्रों के लिए। 2007 में, ओडिशा सरकार ने एक कार्यक्रम शुरू किया जिसमें अनुसूचित जनजातियों के विद्यार्थियों की मातृभाषा प्राथमिक विद्यालय में शिक्षा के माध्यम के रूप में उपयोग की जाती है। ओडिशा को ग्रेड II से दूसरी भाषा और ग्रेड III से अंग्रेजी को तीसरी भाषा के रूप में पढ़ाया जाता है। प्राथमिक विद्यालय के बाद भी जनजातीय भाषाओं को विषय के रूप में पढ़ाया जाता है। इसे संभव बनाने के लिए, समुदाय के वे शिक्षक जो मातृभाषा के साथ-साथ दूसरी भाषा (या तो ओडिया या अंग्रेजी) में धारा प्रवाह हैं, की भर्ती की जाती है, इस कार्यक्रम के विस्तार की घोषणा करने वाले सरकार के 2014 के एक परिपत्र में स्पष्ट किया गया है कि “जो लोग इन मानदंडों को पूरा नहीं करते हैं उन्हें अनुबंध के आधार पर इस शर्त के साथ काम पर रखा जाता है कि वे उन भाषा कौशल को हासिल कर लें। यदि समुदाय का कोई शिक्षक इस मानदंड को पूरा नहीं करता है, तो सरकार गैर-स्थानीय शिक्षकों को काम पर रखती है जो स्थानीय भाषा में कुशल और संस्कृति से परिचित हैं”। सरकार ने स्थानीय भाषाओं जैसे देसिया, कुवी और कुई में द्विभाषी शब्दकोश, पाठ्यपुस्तकें, पूरक पठन सामग्री और भाषा पुस्तिकाएं भी बनाई हैं।

यदि स्कूल स्थानीय भाषाओं में पढ़ाते हैं, तो परिवार भी अपने बच्चे की शिक्षा में शामिल हो सकते हैं। सिंह (2006) (जो एक प्रथम-स्कूल कार्यक्रम के साथ काम करते हैं, जो असम के कोकराझार और चिरांग में जनजातीय और गैर-जनजातीय ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में बच्चों को उनकी मातृभाषा अधिगम में सहायता प्रदान करता है) का मानना है की समुदाय के सदस्यों को शिक्षकों के रूप में भी काम पर रखा जा सकता है क्योंकि वे स्थानीय भाषा में पारंगत होते हैं। स्कूल क्षेत्रीय भाषा और अंग्रेजी भाषा को एक विषय के रूप में पढ़ाना जारी रख सकते हैं। उदाहरण के लिए पैट्रिनोस और वेलेज (2009) द्वारा किए गए ग्वाटेमाला के अध्ययन से यह साक्ष्य मिलते हैं की द्विभाषी कक्षाओं में बच्चे, जिसमें प्राथमिक विद्यालय में शिक्षा के माध्यम के रूप में मायान भाषाओं में से एक शामिल है, स्पेनिश भाषा की परीक्षाओं में केवल स्पेनिश भाषा में पढ़ाये जाने वाले स्कूलों की तुलना में बेहतर प्रदर्शन करते हैं।

मातृभाषा अधिगम के कार्यान्वयन की चुनौतियाँ :

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (2020) “शिक्षकों के लिए सहायता के रूप में सेवा” करने के लिए तकनीकी हस्तक्षेप का सुझाव देती है और “रमणीय” पुस्तकों का स्थानीय भाषाओं में विकास या अनुवाद करना और उन्हें स्कूल और डिजिटल पुस्तकालयों में उपलब्ध कराने कि बात करती है। यह उन शिक्षकों के लिए प्रोत्साहन का भी सुझाव देती है जो विशेष रूप से उच्च शालात्यागी दर वाले क्षेत्रों में स्थानीय भाषाएं जानते हैं और पाठ्यक्रम को अधिक आकर्षक और उपयोगी बनाने के लिए इसमें बदलाव करते हैं।

स्कूलों में मातृभाषा का प्रयोग करने की नीति की सबसे आम आलोचना यह है कि यह उन लोगों के बीच की खाई को चौड़ा करती है जो अंग्रेजी में संवाद कर सकते हैं और जो नहीं कर सकते हैं। भट्टाचार्य (2020) का मानना है कि “शिक्षाविदों के लिए यह कहना ठीक है कि स्थानीय भाषा शिक्षा का माध्यम होनी चाहिए लेकिन माता-पिता यह नहीं चाहते हैं। वे अंग्रेजी माध्यम चाहते हैं क्योंकि उन्हें लगता है कि अंग्रेजी भाषा उनके बच्चों को जीवन में आगे ले जाएगी”। उनका मानना है कि माता-पिता के लिए व्यवस्थित मार्गदर्शन होना चाहिए ताकि उन्हें यह समझने में मदद मिल सके कि उनके बच्चों के लिए अंग्रेजी माध्यम में अधिगम और भी सरल हो जाएगा यदि वे अपनी मातृ भाषा से शुरुआत करते हैं।

भारत के राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसन्धान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद के पूर्व सचिव, अनिल स्वरूप (2020) के अनुसार “इस नीति के कार्यान्वयन में असंख्य समस्याएं होंगी लेकिन वे दुर्गम नहीं हैं”। वे आगे लिखते हैं की मातृभाषा अधिगम पर नीति “राजनीतिक रूप से स्वीकार्य है”, क्योंकि यह राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति का एक हिस्सा है; यह “सामाजिक रूप से वांछनीय है”, क्योंकि यह स्कूल में अधिगम के स्तर में सुधार करने में सहायता करेगी; और “तकनीकी रूप से संभव है”, क्योंकि इसे लागू करना संभव है। लेकिन यह धन की कमी के कारण “आर्थिक रूप से व्यवहार्य नहीं है”, क्योंकि परिवर्तन को लागू करने के लिए शिक्षकों सहित प्रशिक्षित कर्मचारियों की कमी के कारण राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में “प्रशासनिक क्षमता अल्प है”। उदाहरण के लिए, मोहंती (2015) ने सुंदरगढ़, ओडिशा में बहुभाषीय शिक्षा (एम.एल.ई.) के कार्यान्वयन पर अपने गुणात्मक अध्ययन से यह निष्कर्ष निकाला कि स्कूल बहुभाषीय शिक्षकों को काम पर रखने को प्राथमिकता नहीं देते हैं।

एक और चुनौती यह है कि कौन सी मातृभाषा स्कूल में शिक्षा का माध्यम बनती है और कौन सी नहीं, यह अत्यंत राजनीतिक है। सिंह (2006), के अनुसार, राभा, संथाली और नेपाली जैसी स्थानीय भाषा बोलने वाले विद्यार्थी कोकराझार और चिरांग क्षेत्रों में असमिया-माध्यम के स्कूलों में जाते हैं। यदि मातृभाषा में स्कूली शिक्षा को केवल अंग्रेजी में पढ़ाने के विरोध में देखा जाता है और राज्य भाषा को प्राथमिकता दी जाती है, तो ये बच्चे जिन्हें अपनी मातृ भाषा में पढ़ाए जाने से लाभ होना चाहिए वह नहीं मिलेगा।

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (2020)के अनुसार, क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं का उपयोग करने का उद्देश्य न केवल एक बच्चे के सीखने के परिणामों में सुधार करना है, बल्कि “भारत के ज्ञान को स्थापित करना” भी है। इसे “राष्ट्रीय गौरव, आत्मविश्वास, आत्म-ज्ञान, सहयोग और एकीकरण के उद्देश्यों के लिए महत्वपूर्ण माना जाता है”। सिंह (2006) के अनुसार, “यदि भाषा को केवल राष्ट्रीय एकता की दृष्टि से समझा जाए, तो यह गलत होगा”। यह विशेष रूप से उन क्षेत्रों

में बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है, जहां कई भाषाओं में गैर-मानकीकृत लिपियाँ हैं जो समुदाय में सभी के द्वारा स्वीकार नहीं की जाती हैं और जहां अतीत में जातीय हिंसा हुई हो। इन सभी समस्याओं के अतिरिक्त मातृभाषा में अधिगम संबन्धित परिवर्तनों को लागू करने का कोई मार्ग राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 नहीं दिखलाती है और यह स्थानीय सरकारों और व्यक्तिगत संस्थानों पर निर्भर है कि क्या वे इन परिवर्तनों को लागू करना चाहते हैं क्योंकि यह एक अनिवार्य नीति नहीं है।

मातृभाषा में अधिगम की चुनौतियाँ : भारत में कई भाषाएँ हैं - 2011 की जनगणना ने 270 मातृभाषाओं की पहचान की और कक्षाओं में एक से अधिक बोली जाने वाली भाषा वाले बच्चे होते हैं। झिंगरान (2009) के अनुसार सभी भाषाओं के लिए शिक्षा का माध्यम बनना संभव नहीं हो सकता है और देश के बड़े हिस्से के लिए इसे लागू करना भी संभव नहीं हो सकता है। वे औपचारिक बहुभाषीय शिक्षा के विकल्प का सुझाव देते हुए लिखते हैं कि विद्यार्थी की भाषा शिक्षा का माध्यम नहीं होगी, लेकिन सरकार औपचारिक रूप से यह अनिवार्य करेगी कि शिक्षकों और विद्यार्थियों द्वारा कक्षा में मातृभाषा का उपयोग किया जाए। यह बच्चों को क्षेत्रीय भाषा या अंग्रेजी सीखने के साथ-साथ अपनी भाषा में बात करने, चर्चा करने और खुद को अभिव्यक्त करने की क्षमता को विकसित करेगा। वे अपने व्यक्तिगत अनुभव को उल्लेखित करते हुए लिखते हैं कि “जब उपर्युक्त बदलाव किए गए तो हमने मूक कक्षाओं को 2-3 महीनों में परिवर्तित होते देखा और विद्यार्थी बोलने, बातचीत करने में अधिक सक्रिय और व्यस्त दिखने लगे”। पलियाटो (2020) के लेख में भी केरल में ‘रोशनी कार्यक्रम’ का एक उदाहरण मिलता है जिसके माध्यम से प्रवासी बच्चे, जो आमतौर पर शिक्षा के विभिन्न भाषायी माध्यमों के कारण आंशिक रूप से स्कूल में पिछड़ जाते हैं, बच्चे की मातृभाषा सहित कई भाषाओं के उपयोग के माध्यम से मलयालम सहजता से सीखते हैं।

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति इस बात का कोई उल्लेख नहीं करती है कि शिक्षा के माध्यम में इस बदलाव को कैसे वित्त पोषित किया जाना है। द्विभाषी कार्यक्रमों में प्रारंभिक निवेश अधिक हो सकता है विशेष रूप से उन भाषाओं के लिए नई शिक्षण सामग्री विकसित करने में अतिरिक्त लागत आएगी जिन्हें मानकीकृत नहीं किया गया है या जिनके अपनी कोई लिपि नहीं है। इसके लिए एक बहुभाषी कक्षा में पढ़ाने के लिए प्रशिक्षित शिक्षकों और इन भाषाओं में धारा प्रवाह बोलने वाले नए शिक्षकों की भी आवश्यकता होगी। पैट्रिनोस और वेलेज (2009) के द्वारा ग्वाटेमाला और सेनेगल के अध्ययन से जो आंकड़ें मिलते हैं उससे यह अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है कि स्थानीय भाषा सामग्री के उत्पादन में शिक्षा बजट का लगभग 1% खर्च हुआ और समय बीतने के साथ निवेश घट गया। आंकड़ें दिखलाते हैं कि ग्वाटेमाला में, द्विभाषी स्कूली शिक्षा, उच्च लागत के बावजूद, अंततः 5 मिलियन डॉलर प्रति वर्ष (374 मिलियन रुपये से अधिक) की बचत हुई, क्योंकि इससे शाला त्यागने और पुनरावृत्ति में कमी आई।

सुझाव एवं निष्कर्ष :

प्रारम्भ में देश भर के कुछ स्कूलों में लगभग तीन-चार वर्षों के लिए बहुभाषी शिक्षा की कोशिश करनी चाहिए। कार्यान्वयन में आने वाली समस्याओं और परिवर्तन की लागत की पहचान कर और फिर इन समस्याओं को हल करने वाली कार्य योजना तैयार करनी चाहिए। स्थानीय भाषा की शिक्षा के माध्यम के रूप में पेश करना निश्चित रूप से दो स्थितियों में किया जाना चाहिए - एक अंतरराज्यीय सीमाओं के साथ स्थित क्षेत्रों में प्रवासी आबादी के लिए, जहां बच्चे घर पर एक भाषा बोलते हैं लेकिन स्कूल में दूसरी भाषा में पढ़ाया जाता है जैसे मध्य प्रदेश के साथ महाराष्ट्र की सीमा पर मराठी भाषी बच्चे, आंध्र प्रदेश के साथ ओडिशा की सीमा में तेलुगु भाषी बच्चे, या पश्चिम बंगाल में बिहारी प्रवासीयों के बच्चे। दूसरा उन भाषाओं के लिए जो आसानी से शिक्षा के माध्यम के रूप में उपयोग की जा सकती हैं लेकिन नहीं हैं। जैसे छत्तीसगढ़ी, जो 8-10 जिलों में बोली जाती है, जो भाषा और साहित्य में भी पर्याप्त शिक्षक पैदा कर सकती है और समुदाय द्वारा स्वीकार भी की जा सकती है लेकिन अभी भी स्कूलों में शिक्षा का माध्यम नहीं है। उम्मीद है कि इस नीति के परिणामस्वरूप, चीजें बदल जाएंगी लेकिन यह कहना कि हम शिक्षा का माध्यम मातृभाषा चाहते हैं, केवल पहला कदम है। किसी भी सार्थक बदलाव के लिए हमें सफल कार्यान्वयन योजना की आवश्यकता होगी।

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राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति - 2020 एवं भारत का भाषाई संकट

अरविन्द कुमार गौतम

भारत एक विशाल भाषाई विविधता वाला देश है। यहाँ की बहुभाषीय एवं बहुसांस्कृतिक परिवेश में भाषाओं की प्रासंगिकता और भी बढ़ जाती है। यहाँ पर लगभग प्रत्येक 15 से 20 किलोमीटर पर भाषा बदल जाती है। जैसे कि कहा भी जाता है कि-

कोस कोस पर बदले पानी, चार कोस पर वानी।

अर्थात् यहाँ पर हर एक कोस पर पानी बदल जाता है तथा प्रत्येक चार कोस पर वानी या भाषा बदल जाती है। इसी कारण यहाँ अनगिनत भाषाएँ बोली जाती हैं। भाषाएँ व्यक्ति के संस्कारों की संवाहक होती हैं। भाषा के बिना किसी भी देश की संस्कृति की कल्पना भी नहीं की जा सकती है। भाषा हमें राष्ट्रीयता से जोड़ती है और देश प्रेम की भावना उत्प्रेरित करती है। कोस-कोस पर बदले पानीवचार कोस पर वानी वाला हमारा देश वर्तमान में न सिर्फ अपनी भाषाओं को खो रहा है बल्कि इनके साथ जुड़ी अपनी पहचान से भी दूर होता जा रहा है।

वर्ष 1961 की जनगणना के अनुसार भारत में लगभग 1652 भाषाएँ थी। लेकिन वर्ष 1971 तक इनमें से केवल 808 भाषाएँ ही बची थी। भारतीय जनगणना 2011 के अनुसार यहाँ पर 121 मातृभाषाएँ एवं 19569 बोलियाँ बोली जाती हैं। ये भाषाएँ मुख्यतः पांच भाषा परिवारों हिन्द-आर्य भाषा परिवार, द्रविड़ भाषा परिवार, ऑस्ट्रो एशियाटिक भाषा परिवार, चीनी, तिब्बती भाषा परिवार एवं अंडमानी भाषा परिवारों से सम्बंधित हैं। यूनेस्को की 'एटलस ऑफ द वर्ल्ड्स लैंग्वेजेस इन डेंजर' (UNESCO's Atlas of the Worlds Languages in Danger. 2011) की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार पूरे विश्व में भाषाएँ बहुत तेजी से विलुप्त हो रही हैं तथा भारत वर्ष में लुप्तप्राय भाषाओं की संख्या सबसे अधिक है। एक अन्य सर्वेक्षण 'भारतीय लोकभाषा सर्वेक्षण' (People's Linguistic Survey of India-2013) के अनुसार, पिछले 50 वर्षों में लगभग 220 भाषाएँ लुप्त हो चुकी हैं जबकि 197 भाषाओं को लुप्तप्राय के रूप में वर्गीकृत किया गया है। चिंता की बात यह है कि इन 197 भाषाओं में से मणिपुरी व बोडो जैसी अनुसूचित भाषाएँ भी शामिल हैं। दुनियाभर के भाषाविदों की ऐसी चिंता है कि यदि भाषाओं की क्षति को रोकने के लिए कोई ठोस कदम नहीं उठाये गए तो इस सदी के अंत तक अभी बोली जाने वाली 6000 भाषाओं में से लगभग आधी भाषाएँ विलुप्त हो जायेंगी। ये वो भाषाएँ हैं जिनका प्रयोग या तो कम हो रहा है या ये भाषाएँ नयी पीढ़ी को स्थानांतरित नहीं हो रही हैं। इन्हीं भाषाओं को ही सामान्यतः लुप्तप्राय भाषा कहा जाता है। यह एक प्रामाणिक तथ्य है कि भाषाएँ जन्म लेती हैं, फलती फूलती हैं और एक निश्चित अंतराल के पश्चात लुप्त भी हो जाती हैं। यद्यपि वर्तमान समय में भाषाएँ बहुत तेजी से विलुप्त हो रही हैं। भाषाओं का इस प्रकार विलुप्त होना सम्पूर्ण मानव जाति के लिए चिंता का विषय है।

भारत विभिन्न संस्कृतियों का समृद्ध भंडार है जो हजारों वर्षों में विकसित हुई हैं और यहां की कला, साहित्यिक कृतियों, प्रथाओं, परम्पराओं, भाषाई अभिव्यक्तियों, कलाकृतियों, ऐतिहासिक एवं सांस्कृतिक धरोहर स्थलों आदि में परिलक्षित होती हुई दिखती है। यहां की कला एवं संस्कृति को बढ़ावा देने के लिए भाषाओं का संवर्धन बहुत आवश्यक है।

भाषा सिर्फ संप्रेषण का माध्यम ही नहीं है बल्कि यह व्यक्ति के समग्र व्यक्तित्व को परिभाषित करने का प्रमुख साधन भी है। मनुष्य के विचारों की संकल्पना भाषा के माध्यम से ही साकार होती है एवं उसकी मूलभूत बौद्धिक प्रक्रियाएं जैसे विचार करना, समझना और यहां तक कि स्वप्न देखना भी भाषा के माध्यम से ही संभव होता है।

विश्व की जनसंख्या तथा भाषाओं का वितरण बहुत विषम है, एक ओर विश्व की पचास प्रतिशत जनसंख्या सर्वाधिक बोली जाने वाली 20 भाषाओं जैसे मंदारिन, अंग्रेजी, हिन्दी, उर्दू और स्पेनिश का प्रयोग करती है जिनके बोलने वालों की संख्या लगभग 5 करोड़ से अधिक हैं, तो दूसरी ओर विश्व की शेष जनसंख्या बहुत सी अन्य अल्प प्रचलित भाषाओं का प्रयोग करती है जिनके बोलने वालों की संख्या केवल सैकड़ों या हजारों में है।

प्रसिद्ध भाषा वैज्ञानिक क्रिस्टोफर मूसले के अनुसार, भाषा हमेशा से समाज तथा राष्ट्र पर आधिपत्य करने का एक सशक्त हथियार रहा है। साम्राज्य तलवार की ताकत के दम पर जीते और हारे जाते हैं। लेकिन उनकी वास्तविक सहनशीलता, उनका स्थायी प्रभाव औपचारिक शासन समाप्त हो जाने के बाद भी भाषा के प्रभाव के कारण सदियों तक बना रहता है (एटलस, 2011)

भाषा में व्यक्ति का विशिष्ट सांस्कृतिक एवं ऐतिहासिक ज्ञान संचित होता है। किसी भी भाषा की क्षति संपूर्ण मानवता की अखण्डनीय क्षति है। भाषाएँ विलुप्त होने से समाज में बहुत सारी सांस्कृतिक परम्पराएँ, रीति-रिवाज समाप्त हो रहे हैं। विलुप्त भाषाएँ अपने पीछे एक सुनहरे सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक जीवन के लक्षण छोड़ जाती हैं। यूनेस्को के मानदण्ड के अनुसार कोई भी भाषा तब लुप्तप्राय की श्रेणी में आती है जब उस भाषा के बोलने वाले जीवित न रहें या उस भाषा का प्रयोग करना बंद कर दें। भाषाओं के खतरे के स्तर के आधार पर उनको पांच श्रेणियों में विभाजित किया जा सकता है। असुरक्षित (Unsafe), निश्चित रूप से लुप्तप्राय (Definitely Endangered), गंभीर रूप से लुप्तप्राय (Severely Endangered), गंभीर संकटग्रस्त (Critically endangered) एवं विलुप्त (Extinct)। यूनेस्को की ताजा रिपोर्ट विश्व के 155 देशों की संकटग्रस्त भाषाओं की एक भयानक तस्वीर प्रस्तुत करती है। इसके अनुसार वैश्विक स्तर पर पिछले तीन पीढ़ियों में लगभग 228 भाषाएँ विलुप्त हो चुकी हैं इसके अतिरिक्त 577 भाषाएँ नाजुक रूप से खतरे में, 537 गंभीर रूप से खतरे में, 640 निश्चित रूप से खतरे में और 482 असुरक्षित की श्रेणी में हैं।

भारतवर्ष में वर्तमान में 197 भाषाएँ लुप्तप्राय की श्रेणी में हैं जिनमें से क्रमशः 81 भाषाएँ असुरक्षित, 62 भाषाएँ निश्चित रूप से खतरे में, 7 भाषाएँ गंभीर रूप से खतरे में, 42 भाषाएँ नाजुक रूप से खतरे की श्रेणी में हैं। इसके साथ ही अहोम, अईमोल, एंड्रो, चैरेल, कोल्हरेंग, रंगकास, सेंगमाई, तराओं एवं तोल्वा जैसी भाषाएँ विलुप्त हो चुकी हैं। यूनेस्को की यह रिपोर्ट लुप्तप्राय भाषाओं को बचाते हुए विश्व की भाषाई एवं सांस्कृतिक विविधता को बचाने की दिशा में एक पहल का परिणाम है।

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति एवं भारतीय भाषाएँ

भारतीय जनगणना 2011 के अनुसार भारतवर्ष में 22 अनुसूचित एवं 99 गैर अनुसूचित भाषाएँ बोली जाती हैं तथा 19569 बोलियाँ बोली जाती हैं। इनमें से 30 ऐसी भाषाएँ हैं जिनके बोलने वालों की संख्या 10,00,000 या इससे अधिक है तथा 121 ऐसी भाषाएँ हैं जिनके बोलने वालों की संख्या 10,000 या इससे अधिक है। जनगणना के आंकड़ों के अनुसार भारत वर्ष में हिंदी सर्वाधिक बोली जाने वाली भाषा है, जिसके बोलने

वालों की संख्या लगभग 34 करोड़ है तथा मणिपुर की मारम भाषा 10144 व्यक्तियों के साथ सबसे कम बोली जाने वाली भाषा है। यहाँ 22 अनुसूचित भाषाओं के अतिरिक्त गैर अनुसूचित भाषाओं में भीली (56 लाख) सबसे ज्यादा बोली जानी वाली भाषा है। यहाँ विद्यालयों में 47 से ज्यादा भाषाएँ शिक्षा के माध्यम या विषय के रूप में पढ़ाई जा रही हैं। (एनसीईआरटी, 2006)

हालांकि लुप्तप्राय भाषाएँ पूरे भारतवर्ष में फैली हुई हैं फिर भी इनमें से अधिकांश भाषाएँ पूर्वोत्तर क्षेत्र तथा पश्चिम बंगाल, ओडिशा, हिमाचल प्रदेश, जम्मू एवं कश्मीर व उत्तराखंड के आदिवासी क्षेत्रों में बोली जाती हैं। 2001 की जनगणना के अनुसार इन भाषाओं के बोलने वालों की संख्या में भी काफी विविधता है जो कि शून्य से 27 लाख (गोंडी) तक है। इसके अतिरिक्त नाजुक रूप से लुप्तप्राय और गंभीर रूप से लुप्तप्राय भाषाओं में से लगभग 75 प्रतिशत भाषाओं के बोलने वालों की संख्या 5,000 से भी कम है। जिसका आशय यह है कि ये भाषाएँ भी लुप्तप्राय होने की कगार पर हैं। भारत के विभिन्न राज्यों में बोली जाने वाली अधिकारिक भाषाओं में से आओ (नागालैंड), अंगामी (नागालैंड), चांग (नागालैंड), खासी (मेघालय), खीमनुंगन (नागालैंड), कोंयक (नागालैंड) एवं मणिपुरी (मणिपुर) भाषाएँ लुप्तप्राय की श्रेणी में हैं।

मातृभाषा एवं शिक्षा का माध्यम

मातृभाषा में शिक्षा की अवधारणा का विचार नया नहीं है। विदित है कि अनुच्छेद 350ए में स्पष्ट रूप से उल्लेख है कि यदि राज्य चाहे तो वह मातृभाषा में शिक्षा की व्यवस्था कर सकता है। इसके अनुसार यह किसी भी राज्य और वहाँ के स्थानीय प्राधिकरण का प्रयास होना चाहिए कि वह अपने राज्य में प्राथमिक स्तर तक अल्पसंख्यक भाषाई समूहों के लिए प्राथमिक स्तर तक शिक्षा की व्यवस्था उनकी मातृभाषा में करना सुनिश्चित करें। शिक्षा का अधिकार 2009, भी इस बात पर बल देता है कि शिक्षा का माध्यम मातृभाषा ही होनी चाहिए। मातृभाषा के माध्यम से अगर शिक्षा दी जाये तो इससे बालक की मौलिक रचनात्मक प्रतिभा को विकसित करने में निश्चित ही मदद मिलती है। मातृभाषा में शिक्षा प्रदान करके उनकी कल्पनाशीलता और सृजनशीलता को बचाया जा सकता है। जो बच्चे अपनी मातृभाषा में जितनी ज्यादा पकड़ रखते हैं उनकी रचनात्मकता और तार्किकता उतनी ही अधिक होती है। इसी तारतम्य में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में इस बात की व्यवस्था की गई है कि कम से कम पाँचवी कक्षा तक लेकिन बेहतर यह होगा कि आठवीं कक्षा तक या उससे आगे जहाँ तक संभव हो शिक्षा का माध्यम घर की भाषा, मातृभाषा, स्थानीय भाषाया क्षेत्रीय भाषा ही होगी। (घर की भाषा आमतौर पर मातृभाषा या स्थानीय समुदायों द्वारा बोली जाने वाली भाषा है) इसके पश्चात घर/स्थानीय भाषा को जहाँ तकभी संभव हो भाषा के रूप में पढ़ाई जाती रहेंगी। सार्वजनिक तथा निजी क्षेत्र के विद्यालय इसका अनुपालन करेंगे। UDISE के 2019-20 के आंकड़ों के अनुसार कुछ राज्यों/केन्द्र शासित प्रदेशों में शिक्षा के माध्यम के रूप में 1 से लेकर सात भाषाएँ तक प्रयोग में लाई जा रही हैं। जिनमें से एक मुख्य रूप से उस राज्य की बोली जाने वाली स्थानीय भाषा है तथा दूसरी हिन्दी या अंग्रेजी है, उदाहरण के लिए असम में-असमिया, हिन्दी, बंगाली, मणिपुरी, गारो, बोडो तथा अंग्रेजी इत्यादि भाषाएँ शिक्षा के माध्यम के रूप में प्रयोग की जा रही हैं।

भाषा विलुप्ति के कारण

लॉर्ड मैकाले के 1935 के अंग्रेजी भाषा कानून आने के बाद भारत की क्षेत्रीय भाषाएँ जैसे कि हिन्दी, संस्कृत और उर्दू आदि क्रमिक रूप से केवल पारंपरिक विद्यालयों में शिक्षा के माध्यम के रूप में ही सीमित होती गयीं। ऐसा माहौल बनाया गया कि भारतीय भाषाओं को पढ़ने का कोई लाभ नहीं है, समस्त ज्ञान-विज्ञान सिर्फ और सिर्फ अंग्रेजी भाषा में ही निहित है। युवा पीढ़ी रोजगार के लिए अंग्रेजी व अन्य प्रभावशाली भाषाओं (जिनमें रोजगार की अधिक संभावना हो) की ओर उन्मुख होने लगी जिसके फलस्वरूप धीरे-धीरे क्षेत्रीय भाषाएँ हाशिए की

ओर चली गई व ऐसी भाषाएँ जिनके बोलने वालों की संख्या बहुत कम थी वे लुप्त हो गई। भाषा के विलुप्त होने के बहुत से कारण होते हैं, जिनमें से कुछ प्रमुख कारण इस प्रकार हैं-

सरकारी नीतियाँ किसी भी देश की नीतियाँ वहाँ की भाषाओं के विकास का सबसे प्रमुख कारण हैं, उदाहरण स्वरूप वर्तमान में भारत सरकार केवल उन भाषाओं को मान्यता देती है जिसकी अपनी एक लिपि हो तथा व्यापक स्तर पर बोली जाती हो। इस प्रकार भारत सरकार द्वारा 122 भाषाओं को मान्यता दी गई है जो भारतीय लोकभाषा सर्वेक्षण द्वारा आकलित 780 भाषाओं की तुलना में बहुत कम है। इस विसंगति का एक प्रमुख कारण यह भी है कि भारत सरकार ऐसी किसी भाषा को मान्यता नहीं देती जिसे बोलने वालों की संख्या 10,000 से कम है। इस कारण इन भाषाओं के सामने अपने अस्तित्व को बचाने की चुनौती है।

समुदायों का पलायन समुदायों का एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान पर पलायन होना भी भाषाओं के विलुप्त होने का प्रमुख कारण है। ये समुदाय बंटवारा, युद्ध, महामारी या अन्य कारणों से एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान पर पलायन करते हैं जिसके फलस्वरूप इनकी भाषा भी प्रभावित होती है।

रोजगार के बदलते स्वरूप रोजगार के बदलते स्वरूपों के कारण अल्पप्रचलित भाषाओं को कम महत्व दिया जाता है तथा ऐसी भाषाएँ जिनमें रोजगार की संभावना ज्यादा होती है उनको अधिक महत्व दिया जा रहा है जिसके कारण युवा पीढ़ी इन अल्पप्रचलित भाषाओं का प्रयोग कम करती है।

सामाजिक मूल्यों में बदलाव सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों में बदलाव के कारण भी भाषा प्रभावित होती है।

एकल परिवार का चलन वर्तमान समय में वैश्वीकरण के बढ़ते प्रभाव के कारण संयुक्त परिवार के स्थान पर एकल परिवार का चलन बढ़ रहा है जिसके कारण बच्चे अपने पूर्वजों की भाषा नहीं सीख पा रहे हैं। भाषाओं के विलुप्त होने का यह भी एक प्रमुख कारण है।

शिक्षा का माध्यम अंग्रेजी या अन्य भाषाओं में होना भी भाषाओं के विलुप्त होने का एक कारण है। शहरीकरण के इस दौर में निजी स्कूलों की संख्या बहुत तेजी से बढ़ रही है। इन स्कूलों में शिक्षा का माध्यम आमतौर पर अंग्रेजी होता है जिस कारण से बच्चे अपनी मातृभाषा से दूर हो जाते हैं।

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति और क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं का संरक्षण

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 में मातृभाषाओं को पुनः जीवित करने का प्रयास किया है। यह शिक्षा नीति किसी भाषा विशेष के प्रोत्साहन की बात नहीं करती बल्कि यह समान रूप से सभी भारतीय भाषाओं की चिंता करती है। हमारी समतामूलक दृष्टि अनेक भाषाओं और बोलियों में विद्यमान लोक साहित्य, लोक कला, लोक नृत्य, लोक संगीत, लोक कथा आदि से समृद्ध हुई है। हमारी दंत कथाएँ लोकोक्तियाँ, पर्व, तीर्थ आदि सभी क्षेत्रीय बंधनों से परे देखने में हमेशा समर्थ रहे हैं। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति इस विचार को अग्रसारित करती प्रतीत होती है। किसी भी भाषा के संकटग्रस्त होने या लुप्त हो जाने के परिणाम बहुत ही दूरगामी होते हैं। वास्तव में भाषा का एक-एक शब्द बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण होता है। वह अपने पीछे कला व संस्कृति की एक लंबी परंपरा को लेकर चलता है, इसलिए भाषा के लुप्त होने पर संस्कृति पर भी खतरा मंडराने लगता है। इस प्रकार देखा जाये तो संस्कृति और उस भाषा के संचित ज्ञान को बचाने के लिए भारतीय भाषाओं के संरक्षण की अत्यंत आवश्यकता है।

भाषा प्रत्यक्ष रूप से मनुष्य की संस्कृति और परंपरा से जुड़ी होती है। इसका सीधा संबंध मानव जाति की उत्पत्ति से है। भाषाओं के लुप्त होने से हमारी सभ्यता और संस्कृति को उसी प्रकार खतरा है जिस प्रकार से सिंधु घाटी सभ्यता के खत्म होने से ब्राह्मी लिपि समाप्त हो गयी थी। भाषा के द्वारा ही अनेकता में एकता तथा विभिन्न संस्कृतियों का समागम संभव है। देश में प्रयोग की जा रही अल्पज्ञात या कम प्रभावशाली भाषाओं के लिए उपलब्ध

नीतियों के मूल्यांकन एवं सुधार तथा भाषाई विविधता को बचाने के लिए सभी लुप्तप्राय भाषाओं को संरक्षित करने, पुनर्जीवित करने एवं प्रोत्साहन के लिए ठोस नीतियों को तुरंत लागू करने की आवश्यकता है। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में भाषाओं की सुरक्षा तथा संरक्षण के लिए कुछ सुझाव दिए गए हैं जिनमें से कुछ इस प्रकार हैं।

विद्यालयों में बच्चों को प्राथमिक शिक्षा उनकी मातृभाषा में दी जाये क्योंकि बच्चा जब मातृभाषा में सीखता है तो मातृभाषा के विकास के साथ ही बच्चे का व्यक्तिगत भाषाई विकास भी सुचारू रूप से होता है। इसी बात को ध्यान में रखते हुए नई शिक्षा नीति में भी प्राथमिक शिक्षा मातृभाषा में देने की बात कही गई है।

- विद्यार्थियों को उनकी अपनी भाषा के अतिरिक्त कोई अन्य भाषा सीखने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया जाना चाहिए जिससे कि वे अपनी मातृभाषा के साथ ही किसी अन्य भाषा का ज्ञान प्राप्त कर सकें। ऐसा करने से वे उस भाषा में निहित सभ्यता, संस्कृति व लोक व्यवहार को भी जान सकेंगे। राष्ट्रीय एकता के लिए यह महत्वपूर्ण कदम सिद्ध होगा। इस शिक्षा नीति में त्रिभाषा सूत्र की परिकल्पना फिर से की गयी है। इसमें इस बात का प्रावधान किया गया है कि किसी भी राज्य, क्षेत्र या विद्यार्थी को कोई भाषा जबरदस्ती न थोपी जाये वरन, इसमें इस बात की व्यवस्था की गयी है कि विद्यार्थी कोई दो भाषाएँ अपने राज्य की तथा तीसरी किसी अन्य भाषा का चुनाव अपने हिसाब से कर सकता है। त्रिभाषा सूत्र की संकल्पना सर्वप्रथम राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 1968 में की गयी थी लेकिन इतने वर्षों के बीत जाने के बाद भी इसका सही तरीके से क्रियान्वयन नहीं हुआ है।
- सभी विश्वविद्यालयों को क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं पर शोध कार्य कराने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया जाना चाहिये। शोधार्थियों को उस क्षेत्र विशेष की भाषा, बोली पर कार्य करने के लिए प्रेरित किया जाये तथा अगर कोई भाषा अल्प प्रचलित या लुप्तप्राय है तो उस पर विशेष रूप से ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है।
- गैर सरकारी संगठनों के माध्यम से प्राचीन भाषाओं को संरक्षित करने व बढ़ावा देने के लिए अनुदान की व्यवस्था की जाये व उनके प्रति जागरूकता पैदा की जाये।
- सरकार की कुछ संस्थाएं भारतीय भाषाओं की सुरक्षा, संरक्षण एवं संवर्धन की दिशा में बहुत महत्वपूर्ण कार्य कर रही हैं जिनमें से भारतीय भाषा संस्थान, मैसूर तथा केन्द्रीय हिन्दी संस्थान, आगरा का योगदान अमूल्य है। विभिन्न भारतीय भाषाओं के शोध एवं विकास व उनके संरक्षण के लिए भारत सरकार ने 1969 में कर्नाटक राज्य के मैसूर में भारतीय भाषा संस्थान की स्थापना की थी। इसके अतिरिक्त यहां पर 2014 में लुप्तप्राय भाषाओं के सुरक्षा एवं संरक्षण के लिए 'लुप्तप्राय भाषाओं की सुरक्षा एवं संरक्षण परियोजना' (Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages), स्थापित की गई है। यह परियोजना अल्पज्ञात एवं संकटग्रस्त भाषाओं के संरक्षण एवं उनके उन्नयन के लिए उल्लेखनीय कार्य कर रही है।

लुप्तप्राय भाषाओं का संरक्षण

लुप्तप्राय भाषाओं को संरक्षित करने और विकसित करने के लिए एक वृहत डिजिटल परियोजना लाने की आवश्यकता है, जिसके अन्तर्गत भाषा के महत्वपूर्ण पक्षों का श्रव्य-दृश्य प्रलेखन आदि किया जाना चाहिये। युवा पीढ़ी इन भाषाओं का अधिक से अधिक प्रयोग करे इसके लिए उनको प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए नये-नये भाषाई गेम व एप्प विकसित करने की आवश्यकता है जिससे कि वे अपनी मातृभाषा को सीखने के लिए प्रेरित हो सकें व सामान्य जीवन में उनका अधिक से अधिक प्रयोग करें। भाषा प्रलेखन लुप्तप्राय भाषाओं को सुरक्षित रखने का एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम है। लुप्तप्राय भाषाओं का प्रलेखन करते हुए इनकी व्याख्या हिन्दी या अंग्रेजी जैसी प्रचलित भाषाओं में देना अधिक संगतपूर्ण होगा जिससे अधिक से अधिक लोग उसको समझ सकें।

भाषा को प्रोत्साहित और संरक्षित करने का कार्य भाषाई डिजिटलीकरण के द्वारा ही संभव है। डिजिटलीकरण के द्वारा इन भाषाओं तक अधिकाधिक लोगों की पहुंच संभव हो सकती है। इस बात को ध्यान में रखते हुए राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में भाषाओं के डिजिटलीकरण के लिए प्रावधान किये गये हैं जिसमें स्पष्ट रूप से उल्लिखित है कि भारतीय भाषाओं और उनमें निहित साहित्य, कला एवं संस्कृति का वेब आधारित प्लेटफॉर्म, पोर्टल, विकिपीडिया के माध्यम से दस्तावेजीकरण किया जायेगा। भारत जैसे देश में जहां की लगभग एक चौथाई जनसंख्या अशिक्षित है और अधिकांश भाषाएँ केवल बोलचाल के रूप में ही प्रचलित हैं, यह और भी अधिक आवश्यक हो जाता है कि भाषा सामग्री श्रव्य-दृश्य माध्यम में प्रलेखित करके सुरक्षित और संरक्षित रखी जाये। यह सभी कार्य व्यापक तरीके से जनभागीदारी के माध्यम से पूरे किये जायेंगे तथा ऐसी सभी परियोजनाओं में सरकार के द्वारा वित्तीय सहायता प्रदान की जायेगी। यह कदम न केवल लुप्त हो चुकी भाषाओं के लिये अपितु लुप्तप्राय भाषाओं के लिए भी समान रूप से उपयोगी साबित होगा। भाषा में मौजूद कुछ प्रमुख सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक पहलुओं जैसे कहानी कहने की कला (Folk Story telling), लोक साहित्य (Folk literature), लोकगीत (Folk song) या खाना बनाने की कला, मौखिक संस्कृति एवं इतिहास (Oral traditions and history), स्थानीय त्यौहार मनाने की परंपरा या अन्य कलाओं का श्रव्य-दृश्य माध्यम में प्रलेखन करके इनको सुरक्षित रखा जा सकता है व इसकी सहायता से सांस्कृतिक विरासत में मिले ज्ञान को संजोया जा सकता है।

निष्कर्ष

भाषा में क्षरण अपरिहार्य है लेकिन अगर भाषाएँ इसी प्रकार तेजी से विलुप्त होती रही तो यह आने वाली पीढ़ी और सम्पूर्ण मानवता के लिए बड़ी क्षति होगी। वैश्विक स्तर पर लगभग पन्द्रह दिनों में एक भाषा विलुप्त हो रही है और उस भाषा के साथ ही उसमें संरक्षित अमूल्य ज्ञान का खजाना भी नष्ट हो जाता है। इस संबंध में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 भाषाओं को पुनर्जीवित करने, बचाने और संरक्षित करने की दिशा में सही समय पर एक वरदान के रूप में आई है। यह शिक्षा नीति भारतीय भाषाओं के संवर्धन की बात करती है तथा इस बात पर भी बल देती है कि शास्त्रीय भाषाएँ, जनजातीय तथा लुप्तप्राय आदि सभी भारतीय भाषाओं को संरक्षण तथा बढ़ावा देने का प्रयास करने चाहिए। इसके लिए राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में इन भाषाओं को प्राथमिक शिक्षा तथा उच्च शिक्षा के प्रत्येक स्तर पर अनिवार्य किये जाने की बात कही गई है। विद्यार्थी इन भाषाओं को आसानी से सीख सकें इसके लिए उच्च गुणवत्ता वाली अधिगम सामग्री जैसे कि अभ्यास पुस्तिका, पाठ्यपुस्तक, पत्रिका आदि की सुनिश्चितता की व्यवस्था भी इसके अंतर्गत की जायेगी। विज्ञान सहित सभी विषयों में उच्चतम गुणवत्ता वाली पाठ्य पुस्तकों को मातृभाषा में उपलब्ध कराया जायेगा। भाषा के विकास के लिए त्रिभाषा सूत्र को पुनः शामिल किया जायेगा। संस्कृत, पालि, प्राकृत, फारसी के साथ ही तमिल, तेलुगु, कन्नड़, मलयालम और ओड़िया आदि भाषाओं को भी विकल्प के रूप में शामिल किया जायेगा व पाठ्यक्रम का हिस्सा बनाया जायेगा। भारत की राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 नई सहस्राब्दी के लिए राष्ट्रीय स्तर की रणनीति निर्धारित करने वाला एक महत्वपूर्ण नीति दस्तावेज है। यह नीति देश में स्कूली और उच्च शिक्षा में परिवर्तनकारी सुधारों का मार्ग प्रशस्त करेगी।

भाषा विज्ञान विभाग

डॉ. हरीसिंह गौर केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय, सागर (म.प्र.)

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नई शिक्षा नीति - 2020 के सन्दर्भ में प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा का बदलता स्वरूप

पुष्पेन्द्र यादव

प्रस्तावना

प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की अवधि शून्य अर्थात् गर्भाधान से शुरू होती है और आठ साल की उम्र तक चलती है। बच्चों के जीवन के ये प्रारंभिक वर्ष उनके जीवित रहने एवं जीवन में फलने-फूलने का निर्णय लेने और सभी क्षेत्रों में उनके सीखने और समग्र विकास की नींव रखने के लिए महत्वपूर्ण होते हैं। इन वर्षों के दौरान यह महत्वपूर्ण है कि उनके स्वास्थ्य और पोषण संबंधी आवश्यकताओं के साथ-साथ बच्चों की संज्ञानात्मक, शारीरिक, सामाजिक एवं भावनात्मक जरूरतों को भी पर्याप्त रूप से पूरा किया जाए ताकि उनका मस्तिष्क अपनी पूरी क्षमता से विकसित हो सके। नई शिक्षा नीति-2020 ने इस बात को प्रमुखता के साथ अपने दस्तावेज में उल्लेखित किया है कि बच्चों के मस्तिष्क का लगभग 85% विकास 6 वर्ष की आयु तक हो जाता है ऐसे में शुरुआती वर्षों में बच्चों की देखभाल और उनकी शिक्षा पर विशेष ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए। प्रथम द्वारा प्रकाशित वार्षिक स्थिति रिपोर्ट-2018 (अ.स.र.) में इस बात का जिक्र किया गया है कि बच्चों में बुनियादी और आधारभूत कौशलों के आभाव में उनसे ऊपर की कक्षाओं में आपेक्षित सीखने के प्रतिफल (लीनिंग आउटकम्स) प्राप्त नहीं किए जा सकते इसलिए यह जरूरी है कि इस दिशा में उचित कदम उठाए जाएँ।

कुछ वर्ष पूर्व राष्ट्रीय बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा नीति-2013 में समावेशी शिक्षा को बढ़ावा देने की परिकल्पना की गई थी, इसमें 6 वर्ष से कम आयु के बच्चों को न्यायसंगत और प्रासंगिक अवसर प्रदान करने एवं सभी बच्चों के इष्टतम विकास और सक्रीय सीखने की क्षमता को बढ़ावा देने के लिए प्रावधान किये गए थे। यह नीति बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा के सन्दर्भ में विकास को सुनिश्चित करने के साथ-साथ एक ठोस आधार प्रदान करने की दिशा में रास्ता तय करती है। राष्ट्रीय बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा नीति-2013 का उद्देश्य था कि प्रत्येक बच्चे के लिए देखभाल और प्रारंभिक शिक्षा पर ध्यान देने के साथ विकास, इकिवटी और समावेश के साथ सार्वभौमिक पहुंच को बढ़ावा दिया जाए एवं ई.सी.सी.ई. में गुणवत्ता और क्षमता को मजबूत करना, निगरानी और पर्यवेक्षण करना, अनुसंधान को बढ़ावा देना इत्यादि भी इस नीति के प्रमुख उद्देश्यों में से हैं। इस नीति के एक बड़े भाग का अभी भी जमीनी स्तर पर उतरना बाकी है इसके लिए आवश्यक कदम उठाने की आवश्यकता है। ई.सी.सी.ई. के लिए एक प्रमुख सार्वजनिक पहल इंटीग्रेटेड चाइल्ड डेवलपमेंट सर्विस (आई.सी.डी.एस.) द्वारा की जा रही है जिसका उद्देश्य है प्री-स्कूल शिक्षा प्रदान करने में आने वाली चुनौतियों को समझना और उन्हें दूर करने के लिए प्रयास करना है और दूसरा उद्देश्य है छोटे बच्चों में कुपोषण, रुग्णता, कम सीखने की क्षमता और मृत्यु दर के दुष्चक्र को तोड़ना। आई.सी.डी.एस.कार्यक्रम का बारीकी से मूल्यांकन करने से पता चलता है कि इसमें अनौपचारिक (इनफॉर्मल) शिक्षा के घटक को ठीक से शामिल नहीं किया गया है (अब्राहम, 2017)।

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यूजीसी केयर लिस्ट, गुप-सी (मल्टीडिसिप्लिनरी), क्र.सं.-15

भारत में नेशनल काउंसिल फॉर टीचर एजुकेशन (एन.सी.टी.ई.) और स्टेट काउंसिल ऑफ एजुकेशनल रिसर्च एंड ट्रेनिंग (एस.सी.ई.आर.टी.) मिलकर अर्ली चाइल्डहुड केयर एजुकेशन (ई.सी.सी.ई.) के लिए शिक्षक प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम चलाते हैं। किन्तु भारत में काफी कम ऐसे विश्वविद्यालय हैं जो ई.सी.सी.ई. के लिए शिक्षकों को प्रशिक्षित करने के लिए प्रोग्राम चलाते हैं। सामान्यतया देखने को मिलता है कि अधिकतर ऐसे प्रोग्राम जो नर्सरी स्तर पर शिक्षकों को तैयार करने के लिए चलाए जा रहे हैं वो डिप्लोमा प्रदान करते हैं और ई.सी.सी.ई. के लिए प्रदान किये जाने वाले अधिकतर डिप्लोमा एन.सी.टी.ई. और एस.सी.ई.आर.टी. द्वारा मान्यता प्राप्त नहीं हैं और ना ही ये इन संस्थानों द्वारा निर्धारित मानकों को पूरा करते हैं (ढींगरा, 2017)।

प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा का महत्व -

प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था बच्चों के मानसिक कार्यों के विकास के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण समय अवधि है जिसमें भाषा, मोटर कौशल, मनोसामाजिक, संज्ञानात्मक और सीखने की क्षमता का उदय शामिल है। बच्चों के मानसिक और शारीरिक विकास को आंतरिक कारकों के साथ-साथ बहिर्जात कारक भी बड़े स्तर पर प्रभावित करते हैं जैसे कि शैक्षिक वातावरण जिसमें बच्चे जीवन के पहले 6 से 8 वर्षों के दौरान जिन लोगों से, वस्तुओं से और वातावरण से संक्रिया करते हैं (हाइसन एट अल, 2009)। कई अध्ययनों से पता चला है कि अच्छी गुणात्मक बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा बच्चों में स्कूल रेडीनेस को बढ़ाने में सहायक होती है और उन्हें अच्छी उच्च शिक्षा के लिए लालायित करने एवं भविष्य में बेहतर आर्थिक और सामाजिक लाभ लेने योग्य बनाती है (अब्राहम, 2017)। जेम्सहेकमैन जो किशिकागो विश्वविद्यालय से अर्थशास्त्र में नोबेल पुरस्कार विजेता है उन्होंने अर्ली चाइल्डहुड केयर एंड एजुकेशन (ई.सी.सी.ई.) साहित्य की समीक्षा की और पाया कि उच्च गुणवत्ता की ई.सी.सी.ई. में निवेश भविष्य में दीर्घकालिक, आर्थिक प्रतिफल प्राप्त करने में सहायक है (ढींगरा, 2017)। ढींगरा के अनुसार गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. बच्चों में मुख्य रूप से तीन गुणों, सामाजिक कौशल, प्रेरणा (मोटिवेशन) और शिक्षा को विकसित करने में मदद करती है जो भविष्य में व्यक्ति को उच्च कुशलता युक्त उत्पाद के रूप में विकसित करती है जिस से व्यक्ति अपने कार्यस्थल पर एक महत्वपूर्ण और मूल्यवान घटक के रूप में कार्य करने में सक्षम होता है।

वैश्वीकरण और ई.सी.सी.ई. -

वैश्वीकरण की प्रक्रिया ने भारत में ई.सी.सी.ई. को काफी हद तक प्रभावित किया है। बाल स्वास्थ्य, पोषण संबंधी जरूरतों और शिक्षा के संबंध में विभिन्न सामान्य मुद्दों ने समय-समय हमारा ध्यान आकर्षित किया है जिन पर ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता भी है। 2001 की जनगणना के अनुसार भारत में 0-6 वर्ष के बीच के बच्चों की जनसंख्या लगभग 158 मिलियन थी। मानव विकास रिपोर्ट-2003 (जैसा कि पोजीशन पेपर, नेशनल फोकस ग्रुप ऑन अर्ली चाइल्डहुड एजुकेशन, 2006 में उद्धृत) ने चिंता व्यक्त की है कि भारत ने स्वास्थ्य, जीवन प्रत्याशा और शिक्षा से संबंधित क्षेत्रों में अच्छा प्रदर्शन नहीं किया है। भारत की अन्य विकासशील देशों के संबंध में मिलेनियम डेवलपमेंट गोलस (एम.डी.जी.) की प्राप्ति की दिशा में सापेक्ष प्रगति यह दर्शाती है कि शुरूआती वर्षों में बच्चों को काफी लंबी अवधि के लिए बिना किसी देखभाल के छोड़ दिया जाता है। भारत भी उन देशों की कतार में शामिल है जिसे 2030 तक सत्रह सतत विकास लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करना है इनमें से दो प्रमुख लक्ष्य शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य से जुड़े हुए हैं जिनमें पहला लक्ष्य है छोटे बच्चों सहित सभी के लिए स्वस्थ जीवन और कल्याण सुनिश्चित करना और दूसरा लक्ष्य है सभी विद्यार्थियों के लिए गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा सुनिश्चित करना। नई शिक्षा नीति-2020 ने ई.सी.सी.ई. के क्षेत्र में कई महत्वपूर्ण सुझाव दिए हैं जिन का समय पर अनुपालन करने की अत्याधिक आवश्यकता है।

ई.सी.सी.ई.के क्षेत्र में भारत सरकार के प्रयास -

प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में भारत सरकार के प्रयासों को योजनाओं, संवैधानिक संशोधनों, अधिनियम और नीतियों के रूप में देखा जा सकता है। ई.सी.सी.ई. की अहमियत को अच्छी तरह समझते हुए भारत सरकार ने इसे मान्यता प्रदान की है। भारत के संविधान में अनुच्छेद 45 (संविधान

अधिनियम, 2002) निर्देश देता है कि बच्चों को छह वर्ष की आयु पूरी करने तक ई.सी.सी.ई. प्रदान करना राज्य और केंद्र सरकार का दायित्व है। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-1986 ने प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की शिक्षा को मानव विकास के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण पड़ाव के रूप में माना है। इसके अलावा, राष्ट्रीय पोषण नीति-1993 ने भी प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था में बच्चों की देखभाल और पोषण के लिए मध्यस्थता करने पर जोर दिया है और दृढ़ता से इसकी सिफारिश भी की है। प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था के लिए अन्य सहायक नीतिगत पहल हैं राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य नीति-2002 और बच्चों के लिए राष्ट्रीय कार्य योजना-2005 जिनमें प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा की जरूरत को समझते हुए इसके लिए आवश्यक कदम उठाने को लेकर चर्चा की गयी है।

11वीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के अनुसार प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा (ई.सी.सी.ई.) एक महत्वपूर्ण चरण है जो आजीवन विकास के लिए आधार बनाता है और एक बच्चे को उसकी पूरी क्षमता का एहसास कराने में मदद करता है। तथ्यों की गंभीरता को समझते हुए 12वीं पंचवर्षीय योजना भी स्कूल की तैयारी (स्कूल प्रिपेयर्डनेस) में सुधार और इसको बढ़ावा देने पर जोर देती है। बच्चों के लिए निःशुल्क और अनिवार्य शिक्षा अधिनियम (आर.टी.ई.) 2009 में प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की शिक्षा को भी अधिकार द्वारा संबोधित किया गया है इस अधिनियम की धारा 11 में कहा गया है कि 3 वर्ष से ऊपर के बच्चों को प्रारंभिक शिक्षा के लिए तैयार करने की दृष्टि से बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा प्रदान की जाए जब तक कि वे 6 वर्ष की आयु पूरी नहीं कर लेते ऐसे में सम्बंधित सरकारें बच्चों के लिए मुफ्त प्री-स्कूल शिक्षा प्रदान करने के लिए आवश्यक व्यवस्था कर सकती हैं।

भारत ने 1992 में यूनाइटेड नेशंस कन्वेनसन ओन द राइट्स ऑफ द चाइल्ड्स (यू.एन.सी.आर.सी.) में पुष्टि की और पूरे देश में सभी के लिए शिक्षा (1990) का संकल्प लिया। इसके अलावा, डकार फ्रेमवर्क फॉर एक्शन-2000 भी ई.सी.सी.ई. के महत्व को दोहराता है और ई.सी.सी.ई. में राज्य, परिवार और समुदाय की भागीदारी पर जोर देता है। ई.सी.सी.ई. सेवाएं सार्वजनिक, निजी और गैर-सरकारी संस्थानों के माध्यम से प्रदान की जा रही हैं। एकीकृत बाल विकास सेवा (आई.सी.डी.एस.) सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र में ई.सी.सी.ई. प्रदान करने वाला दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा कार्यक्रम है। जिला प्राथमिक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम (डिस्ट्रिक्ट प्राइमरी एजुकेशन प्रोग्राम, डी.पी.ई.पी.) और सर्व शिक्षा अभियान (एस.एस.ए.) जैसे कार्यक्रमों ने आई.सी.डी.एस. द्वारा छोड़े गए स्थान को भरने का प्रयास किया है। निजी क्षेत्र द्वारा की गई पहल (डे-केयर सेंटर, नर्सरी और किंडरगार्टन) ने छोटे शहरों, गांवों, अर्ध-शहरी क्षेत्रों और शहरी मलिन बस्तियों को कवर करने का प्रयास किया है। एकीकृत बाल विकास सेवा (आई.सी.डी.एस.) कार्यक्रम एक केंद्र प्रायोजित और राज्य प्रशासित ई.सी.सी.ई. कार्यक्रम है, जो महिला और बाल विकास मंत्रालय के अंतर्गत आता है। लगभग 1.4 मिलियन आंगनवाड़ी केंद्रों के नेटवर्क के साथ, इसमें लगभग 38 मिलियन बच्चे शामिल हैं।

ई.सी.सी.ई. सेवाओं के इस विस्तार के साथ-साथ अब ध्यान इस ओर बढ़ रहा है कि ई.सी.सी.ई. की गुणवत्ता में सुधार किया जाए और इसे मुफ्त और अनिवार्य बनाया जाए ताकि इसकी पहुंच सर्वसुलभ हो सके। ई.सी.सी.ई. की सेवाओं की गुणवत्ता को ध्यान में रखने के लिए समान निवेश करना महत्वपूर्ण चिंता का विषय बन जाता है। हालांकि भारत सरकार ने बचपन की शिक्षा के महत्व को अच्छी तरह से पहचाना है, लेकिन भारत जैसे सघन जनसंख्या घनत्व और व्यापक स्तर पर फैली विविधता वाले देश के लिए गुणवत्तायुक्त ई.सी.सी.ई. को सर्वसुलभ कराना अभी भी चुनौतीपूर्ण है। भारत में अभी ई.सी.सी.ई. के गुणात्मक आयामों के बारे में सामान्य तस्वीर उत्साहजनक नहीं है। जबकि प्राथमिक ग्रेड में नामांकन में उल्लेखनीय वृद्धि हुई है, यह अभी भी एक चिंता का विषय है कि प्राथमिक स्तर पर पहले दो ग्रेड में ड्रॉप आउट्स की दर सर्वाधिक है।

ई.सी.सी.ई. की जरूरत और चुनौतियाँ

2011 की जनगणना के आंकड़ों के अनुसार भारत में 0-6 वर्ष की आयु के लगभग 164.48 मिलियन बच्चे हैं। इतनी बड़ी संख्या में बच्चों के शामिल होने के कारण सभी को गुणवत्तापूर्ण प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की शिक्षा

प्रदान कर पाना अपने आप में एक चुनौती है। भारत सरकार ने गुणवत्तापूर्ण प्री-प्राइमरी शिक्षा को प्रदान करने की आवश्यकता को स्वीकार किया है और विभिन्न प्रकार के कार्यक्रमों के रूप में एवं सवैधानिक और नीतिगत प्रावधानों के माध्यम से सभी के लिए ई.सी.सी.ई. प्रदान करने के लिए प्रयास किये हैं। शोधार्थी ने ई.सी.सी.ई.के क्षेत्र में आने वाली चुनौतियों को अपनी समझ के अनुसार बिन्दुवार लिखा है-

कुशल ई.सी.सी.ई. शिक्षकों की कमी: असर-2018 ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में माना है कि भारत में प्राथमिक स्तर पर कुशल शिक्षकों की भारी कमी है। लेकिन जब बात प्री स्कूल शिक्षा की हो तो ये और भी महत्वपूर्ण हो जाता है क्योंकि ये वर्ष बच्चों को भविष्य में किसी क्षेत्र में बेहतर करने के लिए आधार की तरह कार्य करते हैं इसलिए हमें ऐसे ई.सी.सी.ई. शिक्षक चाहिए जो 21वीं सदी की जरूरतों को पूरा कर सकें और विभिन्न प्रकार के पेड़गोजिकल कौशलों से लैस हों।

अभिभावकों में ई.सी.सी.ई. के प्रति संवेदनशीलता का आभाव: भारत एक विविधता से भरा और विशाल जनसँख्या वाला देश है ऐसे में एक बड़ी आबादी ऐसी है जो समाज के निचले तबके, बंचित समूहों या हाशिये के समूहों से ताल्लुक रखती है इनके लिए दो वक्त की रोटी का जुगाड़ कर पाना ही एक बड़ी चुनौती होता है ऐसे में इन समूहों के बच्चों के स्वास्थ्य, पोषण और शिक्षा से सम्बंधित मुद्दे कही पीछे छूट जाते हैं।

प्री-स्कूल(नर्सरी) शिक्षा पर लम्बे समय ध्यान न दिया जाना: शिक्षा का अधिकार अधिनियम-2009 के द्वारा 6 वर्ष से 14 वर्ष तक के सभी बच्चों को निःशुल्क और अनिवार्य शिक्षा देने का प्रावधान तो किया गया लेकिन क्या ये बच्चे औपचारिक शिक्षा लेने के लिए तैयार हैं इस बात की चिंता काफी समय तक नहीं की गयी जिस कारण प्राथमिक स्तर की शिक्षा में गुणवत्ता को लेकर आज भी एक बड़ा प्रश्न चिन्ह है।

ई.सी.सी.ई. के लिए लम्बे समय तक अलग से पाठ्यचर्या का आभाव: नई शिक्षा नीति-2020 से पहले ई.सी.सी.ई. के लिए अलग से राष्ट्रीय पाठ्यचर्या रूपरेखा बनाने की जरूरत को नहीं समझा गया था जब कि प्राथमिक स्तर के लिए बने राष्ट्रीय पाठ्यचर्या रूपरेखा में ही इसे शामिल किया गया था जिस कारण कही ना कही भारतीय शिक्षा व्यवस्था में ई.सी.सी.ई. वो स्थान नहीं मिल पाया जो काफी वर्ष पूर्व मिल जाना चाहिए था।

ई.सी.सी.ई. के लिए वित्तीय अनुदान की कमी: भारत में बड़ी संख्या में ऐसे बच्चे हैं जो पोषण और बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल की कमी होने के बावजूद भी जी रहे हैं सरकारों और सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रों की निजी संस्थाओं द्वारा कई प्रयास किये गए हैं पर ये काफी नहीं हैं। इसलिए प्रत्येक बच्चे तक गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. पहुंचाने के लिए आवश्यक वित्तीय सहायता का प्रबंध ना हो पाना भी एक बड़ी चुनौती है।

ई.सी.सी.ई. में शिक्षकों की भूमिका

भारत में आई.सी.डी.एस. के साथ-साथ अन्य ई.सी.ई. संस्थाओं को बच्चों को गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. प्रदान करने के लिए एवं शैक्षिक कार्यक्रमों को चलाने में पर्याप्त रूप से प्रशिक्षित शिक्षकों के महत्व को पहचानना बाकी है। आई.सी.डी.एस. के पास पेशेवर रूप से प्रशिक्षित शिक्षकों को भी भर्ती करने का कोई कार्यक्रम नहीं है। कौल, चौधरी और शर्मा 2015 ने प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की शिक्षा में गुणवत्ता और विविधता पर आधारित एक अध्ययन किया जिसके लिए उन्होंने भारत के तीन राज्यों राजस्थान, आंध्रप्रदेश और असम में 298 ई.सी.ई. केंद्रों पर आयोजित किया, इस शोध के परिणाम बताते हैं कि लगभग सभी शिक्षकों ने अपनी माध्यमिक स्तर से नीचे की स्कूली शिक्षा शिक्षकों की बहुत कम संख्या के साथ पूरी की है। कौल, एट, अल. कहते हैं कि सामान्यतया यह देखा जाता है कि आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं (AWWS) को पारंपरिक रूप से अर्ध-साक्षर या कम शिक्षित श्रमिक के रूप में संदर्भित किया जाता है, इनको कुशल प्रशिक्षित शिक्षकों के रूप में संबोधित नहीं किया जाता है लेकिन यह देखकर खुशी होती है कि लगभग 12 प्रतिशत आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ता स्नातक थे। यह वास्तव में आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं और उनकी भूमिका की समग्र प्रोफाइल और छवि को बढ़ाता है और इन संभावनाओं को भी बढ़ाता है कि भविष्य में ये छोटे बच्चों के शिक्षक के रूप में कार्य कर सकते हैं। इसी शोध में यह भी पता चला कि अलग-अलग राज्यों में

अलग प्रोफाइल की शिक्षण प्रैक्टिस पाई गयी जैसे कि राजस्थान में बोध शाला, आंध्र प्रदेश में बालवाडी और असम में श्रेणी शोध के नाम से प्री-स्कूल शैक्षणिक कार्यक्रम चल रहे हैं। शोध के परिणाम बताते हैं कि इनमें लगभग 95% शिक्षकों की शैक्षणिक योग्यता माध्यमिक स्तर से ऊपर है। इसमें से लगभग 22% उच्च प्राथमिक स्तर की योग्यता रखते हैं जबकि 28% स्नातक स्तर की योग्यता रखते हैं। आंगनवाडी कार्यकर्ताओं के सापेक्ष प्राइवेट प्री-स्कूलों में लगभग 65% शिक्षक स्नातक पाए गए जब कि इनमें कुछ परास्नातक भी थे।

यदि आई.सी.डी.एस. द्वारा दी जाने वाली सेवाओं में शिक्षा भी एक प्रमुख पहलू है, तो इसके लिए पेशेवर रूप से प्रशिक्षित कर्मियों की आवश्यकता है। आई.सी.डी.एस. के कर्मियों को शुरुआत में चार दिन का प्रशिक्षण दिया जा रहा है और 3 से 4 सत्र रेफ्रेसर ट्रेनिंग के लिए दिए जा रहे हैं (सेन, 2009)। आंगनवाडी कार्यकर्ता का वेतनमान भी अलग-अलग राज्यों में वहां के नियमित शिक्षकों के वेतनमान से काफी कम और भिन्न हैं ऐसे में कहा जा सकता है गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.ई. के लिए आंगनवाडी कार्यकर्ताओं का वेतनमान भी शिक्षकों के सामान होना चाहिए। आई.सी.डी.एस. के शैक्षिक घटक और अन्य ई.सी.ई. के कार्यक्रमों के लिए भर्ती के संबंध में नीति का अभाव अपने आप में एक बड़ी कमी है।

ई.सी.सी.ई. के लिए प्रशिक्षित शिक्षकों की आवश्यकता

प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की शिक्षा में बाल विकास के विभिन्न आयाम जैसे कि भाषाई विकास, संज्ञानात्मक कौशल, सामाजिक और भावनात्मक पहलुओं के साथ-साथ रचनात्मकता के कौशलों को विकसित करने की क्षमता होती है। अधिकतर आई.सी.डी.एस. केंद्र मध्याह्न भोजन पर ध्यान केंद्रित करते हैं और एक केंद्र के रूप में स्वास्थ्य से सम्बंधित सेवाएं प्रदान करते हैं इनमें बहुत कम समय के लिए खेल गतिविधियां आयोजित की जाती हैं। दूसरी ओर ई.सी.ई. शिक्षक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम अपने पाठ्यक्रम के माध्यम से जिसमें थ्योरी, प्रैक्टिकल और इंटरनशिप शामिल हैं के द्वारा ई.सी.ई. के लिए शिक्षक तैयार करते हैं। निजी प्री-स्कूलों में भाषा विकास के लिए परम्परावादी शिक्षण प्रैक्टिस का अनुसरण किया जाता है जो कि औपचारिक शिक्षा को अधोमुखी विस्तार की ओर ले जा रहा है इसमें प्राथमिक स्तर पर मुख्य फोकस 3R(पढ़ना, लिखना और अंकगणित) पर होता है। जब की राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-1986 ने स्पष्ट रूप से उल्लेखित किया है कि बच्चों के समग्र विकास के लिए खेल विधि के तरीकों को प्रोत्साहित किया जाए और 3R पर कम ध्यान दिया जाए। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-1986 ने बच्चों के समग्र विकास के लिए विभिन्न प्रकार की गतिविधियां जैसे कि खुली एवं निर्देशित बातचीत, गीतों और कविताओं को दोहराना, निर्देशित भाषाई और शब्दावली पर आधारित खेल और स्टोरी टेलिंग जैसी गतिविधियां सुझाई गयी हैं इसी क्रम में आंगे स्वरों, चित्रों और रंगों की जागरूकता के लिए आवाज को मैच करना, पूर्व पढ़े हुए अनुभव के आधार पर किताबों को हैंडल करना, डॉट्स को आपस में मिलाना, पैटर्न बनाना, बंद आकृतियों में रंग भरना इत्यादि जैसी गतिविधियां को बच्चों में आँख और हाथ के को-ऑर्डिनेशन को बेहतर करने और उनके भीतर तत्परता और लेखन क्षमता का विकास हो, इसके लिए सुझाई गयी हैं (कौल, एट, अल, 2015)।

कौल, एट, अल, 2015 के अनुसार ई.सी.ई. के कार्यक्रमों के माध्यम से यह उम्मीद की जाती है कि इस प्रकार के कार्यक्रम बच्चों में अवधारणात्मक और संज्ञानात्मक नीव जैसे कि शारीरिक, प्राकृतिक और सामाजिक-वातावरण, रंगों के संप्रत्यय, चित्र एवं आकृतियाँ, आकार, लम्बाई, भार, दूरी, तापमान जैसे विभिन्न आयामों से जुड़े संख्याओं के संप्रत्यय, इत्यादि के विकास में अहम योगदान देंगे। इन सारे संप्रत्ययों को सिखाने के लिए मुख्य रूप से खेल विधि का प्रयोग करेंगे ताकि बच्चों में लॉजिकल थिंकिंग जैसे की प्रथक्करण, क्रमबद्धता, अनुक्रमिक सोच, समस्या समाधान, सृजनात्मकता जैसे गुणों का विकास किया जा सके। शोध के परिणाम बताते हैं कि 3 राज्यों में चलने वाले ई.सी.ई. केन्द्रों में से 71% केन्द्रों में बच्चों के लिए ऐसी कोई भी गतिविधि नहीं करायी जा रही जिस से उनके भीतर अवधारणात्मक और संज्ञानात्मक नीव को मजबूत किया जा सके।

पहली पीढ़ी के शिक्षार्थियों में स्कूल की तैयारी (रेडीनेस) का विकास करने के लिए विभिन्न प्रकार की सही से प्लान की गयी गतिविधियों का प्रयोग किया जाना चाहिए जैसे कि विभिन्न प्रकार के मैटेरियल, पिक्चर कार्ड्स, पजल, चित्रयुक्त कहानी की किताबें, नंबर टावर एवं वातावरण में उपस्थित अन्य साधनों का प्रयोग खेल विधि के दौरान सीखने के लिए करना चाहिए। रटकर याद करने को रोकने के लिए कुछ गतिविधियां जैसे कि ब्लैकबोर्ड, चार्ट, पाठ्यपुस्तकों से कॉपी करना इत्यादि को उपयुक्त प्रशिक्षण और पेडागोगी का प्रयोग कर बच्चों को समझ कर सीखने की ओर प्रेरित करना चाहिए।

ग्यारहवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में भारत सरकार की उप समूह रिपोर्ट (2007-2012) में ई.सी.ई. स्तर पर शिक्षकों के लिए अच्छी गुणवत्ता वाले प्रशिक्षण और क्षमता निर्माण के कार्यक्रमों के महत्व का भी उल्लेख किया गया है। एस.सी.ई.आर.टी. द्वारा नर्सरी शिक्षकों को तैयार करने के लिए बी.एड. नर्सरी कार्यक्रम में संशोधन किया गया है ताकि एन.सी.टी.ई. की गाइडलाइन में दिए गए सुझावों को समायोजित किया जा सके और चिंतनशील गतिविधियों को कार्यक्रम में अधिक जगह मिल सके। दिल्ली में ई.सी.ई. में सेवा पूर्व शिक्षक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम ज्यादातर निजी संस्थानों द्वारा संचालित किए जा रहे हैं। इन संस्थानों द्वारा संचालित नर्सरी शिक्षक प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम एस.सी.ई.आर.टी. से संबद्ध हैं। यहाँ ये समझने वाली बात है कि अपने आप में कोई भी शिक्षक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम चाहे उसकी गुणवत्ता कितनी ही अच्छी क्यों न हो वह शिक्षकों के निरंतर ज्ञान, कौशल एवं बच्चों के स्वस्थ विकास और उत्पादक ज्ञान को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए पूरी तरह से जिम्मेदार नहीं हो सकता है। लगातार उच्च गुणवत्ता वाले शिक्षण के लिए व्यावसायिक विकास के अवसरों, संतोषजनक वेतन और अन्य कारकों के माध्यम से निरंतर उच्च गुणवत्ता वाले समर्थन की आवश्यकता होती है। ई.सी.ई. में शिक्षक शिक्षा के सन्दर्भ में सभी संस्थानों को पाठ्यक्रम के संबंध में एन.सी.टी.ई. के दिशा निर्देशों का पालन करके इसे विनियमित करने की आवश्यकता है।

हमें ज्ञात है ई.सी.ई. का एक प्रमुख भाग (50% से अधिक) आई.सी.डी.एस. के कार्यक्रमों के माध्यम से संचालित है। अभी तक आई.सी.डी.एस. के पास कुशल प्रोफेशनल कार्यकर्ताओं को भर्ती करने का अधिकार नहीं है ऐसे में गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.ई. के लिए प्रशिक्षित अध्यापकों की जरूरत को स्वतः ही समझा जा सकता है। आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं की भर्ती की नीति पर फिर से विचार करने की आवश्यकता है जैसा कि पहले कहा गया है कि आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं को दिया जाने वाला व्यावसायिक प्रशिक्षण हम उनसे जो अपेक्षाएं रखते हैं, उन्हें पूरा करने के लिए पर्याप्त नहीं है। बाल विकास परियोजना अधिकारी (सीडीपीओ) और आंगनवाड़ी को दिए गए 26 दिनों के सेवाकालीन कार्यक्रमों में केवल चार दिन ई.सी.ई. को समर्पित किए गए हैं (अब्राहम, 2009)।

नई शिक्षा नीति 2020 और ई.सी.सी.ई. - नई शिक्षा नीति-2020 ने अपने प्रतिवेदन में गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. के महत्व को भलीभांति समझा है और भारत में ई.सी.सी.ई. की बुनियाद को मजबूत करने के लिए कुछ खास कदम उठाए हैं जिनमें से कुछ महत्वपूर्ण तथ्यों को नीचे बिन्दुवार लिखा गया है-

नेशनल करिकुलर पेडागोजिकल फ्रेमवर्क फॉर अर्ली चाइल्डहुड केयर एंड एजुकेशन (एन.सी.पी.एफ.ई. सी.सी.ई.) का विकास एन.सी.ई.आर.टी. द्वारा 8 वर्ष की आयु तक के सभी बच्चों के लिए प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा के लिए एक अच्छा पाठ्यक्रम और शैक्षणिक ढांचा (एन.सी.पी.एफ.ई.सी.सी.ई.) विकसित किया जायेगा जिसमें 0-3 वर्ष की आयु के बच्चों के लिए सब-फ्रेमवर्क तथा 3-8 वर्ष की आयु के बच्चों के लिए एक अलग सब-फ्रेमवर्क बनाने का प्रावधान है। इन सब-फ्रेमवर्क के माध्यम से ई.सी.सी.ई. में राष्ट्रीय एवं अंतर्राष्ट्रीय नवाचार एवं सर्वोत्तम प्रथाओं को शामिल करने पर जोर दिया जायेगा।

उच्चतर गुणवत्ता वाले ई.सी.सी.ई. संस्थानों के लिए सार्वभौमिक पहुच सुनिश्चित करना

नयी शिक्षा नीति ने पूरे देश में पिछड़े जिलों एवं वंचित क्षेत्रों को प्राथमिकता देने की दृष्टि से सशक्त ई.सी.सी.ई. संस्थानों द्वारा ई.सी.सी.ई. प्रणाली को नए और प्रभावी तरीके से लागू करने का प्रावधान किया है।

आंगनवाड़ी केन्द्रों, प्राथमिक विद्यालयों, पूर्व प्राथमिक विद्यालयों एवं अकेले चल रहे प्री-स्कूल्स को एक साथ ला कर आपस में सामंजस्य बनाकर कार्य किया जायेगा जिस से अच्छी गुणवत्ता वाली ई.सी.सी.ई. सर्वसुलभ हो सके।

ई.सी.सी.ई. के लिए बुनियादी ढांचे का निर्माण

ई.सी.सी.ई. की सार्वभौमिक पहुंच के लिए आंगनवाड़ी केन्द्रों को उच्च गुणवत्तायुक्त ई.सी.सी.ई. के अनुकूल हवादार एवं खेलने के संसाधनों से सुसज्जित भवनों के रूप में विकसित किया जायेगा। बच्चे खेल विधि और गतिविधियों के माध्यम से सीख पाएं इस लिए आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं को प्रशिक्षित भी किया जायेगा।

प्रारंभिक कक्षा या बालवाटिका का प्रस्ताव

नई शिक्षा नीति में ऐसी परिकल्पना की गयी है कि 5 वर्ष की आयु और कक्षा 1 में प्रवेश लेने से पहले प्रत्येक बच्चा प्रारंभिक कक्षा या बालवाटिका में स्थानांतरित कर दिया जायेगा जिसमें कुशल एवं प्रशिक्षित ई.सी.सी.ई. शिक्षक होंगे जो बच्चों को मुख्य रूप से खेल आधारित शिक्षा के माध्यम से उनके संज्ञानात्मक, भावनात्मक और शारीरिक क्षमताओं के विकास पर ध्यान देंगे और बच्चों को स्कूल में शिक्षा लेने के लिए तैयार करेंगे।

ई.सी.सी.ई. शिक्षकों के शुरुआती कैडर को तैयार करना

आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं और शिक्षकों को एन.सी.ई.आर.टी. द्वारा विकसित पाठ्यक्रम एवं शिक्षण-शस्त्रीय फ्रेमवर्क के द्वारा एक व्यवस्थित तरीके से प्रशिक्षण दिया जायेगा। 102 और इस से अधिक योग्यता रखने वाले आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं को 6 महीने का प्रमाण पत्र कार्यक्रम कराया जायेगा और इस से कम योग्यता रखने वाले कार्यकर्ताओं को डिप्लोमा कार्यक्रम कराया जायेगा जिसमें प्रारंभिक साक्षरता, संख्या और ई.सी.सी.ई. के अन्य प्रासंगिक पहलुओं को भी शामिल किया जायेगा।

आदिवासी क्षेत्रों की आश्रम शालाओं में ई.सी.सी.ई. शुरू करना

चरणबद्ध तरीके से आदिवासी बहुल क्षेत्रों की आश्रम शालाओं में ई.सी.सी.ई. को शुरू किया जायेगा ताकि दूर-दराज एवं समाज की मुख्यधारा से कटे समूहों के बच्चों को भी गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. प्रदान की जा सके।

ई.सी.सी.ई. की सार्वभौमिक पहुंच के लिए आर्थिक अनुदान की संस्तुति

गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. की सार्वभौमिक पहुंच के लिए नई शिक्षा नीति-2020 में शिक्षा के इस महत्वपूर्ण स्तर के लिए विशेष अनुदान पैकेज देने का आश्वासन दिया है क्यों की नयी शिक्षा नीति का मानना है कि भारत में काफी लम्बे समय तक ई.सी.सी.ई. की उपेक्षा की गयी है या फिर यूँ कहें कि जितनी गंभीरता के साथ इसको समझना और इसके लिए कदम उठाने की आवश्यकता थी उस तरफ काफी कम ध्यान दिया गया है। शिक्षा नीति ने अपने प्रतिवेदन में स्पष्ट किया किया है कि लगभग 85% प्रतिशत मण्डल का विकास बच्चों में 6 वर्ष की आयु तक हो जाता है इसलिए प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा को और गंभीरता से लिया जाना चाहिए शायद तभी हम वर्ष 2030 तक सतत विकास लक्ष्यों की प्राप्ति की ओर बढ़ पाएंगे।

निष्कर्ष

प्रारंभिक बाल्यावस्था की देखभाल और शिक्षा (ई.सी.सी.ई.) के महत्व को दरकिनार नहीं किया जा सकता है। आज दुनिया भर में लगभग सभी विकासशील देश अपने यहाँ गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. को पहुंचाने के लिए प्रयास कर रहे हैं भारत भी उन देशों की कतार में शामिल है जिसे गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. को सर्वसुलभ बनाना है। ई.सी.सी.ई. से सम्बंधित साहित्य की समीक्षा करने पर स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि अच्छी गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. बच्चों में अच्छा संज्ञानात्मक, भावात्मक और सामाजिक विकास को प्रोत्साहित करती है और साथ में उनको औपचारिक शिक्षा के लिए मानसिक रूप से भी तैयार करने का काम करती है। ई.सी.सी.ई. पर हुए विभिन्न प्रकार के शोधों से ये स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. पर निवेश भविष्य में बच्चों को अच्छे व्यक्तित्व और एक बेहतर उत्पाद के रूप में विकसित होने का अवसर प्रदान करता है। भारत को यदि 21वीं सदी की जरूरतों के

अनुसार अच्छे और खुशाल नागरिक चाहिए तो अभी से बच्चों को गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. प्रदान करने की ओर विशेष ध्यान देना होगा। नई शिक्षा नीति-2020 के सुझाव और अनुमोदन गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. को सुनिश्चित करने एवं इसकी सार्वभौमिक पहुँच के लिए एक आशा की किरण के रूप में दिखाई देते हैं। भारत में गुणवत्तापूर्ण ई.सी.सी.ई. के लिए आवश्यक ढाँचे के विकास से लेकर ई.सी.सी.ई. के लिए कुशल और प्रशिक्षित शिक्षकों के कैंडिड को तैयार करने जैसे अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण कार्य करने हैं जिसमें पूर्व प्राथमिक विद्यालय, आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं एवं प्री-स्कूल्स की भूमिका को फिर से परिभाषित करने की आवश्यकता है। साथ ही साथ गैर सरकारी संस्थाएँ जैसे की एकीकृत बाल विकास सेवा (आई.सी.डी.एस.) सरीखे संस्थाओं को और मजबूत करने, आर्थिक सहायता देने एवं इनके अधिकारों में विस्तार करने की भी आवश्यकता है।

शोधार्थी, शिक्षा विभाग,
दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय दिल्ली-110007

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Early Childhood Teacher Education Landscape in India : Issues and Concerns with Respect to NEP - 2020

Fariha Siddiqui & Sajjad Ahmad

Introduction

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) or pre-school education has been credited globally for its significant impact on children's learning and positive gains in later years of schooling (Upadhyay, 2015). Neuroscience research highlights that the early years are the most active years for establishing neural connections and 90% of the brain development takes place during this age. Shonkoff (2009) suggests that the investment made in the first 8 years of a child's life has high chances of future returns-both economically and socially. Furthermore, children's interactions and experiences with care givers in their early years contributes considerably in terms of impact on a child's life.

The significance of ECCE to the human life and economic prosperity of a country can be traced down from its inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.2 of the 2030 United Nations Agenda. The target reads “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education” (UNESCO, 2016). To achieve this target, countries have invested extensively in quality ECCE programs and their related aspects. India being a signatory of the SDGs, has also taken positive steps in this direction and emphasized 'foundational years' in its the newly launched National Education Policy 2020. The quantity, as well as, quality in the Indian ECCE scenario, is debatable though.

On the one hand, India has an existence of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), which is the world's largest public sponsored provision of services for children below 6 years. However, Annual Status of Education Report (ASER, 2018) suggests that a significant portion of children are not enrolled in any of the ECCE programs offered till date. Thus, in order to provide quality ECCE in India, investment is highly required in different domains such as, policy, programs, infrastructure and preparing qualified ECCE professionals or ECCE teacher education.

Furthermore, the need for qualified teachers at all levels is felt globally. As a result, it finds place as one of the ten global education targets in the Sustainable

Development Goal (SDG target 4C). The presence of well qualified teachers is one of the fundamental conditions for guaranteeing quality education at all levels of school (UNESCO, 2016). Similarly, in early childhood years, teachers' efficiency is of paramount importance. Therefore, early childhood teacher education plays a crucial role in developing trained and qualified professionals. Consequently, the Indian National Education Policy 2020 also exhorts the need for the preparation of high-quality ECCE teachers/Anganwadi workers so as to successfully implement its recommendations at the foundational stage. In this backdrop, the present article delineates how the ECCE teacher education field in India is scanty and not well researched. The article trace down the status of ECCE teacher education programme as mentioned in National level policies and the types of programme offered to prepare qualified teachers to work with young children. The guiding research question for the study revolves round the gaps and suggests the road map for its success. It is framed as :What are the existing gaps in early childhood teacher education in India and the way forward ?

The article focuses on policies and reports examining ECCE and ECCE teacher education policies in India. The purpose is to highlight the status of ECCE teacher education in India, issues surrounding this field and some recommendations to revamp it. The first section of the article discusses ECCE teacher education status, prominent approach and then the programme offered to train ECCE teachers. Last, the discussion is culminated by describing issues such as low investment in ECCE, multi-sectoral arrangement and the challenges that inevitably surround this field.

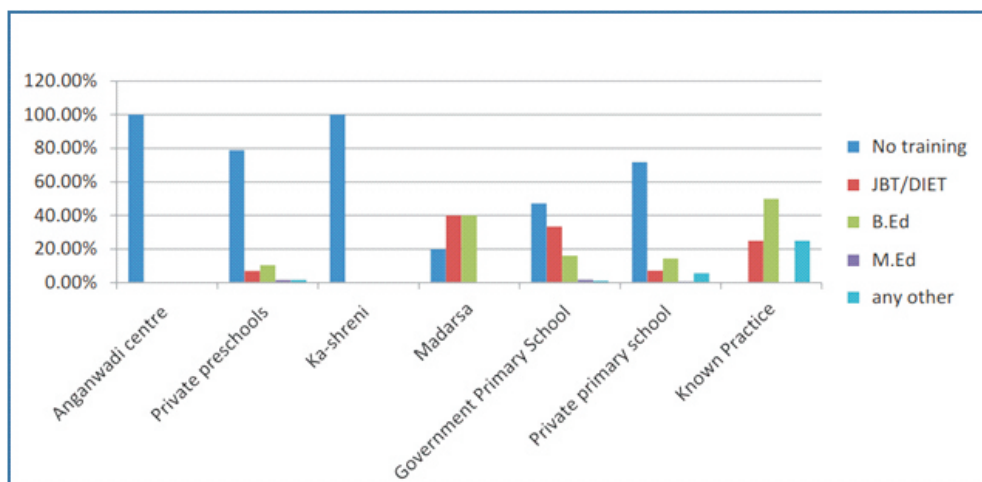
We want to clarify that this review does not assert to be exhaustive or definitive; it represents an attempt to extract from a sampling of the literature (reports and policies) on ECCE teacher education in India so as to aid in developing comprehensive understanding of the status of ECCE teacher education.

ECCE teacher education in India:

Several studies (Jackson, 1968; Kaul, Chaudhary & Sharma, 2014; Lortie, 1975) suggest that a teacher plays the central role in the initial years of a child's life. Therefore, the quality of early experiences of young children is highly shaped by the ECCE teacher's qualifications, beliefs, skills and competencies. When children are taught by qualified and well-trained ECCE professionals, they demonstrate higher cognitive abilities, develop language and communications skills, becomes are more sociable, empathetic and readiness for school (Ahmad & Walker, 2020). However, Neuman, et al. (2015) suggests that despite its importance and pieces of evidence towards the impact of quality training and qualification requirements of ECCE teachers on children, many teachers are imperceptibly prepared.

Identically, in India, ECCE has remained a non regularized field and thus qualifications of ECCE teachers significantly varies. The Early Childhood Education Impact Study (IECEI-2017) conducted in three Indian states of Rajasthan, Assam, and Telangana show that the qualification of teachers across different levels (preschool and primary) showed skewed professional training (Figure-1). The figure indicates that pre-service training of ECCE teachers does not constitute at the priority list of these three states. The national picture in this regard is also not less different.

Figure-1 Pre-service training of teacher



(Source: Early Childhood education and School readiness)

This gap in training of ECCE teachers can be attributed to the commonly held belief in India that personnel working with young children require nominal training of fun, vibrant, cheerful and warm attitude only. Such belief is strengthened and reproduced by ECCE teacher education discourse in India since decades. Centre for Early Childhood Education and Development in this regard emphasize that:

“The result is that most ECCE programmes, particularly in the private sector, may not always demand professional preparation on the part of the teacher since the curriculum in most cases tends to be restricted to the teaching of rhymes, play in activity rooms, fancy dress competitions, and glossy report cards that resemble Disney handouts but are driven by the need to prepare the young child to know the English alphabet, the alphabet of the regional language, counting from 1 to 100 (sometimes even more) and a host of symbols of formal education without meaning, developmental appropriateness or context.”

(CECED, 2010:p.6).

By and large, Providing ECCE pre-service education is unregulated field in India. As a result, the programmes offered for Preschool/ECCE teacher education varies in duration and content. Hence, opening a Preschool or any other type of ECCE centers in India does not require permission from any accreditation bodies. Moreover, programmes are offered by different bodies or institutions, may or may not recognized by National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), SCERT and Universities, NGOs (like Mobile Creches) and privately run institutions. It must also be noted, the ECCE teacher education institutes are very few in numbers as compared to the increasing demand in the society (Upadhyay, 2015).

Method of review:

The present study reviewed pre-service teacher education provision, policies and programmes in ECCE in India. To identify the gaps and concerns within ECCE teacher education, national level policy documents like National Education Policy

(2020), National ECCE Policy and framework 2013, National Teacher Education Framework 2009 were examined and analysed.

Findings and discussion:

The result of the reviews is organized at two levels. First, the status of ECCE pre-service education across India is presented. Second, the identified issues and concerns in ECCE teacher education are presented along with its implications for present ECCE teacher education field.

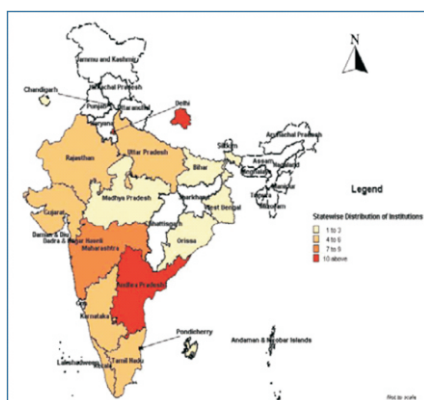
Mapping ECCE pre-service training and institutes:

Indian government being a signatory of SDG is obligated to offer “quality” early childhood care and education by ensuring “access” and “participation” to all children. In this endeavour, ECCE teachers have a key role in imparting quality education and care to children. However, ECCE teacher training is an unexplored arena in the Indian context due to many reasons and one of them being a lack of awareness about the significance of early education in school education. Only a few studies have mapped out the status of training institutes and the quality of training offered in the Indian context.

The Centre for Early Childhood Education and Development (CECED) in collaboration with National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) conducted a study on pre-service training for ECCE teachers in 2010. The sample of the study was 367 institutes offering ECCE pre-service training across different states in India. The geographical mapping of the study covered training institutes across the country (see Figure-2). The result showed that Andhra Pradesh and Delhi/NCR lead as the states housing maximum teacher training institutes (10 per state). On contrary, states such as Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and North Eastern states had a negligible presence of ECCE training institutions.

Further, the mere presence of institutes does not lead to quality assurance in ECCE. It depends on curriculum, quality of teacher educators, policy and provisions along with quality infrastructure. Thus recognition of institutions is crucial for quality deliverables.

Figure-2 Distribution of ECCE training institutes



Source: CECED 2010

The CECED study demonstrated that 36.5% of institutes were recognized either by NCTE or state boards or universities and 63.4% were unrecognized institutes. This

imbalance in the status of recognition reflects the compromise of quality or standards with ECCE teacher education. The study was conducted in 2010 and still, after 11 years the situation remains the same.

Issues and concerns in ECCE Teacher Education in India:

In India, the momentum of ECCE gained prominence after the launch of the National ECCE Policy and Curriculum Framework (2013). This policy called upon the need to ensure quality by investing in the training of ECCE professionals. Despite this policy and other existing national policies and curriculum frameworks such as the National Curriculum Framework (NCERT, 2005), Right to Education (2009), National Curriculum for Teacher Education (2009) and the most recent National Education Policy (2020), the ECCE teacher education is grappling with issues and challenges which are discussed below.

Low investment in ECCE:

Public spending on children's well-being and education is a national and international commitment that every country believes in. Globally, the long-term benefit of investment in ECCE is well researched and documented (Heckman and Carneiro, 2003; Shonkoff, 2009; EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2007). However, as per UNICEF data, the expenditure on early childhood education (between 2007-2017) by governments of low-income countries was less than 2% (UIS global database, 2018) of their education budgets. This data covers India as well. India being a signatory of the SDGs and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and constitutional rights necessitates it to spend a good amount of the public budget on children. And the same was reiterated by National Policy for Children (2013) to keep a check on the distribution and consumption of resources and their impact on children with respect to the total expenditures by different Ministries and Departments. But the ground realities in India are similar to the global projections mentioned above.

In India, HAQ Centre for Child Rights, a Civil Society Organisation (CSO), conducted an analysis of the Union budget 2020-21 from the perspective of children. It reported that children received the lowest share in the Union Budget in the last ten years in 2021-22 which is 2.46% of the total allocated budget. Furthermore, the share of child education has gone down from 2.18 per cent in 2020-21 to 1.74 per cent in Union Budget 2021-22. The budget for children is utilised for their health, education, development and protection.

Sectoral share in Union Budget 2021-22 (in percent)					
Year	Health BE	Development BE	Education BE	Protection BE	Other than BE
2016-17	0.12	0.77	2.40	0.03	96.68
2017-18	0.12	0.80	2.34	0.05	96.68
2018-19	0.13	0.82	2.25	0.05	96.76
2019-20	0.12	0.85	2.19	0.07	96.71
2020-21	0.11	0.80	2.18	0.06	96.84
2021-22	0.11	0.57	1.74	0.03	97.54

Table-1 Sectoral share in budget (Source: HAQ Centre for Child Rights, Budget for Children 2021-22 Cast in Shadows)

As a result of reductions, the ECCE sector in India may have serious repercussions since India is already lagging behind other countries in providing ECCE to all the children. The reduced share in child's education (from 2.18 to 1.74%) as mentioned in the above table (Table-1), covers different areas such as infrastructure, programming and teachers' salaries (being one of the largest components). The inequitable distribution of teacher education institutions in the country (Figure-2) and reduced budget allocations accentuate the issues of teacher preparation in India like inadequate infrastructure, regulation of quality and certification; and lack of professional development to increase teacher efficiency in ECCE. Moreover, the situation gets worsened since there is negligible government presence in this sphere of school education (CECED, 2011). Although ECCE is a growing concern in the Indian education scenario, it has yet to receive focused attention since it is shared among a few sectors and ministries, as discussed in the next section.

Multi-sectoral arrangement:

The subject of ECCE was earlier with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). However, in 2006, it was transferred to the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD). The NEP 2020, shifted it to the Ministry of Education in order to provide continuity in curriculum and pedagogy from pre-primary to primary schools. The other ministries such as Ministry of Labour & Empowerment, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) will now share the responsibility of its implementation. This joint venture of managing ECCE by different ministries may 'dilute the holistic conception and integrated provisioning of ECCE' (Suresh, 2019). Moreover, if NCERT alone is responsible for planning the ECCE curriculum, as proposed in NEP 2020, it may result in the downward filtration of primary education and will compromise with health and wellbeing of children as well as teacher preparation. Further training of Anganwadi workers who is the backbone of ECCE may will get sidelined. This is because NCERT so far directly deals with the training and curriculum planning in school education only.

Absence of regulatory bodies:

ECCE is provided to young children through Government initiatives (at Central/State/Local bodies), Non-governmental organisations (with a not-for-profit vision) and the Private or "for-profit sectors. The nature of programmes and services provided varies a great deal. In contrast, the government programmes (like Integrated Child Development Scheme) and Non-governmental Organizations (Mobile Creches, Pratham Balwadis) follow the government mandate of quality standards (MWCD prepared Quality Standards in 2013) namely interaction; Health, nutrition, personal care and routines; Protective care and safety; Infrastructure/ Physical environment; Organization and management; Children experience and learning opportunities; assessment and learning opportunities and Managing to support quality system. However, the implementation of these standards is still to be researched widely. The private sector follows its own standards or adopts a 'Western' conception in order to serve the 'customers'.

Similarly, there is a difference in the orientation of various organizations offering ECCE teacher education in India. Private institutions have adopted Western programs and Government-run institutes have more developmentally and contextually appropriate programs (Gupta, 2013). This difference can be attributed to the absence of any regulatory body in the ECCE landscape in India. In NEP 2020, the idea of having a National Accreditation Board and developing National Professional Standards will play a key role in ensuring quality ECCE sphere.

Variation in duration of programmes offered:

The minimum qualification expected of ECCE teachers were Grade 12th and grade 10th for vocational training in ECCE. For Anganwadi workers, the expectation of such qualification is to have passed Grade 10th or at least Grade 8th (in rural areas). Since there is an absence of government laid norms and regulations for ECCE teacher/Anganwadi worker training, there appears a great diversity in terms of minimum qualification. The Central Advisory Board of Education report (CABE, 2013) and National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) have prescribed a 2-year long diploma in preschool education. This is reiterated by NEP 2020. The variety of teacher training programmes is diverse as depicted in figure-1. There is a need to have a mechanism to separate teacher education programmes offered in ECCE as per the outcome or the competency level as proposed by National Professional Standards of Teachers (NPST) as well. For instance, a programme for ECCE teacher (pre-service) should have a different nature, duration and curriculum from a 3-month in-service or induction programme.

Neoliberalisation and ECCE teacher education:

Noam Chomsky (2016) warned the world about emerging ideology of neoliberalism. According to Chomsky:

“As long as the general population is passive, apathetic, and diverted to consumerism or hatred of the vulnerable, then the powerful can do as they please, and those who survive will be left to contemplate the outcome (Chomsky, 2016, p. 56).”

Neoliberal policies have found their roots in many developed countries after the Second World War. Neoliberal policies are characterized by privatisation and less regulation from State's end to ensure public services. The effects of neoliberalism are evident in the field of ECCE as well. According to Giroux (2015), the State aims to prepare productive and employable graduates through 'pedagogy of ignorance'. This pedagogy of ignorance prepares individuals for the job market through conformity to the political and other social phenomenon prevalent in the society. This mandates 'employees' to be ready for the job without any question and follow the authority (Pucci, 2015). The impact of neoliberalisation can be seen in different aspects of ECCE. For instance, the policies adopted at national level are directly proportional to the work of International funding agencies and institutions like World Bank or the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). However, these programs are perpetuating a form of inequality within a country- those children who are getting benefits of the intervention and those who are not. And the benefit of this inequality is exploited by private players at two levels- early childhood centers and teacher training institutes and this privatization has grown many fold in recent years (Gupta, 2018). In

majority of these private teacher training institutions (majorly offering Montessori training), the focus is on preparing teachers to make learning experience joyful for children with no or little scope to question or reflection.

Teacher education model and approach followed:

Delpit (1995) and Simon, (1992) highlighted that in Europe and United States, traditionally teacher education was considered to be the training of teaching skills and basic classroom management strategies which are universal. Student-teacher was supposed to master these skills and practice the same in the classroom settings and continuously repeat the same without much consideration to the social reality of children. This model of teaching resonates with the behaviourist model of teaching or training model. In India the prevalent model of teacher-training has the same 'behaviourist' tone. In this type of training, student-teachers are trained in a light-but-tight-approach about lesson planning or activity planning; Developing teaching and learning material; and standardised assessment and teaching strategies. NCFTE 2009 and NEP 2020 highlights the need to have humanistic approach to teacher-education but its success so far is not bright in ECCE. There is a need to bring dialogue from other fields in ECCE teacher education like Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology and help ECCE teachers develop a perspective rooted in the social reality instead of overwhelmingly adopting western concepts.

Conclusion and way forward:

Initial teacher education is a crucial area of investment since it prepares teachers for the social reality of schooling. These pre-service programmes should provide an exposure to the student-teacher about social reality, children's experiences and teaching strategies which can be adopted as per the changing schooling context instead of standard or universal methods or approach. In India, the ECCE teacher education has not changed much in last few decades. The demand of this sector has increased and increasing multi-fold. The minimum qualification needs to be regulated in order to accomplish the vision of NEP 2020. The training needs to be in tune with the NEP vision of 'light but tight' which will bring rigour to the trained personnel involved in ECCE sectors. Therefore, the policy makers, teacher educators and institutions should collaborate with academia or Universities to offer humanistic orientation to the prospective teachers.

*Department of Educational Studies,
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi*

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How NEP - 2020 Shapes Teacher Education

Anil Kumar Teotia

Introduction

Education is a continuously changing phenomenon. A teacher's performance is considered one of the most crucial aspects of education. Someone rightly said, "Education truly shapes the individuals and the nation as well," education is a crucial thing that brings social changes and transformation; it helps the country in developing economically, politically, and socially. It helps the citizens to learn various essential skills at the right time.

The education that has the potential to transform the fate of any nation essentially requires great teachers. Even teachers are considered synonyms with nation-builders. He is considered to be the focal point in the entire formal educational process. He decides that he also shapes classroom teaching and the future of the students in the class. A teacher's place can never be underestimated.

Justice JS Verma Committee report of 2012 states that "a broken teacher education sector is putting our 370 million children at risk.... and upon inspection scores of private **Teacher Education Institutes (TEI)** were found to have only a foundation stone in the name of infrastructure and 99% passing rate". This report also highlights trained teachers' incompetence by providing **CTET** (Central Teacher Eligibility Test), which declared that 85% of trained teachers failed. It was severe in the sense that it was a post-qualification competency test.

Thus, teacher education in the nation is facing much criticism from the educationists. All the stakeholders firmly believe that the quality of teacher education needs to be upgraded. The prevailing conditions of teacher education in India are far from the requisite standards. Teachers are not able to solve classroom issues and are not able to think critically. Teachers are lagging in terms of content, teaching methods, classroom management, discipline strategies, etc., and all these issues are repeatedly in light in the report published by any of the organisations.

Therefore, the nation's teacher education demands some comprehensive reforms in terms of curriculum re-structuring, content pedagogy, teaching methodology, etc. In this paper, we are discussing the main problems that appear in teacher education in India. We will discuss these in the light of NEP 2020 and share the main challenges that

will hinder the bright future of teacher education in the country. Instead of blaming teachers, the new national education policy of 2020 co-relates the poor performance of teachers with the poor level of teachers training provided to them.

MAJOR PROBLEMS OF TEACHER EDUCATION CORRESPONDING TO NEP 2020

The Curriculum

The curriculum of the teacher education is not inspiring. The curriculum is rigid and traditional. Teacher educators think that *this curriculum is highly theoretical and very less important than the practical aspect*. Integrating what is taught in teacher education and what is used in real classrooms is ignored. There is a lower level of creativity to be taught in teacher education. "It is unfortunate that teacher education institutions have not paid much attention to promoting creativity (Sharma, 2018)". The curriculum of teacher education is not linked with life and community.

NEP 2020 addresses this issue by making teacher education institutes multidisciplinary. NEP 2020 states that "As teacher education requires multidisciplinary inputs, and education in high-quality content as well as pedagogy, all teacher education programmes must be conducted within composite multidisciplinary institutions." These will help create more inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary teaching-learning in teacher education institutes. It is going to be fruitful to construct a more creative and lively curriculum for teacher education.

Short Duration of Training programmes

The duration of teacher training programmes is very short in India. In becoming a primary teacher, one has to do a two-year diploma course after his senior secondary, which is two years on paper only. The exams and other admission-related procedures steal more than four months, and the quality time for providing instructions in the training remains very little. It is tough to develop requisite knowledge in terms of health, attitude, principles, and values for becoming teachers with this bit of time. The duration of the training programme essentially affects the quality of the training programme.

On the post-graduate teacher level, the scenario is even worst. The essential qualification for becoming a PGT teacher in Delhi is "*Post graduation degree with first division and above 60% marks in 10th, 12th and graduation*". Candidate may qualify B.Ed. (Bachelors in Education) later on. It means that a person with zero knowledge about pedagogy is eligible to become a PGT teacher in Delhi (and in other parts of India, too). This has faced much criticism from the experts.

The NEP 2020 is taking steps to resolve the short duration of teacher training courses by offering new wide-ranging courses. NEP 2020 states that "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". Further, the policy also talks about specialising through 1 or 2 years courses to the selected individuals who have attained some pre-requisite qualifications. It will increase the quality time available for teacher training.

Selection Procedures in Teacher Training

The selection procedure in the teacher training is another concern. We have numerous examples of trained individuals who have no aptitude for teaching. There is an urgent need to put better selection methods in teacher training. These methods will improve the quality of training, and the cases of stagnation and wastage will not occur.

The selection procedure for admitting the aspirants in D. EL. Ed. (Diploma in Elementary Education- necessary for becoming a primary teacher) course in Delhi, takes into consideration the marks obtained in the senior secondary, irrespective of the stream of education he had, or if he has any interest or aptitude for this type of training. This is the dark side of the selection process. The main areas that can be considered include a test of intelligence, test in school subject, creativity, a test of languages, a test of aptitude tests, etc. these will improve the quality of teacher trainees. NEP 2020, however, does not talk much on this issue.

Teacher Educators

Teacher educators are essential in the entire training duration of the teacher training. Their recruitment in the institutes should be highly scrutinised. They need adequate abilities and skills in content knowledge, teaching methodologies, pedagogical knowledge, communication skills, etc. They ought to be professional, as they have to teach professionalism to a young teacher. However, the reality is quite the opposite. Teacher educators are not efficient and effective. They are incompetent in developing desired skills and abilities in the teacher trainees. They lack professionalism and professional ethics. The essential qualifications are often relaxed while recruiting teacher educators. These incapable teacher educators find it challenging to develop pupils' skills to resolve classroom-related problems in an ideal way.

NEP 2020 issues guidelines for making faculty in teacher education institutes diverse. It also talks about taking attracting and retaining faculty with training areas related to school education. It also talks about a National Mission for Mentoring to aid teacher educators, i.e., "establishing 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." This will improve the quality of teacher education.

Technology in Teacher Education

The conditions of teacher education have remained relatively unchanged even in the present digital age. It is changing with a prolonged rate of modernization. We have failed to accelerate the rate of technological advancements in teacher education. In other words, the infusion of technological innovations in teacher education is inadequate. ICT (Information and Communication Technology) can transform the higher and professional education of almost all fields, but in teacher education, ICT was never emphasised on grounds. Educational technology can transform school education, and hence it is becoming an inevitable part of modern educational systems.

Further, ICT is diluting learning in schools and making it more joyous, attractive, long-lasting and easy. Therefore, "the teachers have to prepare themselves for the changed responsibilities and skill sets for future teaching that will involve high levels

of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the need for more facilitative than didactic teaching roles (Gupta & Amre, 2013)". It was also realised that, "educational transformation is not possible unless teacher education programs are transformed to prepare the teachers to play their pivotal role in this process of change (Deshmukh, Chougule, et al.)." Currently, the use of technology in teacher education institutes is negligible. Pupil teachers are not provided an adequate level of training in preparing lessons using technology, and they are also not well versed in the use of technological tools in real-world classrooms. The use of ICT in TEIs is not satisfactory. Many pupil teachers were asked about their opinion on the level of ICT use in their course of teacher training. More than 75% of the trainees said, "We are incompetent in using computers and digital gadgets because we read ICT in books only, and our institutes do not have the proper technological infrastructure for the same." These are the conditions of the majority of private TEIs. The trainee teachers are themselves unsatisfied with the kind of ICT support provided to them.

ICT in teacher education is missing in the true sense. Unluckily, ICT in teacher education has given no special place in the **new national education policy**. This may be regarded as the most negative point of this policy. The entire chapter on teachers and teacher education does not encourage ICT in teacher education itself. This policy is not giving ICT its due importance in teacher education. It will be tough to set up ICT standards for TEIs because the policy is silent. The ICT training will be beneficial in developing digital literacy among young learners by teachers. However, this will be possible only when teachers are self-reliant in the use of ICT.

GENERAL CONCERN OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Improving the quality of teacher education has been the focus of various educational documents. Many have reported that despite having the latest technologies in school education, teacher education could not raise its standards on a technological basis; it is not up to the expected level. Our teacher education is lacking behind in realising its purpose. The main goal of education is to "equip students with suitable knowledge and skills that must be perceived as understanding the reality through personal experience and emotional reactions with the surrounding world of objects and specific situations (Yang, 2004)". And this knowledge can be transmitted through "appropriately designed and organized learning process – learning that brings about substantial changes in the perspective of individual vision and perception of the world (O'Sullivan, 2008)". The recent evidence in the education has shown that, this kind of 'appropriately designed and organised learning' can be delivered by highly effective teachers. In other words, "teacher's abilities are especially critical contributors to student's learning and consequently the success of a nation to advance in its economic, social and political spheres (Darling – Hammond, 2006)".

Universally, education is considered one of the most effective means for social change, and it also provides opportunities to solve societal problems at large. These problems include cultural, moral, social, ecological, political, and educational. It is a tool of social reconstruction. Teachers are the key stakeholders in the entire education process, so their education, to a large extent, is a matter of great concern. Today, our

teacher education is going through several problems. These are discussed in the next paragraph.

The pupil teachers are incompetent. They are not motivated to learn and lack creativity. They do not have a solid academic background. This knowledge deficit is further enhanced with insufficient instructional support provided in the teacher training institutes that are segregated and lack the facilities required for professional development. Teacher training in these institutes is defective. Teaching methods are rigid and lack innovations; hardly any culture-specific pedagogy is dealt with in such training institutes. They also lack in providing proper supervision of teaching of pupil teachers, and the case of practice teaching is superficial in the majority of teacher training institutes.

NEP 2020 GIVES NEW HOPES ?

It seems interesting that policy makers have touched almost every corner of teacher education and discussed it in chapter-15 and chapter-5. NEP 2020 firmly says (using words of J.S. Verma Commission), “a majority of stand-alone TEIs - over 10,000 in number are not even attempting serious teacher education but are essentially selling degrees for a price”.

NEP 2020 provides adequate provisions to disband the NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education) to reform teacher education. NEP 2020 advocates that the teacher training institutes should be multidisciplinary and should not be stand-alone type institutions. This recommendation essentially ponders us to think about breaking up the idea of having councils such as NCTE. The government may think of setting up an autonomous body that has the power, dare, and will to change the existing realities of teacher education.

In order to improve the picture of teacher education, NEP 2020 recommends making the regulatory system empowered "to take stringent action against substandard and dysfunctional teacher education institutions (NEP 2020". It set up the time limit (by 2030) to improve the existing TEIs educationally and in a multidisciplinary way; otherwise, they are closed down.

However, it is equally important to think about this critically. Chapter-15 of the policy talks about teacher education exclusively, but it does not speak about teacher education in all ways. The points in this chapter are mere repetitions of the points already mentioned in chapter-5. In NEP 2020, there are a total of 11 points guidelines for teacher education.

In the first point, the policy talks about, as usual, its expectations from teachers, i.e., grounded in India Languages, traditions, ethos, culture, and values along with technological advancements; this point is a repetition. It then proposes to reform TEIs by transforming them into multidisciplinary institutes. It limits that time frame of 10 years for filtering and shutting down the ineffective and dysfunctional TEIs, but why ten years? Why can't we filter such TEIs in just 3-4 years ? Further, it repeats the point of making B.Ed a four years course. Another point concerns the minimum qualification of teacher educators, which are already on paper, but these are not implemented. The policy does not provide adequate measures to ensure the implementation of its recommendations.

CONCLUSION

The goal of improving school education demands improving the present conditions of teacher education. To make radical changes in teacher education, we must look at it holistically, as envisaged in NEP 2020. Teacher education is not a separate event isolated; instead, it is a pathway that requires bringing things from different stages.

The main purpose of this paper is to understand the main contemporary problems faced by teacher education and how the current policy on education aims to tackle these. We have considered the significant problems such as short duration of teacher training, inadequate selection methods of pupil teachers, the efficiency of teacher educators, etc. we have listed the corresponding recommendations of such problems as suggested in NEP 2020.

Implementation of the recommendations of NEP 2020 is the primary concern; the appropriate government is required to take more visible and robust steps to ensure its implementation. The most vital thing to improve the quality of teacher education will be to set up an autonomous body that has the power, dare, and will to change the existing realities of teacher education; otherwise, all efforts will go in vain.

*District Institute of Education & Training (SCERT),
Dilshad Garden, Delhi, 110095*

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Implementation of NEP - 2020 and Empowerment of Teachers

Anjali Shokeen & Nisha Saini

Introduction

It was decided on in 1986 and revised in 1992 to become the current National Policy on Education. Several changes have occurred since then, necessitating a modification of the Policy. In 1986, the National Policy on Education (NPE) was adopted as the first education policy of the 21st century. It is based on the five pillars of equity, quality, affordability, and accountability and is designed to help India become the global knowledge superpower it aspires to be by making school and college education more holistic and flexible to meet the demands of the 21st century while also maximising the potential of each individual student. Union Cabinet adopted New Education Policy 2020 on July 29, 2020, replacing the previous version of Education policy and adding several new concepts. The new policy's goal is to refocus attention on the importance of education, both in the classroom and at the university level. The New Education Policy 2020 have an influence on the recruitment of CTET and TET certified teachers in the KVS and NV government education system once it is implemented.

Purpose of NEP 2020

In order to steer the growth of education in the nation, the National Education Policy or NEP 2020 was established. Every few decades or so, a new policy is introduced. This is India's third education policy. For the first time in 34 years, a new NEP will replace the 1986 NEP. All states will be bound by the new National Education Policy 2020. All levels of state government are required to adhere to the policy's directives. NEP 2020 does not need this, though.

Attaining Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

It is imperative that the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) establishes a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, recognizing that literacy and numeracy are prerequisites for learning. In order to achieve universal reading and numeracy in all primary schools by 2025, states will develop an implementation plan. It's time to draught up a National Book Promotion Policy.

Multilingualism and the power of language

According to policy, students should be taught in their mother tongue or a local language or a regional language up to and including fifth grade, and ideally all the way through eighth grade. In addition to the three-language formula, Sanskrit should be given as an alternative for students at all stages of school and higher education. Other Indian classical languages and literatures will also be accessible as choices on the menu here. The language of instruction will not be dictated to any learner. Students in grades 6-8 may take part in a fun project or activity centred on "The Languages of India," such as the "Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat" programmed. It is expected that secondary school students would be able to take courses in many different languages. For kids with hearing impairment, Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized throughout the nation and National and State curricular materials prepared.

Assessment Reforms

According to NEP 2020, students will no longer be assessed in a summative manner, but rather in a formative, competency-based manner that encourages growth and development while also assessing higher-order abilities like critical analysis and conceptual clarity. In grades three, five, and eight, children will sit for standardized tests administered by the proper authorities. Redesigned board examinations for grades 10 and 12 will continue, but with the goal of fostering a more comprehensive education in mind.

The situation in higher education has progressed at a far slower pace. Among the foundations of NEP 2020 is the four-year undergraduate course, which is intended to provide comprehensive and interdisciplinary education, as well as liberal education. However, the four-year undergraduate course has not yet been included in the list of degrees recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) (UGC). According to the National Education Policy 2020, one of the most significant duties of the Department of Higher Education is the development of a new framework for the control and maintenance of standards in higher education, which is in accordance with the department's constitutional mandate. Different entities would be responsible for the separate duties of regulation, certification, finance, and standard setting under the new organisation. These institutions would be independent and authorized to carry out their tasks. This division of responsibilities is necessary in order to reduce overlapping authority, offer checks and balances within the system, limit conflicts of interest, and remove concentrations of power in the organisation or system. The formation of these four organizations as different verticals inside the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), an umbrella institution, is required by NEP 2020 in order to ensure that they operate in cooperation with one another.

Although the concept of a teacher who is in control of their own learning has the potential to change the world, the reality is very different. Verma Committee report, 2012, said that 'a dysfunctional education system is placing more than 370 million children at danger' since private TEIs were discovered merely to have a foundation stone in the name of infrastructure and 99 percent passing rate.' 85% of instructors failed to pass the Central Teacher Eligibility Test a post-qualification competence test according

to the study (C-TET). Adhocism, obsolete teaching knowledge, lack of professionalism, and low pay are only a few problems teachers face once they leave their jobs. Other problems include low morale among teachers, which may lead to burnout.

Rather than pointing the blame at teachers, the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) focuses on the terrible circumstances of teacher education, recruiting, deployment, and service conditions. Understanding the "power of teacher," NEP 2020 has implemented structural changes to make "teaching" an appealing career option for young brains with exceptional abilities. In order to "restore the high esteem and standing" of the teaching profession, numerous modifications are proposed in the hopes of attracting the brightest brains and the most talented individuals.

In the same way that the 1986 policy was backed by a Program of Action (PoA) in 1992, it may be beneficial to develop a PoA for NEP 2020 in order to encourage faster implementation. Overall, the year 2021 saw HEIs and all other stakeholders putting the policy to the test and comprehending its spirit, as well as developing their own implementation plans that were consistent with the policy's intended spirit. The year comes to a close on an exhilarating note as we anticipate many of the spectacular events that will take place in the year 2022.

The National Forum on Educational Technology (NETF)

An important first step toward realizing NEP 2020's full potential will be taken by the NETF. Institutions of learning would be able to adjust more swiftly if they had access to high-quality educational technology resources. As well as adhering to cyber security standards and implementing firewalls and Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) against external threats and vulnerabilities, the focus should be on hosting indigenous Ed-Tech products on "open-source development platforms" with built-in cyber security resilience. Individual pupils' "personal privacy" will be protected in this way.

NEP 2020 training for teachers

To reach one's full potential as a human being, education entails the process of acquiring new skills, information, values, morals, and beliefs. It is often regarded as the most effective means of promoting social justice and equality for all members of society. When it comes to human resource development, formal education refers to the academic institution where established curriculums are taught or demonstrated by instructors.

There are three pillars to this formal education: goals, curriculum, and assessment. The goal is to transform children into human resources. Students, instructors and curriculum are all part of a four-tiered system of formal education in which this third vertical plays a critical role in achieving the goals of education.

American diplomat and politician, John Adam, defined teachers as the foundation of manhood. In India's 1986 National Policy on Education, it was stated that no educational system could ever advance beyond the caliber of its professors. There are several proverbs that speak to the importance of a teacher in affecting social change. The National Education Plan-2020 (NEP-2020) emphasizes the significance of teachers in the education system, as well as the desirable traits of teachers for nation-building. As a result of this approach, teachers have been placed at the heart of the most critical educational innovations. Teacher re-establishment at all levels has been a key part of the

agenda, since they help to mould the country's future generations. The National Education Program-2020 (NEP-2020) has also taken a step ahead by focusing on the recruitment of high-quality teachers in a transparent and accountable manner.

A teacher's responsibilities go well beyond the classroom, and we need to recognize this. They include crafting course content, creating excellent books and study materials, innovating in teaching and learning techniques, grading students, mentoring students and so on. We need to understand this. Hence, the NEP 2020 reaffirmed the need of restoring teachers' prestige and respect in society via empowerment. As a result, a strategy for increasing human capital has been devised to ensure the highest quality of human creation. Additionally, the National Education Program (NEP) has outlined the qualities that teachers must possess to be successful in order to meet the goals of the program.

- Is it possible to find a really excellent teacher ? What qualities do you look for in a potential teacher ?
- Who will make the decision on whether or not a teacher has the necessary acquiring characteristics to be considered an ideal teacher ?
- Is it possible to pinpoint a few qualities that should be ingrained in every educator ?

Questions on what makes a good or ideal teacher may be many, yet they might be difficult to answer or narrow down.

There are a number of characteristics that make a successful teacher, and a teacher may achieve at least some of these characteristics, if not all of them, depending on the system and environment. A virtue that is crucial for every person, regardless of their job, is punctuality; more so for teachers since it is tied to the future of their students' careers. As soon as a person decides to enter the field of teaching, he or she is required to keep track of all of the actions both within and outside of an academic institution in order to ensure that everything goes smoothly. As a professional, you must adhere to professional ethics at all times. Everyone's life revolves around ethics. Professors serve as role models for their students, and as a result, many students model their behavior after their teachers. As a result, teachers are expected to maintain a certain level of decorum in their daily lives. Many people's work lives are marred by a lack of professional ethics, which may be at the root of many of society's ills and crises. Throughout history, knowledge has grown, particularly when new ideas and innovations have been developed.

Reflection on NEP-2020

The Indian government's educational policy. Developing a country's economy has traditionally relied heavily on the quality of its educational system. It's used to provide people the tools they need to reach their full potential and confront the future. Increasing literacy rates and creating a more fair and equal society have long been the primary goals of Indian education. The rise of globalization has allowed for the development of new educational reform program and tactics. Education is a key component of the Indian government's plan for a sustainable future. With the renaming of the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHR&D) to the Ministry of

Education, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has shown his commitment to improving education in India by introducing a new strategy, the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). (Joshi et al. : 2021)

NEP 2020 on Education at the Nation's Higher Institutions - Faculty Mentoring for Institutional Excellence. This article proposes a mentorship strategy for achieving greatness. In order to prepare higher education institutions (HEIs) for the implementation of the requirements of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, educational leaders and faculty members should be trained in this manner. At the institution level, mentors are selected, mentees are oriented, the mentoring process is followed by both mentors as well as their students, the results of the programme are academic, research, and excellence, and so on and so forth. (Gupta et al. 2021)

NEP 2020, the country's long-term educational plan. Policy needs for comprehensive, transdisciplinary, and future-oriented education are highlighted by NEP 2020's transformative changes in higher education. Quality research and fair use of technology in education are the main goals of this program. For the first of a series of webinars to educate stakeholders and the general public on the National Education Policy (NEP), educational experts shared their thoughts in this document, which serves as a starting point for future sessions. (Anita et al. 2021)

All Stakeholders in the Business and Management Disciplines' Perceptions on the Impact of the 2020 National Education Policy. The National Education Policy-2020 envisions a high-quality education that will help satisfy the needs of India's rapidly expanding economy. From pre-school through college, the new strategy aims to accomplish three primary goals: the best possible quality of education; fairness; and honesty. Finance is the nervous system in every field, and knowledge of how to manage finance is dealt with in commerce and management education. This has a significant impact on the country's economy because it affects all sectors such as manufacturing, service industry, research and development, banking, and so on. There is a shortage of practical training among students in India's present education strategy, which is a key impediment for addressing global career prospects. Because of this, the National Education Policy-2020 aims to foster students' ability to think critically and creatively, qualities in high demand in today's global employment market. If stakeholders can know in advance what they are going to learn and how it will benefit them in the future economy, then all commerce and management curricula should be revised based on outcome-based education. (Devi et al. 2020)

Fedorova et al. (2020), Using Blockchain in the field of higher education. Blockchain technology is examined in terms of its usefulness and limitations in education, and this research also tries to determine the repercussions of its effect on education's progress. MIT is used as a case study in the article's analysis of how this technology has been used in the real world. In order to safeguard and verify the certificates that it issued; the MIT used this method. Additionally, Sony Global Education keeps track of each student's abilities and productivity via individual data collection, while the University of Nicosia was the first institution to use smart contracts and accept crypto currencies as payment. Additionally, the report examines how

blockchain technology is being used in MOOCs at institutions all across the world, not only in Russia.

NEP 2020's national education policy By offering high-quality education for everyone, the recently announced National Education Policy 2020 aims to develop our country into a just and thriving knowledge society that benefits all. Changes in the Teacher Education scenario are recommended by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The NEP-2020 Part II chapter on higher education policy adjustments includes a guideline on teacher preparation. A total of eleven sub-points have been included in this section. By 2030, the 4-year integrated B.Ed. delivered by such interdisciplinary HEIs will be the minimum degree requirement for school teachers. This is one of the key goals of NEP. "Ensure that teachers get the best quality training in material, pedagogy, and practise." NEP 2020 presents a fascinating mix of possibilities and challenges for the future of teacher education in the US. Analyzing the paradigm changes in teacher education and the opportunities and challenges they bring is the focus of this paper. (Smitha et al. 2020)

Aithal et al. (2020), Examining Indian Education 2020's Progress Towards Its Objects For a nation to advance economically and socially, a well-defined and forward-looking education strategy is required at all levels of education, from elementary school through college. In order to make their educational systems more successful, several nations use various educational systems that take tradition and culture into account. They also use various phases in the educational cycle at the high school and college levels. Dr. Kasturirangan, the former chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization, oversaw an expert group that recently recommended a new education strategy for India's government (ISRO). This article examines a number of recently proposed changes to the higher education system and compares them to the present framework. A number of changes and their possible effects on the Indian higher education system are explored, along with their advantages. There are also some recommendations on how it may be put into practise in order to achieve its goals.

Gupta et al. (2020), Some Tips for Obtaining and Maintaining Autonomy for Higher Education Institutions. In order to get accreditation, HEIs must undergo a radical change in how they operate, according to the policy. Because they have been accredited, the institution will be able to exercise more control over its educational and research program, which will lead to better outcomes. A higher level of certification means a greater degree of independence. Quality, accreditation, and self-governance are all paths that HEIs might take in their quest to become interdisciplinary universities. In order to keep institutions responsible to their stakeholders, autonomy is a major consideration.

Developing the institute's maximum potential and making them more responsive and inventive over time. Various viewpoints and degrees of autonomy are examined in the literature connected to Indian and international educational institutions in this research. Research, personal experience and engagement with specialists working in autonomous institutions have led to principles for achieving and preserving autonomy. Gupta et al. (2020), In the context of NEP 2020, strategies for overcoming barriers to faculty mentoring are needed. To better understand the obstacles that faculty members

face when it comes to being mentored, descriptive research was done in India. There were two types of surveys used to gather information: one was structured and the other was semi-structured. The results of these surveys were used to develop strategies for decreasing the impact of mentoring barriers on faculty members and increasing the mentoring program's overall effectiveness. Faculty members will be better prepared to execute the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 changes if a mentorship programme is properly designed and implemented (MHRD, 2020). In order to enhance the design of the mentoring programme and ensure that the mentoring programme is implemented effectively, identifying hurdles to its implementation would be beneficial. Limitations and future research opportunities are discussed towards the conclusion of the publication.

Implementing the New National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

Dan Curry, Director & Principal, Vega Schools also remarked, “Leaders should be up-to-date with the newest trends. Vocational training in schools is a necessary. National Education Policy should reach out to the community adequately. We need to design systems that generate learning chances. The school leaders should be having academic skills and leadership training. There is a lot of study on educational practices. It is high time to adopt NEP practically.”

“The education sector's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth before was 3 per cent, which has now climbed to 6 per cent. Around 10 crore youngsters were impacted to acquire schooling in the past 15 months because to the covid 19 epidemic.

She claimed that NEP is the motor of economic and social advancement. “It is a policy that envisions a paradigm of comprehensive learning, growth, engaging and immersive. It will emphasis on scientific temperament and evidence-based learning. It is quite adaptable and focuses on equitable development of art, science, physical education and extracurricular activity,” she noted.

Key to the Implementation of NEP 2020

National Education Policy (NEP) has been adopted by the Union Cabinet, and MHRD has been renamed as the Ministry of Education. On July 29, 2020, in the National Media Centre, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' and Union Minister Prakash Javadekar made the announcements. To better describe the ministry's activities, the name has been changed.

The 2020 National Education Policy has been released. Is it noteworthy that a panel of former ISRO leader K. Kasturirangan has been put in charge of writing the new National Education Policy ? This is an important distinction to make. Following its initial release last year, various revisions have been made, most recently to ensure that it is suitable for a Covid-19-based educational system. For the first time, students are the focus of the whole policy, which is a significant shift. The five 'I's' Indianness, Internationalism, Impact, Interactivity, and Inclusiveness – are reflected in the policy, which also emphasizes quality, equality, and inclusion. The policy will help students adapt to 21st-century abilities at all stages of education, from elementary school through college and university.

Top changes :

- Early Childhood Care Education: NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of the early years in order to guarantee that all children between the ages of 3 and 6 get high-quality early childhood care and education by 2025.
- New Curricular and Pedagogical Structure: School curriculum are to be restructured such that the 10+2 structure is replaced with a 5+3+3+4 structure that corresponds to the ages of 3 to 8, 8 to 11, 11 to 14, and 14 to 18.
- Holistic Multidisciplinary Education: At the undergraduate level, the policy envisions a broad-based, multi-disciplinary, and holistic education. The undergraduate degree may be completed in either three or four years, with several exit choices and necessary credentials.
- An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC): Academic credits obtained from different recognized Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) will be digitized and stored in an ABC so that degrees may be conferred taking into consideration the credits gained.

Conclusion

A successful teaching profession also requires a commitment to lifelong learning and a love of information. As we can see, learning is a never-ending process, and it doesn't finish when you leave the classroom. It is impossible for a teacher to be an effective educator if he or she believes that after they have obtained the necessary credentials (degree/diploma), their education is complete. Instead, they will work as a teacher to supplement their income. Students go to school to learn things that they might learn on their own from books or other resources, but that they need the guidance of a teacher to learn. A teacher must be an effective communicator both in giving and receiving information. While it's the teacher's job to aid students who have difficulty articulating their concerns or issues in a way that the class can comprehend, this isn't always the case. To be a good teacher, it must be a good communicator both verbally and nonverbally. Additionally, an ideal teacher should have excellent listening skills. Teaching should be an enjoyable experience for both the instructor and the students so that they are not scared to ask questions or express their concerns. Students' confidence grows as a result of this listening, which leads to effective learning. A successful teacher must also have the ability to connect with kids on an emotional level. Students sometimes grow bored in the classroom or at teacher's discussions because they find the content repetitive. An excellent teacher uses humour and creativity to captivate their pupils.

A teacher may approach each student as a person and understand what may be going on in their life in order to better engage them. Consequently, the teaching-learning system should be seen as an interactive activity including the learners. Students no longer buy into the old assumption that professors know everything and students are like empty bags waiting to be filled with all kinds of meaningless material. Rather, a teacher must be able to instill a hunger for knowledge in pupils that will allow them to meet society's needs for at least the next 40 years. The effectiveness of education as a mission relies on the participation of all stakeholders. It is important for teachers to concentrate on

teamwork since they do not have the luxury of working on their own. It is definitely a joint effort between a paraprofessional and a teacher. A teacher in this circumstance may have to take on several hats to ensure that the group's teaching and learning efforts are successful, but they should still be able to enjoy their work. Multidisciplinary teachers are more likely to succeed than those who specialize in a single discipline. As specified by NEP, a teacher must have a holistic view of his or her topic and not split it down into distinct components like mathematics, economics, physics or any other subject. When teaching, a teacher must have the ability to combine diverse disciplines and an overall perspective in order to help pupils think beyond their own subject matter. Society's needs and resources change throughout time. As a result, curriculum practices are also changing. On-room exams have been replaced by online exams as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic in physical classrooms, for example. In the teaching-learning assessment system, new online exams have become necessary. In order to be a good teacher, one must be able to adapt and respond to these changes and to the changing requirements of society. One of the most crucial qualities of a good teacher is a willingness to experiment with new teaching methods. For a successful teacher, real-world learning is essential. Experiential or real-world learning has been emphasized in NEP-2020. To do this, it has been recommended to minimize the amount of material in the curriculum. More students may enroll in our educational program if teachers use instructional approaches including hands-on learning, arts integration, and sports integration.

As youngsters, our grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other senior members of our family performed a vital part in providing us with all the mental support we needed. When it comes to family size, however, today's parents are so busy with their jobs that they don't have much time for their children. Due to the absence of their parents or other family members, youngsters long for the company of their loved ones at home. For teachers, it's a huge duty to handle pupils who are emotionally upset while they're in their classrooms. For these pupils, a teacher's function as a loving mentor extends beyond the classroom. Using the RTE Act, the country is working to ensure that all children up to the age of 14 have access to quality educational opportunities. The NEP 2020 has placed an emphasis on reducing school dropout rates and ensuring that all children have equal access to a quality education, regardless of where they live or what level of schooling they are already enrolled in. Our teachers must be community builders in order to ensure that NEP 2020's fundamental mission is not undermined but rather encouraged if we are to achieve this goal of universal accessibility. Every teacher, particularly those at the school level, should act as an ambassador in this regard. Aside from proposing various provisions for holistic, multidisciplinary, and universally accessible education, the NEP 2020 also recommends a transparent process for recruiting quality teachers, teachers' training, promotion avenues, incentives for good work and a decent salary with social security so that the nation builders can devote themselves fully to their assigned task of building the nation. Even yet, today's teachers are expected to do a variety of administrative duties, such as arranging events, resolving students' and workers' issues, etc. in addition to their primary duty of teaching. For this reason, a teacher may need

certain special skills in order to deal with these situations in a way that benefits both the institution as a whole and the student body as a whole.

University School of Education, GGSIPU, Delhi

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NEP - 2020 and Open Education : A Paradigm Shift

Rajiv Kumar Singh

Introduction

NEP 2020 has a special focus on digital education as real classroom interactive learning made available at a distance by transforming the traditional expression of learning into a new blended learning model integrated with technology. The recent rise in epidemics and pandemics necessitates that we are ready with alternative modes of quality education whenever and wherever traditional and in-person modes of education are not possible. In this regard, the National Education Policy 2020 recognizes the importance of leveraging the advantages of technology while acknowledging its potential risks and dangers. (Source: NEP 2020, Page 58, 24.1) The National Education Policy 2020 aims to ensure access, equity, and quality education from primary to higher education in a variety of settings: informal, non-formal, and formal by integrating technology. The structure and system of 'Open Distance Education' Institutions such as 'National Institute of Open Schooling' with study centres across the country can play a great role in meeting the desired objectives of National Education Policy 2020.

This National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st-century education, including SDG4 which seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030, while building upon India's traditions and value systems. (Source: NEP 2020, Introduction, Page 3)

Learning is synonymous with human existence and has led to social evolution since time immemorial. Over time, a formal regular system evolved to impart all the basic knowledge required by an individual to contribute to society to the best of their ability. The structure of the education system is also absorbed, assimilated, and conformed to the changing needs of society, its demands, and its priorities. However, the transition rates from elementary to secondary levels are critically and abysmally low in many developing contexts, as the number of secondary schools is insufficient to cater to the larger needs of the population. Therefore, 'Open Distance Education' has come to the

forefront in many developing countries, keeping in mind the limitations of accessibility and adaptability of the diverse learner groups.

The history of distance/correspondence education is considered to be as old as the history of postal services. It is claimed that distance/correspondence tuition started around 1840, when Mr. Pitman sent instructions, in shorthand, by postcards to his students. The successful first distance/correspondence program was launched in 1914 by Victoria University. One of the concerns that led to the emergence of 'Open Distance Education' in various countries was the scarcity of congenial environments required for effective teaching-learning processes and the achievement of desired outcomes for a major section of the population in the countries. Learning at one's own pace, a self-explanatory curriculum and a choice of subjects & medium of instruction is key to the 'Open Distance Education'.

The beginning of 'Open Distance Education' in India may be traced to the introduction of correspondence courses as a pilot project in 1963-64 by the University of Delhi for the B.A. Course. Encouraged by the success, the Andhra Pradesh government gave a lead to the country by setting up the Andhra Pradesh Open University, Hyderabad which was rechristened as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University in 1982. The establishment of IGNOU, New Delhi in 1985 has proven to be a significant milestone in the development of 'Open Distance Education' in India.

Board of Secondary Education, Madhya Pradesh introduced correspondence courses at the matriculation level in 1965. Some other states like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Orissa followed the footsteps of Madhya Pradesh. In 1979, the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi, set up an 'Open School' as a project which was an initiative to move towards a 'parallel system' that accommodates the learners by providing open entry, flexible choice of courses, and flexibility in the duration for course completion to confront the three-fold challenge stated in the National Policy on Education – 1986/1992. Beginning with an experiment in 1979, the open school project of CBSE was upgraded to National Open School (NOS) in 1989, and further in 1990, the Government of India, through a Gazette Notification, vested NOS with the authority to examine and certify learners registered with it up to Pre-Degree level courses which were rechristened as the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in July 2002.

'Open Distance Education' is a form of education in which the main elements include the physical separation of teachers and learners during the teaching-learning process and communication is accomplished by one or more technological media. It provides a platform that strengthens every mind to get into a continuous process of learning while neutralizing the myriad obstacles that one would likely have faced in the normal course of learning. Physical, mental, and social shortcomings do not hinder the learning process, and openness and flexibility allow learners to learn within their comfort zone and apply their areas of strength to reach their learning goals. It is a scheme of education that seeks to remove barriers from learning systematically, whether they are concerned with age, time, or place.

'Open Distance Education' is a term used to describe the system in which courses/subjects are designed flexibly to meet the individual requirements of learners

which tries to remove barriers that prevent participation in the traditional courses (Otto Peters, 2001). Though the 'Open Distance Education' mode has several flexibilities and advantages over the formal system of learning, still limited face-to-face interaction between learner and teacher makes it a little questionable, especially in the case of laboratory experiences or with the subjects with practical knowledge. Contrastingly, academic demands, coupled with the isolation and anxiety experienced by distance learners, may easily contribute to confusion, loneliness, stress, and sometimes attrition (Nonyongo & Ngegebule, 1998). It is, therefore, imperative that distance learners should be provided with relevant and adequate learner support to enable them to cope with the challenges of isolation and infrequent contact with learning facilitators and fellow learners.

At the time, when educationists from around the globe were trying to meet the challenges of isolation and infrequent contact with learning facilitators and fellow learners, the COVID-19 pandemic changed education forever. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the closure of schools worldwide and has accelerated the need for digital learning. Needless to say, the Pandemic has reformed the schooling, learning, and teaching strategies. To fight the spread of COVID-19 and to maintain healthy social distance, schools across the globe quickly transitioned from on-campus education to 'Open Distance Education. The whole scenario changed with the sudden shift away from the classroom worldwide and 'Open Distance Education' has been metamorphosed into 'Open Education', as the idea of distance has been obliterated. In the 'Open Distance Education' teaching methodology, the teacher and learner were separated by time and place. But, now transactional teaching-learning gaps can be filled by a variety of technical assistance tools that are far more accessible and effective than the traditional methods of books, magazines, and other support materials that need to be physically available.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic; the National Education Policy 2020 was announced by the Ministry of Education, Government of India on July 29, 2020, which mentions that new circumstances and realities require new initiatives. The recent rise in epidemics and pandemics necessitates that we are ready with alternative modes of quality education whenever and wherever traditional and in-person modes of education are not possible. In this regard, the National Education Policy 2020 recognizes the importance of leveraging the advantages of technology while acknowledging its potential risks and dangers. (Source: NEP 2020, Page 58, 24.1)

The National Education Policy 2020 aims to ensure access, equity, and quality education from primary to higher education in a variety of settings: informal, non-formal, and formal by integrating technology. NEP 2020 also recommended that the aim must be for India to have an education system by 2040 that is second to none, with equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background.

The structure and system of 'Open Distance Education' institutions such as 'National Institute of Open Schooling' with study centres across the country can play a great role in meeting the desired objectives of National Education Policy 2020. The

National Institute of Open Schooling as an autonomous organization is committed to the vision of National Education Policy 2020. National Institute of Open Schooling operates through a network of five Departments, 23 Regional Centres, two Sub Regional Centres, and more than 7400 Study Centres (AIs/AVIs) spread all over the country and abroad, covering every district as well as urban and rural areas in the state they are established.

National Education Policy 2020 has a special focus on digital education as real classroom interactive learning made available at a distance by transforming the traditional expression of learning into a new blended learning model integrated with technology. The Digital India Campaign is helping to transform the entire nation into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. While education will play a critical role in this transformation, technology itself will play an important role in the improvement of educational processes and outcomes; thus, the relationship between technology and education at all levels is bi-directional. (Source: NEP 2020, Page 56, 23.1)

To achieve desired objectives of the National Education Policy 2020 and to improve multiple aspects of education; the use and integration of technology have been adopted by the National Institute of Open Schooling. It has designed talking books for courses in DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) format for people with “print disabilities” including blindness, impaired vision, and dyslexia, and introduced QR (Quick Response) code which contains text and links (to websites, videos, audio files) and digitization of Self Learning Material. In continuation, the National Institute of Open Schooling offers MOOC courses at all levels. The MOOCs have been developed using the four quadrant approach – text in PDF, a teaching video, self-assessment exercises; and a discussion forum. Learners can enroll themselves on SWAYAM at www.swayam.gov.in without any fee.

The content of the National Institute of Open Schooling is also available on a separate vertical 'DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for School Education)' of PM e-Vidya including the website of the National Institute of Open Schooling. Live Interactive sessions on the PM e-vidya channel are conducted every day which involve two-way communications to enhance performance in all the concerned areas. These are further supplemented by Radio broadcasts 'Mukt Vidya Vani' and 'Radio Vahini'

Adding a feather to the cap, the National Institute of Open Schooling launched the 'Virtual Open School' which is the first-of-its-kind school in India that emphasizes learning and teaching patterns through non-conventional approaches like virtual live classrooms and virtual labs. This school is an example of how leveraging technology and innovation can facilitate inclusion in education with a mission to enable access to affordable, world-class education to enhance learning outcomes and develop learners with multiple intelligence, ready to face the challenges of the digital age. With this initiative, the entire education process for the National Institute of Open Schooling will be online which includes the teaching-learning process, live interactive classes, recorded sessions and videos, submission and evaluation of tutor marked assignments (TMAs), assessments, and certification.

The top accomplishment of the National Institute of Open Schooling is “DEEP” (Digital Education and E-Resource Platform); e-Library which has been designed in tune with achieving the vision of the National Institute of Open Schooling followed by the vision of the National Education Policy 2020 to provide sustainable and equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background. It aims to serve all learners and users with multidimensional information sources in electronic formats including study material, textbooks, reference books, journals, and other support materials to produce quality human resources and further support fighting against the deterioration of knowledge scarcity.

'Open Schooling', as defined by the Commonwealth of Learning involves “the physical separation of the school-level learner from the teacher, and the use of unconventional teaching methodologies, and information and communications technologies (ICTs), to bridge the separation and provide the education and training”. Commonwealth of Learning calls it 'Open Schooling' rather than 'Open and Distance Schooling' because openness and flexibility are more important features than physical separation whereas 'Augmented Reality' and 'Virtual Reality' have lessened the distance between the learner and teacher. 'Open Education' means open for all in all respects whether it is age, choice of subjects, choice of medium of instructions, pace, the convenience of learning and even clearing of doubts, having interaction with their teachers. It is open concerning both physical and psychological domains.

The new paradigm of technological aids has been integrated into the blended learning model, whereby technologies are making the learning process more interactive and interesting. The optimal use of technology not only fills the gaps in traditional education but also enables more learners to be reached at any one time. The teacher is just a click away, and the accessibility to resources and educators has never been better. The learner finds tons of resources without even moving a muscle, which is much better than when the learning was not online.

In the case of 'Open Distance Education'; there is limited face-to-face interaction as a personal contact program, however, 'Open Education' provides interactive virtual classrooms with mutual convenience and the need of learner and teacher without any boundaries. Real classroom interactive learning is made available at a distance by transforming the traditional expression of open learning into a new blended learning model integrated with technology. The use of technological tools i.e. virtual classrooms along with virtual laboratories, web-based hypermedia, computer-assisted learning, interactive teleconferencing, and live interactive audio (radio) and audio-video (television) programme, where learner and teacher meet in cyberspace, can be followed by digital assessment sessions has moulded 'Open Distance Education' into 'Open Education'. Today's youth is techno-savvy and think of technology not as a tool, but as the groundwork for everything they intend to do. Technology-friendly learners no longer need the physical presence of a teacher to transmit the subject knowledge, since technology can do a fairly good job while offering the content in interactive, participative, and creative ways (Carhill-Poza, 2017).

Whether it is language apps, virtual tutoring, video conferencing tools, or online learning software, there was already high growth of adoption of technology in education even before COVID-19;; there has been a significant surge in usage since COVID-19.

'Open Education' can be understood as a general term for the use of telecommunication to provide or enhance learning. 'Open Education' is not just concerned with increasing access, but also with equalizing educational opportunities for learners regardless of their geographic location or socio-economic background. In every educational system, whether it is traditional or open, the students learn in different ways, with their unique learning styles and strategies. Some learners may be effective and skilled listeners, others may need visual stimulation whereas some actively learn through practical exercises. In 'Open Education' learners are free to choose needs and learning styles with appropriate strategies and techniques. Similarly, teachers can make pedagogical choices to use appropriate strategies with the help of technology for appropriate learning purposes. Since quality assurance is a major concern for educationists and policymakers, it should be reassuring that 'Open Education' can offer the same or better quality than traditional courses. Hence, a strong mechanism and policy are required to define minimum standards of service delivery and assure that 'Open Education' adheres to them.

Conclusion

ज्ञानवानेनसुखवान्ज्ञानवानेवजीवति ।।

ज्ञानवानेवबलवान्तस्मात्ज्ञानमयोभवः

“ज्ञानी व्यक्ति हीं सुखी है, और ज्ञानी हीं सही अर्थों में जीता है. जो ज्ञानी है वही बलवान है, इसलिए तू ज्ञानी बन”

A knowledgeable person is happy, and the knowledgeable person lives in the true sense.

The knowledgeable one is the powerful one, so you become knowledgeable.

To be knowledgeable is not only a prerequisite to be a happy and prosperous life, it is the right of every person. In the developing and underdeveloped countries where it is not possible to deal with masses entry into the education because of population growth and rising awareness about the importance of education in social and economic upward mobility, 'Open Education' is parallel system to formal education for overcoming barriers to access learning while seeking to ensure high-quality educational experiences that will enable success both during and after studies.

'Open Education' incorporates the key principle of learner-centeredness in which the learner is facilitated as an active participant in the educational process and can be further supplemented by offering flexibilities i.e. choice of courses, medium of instructions, age, time, and place. If carefully implemented, 'Open Education' can play a potentially important role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and enabling lifelong learning.

In the future, new inventions and new technologies will be integrated into the education system as the whole educational technology community is working hard to meet the challenges faced by learners and teachers during the pandemic. We can think of the day when technology will obliterate all the concerns of the educational community. Though the distance between learner and teacher has been eradicated with technology

integration; we can imagine 3D virtual classrooms and laboratories in 'Open Education' which may replace real classrooms in coming years.

Director (Academic)
NIOS, Noida-62, UP

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Implementation of Academic Bank of Credits of NEP-2020 through Teacher Education Programmes

S.K. Yadav & Saroj Yadav

Introduction

Establishment of Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) is one of the recommendations of National Education Policy-2020 to improve the quality of higher education in the country *and students will have experience of holistic and multidisciplinary education*. The Government of India implemented this recommendation by notifying University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations (Establishment and Operation of Academic Bank of Credits in Higher Education), on 28th July, 2021. This Regulation shall be applicable to all central and state universities, deemed-to-be universities and autonomous institutions. ABC will be set up on the lines of the National Academic Depository and act as on the pattern of commercial banks. The interpretation of any issue related to Regulations shall be decided by the Commission only.

What is Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)

Academic Bank of Credits is an online academic services provided to students for opening and closure their Academic Bank Accounts and will also have facility for credits accumulation, credit transfer, credit redemption earned during their academic programmes from different degree-granting Higher Educational Institutions. ABC is developed by National e- Governance Division (NeGD) of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity) under DigiLocker Framework. Students will have autonomy to choose courses of their choices across a number of higher education *disciplines*. They can also check their credit record at any time in the Bank but not allowed to send their credits directly to ABC.

Now question arises, how to strengthen the ABC so that it can become operational and functional during its implementation in all degree-granting Higher Educational Institutions in the country. It is a big challenge for them to implement ABC in their Institutions and universities because they are not having adequate infrastructure, trained manpower, expertise, sufficient materials and resources etc. Keeping these challenges in view, special efforts are needed for creating a favourable environment for the implementation of ABC in the higher education system. It will be possible through

teacher education programmes and activities which will create awareness and expertise about Academic Bank of Credits among policy makers, administrators, community leaders, curriculum developers, teacher educators, students, teachers and faculty at large in higher education institutions. At present, our country is having more than 16000 teacher education institutions including universities and colleges in which different programmes of teacher education are being run. So for effective implementations is concerned, all the issues and components related to regulations of ABC need to be integrated in teacher education. Teacher education is having mainly two major components namely pre-service and in-service education. Different strategies for implementation of ABC in both the components of teacher education are discussed below.

Implementation Strategies of Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) Through Pre-Service Teacher Education

Many pre-service teacher education programmes such as Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), Master of Education (M.Ed.), B.Ed.- M.Ed (Integrated 3- Years Course) , 4- Years Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) are being run in different universities and institutions in our country. As per NEP 2020, “by 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree. The 2-year B.Ed. programmes will also be offered, by the same multidisciplinary institutions offering the 4-year integrated B.Ed., and will be intended only for those who have already obtained Bachelor's Degrees in other specialized subjects. These B.Ed. programmes may also be suitably adapted as 1-year B.Ed. programmes, and will be offered only to those who have completed the equivalent of 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's Degrees or who have obtained a Master's degree in a specialty and wish to become a subject teacher in that specialty. All such B.Ed. degrees would be offered only by accredited multidisciplinary higher education institutions offering 4-year integrated B.Ed. programmes. Multidisciplinary higher education institutions offering the 4-year in-class integrated B.Ed. programme and having accreditation for ODL may also offer high-quality B.Ed. programmes in blended or ODL mode to students in remote or difficult-to-access locations and also to in-service teachers who are aiming to enhance their qualification, with suitable robust arrangements for mentoring and for the practicum-training and student-teaching components of the programme.”

All these programmes are having four major components, namely, theory courses **including Curriculum and Materials**, pedagogy, practical activities, field engagements and internship. Therefore, Academic Bank of Credits can be made part of these components for its implementation in higher education institutions.

Theory courses - In all the pre-service teacher education programme, there are many theory papers like contemporary India and education, philosophical and sociological perspective in education, knowledge and curriculum, teaching and learning, gender and society and inclusive education. In these courses, different components of Regulations related Academic Bank of Credits such as registration process, norms and standard of

infrastructure, organisational structure and function, conversion of institutions into multi disciplinarily institutions, award of credits from other university, offer of twining programme, joint degree programme dual degree programmes, multiple entry and multiple exit, anytime anywhere from higher education institutions, award of degree by registered higher education Institutions and consequences of violation of regulations can be integrated for generating awareness among the implementers and the students community .

Advocacy Materials - The first and foremost need is to create a favourable environment for acceptance of the urgent need to introduce Academic Bank of Credits. This requires organization of awareness building activities for having interaction with policy framers, opinion leaders, media persons, curriculum developers, teacher educators, teachers and parents. Suitable strategies such as increasing use of mass media, particularly electronic media and interactions with concerned target groups may be very useful. Adequate materials on Academic Bank of Credits in respect to the curriculum content, curriculum transaction, and educational technologies are not available with the institutions because it has been introduced recently in system of higher education. Therefore, there is need to develop material on different components of Academic Bank of Credits for better implementation. The material on online Courses offered through National Schemes – SWAYAM, NPTEL, V-Lab, etc., should also be developed. The material should be of high quality which can enhance creativity and critical thinking among teachers, teacher educators and other functionaries.

Projects and Assignments - The tasks, projects and assignments from theory courses may be given to student teachers for enhancing their professional capacities about implementation strategies of the Academic Bank of Credits. For example, the projects can be assign on setting of Grievance Redressal Mechanism at Central Government, University Grants Commission and Higher Education Institutions to address the grievance of students. Another task may be on establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in Registered Higher Education Institution .

Field Interaction and Internship - In the field interaction and internship programme, student teachers will get opportunity to visit institutions / colleges and can try out their theoretical concepts and ideas about ABC in these institutions and colleges. They can also interact and discuss with students, teachers, teacher educators and other functionaries about the implementation of ABC during field interaction and internship programme.

Pedagogy and Curricular Activities: - The traditional teaching methods may not be fruitful for transacting the different concepts of ABC. It requires interactive and participatory methodology for transacting it. Non-conventional methods like experiential learning, enquiry approach, discovery method, storytelling, sports integrated, art integrated and debate should be followed. Besides this, different activities namely, group discussion, role play, painting, poster competition, essay competition and quiz contest should be organised about ABC.

Monitoring Mechanism - Monitoring mechanism will play an important role in institutionalization of ABC in universities and institutions. Therefore, there is need to evolve suitable monitoring mechanism design for implementation of ABC programmes at the university and institution level. It will monitor the outcomes of implementation of ABC on regular basis. Necessary corrective measures can be undertaken from time to time on the basis monitoring mechanism.

Implementation Strategies of Academic Bank of Credits Through In-service Teacher Education

Our country has strong mechanism for providing in-service education to students, teachers, community leaders, curriculum developers, teacher educators, policy makers, administrators, and faculty of higher education to update their knowledge and skills about new developments and changes occurred from time to time in the field of higher education. Strong mechanism means in-service education is provided to the above functionaries from national level to the far flung areas of the country by many institutions and universities namely, Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs), Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs), National Council of Educational Research Training (NCERT), National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) Human Resource Development Centres, Teaching Learning Centres, Faculty Development Centres, Inter University Centre for Teacher Education and School of Education. These institutions organize orientation programmes, faculty induction programmes, and refresher courses on regular basis for their growth and development. As Academic Bank of Credits is a new concept, it should be made part of these programmes to address comprehensively implementation strategies and all issues mentioned above under theory courses. Besides this, counselling and guidance should also be provided to Registered Higher Education Institutions about the procedure for registration of the institution on ABC (www.abc.gov.in), uploading of data of students credits obtained during or after the academic year 2021-22 and making students of institution aware of ABC facilities and encourage them to open the Academic Bank Account on ABC, The institutions should also be made aware how to create a hyperlink to ABC URL on the institution website homepage ? Discussion should also made how to depute Nodal Officer for implementing ABCS ? Students should also be trained how to fulfil in ABC ID on all examination forms and use of the ABC Cell of UGC ?

At the end, it is concluded that the issues and challenges discussed above for implementation of Academic Bank of Credits can be met through teacher education programmes. Under these programmes, students, teachers, teacher educators, administrators and faculty of higher education can be trained about implementation strategies of Academic Bank of Credits so that they can implement it successfully in their institutions.

*Former Dean Academic,
NCERT, New Delhi*

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NEP-2020 : Some Major Reforms and Threat of Fragile Outcomes

G.L. Puntambekar

The New Education Policy (NEP), 2020 is a major social sector reform initiated by the Central Government. Basically it was a long due reform because it is introduced after 34 years of second National Education Policy introduced in 1986. This new policy has been formulated after a detailed and in depth consultative process and considered over 2 lakh suggestion from across the country and various sections of the society. It was a common belief that our education system is producing only degree holders and creating the jobless mob of these degree holders. Contrary to it, our young talent is holding key positions at all over the world and contributing significantly in the development of developed countries. “To compensate for the failure of previous NEPs, NEP 2020 has proposals of a liberal education to support multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary education and research in under-graduation and post-graduation levels.” (1) On this backdrop, the major challenge before this third National Education Policy is not only to groom young talent but also to provide favorable environment so that their talent can be utilized for the development of the country and control brain drain. It is not a easy task as at initial stage a big challenge to provide access of educational facilities to the huge and diversified population of the country, equity in educational facility, assurance of quality and affordability and most importantly to develop connect with our language, culture and even national interests. It is fortunate that the NEP-2020 has build on the foundational pillars of Access, Equality, Quality, Affordability and Accountability in education system. The design of the new policy is creating hope that it can transform the entire system and also fulfill the developmental goals of the country. But the million dollar question is how we can get the expected outcome from the policy reform? To find out the answer of this question, we have to learn the lesson from history. Robert A. Heinlein rightly said that “A generation which ignores history has no past and no future.” The history of the failures of several good concepts provides us ample proof that failure was none other than ignorance of developing culture required for a particular concept or a design of a policy. It is evident form a historical event of collapse of the USSR in 9th decade of last century. The experiment of the noble concept i.e. “Socialism” was failed

after about 70 years due to failure in developing the culture required for it. NEP-2020 is also a similar kind of reform which needs to change the deep rooted weaknesses in the entire system of education in India.

“The National Education Policy-2020 laid a roadmap for progressive education keeping essence of ancient ethos of Indian tradition, culture, values, to build new country with futuristic vision”. (2) The policy document of NEP-2020 rightly analyzed the major problems of existing higher education system i.e. severely fragmented ecosystem, less emphasis on skill and learning outcome, rigid separation of disciplines, limited access, limited institutional autonomy, poor and ineffective research, ineffective regulatory system, medium of instruction and most importantly low standard of education at international parameters. The policy document reveals that the fundamental principles of the policy formulated is on the basis of analysis of the problems of the system and now focus should be given to implementation as the mission is tough and to get rid of these problems is a hard nut to crack. Though the Government is well aware of almost all the ground reality which is reflected in the policy document and therefore, the time line to achieve the targets under NEP are set between 2030 to 2040. The expected outcome of the policy would be visible only when the mind set of the stakeholders will change. This article aims to analyze the major areas of policy reforms and also to highlight the areas which needs special attention for developing a culture required for transformation in the sector and save the threat of fragile outcome of a good concept.

A more holistic and multidisciplinary approach:

The objective of providing a holistic and multidisciplinary education is good and it is required to shape the career of the young generation and also make them more useful to the society and nation. In the policy document, it aims that by 2030, there shall be at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district and by 2040, all the HEI shall aim to become multidisciplinary with 3000 or more students. At present total 1043 Universities, 42342 colleges, 132 Institutes of national importance and 11779 Stand alone Institutions (not affiliated from any University and therefore allowed only to offer Diploma) are functioning in the country and it is an uphill task to provide education in multidisciplinary mode with required quality as it need huge infrastructure investment. The evidence of last 8 years especially the investment in other infrastructure facilities by the Govt. is creating hope that the next target will be educational infrastructure but for improvement in quality of education, talent should be attracted in education sector which is very tough as there is huge gap in financial and other rewards offered in corporate sector and HEIs. The Govt. sector HEIs are bound to pay as per Govt. norms and private sector is mostly focused on physical infrastructure and the teachers are underpaid. In this situation, how these HEIs can attract talent in the academic sector for quality assurance. Though the Govt. is willing to give more autonomy to the HEIs on the basis of their performance but without developing an alternative financial resources especially in private HEIs, the objective of affordability, quality and easy access to common mass will hamper. We have to accept that devotion and passion towards education like Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya and Doctor Sir Harisingh Gour is missing in new age owners or directors of HEIs. Autonomy with high level of accountability will certainly fulfill the objective

but it is not easy. Acharya Rajneesh (Osho) rightly said that for any transformation at least 20 years are required as it change the generation and we can transplant new culture required for transformation plan. The time line for full-fledged outcome of NEP-2020 is aligned with said quote of Osho and therefore, more focus should be on replacing the existing culture of HEIs.

Though it is too early to make any comment and draw an opinion on this objective and initial efforts made by some HEIs and State Governments to implement the NEP-2020 but it clearly indicate the lack of seriousness not only in implementation of NEP but also to develop required culture to extract concrete result from NEP. For example some HEIs and State Government are giving open option to the students to opt any subject of other disciplines without taking due care of the consequences of hardship faced by the HEIs in teaching, examination and infrastructural constraints especially in colleges in which number of students are very large. The approach of multidisciplinary education is good but it should be implemented to strengthen and improve the usefulness of each and every stream. In this backdrop, to implement this good idea, each discipline should offer some multidisciplinary courses both major and minor to the students of other streams. The subjects of the multi-disciplinary courses (minor and major) should be decided on the basis of its usefulness to the students of other streams and the syllabus and design of such courses should also different from the syllabus and design which is offered to the students of main stream. For example knowledge of taxation system, share market operations and understanding of some business and economic issues are useful to science and arts stream and can be offered by Commerce and Management stream. For Commerce, Arts and Management students, knowledge of Mathematics, Computer Science, Public Policy, Public Finance, History, Law, Psychology and Foreign Languages are important as it will strengthen the career of the students. Other subject such as Literature, Fine Arts, Music and Indian languages can be opted as per the interest of the students. Such pattern of course structure will serve the purpose of providing holistic education with multi-disciplinary knowledge among students and also contribute in nation building.

Multiple Entry and Exit Option :

The idea of multiple entry and exit is good and will help to those students who are not in position to complete their formal education in one stroke. The structure prepared by Ministry and UGC is also good but while the educational institutions exercising on it, the basic essence of this concept is ignored or has not been taken care properly. To implement this concept, it is required to distribute the entire degree courses in such a manner that each and every part of entry and exit should have a complete part of that particular field of knowledge with relevant vocational skills. The current requirement of job skills at different levels should be examined before distributing the yearly (two semester with each entry and exit) structure of the stream. A well planned counseling programme will also help the students to select the multi-disciplinary subjects so that required skill can be develop with multiple entry- exit option. The initial exercise done by the institutions and State Governments are not encouraging because either they are not understanding the basic essence of the concept of multiple entry and

exit option or they are restructuring the syllabus with a very casual approach. If we take the example of Commerce stream for developing an ideal multiple- entry- exit option, the HEIs can offer first two semesters of degree courses for accounting part of the stream with vocational skills like Tally. In second year (next two semesters) we can devote the entire year for Finance related subjects and vocational courses. For remaining two semesters in 3 year degree course, the HEIs can cover the Taxation related subjects and vocational courses. This structure will serve the purpose of this option as at each stage of exit, the student have the knowledge of a particular part the stream and can get the jobs related to that part. If the HEIs are offering four year degree course with Honors degree, then in fourth year, subjects and skill related to Management stream and research can be added. In this example, at each point of entry and exit, student can get a complete knowledge of an independent part i.e. Accounting, finance, Taxation and Management. The practical and vocational training at each and every level provided during the study such as income tax facilitator, GST facilitator, Fund manager and stock trading service provider will automatically increase the value of the student in the job market which the main objective of the NEP-2020. Though it is not so easy in science and arts stream but efforts should be made to develop a ideal structure by analyzing new trend in job market and current requirement of science & technology field. For example, when Government aims to go with hydrogen economy and renewable energy and e-vehicle policy, the academic institutions should be prepare their students for the new age economy of the world.

Skill Development Objective:

Several surveys and reports reveal that there is huge gap between the demand of skilled workers in Indian industries and the availability of the workers as per the demand. The national employability test conducted by Wheebox with the collaboration with AICTE, AIU and other industry partners reported that “46.2 percent of the Indian youths are employable and top job seekers (55.15 percent) are holding B.Tech or B.E. degree. MBA degree holders are at second position and Maharashtra state is on top to provide jobs to the educated workforce”.³ The Man Group's report of Talent Shortage 2020, also reported that 63% companies in India are facing shortage of talented employees. The International Labour Organization (ILO) also predicts that there will be skill deficit of 29 million by 2030 as 53 percent of Indian businesses are unable to hire suitable candidates due to lack of required skill “Catering towards this industrial market demand has provided a requirement to integrate skill-based education in higher education with an aim to develop student's skill sets and make them work-ready and industry-ready professionals”.⁴ To cope up with the problem a separate ministry i.e. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship was established by Government of India and National Skill Development Council (NSDC) initiated to work with Department of Higher Education, MHRD-GoI_in developing skill through various schemes and programmes. The aim of NEP-2020 to restructure the educational ecosystem and to improve the employability among youths is the need of the hour. For achieving this goal, the policy has emphasized on imparting qualitative technical as well as soft skill among graduate and post graduate students. In this backdrop, it is important that the skill cannot

be imparted merely through the written objective of the policy and syllabus content of different courses. The entire issue is demanding required infrastructure and regular recurring financial resources and most importantly the culture in educational institutes. The expected outcome will entirely depend upon how this huge gap will be filled in the time line to the policy implementation.

Transformation in Regulatory System:

The Government of India is reforming each and every sector by analyzing the existing regulatory system in which HEIs are not flourishing as per their potential and also not in position to cater the demand of industrial and business sector of the country. The NEP aims to establish Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) under which four vertical organizations is established for regulation (National Higher Education Regulatory Council), accreditation (National Accreditation Council), funding (Higher Education Grants Council) and academic standard setting (General Education Council). The aim of the policy is to give a single and meaningful role to each vertical organization and the functioning of all of these will be governed by transplant public disclosure, use of technology to reduce human interface and ensure efficiency. The planning to reform the regulatory system is good and it can transform the entire system if implemented in later and spirit. At the time of implementation, one has to know that technology certainly help to improve the transparency and accountability but again it requires to develop a culture for it which is lacking at each and every sector in the country.

Other Major Objectives:

There are several other important objectives set for NEP-2020 which shows that the policy has been formulated in a scientific manner. The Academic Bank of Credit, revision of Choice base Credit System for instilling innovation and flexibility, graded autonomy system to HEIs, making "Lok Vidya" assemble to the students, establishment of incubation centers in HEIs promotion of Indian Languages, Arts and culture are good objective and will certainly transform the system. It has been also decided that Indian Institute of Translation and interpretation (IITI) will be established with extensive use of technology so that the Literature of all the Indian Languages especially Sanskrit can be added in education for knowledge creation. National institute for Pali, Persian and Prakrit is also a landmark initiative. The establishment of National Research Foundation for liaisoning between researcher, government and industry is also a welcome step and it will help in getting quality research and will also utilize the outcome of the research optimally for policy formulation and product development.

The above major reforms initiated through NEP 2020 are very enthusiastic and the design of the policy has also been developed through a long thoughtful process. The action plan prepared with the policy is also creating hope for positive outcome but the success of the entire policy ultimately will rest upon the development of right culture. The education sector is basically not for profession and business, it is for passion and therefore, the expected outcome depends upon the devotion of the teachers and administration of the educational institutions towards the mission of education. To elucidate it one example of Japan is important here. A company got order from another country for some goods and as per the agreement it was mentioned that we will not accept

more than 1% defective items. The exporter company sent a note with the remittance of goods that we have prepared 1% defective items and sending separately but we don't understand why you required these defective items? To prepare these defective items as per agreement, the company made changes in machine and instructed the worker to prepare defective items. This note is the best example of the work culture of Japan in which 100 percent perfection is normal. Only such culture in each and every sector can help to achieve the targets and positive outcome from reformatory measure. Education sector also needs to develop such culture so that our NEP-2020 can transform the entire system and meet out the other targets of economic development of the country.

Professor, Department of Commerce
Dr. Hari Singh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar (M.P.)

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National Education Policy - 2020 and its Discontentment

R. K. Misra

The promulgation of New Education Policy 2020 was an opportunity for me to revisit the grand vision and elaborate scheme of university-education as contained in the Radhakrishnan Commission Report of 1948-49.¹ I was struck by the noble vision, keen insight, literary grace and the down-to earth organizational details of the report. The dedication and diligence of its eminent authors - all the ten members of the Commission being the intellectual stalwarts of the time - was visible on every page of the voluminous report. Shorn of all rhetoric and obsession with the 'global' (Western) blueprint, the authors of the report display a sound understanding of the philosophy and history of Indian theory of education, and it's reframing in the post-colonial India.

The Radhakrishnan Commission Report dealt with almost every aspect of educational policy of independent India that we find in NEP 2020 with necessary adjustments. The report dealt with standards of teaching, qualification of teachers of the colleges and universities, courses of study in arts and sciences, professional education in the fields of agriculture, commerce, engineering and technology, law, medicine, education, religious education, medium of instruction, examinations, welfare of the students, organization and finances of colleges, universities and rural universities. The report contains about 18 appendices that discuss other miscellaneous matters that concern the system of higher education in India. The D.S. Kothari Commission Report of 1964, besides taking up the higher education, also makes detailed recommendations about school education. The point I wish to emphasize is that both the commissions had made substantially the same recommendations regarding the academic, administrative and financial aspects of our system of education. If the framers of NEP 2020 had to burn midnight oil to reiterate most of those recommendations, that merely shows that our policy makers and administrators do not possess what Ortega Y Gasset called 'cool passion' to translate them into action. This is not to say that at this stage of 'liquid' modernity, the academic, administrative and financial aspects of educational system need no adjustments and re-alignments. They do need periodic scrutiny and re-assessment but the 'first principles' of education possess a constancy and a continuity that cannot be tempered with at regular intervals. The organizational and administrative re-shuffling from time to time may reinvigorate the system, but they are not ends by

themselves. After all institutions and structures are meant for realizing a vision. However well-designed and innovative, they by themselves cannot be substitutes for a crippled vision.

The organizational issues of educational system are important but secondary. The rationale advanced in favour of 5+3+3+4 is hardly convincing because the same objectives could be achieved in 10+2+3 system, but could not be because of general climate of apathy and indifference which have become the defining features of our work-culture. Moreover, in a country so vast, diverse and of uneven levels of development, and with different regions having their peculiar problems, temperaments and resources, to impose a rigid and universalistic system of organization, administration and finance can be counter-productive. The uniformity visualized in regard to course-structure, admission and examination policy, recruitment and training of teachers etc. has centralizing potential, and is hardly compatible with the stated goals. The most baffling part of NEP is that which deals with the higher education. The framers of the NEP have been most tentative and experimental here. Making the higher education 'flexible' by providing for multiple entry and exit points is to rob it of all its dignity and seriousness. Higher education will be at the mercy of flirts and pranksters who will bend it to their will and convenience. Why are you making higher education casual in order to make it 'universal' and attractive? Professor Michael Oakeshott, the eminent philosopher of our time, has rightly said that learning is serious, orderly, limited in particular directions and calls for effort and perseverance; it is a detachment, directed not by the interest and motivations that student brings with him, but by 'intimations of excellence and aspirations that he has never yet dreamt of. 'Learning is not a 'seamless job'. The proposed 'adaptiveness' and 'flexibility' may lead to utter chaos and confusion in the higher education which is already in coma and convulsion.

The issue of mother-tongue being the medium of instruction at primary, secondary and university levels has been discussed and debated any number of time. Long back, three-language formula was vigorously advocated and some efforts were also made to implement it. We know that except for some parts of the country, it is a dead letter now. The availability of text books in regional languages is, in large measure, a pipe-dream. General lack of sense of pride in native languages among the people, and the apathy and indecisiveness of governments on this vital issue have facilitated the reign of English as medium of instruction in our schools, colleges and universities even after 75 years of independence. On this score, flesh may be willing but the spirit is weak.

NEP makes certain recommendations which are either fantastic or naive. For example, the role assigned to *Anganwadis* in preparing the children for primary school. Are our framers unaware of the lackluster functioning of the *Anganwadis*? Do they want to do away with the role of parents and grand-parents in the care of children at such tender age? Or do they distrust parents? Can paid *Anganwadi* workers be a substitute for parental warmth and affection? Why are you denying the parents their pious and legitimate duty of child-rearing? We have seen the fatal consequences of the break-down of families in the American society. This proposal only paves the way for slow but certain erosion of family values. As Aristotle said of Plato's scheme of communism of family,

such arrangements only produce 'watery affections'. Psychological and emotional fall-out of such naive schemes will strike at the root of parents-children relationship.

But the recommendation regarding doing away with the affiliation function of the universities, and thus enabling colleges to grant degrees to their students, is no less fantastic. To say the least, it is like granting sovereignty to every town and city. What chaos and disruption will it engender is easily conceivable? Grand projects oftentimes end up in smothering possible reform.

But the organizational and structural aspects are secondary, subsidiary to the vision and ideals of educational system. The foremost thing is what vision, what ideals will be the guiding light of the teachers and students. Here, NEP2020 makes some interesting observations. While asserting that NEP 'envision[s] an educational system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India', it also speaks about reconfiguring the entire education system to achieve the critical targets and goals of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development. The framers think that with a mix of the two, we can make India a 'global knowledge superpower' and Indians 'truly global citizen'. Like our governments and policy makers of last 75 years, they too are die-hard optimists regarding 'synthesizing' opposed and contrary world-views. They seem to think that Indian culture and neo-liberal ideology are branches of the same tree, and will produce well-formed character endowed with extraordinary cognitive, logical, emotional capabilities. But if our historical sense has not been impaired or distorted by the onslaughts of this world-view, we can easily discover that in this synthesizing spree, Indian culture has always been given backseat, and in the garb of modernity, the march of colonial ideas and institutions has been tumultuous as ever.

It goes without saying that the global institutions and their agenda are inextricably linked to neo-liberal world-order. The critical goals and targets contained in goal 4 of 2030 agenda for sustainable development cannot but be neo-liberal in essence. The pitfalls of the neo-liberal ideology are now too obvious and well-known to be recounted here. The secularist, rationalist, technicist, consumerist postulates of neo-liberalism are uprooting whatever is left of our Indianness. Its influence on our system of education can be devastating, and its signs are very much visible around us. Moreover, global institutions and organizations, because of their disconnection from any tradition or culture, can only offer abstractions and generalities in the name of education. Airy concepts and hollow phrases like 'knowledge super power', 'global citizen' may be tantalizing for our rootless intelligentsia, but a true nationalist will never be charmed by these abstractions. True education will inculcate godliness/goodness, and a good man alone can be a good citizen, both of polis and cosmopolis. Truly national education will assimilate new knowledge without self-degradation. Speaking about the quantum and nature of European influence on Indian art, Sister Nivedita has hinted at the proper relationship between national and global. She says-

There is such a thing as national manner in art, and India needs only to add the technical knowledge of Europe to this manner of her own. Indian art student must not be so fascinated by European painting as to lead him out of his own path into endeavours which have hitherto been for the most part as ill-conceived as their execution was futile and disastrous.²

Education in India has been regarded as integrated comprehension of life. Right kind of education is attunement with self, society, nature and Supreme Being. It is the means of Self-knowledge and Self-realization before everything else. It is the turning of life towards the inner light, and illuminated by this light, man is able to imbibe a true understanding of world in all its aspects and relations. It is a process of self-purification that enables us to withstand the onslaughts of material existence. J. Krishnamurti, the great philosopher of our times, says that-

Education is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each of us that the whole of existence is gathered. The right kind of education should help man to experience the integrated processes of life.³

Even in Medieval Europe, the same theory of education prevailed. Ortega Y Gasset, the eminent Spanish thinker, in his book *Mission of the University* has drawn attention to this fact thus:

The Medieval University does no research. It is very little concerned with professions. All is "general culture"- theology, philosophy, "arts". But what is called 'general culture' today, was something very different for the Middle Ages. It was not an ornament for the mind or a training of the character. It was, on the contrary, the system of ideas concerning the world and humanity, which the man of that time possessed. It was, consequently, the repertory of convictions which became the effective guide of his existence.⁴

In this vast and wild forest of existential world, man needs roads and ways to come out of wilderness, in the form of clear, firm ideas concerning the universe and nature of things. 'Culture' is truly speaking, nothing but ensemble of these ideas. Culture saves human life from distraction and disaster. It imparts meaning and direction to human life. This inculcation of right ideas about the nature of things is education. As *Vedas* say 'We are our ideas'.

Every society needs professional man-judges, doctors, engineers, administrators etc., and therefore, one important responsibility of any system of education is to furnish professional and vocational education. But before a professional, one needs to become a good man or woman, one who has clear idea of the nature of things, of matter and all that is not matter, together with all the essentials of an enlightened life. Ortega Y Gasset comes down heavily on modern education's tendency to produce 'perfect barbarians'. Education has been condemned to be an instrument for utilitarian purposes while it should, as Plato said long back, put on track of good. Like recent trends in educational thinking towards the empirical and the technological, the vocational and the managerial, the NEP subscribe to a conception of education in which core mission of educational institutions is to equip students to succeed in work place, understood not in terms of an array of familiar vocations, but as a fluid, rapidly evolving, and global 'knowledge economy'. The current watchwords of this trend include transferable skills, content delivery, evidence based practices, evaluation metrics, learning objectives and outcomes, active and experimental learning and cost-effectiveness. In such a context, the once-hallowed ideals of 'liberal education' are dismissed as obsolete and irrelevant.

While education must equip students to secure the means of life, it is mistake to infer that education should serve such instrumental ends alone. The famous cave allegory of Plato's *Republic* affords a classical articulation of the view repeatedly expressed in the history of various civilizations that there is a higher purpose to education that must be conceived in ontological, not utilitarian, terms. This is the idea that many of the characteristics that we recognize as aspects of a distinctly human life come to us through education. It opens us to our cultural inheritance, thereby making us feel at-homeness in the world. To be educated is to initiated into something that lies beyond our immediacy, something that resists straightforward conceptual articulation, but which opens the possibilities of self-understanding. Education has intrinsic value and it has no natural terminus. Professor Michael Oakeshott called culture 'the conversation of mankind' many decades back and characterized education as 'initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance and in which we acquire intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation.' Emphasizing the centrality of education in making human beings in what they are, he writes-

Education is the transaction between the generations in which new comers to the scene are initiated into the world which they are to inhabit. This is a world of understandings, imaginings, meanings, moral and religious beliefs, relationships, practices- states of mind in which the human condition is to be discerned as recognitions of and responses to the ordeal of consciousness.

Oakeshott makes a powerful stand for education focused not so much on the acquisition of information, professional knowledge and skills, but on the cultivation of judgement, wonder, imagination, powers of thinking and routes of feeling. Such education is 'liberal' because it is liberated from the distractions of satisfying contingent wants. This notion is central to any proper conception of school and the university. It is disastrous for any education policy to replace this liberating education by modes of education preoccupied with relevance, training and instrumental means to useful outcomes.⁵ Here, it is important to point out that learning of any useful art, craft or skill presupposes the meaning and broader significance of the practice in question, and that in turn presupposes self-understanding to which right education aspires. An instrumental concept of education cannot be self-sufficient, for we cannot avoid the question of what is worthwhile in and of itself, and for its own sake. Our education system, thus, can be modelled on either of two patterns-education based on imperatives of managerial efficiency and scientific rationality and quantifiables such as test scores, information retention and marketable credentials, or qualitative matters of intellectual virtues, habits of reflection and thoughtful inquiry.

It is in this context that wisdom contained in the Radhakrishnan Commission Report needs to be recounted. Its authors lament the fact that 'most of our popular writers today seem to be possessed by our desire to escape from the world of meaning and teach us essential purposelessness of life. ...this aimlessness, this indifference to basic issues is, to no small extent, responsible for decline of standards, for the fading of ideals, for the defeat of human endeavors.' They too regard education as providing 'a coherent picture

of universe and integrated view of life.' They quote the words of *Upanishad*- we may be knowers of texts (*Mantra vit*), and not knowers of Self (*Atmavit*). The Indian tradition has spoken about three types of existence which are inter-related and finally one. Man has a relation with nature (*Aadhibhautikam*), he is related to man or society (*Aadhidevatam*), and he is related to the world of Spirit. (*Aadhyatmikam*). Education, if rightly imparted, will relate us to all three types of existence. This is the foremost responsibility of teachers and educational institutions to make the students mindful and dutiful in all three respects. In this sense, the Radhakrishnan Commission calls universities 'sanctuaries of the inner life of nation.

The advent of Cyber age has made the technicization of life more acute and more pervasive. We are witnessing a technological deluge, dehumanizing fundamental institutions and relationships. A careful reading of NEP will reveal that it is not rooted in Indianness, as claimed by its authors, but in neo-liberal world-view. What else will you understand by such phrases as 'global citizen' and 'knowledge super power' ? Education, to serve its true purpose, must be related to the genius of the people, and any scheme for remodeling the education of the future must be related to the past. Without clear idea of the genius and ideals of a nation, any re-structuring may be counter-productive. We may adapt our educational system to modern conditions and at the same time ensure continuity in this work of seminal importance. We cannot afford to be global at the cost of losing our Indianness. This is not simply conjecture. New winds have already done great damage to Indian way of life. We are in the midst of becoming, as Mahatma Gandhi feared long back, strangers in our own land.

Here lies the tragedy of our race;
Not that men are poor,
All men know something of poverty,
Not that all men are wicked,
Who can claim to be good?
Not that men are ignorant,
Who dare boast that he is wise?
But that men are stranger!

Professor (Retd.)
Department of Political Science
University of Lucknow
President, Coomaraswamy Foundation, Lucknow

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Fun Projects and Activities for School Children to Develop Multilingualism in the Light of NEP - 2020

Ramesh M & B.N. Panda

Introduction

Language is a group of words and sentences used to communicate our ideas, views and opinions to others. We all use languages to learn, write and speak and listen. Language and education is inseparable to each other. Language is one of the precondition for learning. Spoken languages is a primary way of communication for children in which their ideas and views are represented. The written language is secondary way of communication in which the ideas can be communicated in symbolic forms. Similarly reading and listening makes thorough understanding of concepts. These reading and listening can decoded through speech and writing. These four important elements of language such as listening, speaking, reading and writing plays significant role language acquisition for students. Mother tongue is main tool to express students natural world and make meaning of it by their own. It was stated in the educational policy while formulating three language policy in 1957 that teaching to all children through mother tongue or regional language, and the additional Indian languages and English could be the curricular subjects. NCERT also emphasised the importance of home languages in school education. Learning the concepts and skills in any subjects is primarily accomplished with the help of languages. Students express ideas and thoughts through words, sentences and textual structure both written and speaking language. School contribute significant role in developing languages among students. During teaching learning and other academic related matters both Teachers and students use languages in the school. Particularly teaching learning process greatly helps the students for language acquisition. School facilitate the students for learning the languages. Lack of education about languages may hinder students thinking and develops negative attitudes towards particular languages. Therefore Curriculum and syllabus provides opportunities to learn languages. Language development both written and spoken is slow process, it require practice, suitable environment and social interaction. Young children learn the words at home and schools they try to communicate with family members and peers with some errors and mistakes but over a period of time child speak fluently. Every citizen have the rights to preserve and promote their languages. Article 29 and 30 of the Indian constitution safeguards the rights of the cultural, linguistic and religious of the

minorities. School have significant role in preserving and promoting languages, and to accommodate different languages and cultures in its teaching and its curriculum as whole, then only students will become multilingual at school. Teacher's role not only limited to transacting the textbook information, completing the syllabus and preparing the students for examination. Teacher also should provide language development environment for the students which will stimulate the skill of self-expressions, creativity in usage of language. Indian classroom is multilingual in nature, there can be scheduled and non-scheduled language students and languages deprived children in the class, all the students need continuous support from the teachers by implementing suitable language development learning experiences such as fun projects or activities in a joyful manner along with teaching learning process. Such fun activities and projects to be continued over a period of time throughout school education to gain deep knowledge and proficiency in languages. Keeping in view of the importance of development of Indian languages in school NEP (2020) recommended that students should participate in a fun project or activity on "The languages of India" under 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' Initiative. Through fun projects and activities students learn about the major Indian Languages. Also they show very interest, enthusiasm and motivation towards different languages and their phonetic, alphabets, grammatical structures vocabulary etc. because young Children are called as language learners they possess innate potentials to learn languages if the school provides suitable environment.

Learning mother tongue and other languages in School

To children before commencing school. Native languages serves as a foundation for the students and it helpful to learn other Indian languages. Children take greater advantage in learning mother tongue at home. Children in the advantaged home will get greater opportunity to learn languages earlier and easier by interchange of ideas in verbal method but children in the disadvantaged home the language acquisition is very slow, this will have a negative effect on speech of the child. Similarly encouragement and appreciation by the parents or carers also assist to enhance verbalisation of language. Language learning at school is slightly differs from learning language at home environment. At home the child will engaged in different activities such as watching T.V, playing toys, watching cartoon and local games etc., which are controlled by parent and other family members, similarly child as a social member in the society will interact with different language and cultural persons and acquire language but their exposure for expanding intellectual abilities are limited and restricted. When the Child attends school his range of experiences expands includes of new learning environment, diversified peers with different linguistic and cultural background, teachers, teaching learning process, new learning tasks and different subjects which provides varied opportunity for learning languages in a systematic way. This develops children language ability and to attain mastery of languages. Children largely rely upon speech for all their needs in family to communicate, enquire, asking questions etc in their mother tongue, children learn other languages from the society by social interaction but at school students learn mother tongue and other languages in a systematic manner. It is emphasised in the NEP (2020) that the school should promote multilingualism through fun projects and activity. Teacher must realise the value and importance of inculcation of home/regional language

and other languages at school and it is necessary to channelize the proper mode of acquisition and learning of languages for the students. Teacher must be aware of the process of language acquisition and language learning by the students in order to understand the correct and particular form of language usage that leads to desirable modification in students' speech. In order to widen the students' language usage skills, teacher needs to provide additional fun activities and projects on regular basis. School children may be already acquired some of the rules of language (s) at home. At schools, it is the teachers responsible that to identify what are the languages students already known and use it at home and society, based on that various learning experiences can be provided and the language skills can be extended in such a way that the students more easily able to speak and write any language (s). It is also important that the teacher must know the knowledge of language(s), systematic nature of language (s), structure of language (s) and then diagnose children language (s) skills and abilities that will help the teacher to design what type of learning experiences is required for the students to strengthen their language usage skills.

Language Policy in India: Present Status of Language learning in School

India is a source of rich nation for multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multilingual. According to Census of India conducted in 2001, it was observed 122 languages in twenty eight states and seven union territories. There were 22 languages officially schedules or legitimised (Cynthia 2017), it is also listed 1635 mother tongues. According to the study conducted by Annamalai (2001) it was found that about 200 total languages reducible from different dialects in India. The curriculum in the schools necessitate to include several languages. Ethnologue listed out 447 languages till now use in India and there could be many more also (Lewis et. al. 2014). The multilingualism is a great advantages and strength for the students but it is a major challenges and obstacles in pedagogy. In the schools, wider gap prevailing between medium of instruction and mother tongue. For example tribal students is facing serious problem that their mother tongue is tribal languages but when they come to school, the medium of instruction is different it is one of the major factor for their dropout and high rate illiteracy. It was stated by Cynthia (2017) that children who are unable to understand the language of teaching may be learning a dominant language but fail to learn content. Language is one of the main factor for students learning achievement. Schools should give equal importance and weightage for all languages irrespective of any culture. Multilinguality implies the presence of more than one languages. No languages are dominant and no languages are undermined. Keeping in view of the vision, NEP 2020 suggested that mother tongue education and multilingualism upto primary level is very necessary. In most of the Government schools the medium of instruction is through mother but in all private schools the medium of instruction is English, mother tongue languages is restricted for speaking and writing. However students are exposed to learn more than one languages in school through three language formula. This three language formula first initiated by Central Advisory Board of Education in 1956. Further Kothari Commission (1964-66) and National Policy on Education (1986) recommended to adopt three language formula the three language formula includes the following: first, mother tongue or regional

languages should be taught upto ten years. Second is the official language Hindi or Sanskrit language to be taught and the third language is English. Three language formula provides great opportunity for the students however students are getting very limited options to study different languages. It is not providing opportunity to study more than two Indian languages. Howard Gardner suggested that the children should know atleast three languages. To some extent the concept of three language formula meeting the objectives of multilingualism but students not getting autonomy and freedom to choose the languages of their own choice. School should incorporate some more languages as per the learners' interest and preferences. Also Implementation of three language formula is varies in different states. For example; the southern state Tamilnadu resisting to teach Hindi as a subject in the school, there the state following bilingual formula wherein first language is mother tongue Tamil and second language English. Hence implementation of three language formula in all the states is incomplete it is very essential for the students to learn more languages according to learners' choice and preferences.

Importance of Languages Development

It was stated by Rosen and Rosen, (1973) that the primary role of school is to prepare the children to use natural and meaningful language; to make conducive environment in which a different variety of languages can use with ease in a confident manner. Thus when a child first started to experience the school, the best is to acquire meaningful languages, it permits to talk. A young children must experience talking with others and the school must accommodate and provide such situation. By talking with others, children share ideas and feelings, and try to link them through shared experiences. By sharing their ideas and feeling not only languages acquisition skills develops, also students knits together and understand the diversity of Indian languages and cultures. Such practices brings new kinds of communication among the students. The speech is the foremost and easiest way of communication and expression of thoughts and feeling, hence the children who are encouraged to talk in different languages freely in the classroom gain more confidence and expressive skills. Language enables the children to cope up with world and environment in which they live.

Language Acquisition and Languages Learning

It was stated by (Maslo, 2007) that language acquisition is based on the neuro-psychological process, language acquisition is different process, and it occurs subconsciously similar to that children acquire their first or home languages (Kramina, 2000). Language acquisition is the active process wherein children attain a fluency control of their native language (Varhney, 2003). Language learning is a conscious and purposeful process occurs in either formal learning situation or by a self-study process (Kramina, 2000). Language learning is an integral part of the unity of all languages (Robbins, 2007).

Theory's of Language Development

Children has ability to learn elements of language such as accent, grammar, phonology, semantics, pragmatics, syntax in their younger stage of school education. These aspects of language is very difficult to learn as the children entered into adolescence period. Neuroscience research reveals that there is a 'sensitive period' in the brain of every child to learn languages. The language learning takes place with the

influence of different theories such as behaviourist, structuralist and cognivist. Some of the theory is as follows:

Nativist Linguist Theory

Nativist Linguist Theory proposed by Noam Chomsky's: He argued that language development is a social process that humans capable to communicate, share and express ideas and knowledge in order to solve their problems. Also he postulates that every human beings is born with innate language ability language and he/she has separate language learning system in their brain which allows the child to acquire linguistic abilities. Chomsky postulates that all children have an in born space or faculty in mind exclusively for language acquisition. According to Chomsky, the language acquisition is biologically already determined in the human mind and it activate naturally when they child exposed to social interaction. The child has natural predisposition to learn the languages and it triggered by listening and hearing the words and speech repeatedly. The child is able to interpret what he /she heard. This natural inborn faculty known as language Acquisition Device (LAD).

B.F. Skinner Behaviorist Theory

This theory advocates that the learning of any language(s) is like learning of new skills through observation, listening, repetition, imitation, errors, rewards and punishments otherwise Skinner called Operant Conditioning. Development of language is learned behaviour and they try to imitate the behaviour of parents and adults and peers who are associated with them. Children in the school should be either rewarded or punished or motivated for learning language(s).

Vygotsky's Social Interactionist Theory.

This theory based on the contribution of Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky. This theory suggests that language has a social origin, when a child since from the birth is continuously engaging in different social interaction process that allows the child to develop higher order cognitive functions such as language learning, language acquisition, language usage and other thoughtful processes. According to him, socio cultural interaction comes first that helps that child for shaping cognition and language development.

Piaget's Constructivist Theory

Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget posit that language knowledge development and skills acquisition occurs based on their own experience and their intelligence itself not only due to imitation or genetic characteristics. Piaget's defined that there are four stages of cognitive development such as sensorimotor stage (birth to 2 Years), preoperational stage (2 to 7 Years), Concrete operational stage (7 to 11 years), and formal operational stage (12 and above). Each stage play significant role in language development of the child. His argument was that a child should understand a concepts before the child use the particular language (s) there after child expresses that concept.

Input or Interactionist Theory

This theory argues that, children receive language inputs from the care givers. And the language existing in order to communicate and it can be learned by interacting with people. The interactionist Jerome Brunner suggested that the language skills of adults support the children for their language acquisition process. This support described

as scaffolding of child's language learning. Brunner also named this term as Language Acquisition Support System or LASS in response to Chomsky's LAD.

Status of fun projects and activities in Indian Scenario

Schools in India are multilingual particularly in most of the urban cities it is expected that 15 to 20 different languages peoples are living and their children go to schools. In such schools, the medium of instructions is different and their home language is different it is very common in most of the schools the medium of instruction is state language however in English medium schools the medium of instruction is English and the students are instructed not to use mother tongue in school premises though the students comes from different language background. Findings of the study conducted by (Annamalai, 2004; Mohanty et al, 2010) states that some of the schools named as English medium but in reality, the medium of instruction is in regional languages. Such practices definitely hinder the development of multi lingual skill among students. It is recommended that to implement multi lingual medium of instruction in the classroom according to which languages he/ she belongs to. But in many of the classroom, there is a mismatch between medium of instructions and the mother tongue. For example: tribal students mother tongue is different and the medium of instruction is different. Here the students feel difficult to understand the concepts because their mother tongue is different. Another sad picture that teacher centred pedagogy predominantly used by the teachers to teach the languages and other subjects. Teacher use “chalk and talk” method of teaching. No innovation and creativity in teaching the subjects. Involving the students in performing experiments, demonstration, fun projects and activities are the rare attempt or it's a distant dream for the students. Students are almost not exposed to perform fun projects and activities. Teachers also remain unsure and incompetent to use different languages in the classroom. If the teachers promote the students to use mixing of different languages upto primary level by engaging them in fun projects and activities, children will become multilingual. Teachers also need to undergo training on how to successfully integrate multilingual method by providing fun projects and activities for the students this can lead to build a true multilingual classroom and it helps to scaffold language learning. All national level documents including NCF (2000, 2005) and the latest one NEP 2020 strongly recommends that incorporation of fun projects and activities in the teaching learning process. Further stated that “Through this fun project and activity, students learn about phonetics, alphabets, scripts, common grammatical structures and its inter-influences and differences of major languages. Hence, it is only the curriculum and teacher should facilitate the leaners to learn different languages by involving them in various learning experiences such as projects, activities, experiments, model making etc. in a joyful way.

Role of teaching and learning in language development

Major portion of the time students spent their day in schools and this too helped them to learn languages. The kind of exposure they get in the school will determine the language acquisition and if they share their ideas and opinions and experiences with teachers and peers and other members in the schools will greatly help them to develop and attain proficiency in more than one languages. The strength of relationship between

children and teacher is based on the communication particularly through speech. It is through this speech, teaching and learning and understanding occurs in students. The greater the communication and the greater the languages learning. Suitable environmental factors make possible for language acquisition however the important element is that getting sufficient exposure to use the language in social context. Children learn the languages by how they learn to walk and run and they learn words, phonological and grammatical structures, and semantics and pragmatics elements every day. Children learn languages because that they are subjected to engage social interaction process also naturally they possess inborn ability that allows them to acquire language(s) during their physical and intellectual developmental process. Child learn a language by exposing himself into the society however it is universal that the child has to undergo some of the stages suggested by Psychologist in acquiring language(s).

Children acquire the language structure without being taught explicitly. Also subconsciously child learn rules of language (s) in his own when they exposed to different learning experiences in the classroom. In addition to speech, the school also can provide enough opportunities for the children to engage in play fun project, and activities individually or with others. These are the unique and specific ways of language development. The children make an attempt to express himself through language while playing and fun projects and activities which enables them to enhance language skill also they gain confidence in usage of language by involving in self-discovery. The Teachers role in the classroom is as encourager of students for language acquisition and language usage. Teacher must create situation in which students should completely involve in fun projects and activities, the child will have the freedom to learn concepts and languages through such experiences. If the teacher created atmosphere to engage the students in fun projects and activities and if students encouraged continuously then they communicate with different linguistic background students through different languages. Child can learn language best through fun, projects, activities, experiments with joy. Such learning experiences is more enjoyable, excitement and create motivation to practice speaking and witting of languages and attain proficiency. Children also will gain confidence in language usage through such type of situation and environment. This is the major roles and responsibilities of teachers and schools.

Fun Projects and Activities

There are many fun projects and activities can be given to school students for learning different languages and promoting multilingualism characteristics among students but it is only by the teachers to design the type of fun projects and activities which are needed for the students according to students cognitive abilities. Some of the fun projects and activities are suggested below for primary school students (i.e. 6th, 7th and 8th class) which can be used it for developing multilingual skills.

Role play

Most students will enjoy the role play, it allows the children to explore his or her imaginations in languages without any constraints. Children can be allotted different character to any game, and each role player can be named by any new words to perform their character. Teacher should help the students to develop their languages skills. Playing

different roles will help the children to expand their language imagination. Games involve different characters that allow them to introduce new words of different languages repeatedly that enable the child to register in their cognition and they use in different situations. Children's social skills also develop. Example for role play: let the child act as a teacher in the classroom, child may say listen carefully, where were you yesterday, give your attendance, keep quiet, show your homework etc. There can be different characters can be given to students to perform role play and they acquire language skills.

Engage them in talk throughout the day

The main purpose is to develop language skills in children, hence at least once in a week a teacher needs to engage the students in speaking skill activities throughout a day to use variety of vocabulary, and it is a kind of practice for them to use different words and vocabulary and structure of languages.

Symbolic Sounds

Words and sounds of different languages can be introduced to the children at the time of playing, fun projects and activities. Such sounds which are related to particular words, animals, objects. For example: "beep beep" for the vehicles, "Kaka" for crow, "Maa" for cow. Such symbolic sound can be incorporated during curriculum transaction. These kinds of symbolic sounds very short and one syllable sounds and the words are very easy for the students to pronounce, also they can associate with animals' objects etc. Also it encourages the imitation, vocabulary building, and vocalisation and language acquisition.

Motivating sound games

Games and play time activities are the greatest opportunities for the children to develop speech and language skills. When the child engaged in sports and games, teacher can use sounds such as ready, start, go, fast, blow up balloon, hit the ball, run, catch the ball, listen to the whistle sounds, done well etc. in any languages. Such words can motivate the students also they learn to use those words in different context.

Simple games

In every state of India, students play indigenous local games in schools. These games are different in different states and are very popular at home as well as school. These simple games should be identified and instruct the students to play in the school environment. During playing, teacher should be focussed to use speech training. By doing so, students listen the words and they use the languages. It improves language and social skills. They pick up a language while playing a simple game with other children and they extend their language abilities.

Use of simple Toys

The simplest toys are greatly influencing the language development. These toys such as wooden blocks, building towers, arranging size etc. can create fun activities and it provides variety of situation to speak. By involving such games students from different languages and cultural background interact with each other and exchange the words of languages that helps to acquire the vocabulary of more than one languages.

Sharing of everyday experiences

Students' everyday gain different experiences from home, society, and peer group etc. these experiences play big role in language development particularly in

developing speaking skills. Hence when they come to school they meet different linguistic background students. Teacher should engage them in talking with other students for sharing their everyday experiences. Students communicate with others through their own language, by doing so students learn different languages.

Storytelling

Storytelling is one of the best method of language development in schools. Students are very interested in listening stories. Teachers can recite the story and asked the students to retell the same story in their mother tongue. In the classroom if there are some different linguistic background students are available then the same story can be asked to read and recite to others that helps them to catch the vocabulary of different languages and students can make meaning of it. The stories includes of character, role, situation, events, conflict, and how to resolve conflict and happy ending. When they listen the story in different languages, students feel happy that their languages is recognised and acknowledged and it motivate them to acquire new language as well as some moral.

Word Chain

This is another interesting languages development activity for the children in school. Through the word chain activity the words and languages of students what they know already and use in day to day life can be strengthened. Firstly engage the students to cut the cardboard papers and write the words of different verbs and nouns which are very familiar to students then write the words of different adjectives and adverbs in the another paper or cardboards. Instruct the students to form a 'word chain' with the help of one noun or verb and as many adverbs and adjectives as possible. Say for an example: if a word is 'school' they can select the words such as 'teacher', 'textbook', 'classroom', 'blackboard', 'playground', 'laboratory', 'friends', 'examination', etc. similarly if u say 'environment' they select the words such as 'plants', 'animals', 'living', 'non-living' etc. This kind of activity help the students to build strong vocabulary and words related to subject as well as it improves communication.

Riddles

Usually children are very curious and excited to listen the riddles in the classroom. Teacher can use riddles for language development by preparing a list of riddles depending upon the cognitive ability of students and ask them to find the answer by individual or group. For example: what has a face and two hands but no arms or legs?. Similarly students also asked to recite the riddles and find the answer. Riddles with pictures also a quite interesting for the students. Riddles can be incorporated in the textbooks for acquiring languages. Through riddles students acquire different vocabulary and words. Also students can discuss with others and they develop speaking skill. Through riddles students can also develops imaginative and creative thinking skills, also interpretative skills.

Field Visit

Children show more interest in learning from outside than the conventional classroom. They experience in the field such as park, sanctuary, aquarium, library, radio station, science museum, language lab etc. A field trip programme should be attached with every unit in each subject. The students should make meaning of the vocabulary

related to concepts through field trip experience. During field trip students should carry vocabulary sheet and write the meaning of relevant terminology, draw diagrams and write concepts definitions in their own languages. Students also can write journals or hand-out, they photograph and videos of their experiences that can be shared in the classroom for discussion with peers and teachers such activity improve students language acquisition.

School Club Activities

Club activities in the school play important role in language development because the debate and discussion are the most popular activity conducted in the club activities. Here the Students use their own languages in a more natural way. This club activities can be conducted in any subjects such as science, mathematics, languages, and social sciences only the relevant subject teacher need to organise club activities regularly. In each club activity, teacher or students need to use new activity which helps the students to learn new vocabulary words. Guest speakers in relevant subject can be invited to give presentation, participants can ask questions and interact with the expert and learn the languages. Songs and Music skits also can be played in different languages and students can enjoy the fun and learn languages.

Making low cost Teaching Aids

Engaging the students in making low cost teaching aids and allow them to present in the classroom either individual or in group help the students to develop their language skill. Low cost teaching aids can be prepared in any subjects such as language, mathematics, science and social science. Making low cost teaching aids is a hands on fun activity students can experience. Students get more scope to discuss with other students and teachers about the selection of teaching aids, planning, preparation and presentation of teaching aids hence it is great fun for the students for improving their languages.

The above fun activities and projects can be given to individual student and in group in the school. In addition certain fun projects and activities asked them to do at home. Involving the students in making fun projects, activities or models in any or all subjects provides rich and concrete learning experiences for language development also to understand the knowledge and skills. Young Children are called as language learners because they possess innate potentials to learn languages if the school provides suitable environment. Teachers should teach the lessons through discussion and debate and ask questions. Students engage in learning task by listening teachers lecture, reading writing and giving verbal answers, presentation, group discussion, experiments, projects and activities etc. and gain experiences that makes effective languages developments. When the children getting opportunity for language usage, then the next role of the teacher is to make them to attain mastery in languages by enable the children to organise the language learning experiences. Language development of the children occurs through the natural environment by providing adequate opportunities in the classroom.

Conclusion

Languages can be learn with joy in the early stage of school education through fun projects and activities. Current practice of language teaching and learning in the schools almost unsatisfactory many students completing their school education without have proficiency in speaking, reading and writing skills even in their first language.

There can be many reasons for poor learning of languages but teaching learning process is one of the main cause. Teacher should encourage the children to involve fun projects and activities in a joyful way to learn vocabulary, grammatical structure, phonetics and origin of multiple languages. These fun projects and activities facilitate the students to acquire more than two languages other than their mother tongue. The pedagogy should provide space for acquisition of different language, also it should integrate different fun projects and activities. Children have greater cognitive advantage and cognitive performance better than the monolingual children in terms of conflict resolution, cognitive functions. Multilingual children also possess better linguistic competence. Hence multilingualism should be encouraged in the school education through fun projects and activities not only just for economic benefits in the later stage of their life, it's also to develop language competitive in the globalised world.

*Assistant Professor of Education
Indira Gandhi National tribal University
Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh*

*Professor of Education
Former Head, Department of Education
Regional Institute of Education (NCERT)
Bhubaneswar, Odissa*

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Scope and Span of NRF for Existing Research Infrastructure in India

Poornima Tripathi

Introduction

India, one of the oldest civilizations on the earth, has a rich tradition of creating knowledge & wisdom and disseminating it across the globe for betterment of humanity. However, a long and tormenting history of foreign invasion has destroyed the shine of educational excellence India once had during the period of Nalanda, Vikramshila and Takshila Universities as the seat of knowledge.

To regain the lost glory, and to compete with the best in the industry it is essential that research and development activities are revitalized in India. To fulfill this objective National Research Foundation (NRF) was proposed by the government of India in 2019 during the budget session stating that NRF would “fund, coordinate and promote research in the country. NRF will assimilate the research grants being given by various ministries in dependent of each other. NRF will ensure that the over all research ecosystem in the country is strengthened with focus on identified thrust areas relevant to our national priorities and to wards basic science without duplication of effort and expenditure. We would work out a very progressive and research oriented structure for NRF. The funds available with all Ministries will be integrated in NRF. This would be adequately supplemented with additional funds”.

Current status of research in India

NEP 2020 has prominently emphasized the need of quality research to enhance the quality of education in India. For a quality education system, fundamental and applied research is the key to reach goals of a welfare state. As mentioned in NEP 2020, the ability to conduct one's own research also enables a country to import and adapt and improvise relevant research a cross the world.

While considering the base level data from where NEP intends to elevate educational standards and wants to ascend, current statistics may not be very encouraging for a country with a population of 140 crore. Till a couple of years ago in terms of the output and number of patent applications (World Intellectual Property Organization WIPO 2017), China has 13,81, 584, USA has 6,06,956, compared to them

India has mere 46,582 (68% by NRI). Publication in top journals, India scores 15.8%, whereas USA 36.2% and China 27.6%. Where as we are still struggling with liter a cyrates and research and innovation investment in India is 0.69% of GDP as compared to 2.8% in USA, 4.3% in Israel, and 4.2% in South Korea.

Status of Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), research publications and patents (2012-17) as under -

- The trends of patents filed/granted/examined/disposed of in Inda during the period of five years (2012-17) shows gradual increase in the number of patents during this period. Comparing the data of 2012 and 2017, an increase of 3.90%, 57.65%, 58.10% and 70.17% in the categories of patents filed, granted, examined and disposal of patts respectively.
- Looking into the number of patents filed and granted in India in various fields of industrial sectors - Mechanical sector leads the list with 10,715 filed-patents (23.57% of the total filed-patents).The second rank is held by Computers/ Electronics (6,43) followed by Chemical (5,911), Electrical (4,141), Drugs (2,122), General Engineering (1,225), Biotechnology (876) and Food (283) sectors.
- In the patent-granted category Chemical sector (2673) has replaced Mechanical sector (1,939) as the leader in the industrial sector. Third position has been claimed by Computer/Electronics(1,049) followed by Electrical (579), Drugs (551), and Biotechnology (333), General Engineering (228) and Food (71) sectors.
- State-wise categorization of ordinary patents-filed –1st position to Maharashtra (3,513) followed by Tamil Nadu (2,003), Karnataka (1,764) and Delhi (1,066). These four states account for 63.75% of the total ordinary patents filed with IPO. Asper IPO data of 2016-17, out of a total of 45,444 patents filed, 70.8% applications were filed by foreign applicants and only 29.2% by Indian applicants.

In the domain of scientific and R & D organizations, the first enorganizations filed 499 patents in 2016-17, with Council of Scientific & Industrial Research CSIR (230), followed by Defence Research & Development Organisation DRDO (58) patent applications.

Of the top ten organizations, four belong to the public sector and the remaining six fall in the category of private sector. These are, G.H.R Labs and Research Centre (50); Hetero Research Foundation (23); Allinov Research & Development Pvt.Ltd. (20); MSNR research & Development Centre (19); L&T Technology Services Ltd. (18); Sun Pharma Advanced Research Company Ltd. (14), and GSP Crop Science Pvt. Ltd. (13).

The top ten Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) of India in the area of patent filing for the year 2016-17.The IITs (collective) took first position with 400 patent applications, followed by Amity University, Noida (106) patent applications filed. Interestingly, only 3 public institutes (IITs, IISc-Bangalore and NITs) figure in the top ten applicants.

Amongst the top 5 Indian Patentees, three belong to public sector i.e. CSIR (104), DRDO (80), and IITs (55) occupying first, second and fifth rankings. The third and four thanks are shared by private companies i.e. Samsung R&D Institute India Bangalore Private Limited, Bengaluru (64) and Hindustan Unilever Ltd., Mumbai (62).

The top 5 foreign resident patentees are Qualcomm Incorporated; GM Global Technology Operations INC; Koninklijke Philips Electronics N. V., LG Electronics, and Honda Motor Company Ltd.

In the field of Information Technology (IT), Wipro Ltd. (190), occupies the first position. It is followed by Tata Consultancy Services Limited (159), IITs (Collective) (43), HCL Technologies Ltd. (35) and Huawei Technologies India Pvt. Ltd., (29).

Revenue generated by the Indian patent office in 2016-17 was Rs. 410.03 Crore, where as expenditure incurred was Rs. 49.67 Crore.

Research Publications and Patenting Profile of Higher Education Institutes and R&D Laboratories of India: Composite analysis of 904 Institutions of HEIs (351) and National research lab (553) were mapped for total research publications/patents filed and granted for period 2010-16, five top Institutions were DU, New Delhi (15052/26), IISC, Bangalore (10852/174), IIT, Kharagpur (8724/10), BHU Varanasi (8140/3) and BARC, Mumbai (7887/16).

Clearly, research is not getting as much importance for inculcating scientific approach in our education system as it is required to impart quality education. Apart from few well-funded standalone Institutes, research is not prominent in inadequately funded Universities, where entire resources are directed towards teaching. Education and research are separated and hence both are sub optimized. The National Research Foundation (NRF) has a daunting task ahead to optimize both by bridging the gap between the two. It is essential to enhance our research capabilities and output across disciplines. NRF Policy envisions a comprehensive approach to transforming the quality and quantity of research.

Another important side is to encourage serious research in Universities and evolving new Centers of Excellence (CoEs) in line with contemporary vision, need and expectations both at local and global level. So far, well-funded Institutions are taking the lead with almost 95% of the share, mainly in the technical field. Few prominent Institutes like 23 IITs, 7 IISER, 40 CSIR, ICAR (4 deemed University and 98 Research Centres), ICMR (22 Institutes, 8 Research Centres), 12 Mo Earth Science, 20 Mo S&T, 15 Mo Biotech, DAE (3 Universities, 19 Research Centres), 7 Meit Y, 20 ISRO, 64 DRDO, 14ICFRE, along with IISc, NITs, etc. are key contributors in teaching and research.

As per global indicators, India is ranked amongst the top 5 countries in terms of number of research publications (Scimago Journal & Country Rank, 2016). However, its global ranking slips down heavily to 45th rank in the indicator of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) (International Property Rights Index Report, 2017). As per Annual Report 2016-17 of Controller General of Patents, Designs, Trade Marks and Geographical Indications (CGPDTM), GoI, 45, 444 patent applications were filed in India, out of which only one fourth applications were filed by Indians, rest by the foreign applicants. Barring CSIR Labs, IITs, and IISc-Bangalore, other institutes do not have much credibility in the regime of patents.

It is pertinent to add new and quality Research Institutions for inculcating scientific approach to social sciences and humanities also in India. Since the focus of the education system is shifting to multi disciplinary, multilingual, vibrant academic culture,

many path breaking brand new innovative applied centers of repute should take forward applied research resulting in patents, publications of articles and books and fundamental path breaking discoveries and innovations in science, technology, pharmacy and social sector. We must be competing with the best of the world and creating few such platforms in India as well which world should aspire to compete for.

Objectives of NRF decodified

Challenge is not just adding new futuristic Institutions, but also to revamp existing schools, colleges, Universities and Institutions and bring them up to international reputation by improving the quality of education. The NRF will be involved in funding competitive peer reviewed grant proposals of all types and across all disciplines. NRF intends to seed, grow and facilitate research at Universities and colleges, where research capacity currently is in nascent stage and poorly funded.

HEIs have great challenges ahead to transform the Indian Higher Education system and make it more relevant, meaningful and accessible, grooming talents from every corner of the country. NRF can play a big role by enlisting and encouraging Universities to exponentially increase the quality of research resulting in solutions to challenges of national importance, business solutions, patents and IPR.

The National Research Foundation is expected to introduce a stringent peer review process with a committed panel of experts with high credentials, fairly representing gender equality. It may also encourage the team of researchers (PIs) to follow gender equality while submitting multi-institutional projects, which will ensure fair involvement of women in STEM. The researchers also look forward to adoption of standardized reviewing practices including content, format, time line and well-defined procedures as followed by prestigious international funding agencies to promote transparency in selection of research projects.

The National Research Foundation shall focus on improving the quality and outcomes of multi disciplinary research, while promoting research efforts in Artificial Intelligence and other emerging areas of scientific/technological research. The National Research Foundation underlines collaborative research by the academic institutions in coordination with CII, FICCI and near by Industries. It will provide speedy and time bound solutions to industry requirements while maintaining the relevance and validity of the sponsored research.

Other points made in the NEP's NRF proposal include provision like intellectual property would belong to researchers but should be licensed royalty-free to the government. Established researchers, including retired researchers, would seed and mentor research at universities. There would be no age limit for such mentors. Doctoral and post doctoral fellowships would be provided at universities to attract talent. Outstanding research would be recognised via awards and symposia. And finally, international collaboration would be "encouraged and supported", though the nature of the support has not been described.

Besides, the provision of a 4-year degree programme will be very useful, as in the 4th year of degree, students interested in pursuing research will go for year long training to develop a research mindset. At the moment when the scientific community is

realizing the need of robust research ecosystem for researches in the area of disruptive technologies, the National Research Foundation shall certainly orient the young researchers to pursue their projects in the areas of climate change, population dynamics, machine learning, Artificial Intelligence and other equally challenging areas to make the lives of humans easier and peaceful.

Role of National Research Foundation (NRF)

According to NEP, NRF is going to play a significant role in bridging the gap between education and research. As mentioned earlier, if Universities are supposed to take lead and make considerable achievements in fundamental and applied research, they must be properly funded to facilitate the process and also benchmark their actions and output with internationally acceptable benchmarks, enjoying greater autonomy within HE framework. This will also require reaching out to a large section of talented students so far untouched and provide them quality and equal opportunity, particularly to those who are from SEDGs. However, Institutions currently funding research, like DST, DA, DBT, ICAR, ICMR, ICHR and UGC etc. will continue to independently fund research according to their priorities and needs.

The most acceptable language to conduct the research is English, but NRF should facilitate and encourage research in mother tongue and local / regional languages to tap on talents who find it challenging to express themselves in English. Also there is a need to move beyond fundamental research to more applied and innovative research, e.g., Research work in Physics can be important, but we need to encourage research in various Engineering branches as well. Most students move out of Engineering Institutions to get absorbed in the job market, not contributing to research in various branches of engineering. NRF intends to create a thriving Research, Education and Innovation eco system, and mend artificially separated education and research not just in technical but in other fields also.

NRF proposes to setup separate Directorates to facilitate the process-Natural Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Engineering, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts, Design and Humanities, Indian Languages and knowledge system, Health and finally, Innovation and entrepreneurship. Doctoral and post doctoral fellowship will be given each year across Directorates, also providing teaching assistance- ship as defined in NRF. However, ideally if NRF encourages mother tongue and local language, then there should be fairly good representation of research work (to encourage it may have provision for some quotas) in mother tongue and regional / local language.

It will be interesting to see how many cross-functional, inter disciplinary/ multi disciplinary/multilingual research works really takes shape and how it impacts the body of knowledge and practical in novations. Out put should attract international reputations and acceptance of relevant educational fraternity. HEIs should encourage work in areas of critical national importance which should be clearly enumerated as guidelines. Another feature "National Mission Project" of critical importance should have a direct impact nation wide. NRF will act as aliaison between researchers and relevant branches of government as well as industry to address most urgent national research issues.

It also hints about faculty career management systems that give due weightage to research, and the governance and regulatory changes that encourage an environment of research and innovation. Performance should be incentivized and encouraged, and talent should be nurtured by providing them with an appropriate platform and support. Direct involvement of faculty can be very crucial. They should not only guide research but mentor students for imbibing core competency as researchers. NRF proposes Professorship at University/College level each year across disciplines - five-year renewable position to be trusted with the best of the researcher. Emphasis is on multidisciplinary research and Professor Chairs should shun away the silo approach and take an integrative approach. In fact, one of the key primary activities of NRF as mentioned in NEP 2020 is to recognize outstanding research and progress.

What remains undefined

The NRF as outlined in the NEP is thus meant to be a transformational body, for universities in particular, but it has been designed to complement - not replace - the existing funding mechanisms. Assuming good intentions behind the proposal and its implementation, few points should be pondered upon. Firstly, in typically funded research in the experimental sciences, the vast amount of research funding goes into equipment, reagents and other supplies. So presumably funding mechanisms for these will not change significantly where currently the funder is the DST, the CSIR or the new NRF.

Secondly, in all fields including humanities, there is the requirement of personnel. In the West, research grants often fund doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows, where as this is generally not the case in India: they are funded institutionally or via national fellowships from funders like UGC and CSIR. Project assistants and research associates, however, are usually funded via grants. The pay for all these positions is more or less uniform, depending on qualifications and years of experience. A project assistant without a PhD earns roughly the same as a PhD student, and so on. Currently, a researcher has very little flexibility to offer market-competitive salaries to, say, a very talented programmer who would otherwise be absorbed by industry, or to a brilliant student who is tempted by transfer options abroad. The NEP does not discuss such aspects. The NRF should set up flexible guidelines for payment of personnel.

Thirdly, another very important aspect of research, in all fields, is travel, including foreign travel. This is where existing funding agencies are at their stingiest. The DST, the DBT, the SERB and others all require the researcher to not have availed an international travel award from the government in the last three years except for a few exceptions like the DBT-Wellcome India Alliance. While in theory a good publication will get noticed by peers, in practice the volume of research is such that dissemination in conferences, visits to and seminars in top universities and personal interactions with leading international researchers are essential to get one's research recognised. This is especially important for students and early-career researchers. In practice, this is not a huge expense per head per year relative to the cost of running an experimental laboratory. The current penny-pinching approach of the government in this respect probably stems from the socialist-era view of foreign travel as a "perk", in the days when few ordinary

citizens could possibly afford it. This must cease - in the NRF as well as in the other funding agencies. Similarly, funds must be available to invite inter national researchers to India, a near-impossibility today via government funding.

Finally, the open-access movement has become widespread in some fields, especially in the biomedical sciences. But while this means no more exorbitant fees for libraries, authors do need to pay for manuscripts, which cost upwards of US\$ 1,500 (Rs 1.02 lakh) each in good journals. There is an ongoing debate on whether this trend is beneficial to India. But despite the existence of many predatory journals, many of the most highly regarded journals also charge open-access fees, and these should be budgeted for in grant applications and awards. In summary, the research funding situation in India must be over hauled which is expected highly from the NRF.

Conclusion

The draft NEP envisions an ambitious NRF whose role must be viewed in the context of other recommendations in the NEP, which seek to impact every aspect of education in India. The current proposal of NRF is devoid of this context, its structure and funding allocation are unknown, and while in the long term such an organization would be welcome, in the short term most of the funding issues that researchers face can and should be addressed by existing bodies, which the NRF intends to supplement, not replace.

The NRF recommendation in the NEP should not be viewed in isolation but as part of a proposed comprehensive overhaul of the Indian educational system, from kindergarten to research institutions. The NEP repeatedly emphasizes the importance of abroad- based and flexible educational system. In the higher education context, it decries the stratification of institutions into elite research-oriented institutes, specialized institutes like the IITs, and universities and colleges where teaching is divorced from research.

It recommends undergraduate programmes that integrate teaching in sciences and humanities, and envisions a re-integration of teaching and research in the country. Eventually, it aspires to three types of HEIs: Research universities, Teaching universities and colleges, with the categories being somewhat fluid, and with each having student enrolment in the thousands or tens of thousands. All existing HEIs would transform into one of these categories, and several new ones would need to be created. The policy anticipates a dramatic expansion both in the teaching responsibilities of research institutes, and in the research activities of teaching universities.

The goals of the NEP are grand and will require dedicated focus at all levels, as well as immense funding, to achieve. The goals of the NRF, as envisioned in the NEP, are correspondingly ambitious. The National Research Foundation shall be instrumental in providing a single platform for all academic/scientific researches in diverse area of research. It will help in avoiding duplication of efforts, and shall provide a common research database to help the researchers in selection of their areas of research. It will provide a "Single Window" for researcher so that all subject areas are as to facilitate the researchers. India was a knowledge center which attracted the likes of Fahyan and other scholars from the world. Today we must recreate that India where foreign nationals

compete to secure seats for education like Indian students' line-up for Cambridge, Oxford, MIT, Stanford, Harvard and Ivy Leagues Universities.

Central Institute of Higher Education
Tibbetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi

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National Education Policy - 2020 : A Milestone in Reforming School Education

R S Kureel and Mayur Gautam

As we all know, that today's younger generation is the leaders of the future who will be leading this world. Their future will be determined by how their thinking and behavior patterns are tailored by their experiences and how practically prepared they are. To make our children to be the future leaders of the world, we have to address the challenges such as access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability being faced by education system of our country. The first proper step that needs to be taken in order to improve the education system in the Government Schools is to improve the levels of accountability.

A successful system clearly defines in measurable terms, expectations for what students need to know and be able to do to succeed in school, at the workplace and in life. A successful system aligns and focuses its policies and programs on student achievement of high academic standards.

The National Education Policy -2020 provides for reforms at all levels of education from school to higher education. It seeks to increase the focus on early childhood care, reform. The current exam system, strengthen teacher training and restructure the education regulatory framework. It also seeks to set up a National Education Commission, increase public investment in education, strengthen the use of technology and increase focus on vocational and adult education, among others.

Based on the deliberation with educationist, policy makers, educational institutions and other stake holders involved in education as well as the rich experience of committee members in the academic arena. National Education Policy committee has made 11 major recommendations for bringing transformation in school education as hereunder:-

Early Childhood Education

The Committee noticed access of children and quality of education being rendered in our schools like desired curriculum, qualified and trained teachers, substandard pedagogy. Now to ensure access and quality education for making strong foundation, the Right to Education Act 2009 has been recommended to assure availability of free and compulsory quality education to the children. This will assures

free, safe and quality education access to every child. It is provisioned that there should be no detention of children till class eight. The provisions have also been made to ensure quality education for the children's of socio-economically and geographically disadvantaged.

Foundational literacy and numeracy

The targets have been made that every child in Grade 5 and beyond will get foundational literacy and numeracy up to 2025. This is a major Challenge to the states and the Implementing agencies to ensure all street children and the children of far flung areas to ensure in the given period. The use of modern tools, techniques, technologies, know-how, public and school libraries, support of Social workers and counselors in motivating local communities and children coupled with nutritious breakfast & midday meal programme will be leveraged to ensure the Policy goals of 100 percent foundational literacy and numeracy .

Free and compulsory quality education.

The Right to Education Act needs to be made more effective to ensure free and compulsory education from pre-school to senior secondary education. It has been estimated that more than 20 million students are school dropouts in our country. It has become imperative to ensure school education for all children in the age group of 3-18 years by 2030. To achieve the above goal in a tie bound manner, dedication and support of stake holders is required to ensure enrolment of children by increasing the intake in the existing school, creating new schools alongwith modern facilities in tribal areas, geographically far flung areas, residential facilities, transport facilities as well as strengthening of open and distance schooling with distance learning platforms.

Pedagogical structure for school education

The Committee observed that the current education system solely focuses on rote learning of facts and procedures. The committee recommended that the curriculum load in each subject should be reduced to its essential core content.

The Pedagogical restructuring in New Education Policy are major reform, which will transform secondary and senior secondary education in our country. Curriculum and pedagogy are transformed in order to reduce rote learning and develop 21st century skills in students such as critical thinking, communication, creativity, scientific temper, collaboration, multilingualism, problem solving, ethics, social responsibility, and digital literacy. The 5+3+3+4 design of pedagogical structure of school education has replaced 10 + 2 system as here under:

- i. Foundational Stage (age 3-8 years): Rapid brain development; learning based on play and active discovery.
- ii. Preparatory Stage (8-11 years): Building on play and discovery; begin the transition to structured learning.
- iii. Middle Stage (11-14 years): Learning concepts in subjects; begin navigating adolescence.
- iv. Secondary Stage (14-18 years): Preparation for employment and higher education; transition into young adulthood

The Secondary Stage of four years of multidisciplinary study will make subject depth, critical thinking, and attention to life aspirations with flexibility for student choice.

Talents and Interests Identification

There is no plant on the earth without medicinal values and there is no person on the earth without talent. This will facilitate the student to decide their career in a professional manner as per their talent. Talents and interests will be identified and fostered through topic-centered and project-based clubs from school to district levels, residential summer programmes, and Olympiads and competitions during secondary stage of 4 years.

Equitable and inclusive education

This policy aims to benefit all children to learn and excel irrespective of their caste, colour, class, religion, region, language, gender etc so that participation and learning outcomes are equalized across all genders and social categories by 2030. The early childhood education, foundational literacy and numeracy, school access, enrolment and attendance will get attention and support for students from under-represented groups.

Examination reforms

The Committee observed that the current board examinations: (i) force students to concentrate only on a few subjects, (ii) do not test learning in a formative manner, and (iii) cause stress among students. To track students' progress throughout their school experience, the Policy proposes State Census Examinations in classes three, five and eight. Further, it recommends restructuring the board examinations to test only core concepts, skills and higher order capacities. These board examinations will be on a range of subjects. The students can choose their subjects, and the semester when they want to take these board exams. The in-school final examinations may be replaced by these board examinations.

Special Education Zones

The provisions have been made to create Special Education Zones in disadvantaged regions across the country. The States will develop these Zones based on clear social development and socio-economic indicators of the localities, geographical locations, and educational status to inclusion of under-represented groups in a concerted manner. Some key initiatives are-

- Capacity development of teachers by continuously sensitizing them, creating alternate pathways for recruitment of teachers from educationally under-represented groups, restricting the pupil-teacher ratio in schools with a high proportion of learners from educationally under-represented groups.
- Creation of inclusive school environments through establishment of mechanisms which address harassments, intimidations and gender-based violence and eliminate exclusionary practices, revising curriculum to make it inclusive.
- Financial support to individual students through a National Fund created specifically for providing scholarships, developing resources and facilities for students from under-represented groups and targeted funding and support for inclusion.
- Breakfast in addition to the mid day meal, and special internship opportunities.
- Women's participation and education of girls to address the gender imbalance among school teachers and girls students.
- Education of tribal, caste and religion-based groups to ensure that children of these communities receive all the benefits earmarked for them.

- Education of children of urban poor families in order to help students to navigate life in urban poor areas and education of children with special needs.

Teacher management

- The country is facing acute shortage of qualified teacher, particularly professional teachers. Policy committee has made recommendations that teachers should be deployed with a particular school complex for at least five to seven years and they will not be allowed to participate in any non-teaching activities.
- For teacher training, the existing B.Ed. programme will be replaced by a four-year integrated B.Ed. programme that combines high-quality content, pedagogy, and practical training. An integrated continuous professional development will also be developed for all subjects. Teachers will be required to complete a minimum of 50 hours of continuous professional development training every year.

Governance in school education

- The committee noted very poor school infrastructure in most of the primary schools in every habitation across the country, which has led to operationally complex to deploy teachers and critical physical resources. Therefore, the draft Policy recommends that multiple public schools should be brought together to form a school complex. A complex will consist of one secondary school (classes nine to twelve) and all the public schools in its neighborhood that offer education.
- Schools are being grouped into school complexes to facilitate the sharing of resources and render school governance more local, effective, and efficient by the State according to population distribution, connectivity and other local considerations. A school complex will comprise a cluster of approximately 10-20 public schools offering education from the initial Foundational stage through Grade 12 within a connected/contiguous geographic region. School complexes will break the isolation of small schools, and create a community of teachers and principals who can work together and support each other - academically and administratively.
- The aim is to create a coherent set of educational facilities, including schools offering initial three years of foundational education, institutions offering vocational education and adult education, teacher support institutions and support for children with special needs that are located within a well-connected geographical area and can support each other in their work.

Regulation of school education

Since the Right to Education is the statutory lynchpin for school regulation and governance, it will be reviewed time to time and appropriate modifications made to enable incorporate improvements based on the leanings. The school education system is invigorated through effective regulation and accreditation mechanisms that ensure integrity and transparency and foster quality and innovation for continually improving educational outcomes.

Policy Committee has recommends separating the regulation of schools on aspects such as policymaking, school operations, and academic development. An independent State-wide regulatory body called the State School Regulatory Authority, with a quasi-judicial status, is being created for each State to ensure basic uniformity of standards for public and private schools.

Conclusion

The focus is expected to shift from rote learning to holistic, integrated, enjoyable and engaging learning. Students are likely to enjoy the freedom of selecting interdisciplinary subjects. Students of Classes VI to VIII are set to engage in a 10-day “bagless” learning period. This period will work like an internship, during which they are expected to gain vocational experience.

The NEP-2020 encourages students to learn more about India. Learning Indian languages will be encouraged. Tribal knowledge and indigenous and traditional ways of learning has been incorporated into different subjects. Subjects will also focus on students gaining local geographical, environmental and social understanding. Recognizing the high dropout rates (> 20 million) in the country, the NEP targets to support students with the help of social workers and counselors working with schools. To make learning more engaging for students, teacher education is set to change. A nutritious breakfast will be added to midday meals.

NEP-2020 hopes to bring more students to school. Various strategies, including scholarships and schemes, will focus on socio-economically disadvantaged groups. The introduction of the Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones are some of the proposed steps towards education equity.

The overall goal of NEP, 2020 is to universalize the pre-primary education by 2025 and provide foundational literacy & numeracy for all by 2025. It proposes new Curricular and Pedagogical Structure, with 5+3+3+4 design covering the children in the age group 3-18 years. The above reforms, policy committee expect 100% Grass Enrolment Ratio (GER) in preschool to secondary level by 2030 and quality education at school level to excel in higher education including professional education.

*Member, National Educational Policy
Drafting Committee -2020 and Vice Chancellor,
Mahatma Gandhi University
of Horticulture & Forestry, Durg, Chhattisgarh*

*Research Fellow, Department of Social Work,
Jamia Millia Islamia,
New Delhi*

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राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति बनाम शिक्षा की भारतीय संकल्पना

बृजेन्द्र पाण्डेय

भारतवर्ष में शिक्षा का प्रश्न बहुत उलझ चुका है। भारत में ब्रिटिश उपनिवेशवाद के परिणामस्वरूप जिस शिक्षा-दृष्टि और तद्नुरूप जिस शिक्षा-व्यवस्था को स्थापित किया गया, उसके विजातीय स्वरूप से सुधीजन अवगत हो चुके हैं। विकल्पतः, भारतीय दृष्टि के शिक्षा-विधान की चर्चा भी बलवती हो रही है। विडम्बना यह है कि आज भारत की अधिकृत शिक्षा-व्यवस्था स्वरूपतः भारतीय नहीं है, और यदि भारतीय शिक्षा-व्यवस्था जैसा कुछ बनाने की चेष्टा हो रही है, तो वह अधिकृत नहीं है।

नई (राष्ट्रीय) शिक्षा-नीति-2020 के कोलाहल के मध्य भी हम उसी दुविधा का शिकार हैं, जो अब लगभग हमारी नियति बन चुकी है। एक तो तथाकथित पुनर्जागरणकालीन उहापोह और असमंजस की स्थिति अभी तक हमारा पीछा नहीं छोड़ रही है, और दूसरी ओर जब कभी शिक्षा, समाज, संस्कृति जैसे शाश्वत महत्व के विषय पर कोई चर्चा आरम्भ होती है, तो तत्क्षण ही इन विषयों का राजनीतिकरण हो जाता है। देश में राजनीतिक मत-विभिन्नता के साथ-साथ मीडिया के अन्दर तो एक बड़ा राजनीतिक विभाजन देखने में आ ही रहा है, दुर्भाग्य से हमारा अकादमिक जगत भी इस विभाजन का शिकार हो चुका है। इस दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण स्थिति ने शिक्षा और शिक्षा-नीति के प्रश्न को भी चतुर्दिक घेर लिया है। एक दल-विशेष का एजेण्डा मानते हुए नई शिक्षा-नीति को भी न केवल दलीय दृष्टि से देखा जा रहा है, वरन् इसकी प्रशस्ति में पूरे देश के शिक्षण-संस्थानों में प्रायोजित कार्यक्रम आयोजित किये जा रहे हैं।

इस पूरे प्रकरण का विश्लेषण करने के लिए काव्य-विमर्श की तरह ही हम इसके कला-पक्ष व भाव-पक्ष को समझने की चेष्टा करेंगे। 'कला-पक्ष' के अन्तर्गत सर्वप्रथम हम भारत में शिक्षा की वस्तुस्थिति, विशेषतः विश्वविद्यालयी शिक्षा की वस्तुस्थिति को समझने का प्रयास करेंगे। तदोपरान्त हम नई (राष्ट्रीय) शिक्षा-नीति-2020 के प्रावधानों की समीक्षा करने का यत्न करेंगे और अन्त में, 'भाव-पक्ष' के अन्तर्गत हम शिक्षा की भारतीय संकल्पना को समझने के माध्यम से इस पूरे प्रकरण के वैचारिक विन्यास का प्रकटीकरण करने की चेष्टा भी करेंगे।

माइकल ऑकशॉट¹ ने विश्वविद्यालय को अक्षय ज्ञान-परम्परा का संरक्षक, सम्बर्द्धक, संपोषक और सम्प्रेषक मानते हुए कहा है किन्तु, यदि निष्पक्ष अवलोकन किया जाए तो अपने प्रत्येक उद्देश्य को पूरा करने की दृष्टि से भारतवर्ष में विश्वविद्यालयों का या तो स्वरूप-विपर्यय हुआ है, अथवा उनका स्वरूप-संकुचन हुआ है। बात भारत में विश्वविद्यालयों के नामकरण से शुरू करते हैं। सामान्यतः, दुनिया भर में विश्वविद्यालयों का नामकरण स्थान-वाचक ही रहा है। प्राचीन भारत से लेकर आधुनिक विश्व तक लगभग सर्वत्र, विश्वविद्यालय अपने स्थान के नाम से ही जाने जाते हैं। आधुनिक भारत में विस्तारित जीवन की खण्डवादी दृष्टि के चलते समाज, संस्कृति सहित जीवन के लगभग सभी पक्षों का तीव्र राजनीतिकरण हुआ है। यह राजनीतिकरण जे.पी. आन्दोलन के बाद बहुत तेजी से हुआ है। वस्तुतः, जब शिक्षा, समाज, संस्कृति आदि जीवन के नियामक पक्ष अपनी अनुमन्य स्वायत्तता और

परिणामतः अपनी सार्थकता खोने लगते हैं, तो राजनीति इन पक्षों को आच्छादित कर लेती है, या यूँ कहिए, हड़प लेती है। परिणामस्वरूप, कुछ एक अपवादों को छोड़कर भारतवर्ष के प्रत्येक प्रान्त में अधिकांश विश्वविद्यालयों का नामकरण राजनेताओं के नाम पर हो चुका है। दुनियाँ के विश्वविद्यालयों में महान शिक्षाविदों या विद्वानों के नाम पर पीठें (Chairs) स्थापित करने का तो चलन रहा है, किन्तु विश्वविद्यालयों का नाम ही राजनेताओं के नाम पर रख दिया जाए, यह तो स्पष्ट रूप से आक्रामक होते जा रहे राजनीतिकरण और निस्तेज होते जा रहे विश्वविद्यालयों का लक्षण ही माना जाना चाहिए।

इसी प्रकार, जिन विषयों के पठन-पाठन के लिए किसी विश्वविद्यालय में एक विभाग, या विश्वविद्यालय के बाहर स्वतन्त्र रूप से एक संस्थान स्थापित किया जाना चाहिए, उनके अध्ययन के लिए एक पूरे विश्वविद्यालय की संकल्पना की जा रही है। चिकित्सा विश्वविद्यालय, तकनीकी विश्वविद्यालय, विधि विश्वविद्यालय, महिला विश्वविद्यालय, बाल विश्वविद्यालय, खेल विश्वविद्यालय, पेट्रोलियम विश्वविद्यालय, पुलिस विश्वविद्यालय, रेल विश्वविद्यालय, गंगा विश्वविद्यालय, फॉरेन्सिक विश्वविद्यालय सदृश विश्वविद्यालयों की बलवली होती संकल्पना भारत में विश्वविद्यालयों के तेजी से स्वरूप-संकुचन होने का ही चिन्त है।

इसी तरह, देश में केन्द्रीय, राज्य, मानित और निजी विश्वविद्यालयों जैसे अनेक प्रकार के विश्वविद्यालयों की उपस्थिति के साथ ही विश्वविद्यालयों के अन्दर परम्परागत विभाग-संकाय पद्धति से इतर पीठें संस्थान और केन्द्र स्थापित करने का चलन तेजी से बढ़ा है। इन संरचनाओं की स्थापना के पीछे प्रोफेसरों की निजी महत्वाकांक्षाएँ तो हैं ही, ये संरचनाएँ अन्ततः अकादमिक अराजकता और भ्रष्टाचार को ही बढ़ावा दे रही हैं। यदि इन पीठों/संस्थानों/केन्द्रों की अकादमिक उपादेयता का निष्पक्ष मूल्यांकन किया जाए तो यह तथ्य स्पष्ट हो जाएगा कि जिन विषयों/उपविषयों के पठन-पाठन को केन्द्र में रखकर इन्हें स्थापित किया गया है, उनके पठन-पाठन का विधान पहले से ही विभिन्न विभागों के परम्परागत पाठ्यक्रमों में निहित है। आवश्यकतानुसार इन पाठ्यक्रमों को अद्यतन करते रहने का प्रावधान भी विभागीय संरचना में आरम्भ से ही अन्तर्निहित है। तो फिर अलग से इस प्रकार की संरचनाएँ खड़ी करने का क्या औचित्य है? अधिकांशतः, ये संरचनाएँ स्ववित्तपोषित होती हैं, और जहाँ एक ओर ये विद्यार्थियों पर अनावश्यक वित्तीय भार आरोपित करती हैं, वहीं दूसरी ओर शिक्षकों को लोभ और लाभ के गणित में उलझाए रखती हैं। एक-एक शिक्षक इन संरचनाओं और इनसे जुड़ी अनेक परियोजनाओं से एक साथ जुड़ा रहता है, और परिणामस्वरूप, न तो अपने मूल विषय के साथ समय और रुचि के अभाव में न्याय कर पाता है, और न ही इन प्रकल्पों से कुछ यथेष्ट प्राप्त कर पाता है। प्रत्येक वर्ष फरवरी और मार्च के महीने में इन प्रकल्पों से जुड़ी धनराशि के व्यय/अपव्यय और इससे जुड़े हिसाब-किताब की गहमा-गहमी और अफरा-तफरी से विश्वविद्यालय के शिक्षक अच्छी तरह परिचित हैं।

देश में इधर कई नए केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय अस्तित्व में आए हैं। इन विश्वविद्यालयों और देश में पहले से चले आ रहे केन्द्रीय और राज्य विश्वविद्यालयों की सेवा-शर्तों में विसंगति के चलते पुराने शिक्षक यहाँ आना नहीं चाहते, और ये नए विश्वविद्यालय केवल युवा शिक्षकों से भरते जा रहे हैं। अधिकांशतः तीस से पैंतालीस वर्ष की आयु वाले इन शिक्षकों में ही इन विश्वविद्यालयों के असिस्टेंट प्रोफेसर भी हैं और हेड तथा डीन भी। परम्परागत विश्वविद्यालयों की तरह इन नए विश्वविद्यालयों में कोई वरिष्ठ-कनिष्ठ-सम्बन्ध बन नहीं पाता; अतः सीखने-सिखाने का कोई अन्योन्याश्रित सम्बन्ध तो इनमें नहीं ही विकसित हो पाता, पारस्परिक कलह और अनुशासनहीनता का वातावरण अवश्य बना रहता है। केन्द्र की देखा-देखी राज्य भी बड़ी संख्या में विश्वविद्यालय, महाविद्यालय और मेडिकल कालेज आदि खोलते चले जा रहे हैं। आवश्यक अधिसंरचना और योग्य शिक्षकों के अभाव में यह एक निरर्थक कोटि का अभियान सिद्ध हो रहा है। भारी-भरकम आर्थिक व्यय के उपरान्त भी गुणात्मक रूप से इनका स्तर तृतीय श्रेणी के प्रशासनिक कार्यालयों से बेहतर नहीं कहा जा सकता।

जहाँ तक देश की उच्चतर शिक्षण संस्थाओं में शिक्षकों की नियुक्ति का प्रश्न है, एक तो इन संस्थानों में नियमित, तदर्थ, संविदा, अतिथि, मानदेय, स्ववित्तपोषित और अंशकालिक-कई कोटि के शिक्षक मिल जाएंगे,

जिनकी अपने संस्थान के साथ प्रतिबद्धता भी अपनी सेवा-कोटि के अनुरूप ही बनी रहती है। फिर कुलपति और विभिन्न शिक्षा आयोगों के अध्यक्षों/सदस्यों से लेकर शिक्षकों की नियुक्ति तक जो-जो तिकड़म किए जाते हैं, उनकी गणना और व्याख्या एक वृहद् और स्वतन्त्र शास्त्र की मांग करती है। इस प्रकार, पहले आप एक तिकड़मी कुलपति नियुक्त कीजिए, जो अपने से भी चार हाथ आगे के परम तिकड़मी शिक्षकों को नियुक्त करे, और ये सब मिलकर नित्य-प्रसूत नए-नए तिकड़मों के सहारे एक विश्वस्तरीय विश्वविद्यालय बनाने का आवा करें, अपने को विश्वगुरु कहलवाने का दम्भ भरें-तो ऐसी स्थिति को बुद्धि और चरित्र का विपर्यय न कहा जाए, तो क्या कहा जाए!

बुद्धि और चरित्र का ये विपर्यय व्यक्तियों, संस्थाओं और समाज में क्रमशः कदाचरण, निरुद्येयता और अस्थिरता को जन्म देता है। स्वप्नदर्शी आशावादी लोग आजकल इस स्थिति को संक्रमणकालीन अवस्था बताकर बच निकलते हैं। उन्हें यह समझ में नहीं आता कि व्यष्टि और समष्टि के स्तर पर जब इस प्रकार की दुरावस्था का जन्म होता है, तो सर्वत्र आपाधापी और अफ़रा-तफ़री मच जाती है। आजकल जिस नवाचार और प्रयोगधर्मिता पर अतिशय बल दिया जा रहा है, वस्तुतः वह भी इसी दुरावस्थाजनित अव्यवस्था का ही लक्षण है। इधर हाल के वर्षों में हमारे विश्वविद्यालयों में परीक्षा और पाठ्यक्रम के स्तर पर अनेक प्रयोग किए जाते रहे हैं। एक ही प्रकार के पाठ्यक्रम की परीक्षा वार्षिक, ऑनर्स, सेमेस्टर, सी.बी.सी.एस., ग्रेडिंग और प्रमोशन की व्यवस्था के आधार पर सम्पादित कराई जा रही है। कहीं परीक्षा की पद्धति ऑब्जेक्टिव है, तो कहीं सब्जेक्टिव, और कहीं मिश्रित। एक ही कक्षा के एक ही विषय के वार्षिक पाठ्यक्रम को दो भागों में विभाजित करके सेमेस्टर-पाठ्यक्रम बना दिया गया। उसके एक सेमेस्टर की परीक्षा सब्जेक्टिव प्रणाली से होती है, तो दूसरे सेमेस्टर की परीक्षा ऑब्जेक्टिव प्रणाली से। कहीं-कहीं किसी पाठ्यक्रम के अन्तिम सेमेस्टर या अन्तिम वर्ष को फाइनल सेमेस्टर या फाइनल ईयर कह कर उसकी परीक्षा किसी अन्य प्रणाली से कराई जा रही है। सामान्य बुद्धि से तहकीकात करने पर भी इन प्रयोगों को मतिभ्रम, आपाधापी और अफ़रा-तफ़री जैसे परिवेश का ही परिणाम कहा जा सकता है। परीक्षा वार्षिक हो या सेमेस्टर, विद्यार्थियों व शिक्षकों की बौद्धिक और नैतिक शुचिता के बिना इसका क्या महत्व है? प्राथमिक स्तर पर अंकों के आधार पर किए गए मूल्यांकन को आप ग्रेडिंग या सी.जी.पी.ए. में बदल दें, और फिर टॉपर का निर्णय करने के लिए पुनः अंकों के आधार पर आकलन करें, तो इस गुणा-गणित से कौन सी गुणात्मकता सुनिश्चित हो पा रही है ? बिना अपनी शिक्षण-संस्थाओं की अधिसंरचना और पाठ्यक्रम का औचित्य समझे सी.बी.सी.एस. लागू कर देने से भला क्या हासिल होने वाला है ? पहले भी सभी संकायों में विषयों के कॉम्बिनेशन की प्रणाली तो विद्यमान ही थी, विद्यार्थी अपने मूल विषय के अनुरूप अपने कॉम्बिनेशन का निर्धारण कर ही लेता था। भौतिक और रसायन विज्ञान के साथ प्राणि विज्ञान, वनस्पति विज्ञान, गणित, सांख्यिकी अथवा भूगर्भशास्त्र के समूह प्रचलित रहे ही हैं। इसी प्रकार राजनीतिशास्त्र के साथ दर्शनशास्त्र और अर्थशास्त्र, अर्थशास्त्र के साथ राजनीतिशास्त्र और समाजशास्त्र, प्राचीन भारतीय इतिहास के साथ संस्कृत और दर्शनशास्त्र, आधुनिक भारतीय इतिहास के साथ राजनीतिशास्त्र और अर्थशास्त्र आदि कॉम्बिनेशन दीर्घकाल से प्रचलन में रहे ही हैं। गुणवत्ता और आकादमिक अनुशासन की दृष्टि से इनकी प्रामाणिकता अनुभव-सिद्ध रही है। ऐसे में केवल नवाचार के नाम पर किए गए अनौचित्यपूर्ण निर्णय अकादमिक अराजकता को बढ़ाने वाले ही सिद्ध होंगे।

गत दो वर्षों में अपनी परीक्षा-प्रणाली में हमने जो प्रमाद किया है- कहीं आन्तरिक मूल्यांकन के आधार पर, कहीं बिना किसी मूल्यांकन के ही, तो कहीं प्रश्नपत्रों को महज़ औपचारिक बनाकर विद्यार्थियों को अगली कक्षाओं में प्रमोट कर दिया है - इससे परीक्षाओं और उनके आधार पर तय होने वाली तुलनात्मक योग्यता का औचित्य ही समाप्त हो गया है। हमें यह समझना चाहिए कि किसी एक वर्ष की परीक्षा की गुणवत्ता को प्रभावित करके हम उस वर्ष के विद्यार्थियों के साथ विभिन्न स्तरों पर अपनी तुलनात्मक योग्यता को निर्धारित करने वाले पीछे और आगे के पाँच-पाँच वर्षों, अर्थात् लगभग दस वर्षों के विद्यार्थियों की मेरिट को अस्त-व्यस्त कर देते हैं।

किसी भी देश की शिक्षण-संस्थाएँ सर्वाधिक अनुशासित संस्थाएँ मानी जाती हैं। ऐसे में पंचायत से लेकर लोकसभा तक के चुनाव कराने को वरीयता देने वाले देश में विद्यार्थियों की पढ़ाई और परीक्षा की शुचिता को बनाए

रखने के लिए महामारी-काल में नीति-नियन्ताओं को अधिक गम्भीर होना चाहिए था। दुर्भाग्य तो ये है कि इस दौरान परीक्षा न कराना विभिन्न राजनीतिक दलों के एजेण्डे के रूप में उभरकर सामने आया है। इसे भी वोट-बैंक बढ़ाने वाले एक निर्णय के रूप में देखा जाने लगा है। जिन विश्वविद्यालयों ने किसी पाठ्यक्रम के अन्तिम वर्ष या अन्तिम सेमेस्टर को फाइनल कहकर अधिक महत्व दिया, उन्होंने न तो स्वयं इस तथ्य पर विचार किया, और न ही उनसे इस बारे में पूछा ही गया कि विश्वविद्यालयों में तो प्रत्येक सेमेस्टर या वर्ष का पाठ्यक्रम अलग-अलग होता है, उनकी परीक्षा भी अलग-अलग होती है, तो फिर सभी सेमेस्टर या वर्ष अपने में फाइनल ही होते हैं। इस प्रकार के बुद्धिहीन निर्णय इस बात की ओर ही संकेत करते हैं कि न केवल हमारी राजनीतिक संस्थाएँ ही, वरन् हमारी अकादमिक संस्थाएँ भी घोर मतिभ्रम और प्रमाद का शिकार हो चुकी हैं।

विश्वविद्यालयों की मानसिक जर्जरता का ये आलम है कि जिन विश्वविद्यालयों में वर्षों से पाठ्यक्रम केवल इस कारण अद्यतन नहीं किए जाते हैं कि हमारे प्रोफेसर अपनी अकादमिक जड़ता से बाहर आना ही नहीं चाहते, उन विश्वविद्यालयों में सत्ताधारी राजनीतिक दल के प्रति अपनी लिप्सापूर्ण प्रतिबद्धता प्रदर्शित करने के लिए बिना सोचे-समझे धारा 370 को, सी.ए.ए. को, तीन तलाक को और जी.एस.टी. को अपने पाठ्यक्रम का अंग बनाने की घोषणाएँ होने लगती हैं।

इसी प्रकार, हमारे विश्वविद्यालय संस्थागत मकड़जाल के भी शिकार बन चुके हैं। विश्वविद्यालय, जो महाविद्यालयों का एक संघुआ करते थे, अब कैम्पस विश्वविद्यालय और महाविद्यालयों के बीच रस्साकसी के अखाड़े बने हुए हैं। कैम्पस विश्वविद्यालय की अधिसंरचना, उसके निर्णय, उसका महत्व सम्बद्ध महाविद्यालयों को दोगुना दर्जे का सिद्ध करने पर तुले हुए हैं। ऊपर से शिक्षा मंत्रालय, यू.जी.सी., केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय, राज्य विश्वविद्यालय, राज्य सरकारें और उनके निदेशालय अपने-अपने तरीके से अकादमिक और प्रशासनिक गतिविधियों का नियमन करते रहते हैं। यू.जी.सी. के रेगुलेशन में शिक्षकों की अर्हताओं, ए.पी.आई., और प्रकाशन सम्बन्धी मानकों के बारे में जो अनिश्चितताएँ गत एक दशक में सामने आई हैं, वे हताश करने वाली हैं। फिर इन मानकों की जिस-जिस प्रकार की हतोत्साही व्याख्याएँ राज्य सरकारें और विश्वविद्यालय करते रहे हैं, उससे उनके स्वभाव और मति में व्याप्त दुर्भावना और मूर्खता, दोनों एक साथ प्रदर्शित होती हैं। नियुक्ति, पदोन्नति और पीएच.डी. प्राप्त करने के लिए प्रकाशनों की अनिवार्यता का परिणाम बहुत जल्द ही सामने आ चुका है। बहुत सी स्तरीय पत्र-पत्रिकाएँ क्लोन हो चुकी हैं, सैकड़ों नई अस्तित्व में आ गई हैं, और छापने-छापाने के 'स्टार्टअप' का टर्न ओवर करोड़ों में पहुँच चुका है।

कोविड-काल में तो राज्य सरकारों ने अपने सचिवालय के माध्यम से विश्वविद्यालयों का पाठ्यक्रम, उनकी परीक्षा-प्रणाली और उनका अकादमिक कैलेंडर तक तय कराना शुरू कर दिया है। विडम्बना यह है कि इन कामों के लिए बार-बार सचिवालय जाने में हमारे कुलपतियों को गर्व का अनुभव होने लगा है। इतना सब कुछ होने के बाद भी जहाँ उच्च शिक्षण संस्थानों की सेवा-शर्तों में एक अखिल भारतीय एकरूपता विकसित होनी चाहिए थी, वह तो नहीं ही हुई, कश्मीर से कन्याकुमारी तक भारत एक है, किन्तु विभिन्न राज्यों में शिक्षकों की सेवा-निवृत्ति की आयु 58 वर्ष से 65 वर्ष तक, उनके वेतन-भत्ते की व्यवस्था अनियमित और विसंगतिपूर्ण बनी हुई है; उलटे पाठ्यक्रमों में, जिनमें विश्वविद्यालयों का अकादमिक वैशिष्ट्य झलकना चाहिए, एकरूपता कायम करने की कोशिश हो रही है। सुधीजन विज्ञ होंगे कि इस एकरूपता को भी एक राजनीतिक एजेण्डे के प्रभाव में रखने की भरपूर कोशिश हो रही है।

इधर हाल के वर्षों में नैक व अन्य स्वतन्त्र मूल्यांकन एजेंसियों, रूसा, ऐश शिक्षा मंत्रालय, यू.जी.सी. तथा राज्य सरकार के विभिन्न अंगों द्वारा समय-समय पर अलग-अलग प्रारूपों में विश्वविद्यालयों/महाविद्यालयों से आख्यायें मांगी जाने लगी हैं। व्यावहारिक यथार्थ ये है कि प्रत्येक विश्वविद्यालय/महाविद्यालय में शिक्षकों की कमी के बावजूद एक बड़ी संख्या में योग्य शिक्षक बारहों महीने ये रिपोर्ट्स बनाने में लगे रहते हैं, जिसकी वास्तविक कीमत भी पढ़ाई-लिखाई को ही देनी पड़ती है।

इस प्रकार, हम कह सकते हैं कि हमारे विश्वविद्यालयों/महाविद्यालयों में एक तो प्राथमिक व माध्यमिक स्तर से अच्छे विद्यार्थियों का न आना एक व्यावहारिक समस्या बना हुआ है, ऊपर से जिस बड़ी संख्या में समाज-विज्ञानों व मानविकी विषयों में विद्यार्थी आ रहे हैं, उनके अनुरूप संस्थाओं में अधिसंरचना, संसाधन और शिक्षकों का अभाव है। जहाँ प्राथमिक शिक्षण-संस्थाएँ सरकारी योजनाओं को लागू करने की एजेंसियाँ बन चुकी हैं, माध्यमिक शिक्षण-संस्थाएँ जर्जर हो चुकी हैं, वहीं उच्चतर शिक्षण-संस्थाओं का तेजी से राजनीतिकरण हुआ है। उच्चतर शिक्षण-संस्थाओं को भी सरकार की ही तर्ज पर सोचने-करने की हिदायत दी जाने लगी है। स्ववित्तपोषित शिक्षण-संस्थाओं की संख्या में तेजी से बढ़ोत्तरी हुई है, किन्तु उनके ऊपर कोई प्रभावी गुणात्मक नियंत्रण नहीं कायम हो पाया है। राज्य/केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालयों में चलने वाले स्ववित्तपोषित पाठ्यक्रमों की उपादेयता संदिग्ध बनी रहती है, परिणामस्वरूप बहुत शोर-शराबे के साथ गा-बजा कर शुरू किए गए पाठ्यक्रम या तो अल्पकाल में ही बन्द होते जा रहे हैं, अथवा वित्तीय व प्रशासनिक अराजकता व भ्रष्टाचार के केन्द्र बने हुए हैं। उच्च शिक्षा के लिए बजट की कमी तो है ही, जो है भी वो भ्रष्ट, अयोग्य या कमजोर प्रशासकों के हाथ में है, जिसकी दुर्गति ही होनी है। कुलपतियों से लेकर शिक्षकों तक की नियुक्ति में पारदर्शिता व निष्पक्षता का अभाव रही-सही कमी को पूरा कर देता है। नियम-कानूनों की विसंगति व जटिलता, सरकारी तन्त्र का बढ़ता हुआ हस्तक्षेप और अकादमिक कार्यों की अपेक्षा लिपिकीय तथा प्रशासकीय कार्यों में अतिलिप्तता विश्वविद्यालयों/महाविद्यालयों को एक सरकारी कार्यालय में परिवर्तित करते जा रहे हैं।

भारत में उच्चतर शिक्षण-संस्थाओं में व्याप्त इन चुनौतियों के सापेक्ष अब हम नई (राष्ट्रीय) शिक्षा-नीति-2020 के प्रावधानों और उनकी उपादेयता को समझने की चेष्टा करेंगे। नई शिक्षा-नीति का सिंहावलोकन करने से लगभग उसी प्रकार की भावना प्रकट होती है, जैसा भारत के संविधान का सिंहावलोकन करने से। दोनों की प्रकृति आम भारतीयों के मन-मस्तिष्क के साथ एकाकार नहीं हो पाती। इसलिए इनको आत्मसात कराने के तमाम प्रयासों के बावजूद भी सब कुछ अजनबी-बेगाना सा लगता है। खैर...

इस शिक्षा-नीति में मानव-संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय का नाम बदलकर फिर से शिक्षा मंत्रालय कर दिया गया, यह स्तुत्य है; किन्तु मनुष्य को एकरेखीय पूंजीपरस्त विकास हेतु एक संसाधन मानने की मनोवृत्ति से हम कितना मुक्त हुए हैं, यह विचारणीय है। इस लोभ और लाभ आधारित पूंजीवादी तन्त्र को 'व्यवस्थित' करने वाला प्रबन्धशास्त्र आज भी हमारे संस्थानों में मनुष्य को मानव-संसाधन (HR) के रूप में ही देखता और गढ़ता है। 2030 तक 2 करोड़ बच्चों को शिक्षा की मुख्यधारा में लाना, माध्यमिक शिक्षा तक सार्वभौमिक पहुँच और सौ प्रतिशत नामांकन के साथ-साथ, 2035 तक उच्चतर शिक्षा में 50% नामांकन को सुनिश्चित करना तथा शिक्षा पर व्यय को जी.डी.पी. के 1.7% से बढ़ाकर 6% तक करना इस शिक्षा-नीति के सांख्यिकीय संकल्प हैं। इन संकल्पों की सिद्धि/असिद्धि को भविष्य रेखांकित करेगा। किन्तु, जैसा कि आनन्द कुमारस्वामी कहते हैं, किसी भी दीर्घकालिक, सभ्यतायी और राष्ट्रीय महत्व के विषय पर कोई सार्थक तथा सुस्पष्ट राय बनाने के लिए अर्थशास्त्रीय और राजनीतिक संकल्पों की अपेक्षा दृष्टि की सम्यक् एकता का ही केन्द्रीय महत्व होता है।¹

इस शिक्षा-नीति में शिक्षा को शिक्षक-केन्द्रित बनाने, शिक्षकों को प्रशिक्षित करने और शिक्षकों का सम्मान सुनिश्चित करने की बात भी की गई है। किन्तु, शिक्षा को शिक्षक-केन्द्रित बनाने की सार्थकता तभी है, जब शिक्षक के चित्त में स्वाभाविक विद्यानुराग हो तथा विद्या को धारित कर सकने का अपेक्षित शील हो। यदि किसी शिक्षक में ये दोनों जन्मजात और संस्कारजन्य सद्गुण विद्यमान हैं, तो ऐसे शिक्षक को प्रशिक्षित करने की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है, और यदि किसी शिक्षक में इन दोनों सद्गुणों का अभाव है, तो ऐसे शिक्षक को प्रशिक्षित करने की कोई सार्थकता नहीं है। शिक्षकों को निरर्थक प्रशिक्षित करने की अपेक्षा नियुक्ति के समय ईमानदारी से उनमें इन सद्गुणों की उपस्थिति/अनुपस्थिति को पहचानना आवश्यक है। और, यह पहचान वे ही कर सकते हैं, जिनमें स्वयं ये सद्गुण सघनतः विद्यमान हों। जहाँ 'राजनीतिक' और 'आर्थिक' तिकड़मों के सहारे समाज के निर्णायक और उच्चतम पदों पर श्रेष्ठ व्यक्तियों को नियुक्त करने की दीर्घकालिक परम्परा को निर्ममता से तोड़ दिया गया हो, वहाँ

सद्गुणों के आधार पर श्रेष्ठजनों की नियुक्ति की बात करने का अब कोई अर्थ नहीं रहा। इन तथाकथित शिक्षकों को आप चाहे जिस तकनीक से प्रशिक्षित कर लें, इनके बंजर चित्त की धरती पर किसी प्रकार के ज्ञान अथवा कर्तव्यबोध को आप अंकुरित ही नहीं कर सकते, विकसित करने का तो प्रश्न ही नहीं उठता। स्वाभाविक ही, इन आत्मसम्मान-रहित शिक्षकों को सरकार अथवा समाज की ओर से जो भी और जिस प्रकार का भी सम्मान देने की आप कोशिश करें, ये उस सम्मान को धारित करने की सामर्थ्य ही नहीं रखते। सरकारी पुरस्कारों द्वारा प्रदत्त सम्मान को प्राप्त करने के लिए शिक्षकों द्वारा किए जाने वाले 'उपाय-कौशल' से अब सुधीजन अनभिज्ञ नहीं हैं। वस्तुतः जिस पूंजीवादी आधुनिक मान्यताओं से विन्यासित समाज में हम रह रहे हैं, उसमें सम्यक् अर्थों में विद्या और उसे उपाजित करने हेतु वांछित साधना न केवल उपेक्षित है, वरन् इस प्रकार के समाज की गति में बाधक है। इसलिए, ये पूरा प्रकरण एक विद्या-विरोधी सभ्यता के औचित्य/अनौचित्य का है, और इसीलिए, बिना इस बड़े प्रश्न से टकराए प्रस्तुत प्रकरण का कोई समाधान नहीं दिखता।

नई शिक्षा-नीति में बच्चों की आरम्भिक और माध्यमिक शिक्षा के सम्बन्ध में प्रचलित 10+2 पद्धति के स्थान पर 5+3+3+4 की नई पद्धति का 'आविष्कार' किया गया है। इन नई खोजों का भी यही मानना है कि बच्चों में मस्तिष्क का 85% विकास 6 वर्ष की आयु तक सम्पन्न हो जाता है। ऐसे बच्चों को पालित-पोषित-सम्बर्द्धित और विकसित करने का जिम्मा शिक्षा मंत्रालय, महिला व बाल विकास मंत्रालय, स्वास्थ्य व परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय तथा जनजातीय मामलों के मंत्रालयों को दिया जाना है। ये मंत्रालय मिलकर स्वास्थ्य सहित सभी दृष्टियों से बच्चों का ख्याल रखेंगे। इन बच्चों का सीधे-सीधे ख्याल रखने में उन आंगनबाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं और आशा-बहुओं की भूमिका है, जो नौकरी के दबाव के चलते स्वयं अपने परिवार और बच्चों का ख्याल नहीं रख पा रही हैं।

शिक्षित कहलाने की नई परिभाषा और शिक्षा के माध्यम से प्राप्त हो सकने वाली नए प्रकार की उपलब्धियों ने भारतीय परिवारों को बुरी तरह से अस्त-व्यस्त कर दिया है। विशेष रूप से 'घर की चारदीवारी में कैद' भारतीय स्त्रियों को घर से निकालकर उनका 'बहुमुखी विकास' करते हुए उन्हें 'राष्ट्र की मुख्य-धारा' में लाने का जो तूफानी अभियान चल रहा है, उस पूरे प्रकल्प पर साहसपूर्वक पुनर्विचार करने की आवश्यकता है। राजनीति, मीडिया, सेना, पुलिस, शिक्षा, खेल, मनोरंजन, साज-सज्जा, बाजार, प्रबन्धन, संचार, यातायात जैसे अनेकानेक क्षेत्रों में महिलाओं का जिस तेजी से निःसंकोच पदार्पण हो रहा है, उसके परिणामस्वरूप उनकी प्रकृति और परिवार के सन्दर्भ में विस्तार से सोचने की आवश्यकता है। इस नई उभरती गत्यात्मकता के सापेक्ष हमें घरों में बच्चों की परवरिश और बुजुर्गों की देखभाल में स्त्री की भूमिका को ठहरकर सोचना होगा। जिस रास्ते पर हम चल रहे हैं, उसी रास्ते पर चलते हुए यूरोप और अमेरिका के देश हमसे पचास साल पहले ही अपनी यात्रा पूरी कर चुके हैं। यदि इस संकेत के निहितार्थ को हम नहीं समझे तो भारतीय परिवारों के बिखरने के साथ-साथ अपने बच्चों और बुजुर्गों की दुर्गति को देखने के लिए हमें केवल दो दशक प्रतीक्षा करने की आवश्यकता है। इसलिए सरकार ने तो अपनी आर्थिक नीति में देश के नवोदित माता-पिताओं को घर छोड़कर नौकरी के पीछे बहवसास होकर भागने का अवसर दे ही दिया है, अब इससे उत्पन्न होने वाली बच्चों के देखभाल की समस्या को अपनी शिक्षा-नीति में आंगनबाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं और आशा-बहुओं के माध्यम से सुलझाने निकली है। हमें इस प्रकरण पर यहीं थोड़ा गम्भीरता से विचार करने के बाद आगे बढ़ने की आवश्यकता है।

विभिन्न तदर्थ और मानवीय विसंगतियों के उपरान्त भी भारतीय समाज की धारक इकाई परिवार या कुल ही है। किसी भी सद्गुण, विद्या या साधना को धारित करने में कुल-शील अथवा कुलीनता का सदा से विशेष महत्व माना गया है। अन्यान्य विद्याओं-साधनाओं की अपेक्षा संगीत की दुनियाँ में आज भी इस कुलीनता का दर्शन घरानों के रूप में होता है। संगीत की घराना-संस्कृति न केवल अपने घराने से सम्बद्ध संगीत की विधाओं का नैरन्तर्य बनाए हुए है, वरन् तत्सम्बन्धी अपेक्षित अनुशासन के प्रति भी संवेदनशील रही है। यही कारण है कि घराना-संस्कृति के अवदान के समक्ष संगीत महाविद्यालयों/विश्वविद्यालयों का अवदान श्रेष्ठता की दृष्टि से कहीं नहीं टिकता।

सामाजिक दृष्टि से कुल-शील की यह वंशानुगत व्यवस्था विवाह की पवित्रता और उस पर आधारित पति-पत्नी के सम्बन्धों पर टिकी हुई है। इसीलिए दुर्गासप्तशती-पाठान्तर्गत अर्गला स्तोत्रों (24) में कुल-शीलवान पत्नी की कामना देवी से की गई है।

पत्नीं मनोरमां देहि मनोवृत्तानुसारिणीम्।

तारिणीं दुर्गासंसारसागरस्य कुलोद्भवाम्।।

अब जिस कलेवर वाली शिक्षा पिछले सवा सौ वर्षों से भारतीयों को प्रदान की जा रही है, और जिसे अधिक से अधिक व्यापक और संघनित बनाने का संकल्प इस नई शिक्षा-नीति में भी द्रष्टव्य है, उसके चलते भारतीयों का अपने कुल-शील पर से विश्वास लगभग उठ चुका है। लोकतन्त्र के नाम पर अर्थ-लोलुपता, तथाकथित स्वतंत्रता और अधिकार की ऐसी धूल भरी आंधी चली है कि व्यक्तिगत और सामाजिक जीवन की सारी अर्थवत्ता और सार्थकता को हमारी किरकिरी आँखें देख ही नहीं पा रहीं। इसीलिए, यह विडम्बना भी हमें देखने को मिलती है कि एक ओर तो साधु-संतों, गुरुओं-शिष्यों, महापुरुषों और राजाओं की कुल-शील और वंशावली आधारित विरुदावली का गायन होता है, भगवान राम के पूर्वजों का सादर स्मरण किया जाता है, वहीं दूसरी ओर 'वंशवाद' के नाम से एक नकारात्मक राजनीतिक नारे का भी वर्चस्व बना हुआ है।

ध्यातव्य है कि स्वाभाविक भारतीय जीवन राजनीति-केन्द्रित न होकर समाजोन्मुख और धर्मानुशासित जीवन रहा है। यहाँ लोगों को राजनीति में अपनी हिस्सेदारी की नहीं, धर्म में अपने प्रतिभाग की चिन्ता रहती थी। वर्णाश्रम, ऋण-त्रय, पुरुषार्थ चतुष्टय और कर्म के सिद्धान्त के तात्त्विक निवेश से युक्त उनका समाज उनके विश्वास का आधार रहा है। राजसत्ता को भी तद्नुरूप व्यवहार करते हुए इस विश्वास को हासिल करना होता था। इस चिर-सुगठित बुनियाद को दरकाकर जिस राजनीतिक सहभागिता को अतिशय उभार देने का प्रयास किया गया, उसने इस समाज की समझ और व्यवस्था, दोनों को ही छिन्न-भिन्न कर दिया है। इसी छिन्न-भिन्नता का निराकरण हम कभी राजनीति के माध्यम से, तो कभी आर्थिक माध्यम से करने का निष्फल प्रयास करते रहते हैं। इस सम्बन्ध में टी.एस. इलियट की यह उक्ति उल्लेखनीय है :

By destroying traditional social habits of the people, by dissolving their natural collective consciousness into individual constituents, by licensing the opinions of the most foolish, by substituting instruction for education, by encouraging cleverness rather than wisdom, the upstart rather than the qualified, by fostering a notion of getting on to which the alternative is a hopeless apathy, liberalism can prepare the way for that which is its own negation: the artificial, mechanised or brutalised control which is a desperate remedy for its chaos.⁴

ध्यातव्य है कि भारतवर्ष में स्वाधीनता-आन्दोलन के समय से ही इस बात की आवश्यकता बनी रही कि अपनी स्वजातीय जीवन-दृष्टि के अनुरूप शुद्ध विद्याओं की रक्षा तथा श्रेष्ठता की परम्परा का पालन करते हुए एक तद्नुरूप शिक्षा-विधान पुनर्स्थापित हो सके, जिससे हमारे अन्दर अपने समाज, अर्थ और राज्य-विधान की समझ और स्वीकार्यता बनी रहे।

दुर्भाग्य से भारतवर्ष में शिक्षा के प्रश्न को लेकर ऐसी संवेदनशीलता पिछली एक सदी में कभी नहीं दिखी। तभी तो लगभग सौ वर्ष पूर्व भारतीयों की जिस मनोदशा का वर्णन आनन्द कुमारस्वामी⁵ ने किया था, वह आज भी यथावत् है। 1909 में प्रकाशित अपनी पुस्तक Essay in National Idealism में यानि आज से लगभग सौ वर्ष पूर्व का भारतीय शिक्षा-व्यवस्था और शिक्षा-दृष्टि के सम्बन्ध में किया गया कुमारस्वामी का अवलोकन आज भी अद्यतन लगता है। इस पूरे परिप्रेक्ष्य के सापेक्ष कुमारस्वामी तत्कालीन भारतवर्ष में स्त्री-शिक्षा के बदलते स्वरूप की भी बड़ी बेबाकी से समीक्षा करते हैं। स्त्रियों की शिक्षा के विषय में उनका आकलन हमें आज की अपनी पारिवारिक व्यवस्था में स्त्रियों की शिक्षा, उनकी स्वतंत्रता, उनके अधिकार, उनकी पहचान, उनकी भागीदारी और उनके

विकास की अवधारणा के सापेक्ष भारतीय परिवारों में अपसंस्कृति का विस्तार और उनके क्षरित-विखण्डित होने की प्रक्रिया को समझने में बहुत सहायक, या यूँ कहिए, निर्णायक है। स्त्रियों की शिक्षा के विषय में उनका मानना है कि इसका स्वरूप सीखने से अधिक संस्कारपरक था, जिसकी आवश्यकता एक सम्यक् सामाजिक आदर्श को बनाए रखने के लिए थी।

कुमारस्वामी की शिक्षा-दृष्टि एक समग्र दृष्टि है। वे तत्त्वशास्त्र, धर्म, दर्शन, संस्कृति, साहित्य, समाज-विधान, कला, संगीत, कृषि, कौशल, व्यापार-वाणिज्य, परिवार, राष्ट्रीयता, स्वदेशी आदि सभी विषयों का समावेश अपनी शिक्षा-दृष्टि में करते हैं। उन्होंने परम्परागत भारतीय शिक्षा-प्रणाली द्वारा संरक्षित-संपोषित-सम्बद्धित उन अनेक प्रवृत्तियों की गणना की है, जिनको ब्रिटिश शिक्षा-प्रणाली ने विरूपित कर दिया। इन प्रवृत्तियों में भारतीयों की जीवन व जगत के बारे में सहज दार्शनिक समझ, धार्मिक और लौकिक के मध्य अभेद की दृष्टि और पवित्रता का भाव, विभिन्न धार्मिक परम्पराओं में अन्तर्भूत तात्त्विक एकता की स्वीकृति, आचरण के अनवरत परिष्कार का यत्न, आत्मिक नियन्त्रण की साधना, और गुरु-शिष्य-परम्परा की प्राण-प्रण से रक्षा का भाव जैसी प्रवृत्तियाँ सम्मिलित हैं। अपनी विखण्डित दृष्टि के कारण ब्रिटिश शिक्षा-प्रणाली ने इन प्रवृत्तियों को गम्भीर नुकसान पहुँचाया। पवित्र और सांसारिक के मध्य भेद करने की प्रणाली के दुष्प्रभाव को कुमारस्वामी ने बड़ी स्पष्टता के साथ उजागर किया है।⁶

किन्तु विखण्डित और आत्म-विभाजनकारी आधुनिक शिक्षा के कारण अपनी प्रतिष्ठा और अपने गौरव को पहचानने की दृष्टि ही भारतीयों ने खो दी। हमारा काल-बोध, हमारा कर्तव्य-बोध और हमारा सौन्दर्य-बोध, सब कुछ छिन्न-भिन्न हो गया। हमारे लिए क्या सम्मानजनक है, और क्या अपमानजनक है- यह तय करने का हमारा विवेक ही जाता रहा। विचारकों ने इसे आध्यात्मिक दृष्टिहीनता अथवा आत्मीय रुग्णता (Sickness of the Soul) कहा है। भारतीय पुरुषों और स्त्रियों का कुल-बोध और पारिवारिक गरिमा के अनुरूप आचरण करने का सुदृढ़ भाव इसी मतिभ्रम के कारण शिथिल और उपेक्षित पड़ गया। वरना, हमें अपने बच्चों को आंगनबाड़ी और बुजुर्गों को वृद्धाश्रमों के सहारे छोड़ने की शर्मनाक स्थिति न आ पाती। कुमारस्वामी आगाह करते हैं कि ऐसी राजनीतिक और आर्थिक स्वतन्त्रता का कोई मूल्य नहीं है, जहाँ हमारी चिति को सुनिश्चित और हमारी आत्मा को स्पर्श करने वाले तत्त्व ही विजातीय प्रभाव से ग्रसित हों। वे लिखते हैं-

India, vulgarised by modern education, and by the ideals of modern commercialism, will never compensate humanity with its knowledge of beauty.⁷

बचपन को अंकगणितीय समीकरणों में बाँधकर बिना घर-परिवार की परवाह किए सरकारी महकमों के भरोसे छोड़ देने के इस संकल्प के निहितार्थ को इतने व्यापक रूप से समझना आवश्यक था। नई शिक्षा-नीति में सह-पाठ्यचर्या और व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रमों को सम्मिलित करने, बस्ते का बोझ कम करने, पाँचवीं से आठवीं कक्षा तक के बच्चों को उनकी मातृभाषा में शिक्षा देने, उनकी शिक्षा में रटने की अपेक्षा अवधारणात्मक समझ विकसित करने, उनके अन्दर सनातनत्व और तार्किकता की भावना विकसित करने, उनकी पाठ्यचर्या में घरेलूपन, स्थानीयता और व्यावहारिकता का पुट देने तथा शिक्षा के साथ-साथ उनके स्वास्थ्य पर भी सतत् दृष्टि रखने के उपाय करने के भी प्रावधान हैं।

वर्तमान यथार्थ यह है कि शिक्षा सद्गुण और सहयोगपरक न होकर प्रतिस्पर्द्धात्मक हो चुकी है। शिक्षा ही क्या, सम्पूर्ण चर-अचर जीवन की यही नियति बन चुकी है। ऐसे में सह-पाठ्यचर्या कार्यक्रमों के संचालन की गम्भीरता आरम्भ से ही सन्दिग्ध हो जाती है। जहाँ कहीं इसे लागू किया जा रहा है, वहाँ ऐसा दिख भी रहा है। जहाँ तक व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रमों को शिक्षा-विधान में सम्मिलित करने का प्रश्न है, पहले तो हमने पैतृक व्यवसाय सीखने की स्थापित परम्परा को छिन्न-भिन्न कर दिया; न तो स्त्रियों को अपने पारिवारिक अनुशासन में रहते हुए परम्परा-प्रदत्त कौशल को सीखने में कोई रुचि रही, और न पुरुषों में अपने पैतृक व्यवसाय के प्रति कोई आदर या आकर्षण शेष रहा। दूसरी ओर, सरकार द्वारा स्थापित पॉलीटेक्नीक, आई.टी.आई. और नवोन्मेषी कौशल विकास

केन्द्रों की दुर्दशा किसी से छिपी नहीं है। जब से इन संस्थाओं में भी निजीकरण को अनुमति मिली है, ये भी पैसा लेकर प्रमाणपत्र बाँटने वाले केन्द्र बनकर रह गए हैं। अब विचारणीय बात यह है कि एक ओर तो व्यावसायिक शिक्षा देने की परम्परागत और अधुनातन दोनों व्यवस्थाएँ निष्प्रभावी हो चुकी हैं, और दूसरी ओर पठन-पाठन और ज्ञान-विज्ञान प्रदान करने वाली शिक्षण-संस्थाओं को ऐसे पाठ्यक्रमों और कार्यों में उलझाया जा रहा है, जिनकी उनके साथ न तो कोई स्वाभाविक संगति बन पा रही है, और न ही उनके पास इन पाठ्यक्रमों व योजनाओं के संचालन के लिए पर्याप्त अनुभव व संसाधन ही हैं। इस प्रकार के बिना सोचे-समझे उठाए जाने वाले कदम पहले से ही उलझी हुयी शिक्षा-व्यवस्था में और अधिक जटिलता तथा भ्रम उत्पन्न कर रहे हैं।

इसी प्रकार, बच्चों को जल्दी से जल्दी सब कुछ सिखा देने की आपाधापी में तथा स्कूलों और प्रकाशकों की दुरभि-संधि के रहते उनके बस्ते का बोझ कितना कम होगा, ये देखने की बात है। गांधी जी ने शिक्षा का तात्पर्य तीन 'H' - Head (मस्तिष्क, बुद्धि), Heart (हृदय, भावना), और Hand (हाथ, कौशल) - का परिमार्जन बताया था। अब तक के उपायों से तो यही लग रहा है कि आधुनिक शिक्षा सिर के मामले में सिरफिरी, दिल के मामले में दिल दहलाने वाली, और हाथ के मामले में अपाहिज बनाने वाली ही सिद्ध हुई है। पाँचवीं से आठवीं तक के बच्चों को एक ओर अपनी मातृभाषा में ही शिक्षा देने की योजना बन रही है, और दूसरी ओर, कक्षा एक से पाँचवी तक की पढ़ाई कराने वाले प्राथमिक विद्यालयों को अधिक से अधिक संख्या में अंग्रेज़ी माध्यम के स्कूलों में बदला जा रहा है। अपनी भाषा में बोलने, पढ़ने, लिखने और जीवन जीने का प्रश्न हमारे लिए राष्ट्रीय आत्मविश्वास का प्रश्न है, और जिस प्रकार हमारा सारा राष्ट्रीय स्वाभिमान और राष्ट्रीय आत्मविश्वास बुरी तरह से दरका हुआ है, उसी की प्रतिध्वनि अपनी भाषाओं के मामले में भी हमें सुनाई दे रही है। अपने राष्ट्रीय मानदण्डों के प्रति बुरी तरह से भटके हुए लोग विद्यार्थियों में अवधारणात्मक समझ, तार्किकता और सनातनत्व का भाव कैसे सृजित करेंगे- यह आरम्भ में ही समझ लेना चाहिए। अपने गाँव से समीप के शहर, और वहाँ से कोटा या दिल्ली का सहारा लेकर बेंगलोर होते हुए सिएटल, कोलम्बिया और कैलिफोर्निया जाने का मार्ग सुनिश्चित कर चुके बच्चों को घरेलूपन और स्थानीयता का पाठ कैसे पढ़ाया जाएगा, इस पर ज्यादा मंथन करने की आवश्यकता नहीं है। आम जनता को मुफ्त बिजली, पानी, गैस, अनाज, लैपटॉप, मोबाइल, साइकिल, स्कूटी, पायल, बिछुआ देने में मग्न सरकारें बच्चों के स्वास्थ्य की कितनी देखभाल कर पाएंगी, इसका भी आसानी से अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है।

नई आशाओं और उम्मीदों में स्थानीय भाषाओं में ई-सामग्री की उपलब्धता तथा ऑनलाइन शिक्षा के लिए आवश्यक मॉड्यूल, उपकरण, उपग्रह, तकनीक और डिजिटल पुस्तकालयों के विकास का स्वप्न भी सम्मिलित है। ओपन स्कूल, दूरस्थ शिक्षा और मुक्त विश्वविद्यालयों के हवा-हवाई संकल्प भी ऐसे ही उत्साह के साथ व्यक्त किए गए थे। आज उनकी निरर्थकता किसी भी सुधी व्यक्ति से छिपी नहीं है। अब भारत को इन ई-परियोजनाओं के माध्यम से एक डिजिटल कॉलोनी में विकसित करने की वैश्विक योजना को शिक्षा का मुलम्मा चढ़ाकर ढका जा रहा है। दिव्यांग-जन के लिए प्रशिक्षण, पोषण, आवास, उपकरणात्मक सहयोग, विशेष बोर्डिंग (बाल-भवन) तथा Indian Sign Languages के लिए राष्ट्रीय मानक बनाने की योजना भी नई शिक्षा-नीति में व्यक्त की गई है, इनकी उपलब्धता और सफलता का रहस्य भविष्य के गर्भ में छिपा हुआ है।

जहाँ तक उच्चतर शिक्षा-संस्थानों की संगठनात्मक और क्रियात्मक योजना का पक्ष है, नई शिक्षा-नीति में इसके लिए भी बहुत कुछ कहा गया है। चिकित्सकीय और विधिक संस्थानों को छोड़कर अन्य सभी उच्चतर शिक्षण संस्थाओं को एक ही नियामक, जिसे 'भारतीय उच्चतर शिक्षा आयोग' कहा जाएगा, के अन्तर्गत रखा जाएगा। इस नियामक के अन्तर्गत राष्ट्रीय उच्चतर शिक्षा नियामक परिषद, सामान्य शिक्षा परिषद, उच्चतर शिक्षा अनुदान परिषद और राष्ट्रीय प्रत्यायन और मूल्यांकन परिषद जैसी चार परिषदें होंगी, जो उच्चतर शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में क्रमशः नियमन, मानकीकरण, वित्त-पोषण और मान्यता तथा मूल्यांकन सम्बन्धी कार्यों को देखेंगी। इसी क्रम में, देश में एक ही प्रकार के विश्वविद्यालय हों, सरकारी और निजी संस्थाओं का एक ही प्रकार से नियमन हो, महाविद्यालयों को स्वायत्त बनाया जाए, विदेशी विश्वविद्यालयों को देश में अपने कैम्पस खोलने की अनुमति हो, राष्ट्रीय संस्कृत

संस्थान व केन्द्रीय संस्कृत विश्वविद्यालय जैसी संस्थाओं को देश में एक से अधिक कैम्पस खोलने की अनुमति हो, देश में एक राष्ट्रीय शोध प्रतिष्ठान हो, तथा प्रधानमंत्री की अध्यक्षता में एक 'राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा आयोग' का गठन हो- ऐसे विचार भी नई शिक्षा-नीति के अंग हैं।

आवश्यकता के अनुरूप कार्यकारी संस्थाओं का पुनर्गठन होना ही चाहिए, किन्तु इनकी उपादेयता तभी सिद्ध हो पाएगी जब ये परिषदें वर्तमान यू.जी.सी. के अलग-अलग विभाग बनकर न रह जाएँ। और, दूसरी तथा अधिक महत्वपूर्ण बात, कि ये परिषदें यू.जी.सी. की तरह आपाधापी में बिना सोचे-समझे काम करने और निर्णय लेने वाली व्यवस्थाएँ न बन जाएँ। देश में एक ही प्रकार के विश्वविद्यालय हों तथा सरकारी व निजी विश्वविद्यालयों का एक ही प्रकार से नियमन हो- यह एक सुलझा हुआ निर्णय प्रतीत हो रहा है; किन्तु, अधिक से अधिक उच्चतर शिक्षण संस्थाओं को स्वायत्त बनाने में न केवल अकादमिक अराजकता की सम्भावना है, वरन् शिक्षकों के शिक्षणेत्तर क्रिया-कलापों, विशेषतः परीक्षा-सम्बन्धी कार्यों में अधिक उलझने की भी सम्भावना है। इसी प्रकार, देशज शिक्षण-संस्थाओं के देशव्यापी कैम्पस हों, यह तो ठीक है; किन्तु विदेशी विश्वविद्यालयों को देश में बढ़ावा देना बुद्धि-विपर्यय को और अधिक बढ़ाने वाला भी सिद्ध हो सकता है। विदेशी विश्वविद्यालयों के आगमन के प्रति अति मुग्ध लोगों को उस समाज के प्रति भी अपनी दृष्टि घुमानी चाहिए, जिस समाज में ये विश्वविद्यालय स्थित हैं। हमें पहले यह देखना चाहिए कि इन विश्वविद्यालयों ने अपने समाज को क्या बना रखा है। इन विश्वविद्यालयों की सबसे ठोस बौद्धिक निर्मिति अमेरिका में आज लगभग पचास प्रतिशत बच्चे परिवार की व्यवस्था के बाहर जन्म ले रहे हैं, और इस देश का समाज मनोरोगियों, अपराधियों और लावारिसों का एक असुरक्षित समाज बनता जा रहा है; चीन में सामाजिक अविश्वास का संकट इतना बढ़ चुका है कि लगभग दो-तिहाई नवजात बच्चों के पिता उनका डीएनए टेस्ट करा रहे हैं, और यह देश भयाक्रान्त करने वाली सत्ता तथा भयग्रस्त होने वाले लोगों का देश बनता जा रहा है; तथा, यूरोप टूटते-बिखरते परिवारों, अधकचरी उम्र के लावारिस बच्चों व बहु-तलाक युक्त थके-हारे-टूटे हुए बुजुर्गों का समाज बनता जा रहा है। कुछ लोगों को इन देशों में एक नागरिक अनुशासन और कानून-व्यवस्था का पक्ष भी दृश्यमान होता है; किन्तु यह विचार करने का विषय है कि ऐसे असुरक्षित और विश्वासहीन समाजों में जिस प्रकार की पूंजीवादी आर्थिक संरचना को संचालित करना है, उसको बनाए रखने के लिए एक ऊपरी अनुशासन और आश्वासन कितना आवश्यक है। जो समाज धर्म, संस्कृति, परिवार, रिश्तों-नातों जैसे अपने सारे बुनियादी और अन्तरंग सम्बन्धों को झकझोर चुका है, उसके अन्दर किसी देश या व्यवस्था के प्रति कोई आंतरिक आकर्षण या समर्थन हो ही नहीं सकता। इसलिए इन देशों में ऊपरी तौर पर दिखाई देने वाला अनुशासन और कानून-व्यवस्था का पक्ष भी अत्यन्त अस्थायी, भंगुर और निरर्थक प्रकृति का है। ऐसे में इन समाजों के बीच से उभरे हुए विश्वविद्यालयों को भारत में अपना कैम्पस खोलने का आमंत्रण देकर हम किस प्रकार के राष्ट्रीय चरित्र को प्रकट कर रहे हैं। यह कम बड़ी विडम्बना नहीं है कि वे समाज जो स्वयं अपनी परम्परा और सनातन परम्परा के निषेध पर टिके हुए हैं, उनकी निर्मिति में अपनी निर्णायक भूमिका निभाने वाले इन विश्वविद्यालयों के सहारे हम अपने अभ्युदय का स्वप्न देख रहे हैं।

देश में एक राष्ट्रीय शोध प्रतिष्ठान तथा एक सर्वोपरि राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा आयोग हो- इनका उद्देश्य, गठन, कार्यप्रणाली सब कुछ अभी भविष्य के गर्भ में है। जहाँ तक शिक्षा-व्यवस्था के क्रियात्मक पक्ष का प्रश्न है, शिक्षा को अन्तः अनुशासनिक और बहु-अनुशासनिक बनाने का संकल्प नई शिक्षा-नीति में व्यक्त किया गया है। आजकल कुछ शिक्षाविद् इसे पराअनुशासनिक रहे हैं। समझने की आवश्यकता यह है कि शिक्षा एक समग्र प्रकल्प है; पहले उसे विशेषज्ञता के नाम पर खण्डित करने और फिर उन खण्ड-प्रखण्डों को आपस में जोड़ने का उद्यम साधने से शिक्षा में समग्रता नहीं आती। सर्वांगपूर्ण दृष्टि के प्रकाश में किसी खण्ड-विशेष को तो आलोकित किया जा सकता है, किन्तु खण्डित दृष्टि से समग्र का अवलोकन नहीं किया जा सकता। इसलिए अन्तः/बहु अनुशासनिक के नाम पर शिक्षा-व्यवस्था में अतिशय ढीलापन भी नहीं होना चाहिए, वरना ऐसा ढीलापन अन्ततः निरुद्देश्यता की ओर ही ले जाता है। इसी प्रकार, और मल्टीपल एक्जिट जैसी नवाचारी व्यवस्थाओं को भी नई शिक्षा-नीति का क्रान्तिकारी

कदम बताया जा रहा है। बीच में अपनी पढ़ाई छोड़ देने वाले विद्यार्थियों को प्रमाण-पत्र और डिप्लोमा दे देने से उनका क्या भला होने वाला है, यह समझ से बाहर है। एकेडमिक बैंक ऑफ क्रेडिट बनाने का भी एक स्वप्निल संकल्प व्यक्त किया गया है। इस क्रेडिट का व्यावहारिक प्रयोग कैसे किया जाएगा- यह प्रश्न भी अनुत्तरित है। अलग-अलग विश्वविद्यालयों की अलग-अलग कक्षाओं के पाठ्यक्रमों में तथा उपलब्ध सीटों और संसाधनों में ऐसी कोई सुसंगत व्यवस्था है ही नहीं, जिससे यह अनावश्यक महत्वाकांक्षा पूरी की जा सके। नेशनल टेस्टिंग एजेंसी के माध्यम से अखिल भारतीय महत्व वाली परीक्षाएँ आयोजित कराने की बात भी इस शिक्षा-नीति में कही गई है। एजेंसी से अधिक महत्वपूर्ण है कि बी.एड. प्रवेश-परीक्षा जैसी निरर्थक हो चुकी परीक्षाओं को इससे बाहर किया जाए, अन्य परीक्षाओं में शुचिता और समयबद्धता का ध्यान रखा जाए, तथा परीक्षाओं में विद्यार्थियों को अधिक से अधिक अवसर प्रदान किया जाए, जिससे देश में व्याप्त सामाजिक-आर्थिक विषमता का उनकी मेधा पर पड़ने वाले प्रभाव को कम किया जा सके, तथा एक बार असफल हो जाने पर पूरे वर्ष भर उन्हें प्रतीक्षा न करनी पड़े।

इसी प्रकार, शिक्षा-तन्त्र में पर्याप्त लोच को सुनिश्चित करने के उद्देश्य से विश्वविद्यालयों को बहुराष्ट्रीय कम्पनियों की तर्ज पर बोर्ड ऑफ गवर्नर्स के माध्यम से स्वायत्तता देने की बात भी कही गई है। अब प्रश्न ये है कि क्या कारण है कि विश्वविद्यालयों को वांछित स्वायत्तता देने के उद्देश्य से पहले से ही उनकी संरचना में विद्यमान बोर्ड ऑफ स्टडीज़, रिसर्च डेवलपमेण्ट कमेटी, फैकल्टी बोर्ड, विश्वविद्यालय कोर्ट, एकेडमिक काउंसिल, एक्जीक्यूटिव काउंसिल जैसी संरचनाएँ निष्प्रभावी, अथवा कुलपति की मुखापेक्षी हो चुकी हैं? छोटे-छोटे पदों और लाभों को प्राप्त करने की लिप्सा के कारण साठ-साठ साल के प्रोफेसर पैंतालीस-पैंतालीस साल के कुलपतियों की हाँ में हाँ मिलाते रहते हैं। विश्वविद्यालयों की स्वायत्तता को सुनिश्चित करने में उनमें अन्तर्निहित संस्थाएँ तभी प्रभावी हो सकती हैं, जब विश्वविद्यालयों के शिक्षकों का बौद्धिक और नैतिक स्तर उच्चकोटि का हो। अब क्या गारण्टी है कि बोर्ड ऑफ गवर्नर्स बन जाने पर सब ठीक हो जाएगा। समस्या बौद्धिक और नैतिक है, समाधान संस्थागत सुझाया जा रहा है।

ये भी योजना है कि प्राथमिक शिक्षा का नियमन जिला-स्तर से, माध्यमिक शिक्षा का नियमन प्रदेश-स्तर से और उच्चतर शिक्षा का नियमन केन्द्रीय स्तर से सुनिश्चित किया जाए। देखना ये होगा कि पहले से ही खण्ड-खण्ड विभाजित और असम्बद्ध शिक्षा-योजना में इस नई पद्धति से सामंजस्य कैसे बन पाता है ? इस नियमन की आड़ लेकर प्राथमिक से उच्चतर शिक्षा तक कहीं सरकारी हस्तक्षेप तो नहीं बढ़ेगा, यह भी अवलोकनीय है। क्योंकि प्राथमिक शिक्षा तो पूरी तरह से सरकारी तन्त्र की कठपुतली बन चुकी है, माध्यमिक शिक्षा में भी रस्साकसी जारी है, और इधर हाल के वर्षों में सरकार और राज्यपाल, दोनों उच्चतर शिक्षा को अपने अनवरत निर्देशों से ग्रसित किए हुए हैं। राज्यपाल अब बताने लगे हैं कि विश्वविद्यालयों में क्या पढ़ाया जाए, कौन से नए कोर्स शुरू किए जाएँ और किन पाठ्यक्रमों में क्या संशोधन किया जाए, किन गाँवों और किन बीमारों को गोद लिया जाए, कहाँ-कहाँ कुआँ खोदा जाए और किन-किन तालाबों की सफाई की जाए ? उन्हीं के समानान्तर सरकारी अनुभाग विश्वविद्यालयों का पाठ्यक्रम और उनका कैलेण्डर तय करने लगे हैं। वे निर्देश देते हैं कि किस-किस दिन किस-किस महापुरुष की जयन्ती किस-किस प्रकार से मनाई जाए। अब विश्वविद्यालयों और महाविद्यालयों के शिक्षकों की ड्यूटी भी लैपटॉप व मोबाइल बँटवाने और सरकारों की जय-जयकार करने में लगाई जाती है। जबकि दूसरी ओर, यू.जी.सी. का पूरा का पूरा रेगुलेशन दस वर्षों में बदल जाता है, तब तक विश्वविद्यालय, सरकारी अनुभाग और राजभवन उसकी व्याख्या ही करते रह जाते हैं, और अनेक योग्य शिक्षक अपने कैरियर में इस सरकारी विशेषज्ञता की कीमत चुकाते रहते हैं।

इस प्रकार, निष्कर्षतः, कहा जा सकता है कि एक तो नई शिक्षा-नीति में शिक्षा-व्यवस्था की संस्थागत और परिचालनात्मक स्थिति के सम्बन्ध में केवल तकनीकी और योजनागत प्रावधान ही सुझाए गए हैं, नीति अथवा दृष्टि के सम्बन्ध में जो कुछ थोड़ा-बहुत कहा गया है, वह या तो अस्पष्ट है, औपचारिक है, अलंकारिक है, या फिर पारस्परिक विसंगतियों से भरा हुआ है। जो तकनीकी और योजनागत प्रावधान सुझाए गए हैं, उनकी जटिलता और अन्तर्विसंगति की चर्चा की ही जा चुकी है। इसलिए इस प्रकरण के कला-पक्ष की समीक्षा करने के उपरान्त अब हम इसके भाव-पक्ष पर विचार करने की चेष्टा करेंगे।

नई (राष्ट्रीय) शिक्षा-नीति में जिन विचारों, संकल्पनाओं और दृष्टियों को महत्व दिया गया है, उनके विश्लेषण के लिए हमें भारतीय राष्ट्रीय आन्दोलन की वीथिका में प्रवेश करना पड़ेगा। लखनऊ समाजशास्त्रीय पीठ के ख्यातिलब्ध विद्वान प्रोफेसर ए.के. सरन का मानना है कि भारत का स्वाधीनता संग्राम जहाँ एक ओर समाजार्थिक दृष्टि से प्रगतिवादी प्रकृति का था, वहीं सांस्कृतिक दृष्टि से पुनरुत्थानवादी था। इस पुनरुत्थानवादी सांस्कृतिक धारा को 'पुनर्जागरण' कहा गया। प्रोफेसर सरन मानते हैं कि इसे सम्यक् अर्थों में पुनर्जागरण नहीं कहा जा सकता, क्योंकि इस तथाकथित पुनर्जागरण के परिणामस्वरूप भारतीय मानस में कुछ आधारभूत दुविधाएँ और मूल्यात्मक विभेद उत्पन्न हो गए। ये दुविधाएँ और विभेद देश की स्वाधीनता को प्रमुखता देने के कारण उस समय तो प्रभावी नहीं दिखे, किन्तु स्वातन्त्र्योत्तर भारत में इन्होंने विनाशकारी प्रभाव उत्पन्न किया है।¹

स्वाधीनता-संग्राम के दौरान विदेशी आधिपत्य से मुक्त होने के प्रश्न पर तो आम सहमति बन गई, किन्तु अपने सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों के पश्चिमीकरण के प्रति हमारी क्या दृष्टि होनी चाहिए, यह प्रश्न अभी तक अनसुलझा है; तथा पश्चिमीकरण के इस प्रश्न पर दुविधा, असमंजस और मतान्तर अभी तक बना हुआ है। इस दुविधा और असमंजस का प्रभाव हमारी शिक्षा-व्यवस्था में स्पष्ट रूप से दिखाई देता है। कभी पश्चिमी सभ्यता के समक्ष स्वाभिमानपूर्वक खड़े होने को लेकर जिन आधुनिक पश्चिमी मूल्य-मान्यताओं और पद्धतियों को हमने अपने शिक्षा-तंत्र में प्रवेश कराया, वे अन्ततः हमारे आत्म-गौरव के लिए हीनता-बोधक ही सिद्ध हुई।

प्रोफेसर सरन के इन निष्कर्षों की पुष्टि भारत में शिक्षा-नीति के बारम्बार बदलने के प्रयास में देखी जा सकती है। इसे एक गम्भीर और दोहरी विडम्बना ही कहा जाएगा कि अपनी शिक्षा-नीति में सुधार के नाम पर हम दिनों-दिन स्वयं पश्चिम में तिरस्कृत पद्धतियों और विचारों को समाहित किए जा रहे हैं, और इस विसंगति को अपनी उपलब्धि मानकर इस पर आत्ममुग्ध हुए जा रहे हैं। जिन परिवर्तनों पर हम गर्वोन्मत्त हो रहे हैं, वे वस्तुतः आधुनिक पश्चिमी मानस की फूहड़ अनुकृति के अतिरिक्त और कुछ नहीं हैं। वैसे भी देखा जाए तो किसी राष्ट्र की शिक्षा-नीति में बार-बार बदलाव की आवश्यकता उत्पन्न होना एक गहरे आध्यात्मिक, नैतिक और बौद्धिक संकट का चिह्न ही माना जाना चाहिए। किसी भी प्रशान्तचित्त-व्यक्ति को यह आसानी से समझ में आ सकता है कि हम अन्दर से एक अशान्त, अस्थिर और दुविधाग्रस्त सभ्यता बन चुके हैं। इसलिए किसी भी राष्ट्र के लिए यदि बार-बार अपनी शिक्षा-नीति को बदलने की आवश्यकता पड़ रही है तो यह अपने राष्ट्रीय चरित्र के प्रति बार-बार शंकालु होने का चिह्न है।

राष्ट्र की इस संकटग्रस्त आत्मा की प्रतिध्वनि सुनने के लिए हमें अपने विश्वविद्यालयों की ओर कान लगाना होगा। हमारे विश्वविद्यालयों में समाज विज्ञानों, साहित्य, दर्शन, मनोविज्ञान और इतिहास के क्षेत्र में जो कुछ भी पढ़ाया जा रहा है, वह सब वास्तव में मनुष्य और समाज के प्रति एक भ्रमित, विकृत या सन्दर्भ-रहित दृष्टि का परिणाम है। आधुनिकता और उत्तर-आधुनिकता के नाम पर उदारवाद, नव-उदारवाद, इच्छा-स्वातन्त्रवाद, समाजवाद, मार्क्सवाद, नववामपंथ, नारीवाद, पर्यावरणवाद, बहुसंस्कृतिवाद, समुदायवाद, सबाल्टर्नवाद और आधुनिक राष्ट्रवाद जैसी जितनी भी अवधारणाएँ हमारे विश्वविद्यालयीय पाठ्यक्रम को आच्छादित किए हुए हैं, वे सभी विश्वविद्यालयों को अमृत-कलश के स्थान पर विष-कुम्भ बनाती जा रही हैं। वास्तव में, आज के हमारे विश्वविद्यालय अकादमिक श्रेष्ठता और उन्नयन के नहीं, वरन् अकादमिक आपदा और पतन के केन्द्र बने हुए हैं। कोविड काल के दौरान आभाषी पटल पर होने वाली वेबिनार हों, अथवा विश्वविद्यालयों में होने वाले शोधकार्य हों- सभी में इस आत्मघाती प्रवृत्ति का दर्शन आसानी से हो जाता है। केन्द्र में भारतीय जनता पार्टी की सरकार के सत्ता में आने के बाद विश्वविद्यालय दक्षिणपंथी और वामपंथी समुदायों के अखाड़े बन गए हैं। किन्तु, द्रष्टव्य यह है कि विश्वविद्यालय के अकादमिक पटल पर दोनों ही समुदायों के विमर्श, उनकी भाषा और उनके मुहावरे एक जैसे ही हैं। बीच-बीच में हम शीघ्रातिशीघ्र अमेरिका, यूरोप और चीन को भी पीछे छोड़कर विश्वगुरु बनने का स्वांग रचने लगते हैं। कोरोना-काल में अतिउत्साहपूर्वक हमने कहना शुरू कर दिया कि अमेरिका अब विश्व का अग्रणी देश नहीं रहा, चीन विश्व-कल्याण की सोच नहीं रखता और यूरोपीय उतने शिक्षित नहीं, जितना उन्हें समझा जाता है।

लेकिन थोड़ा भी ठहरकर देखा जाए तो यह स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि इस बीमारी के दौरान हमारी स्थिति अमेरिका जितनी खराब भले ही न हो, किन्तु इससे निपटने का हमारा सारा प्रयास और संसाधन उसी दृष्टि पर टिका है, जिसे हमने अमेरिकी नेतृत्व वाले पश्चिम से सीखा है। इसी प्रकार, आज भी हम अपनी औषधीय और इलेक्ट्रॉनिक आवश्यकताओं के लिए चीन पर बुरी तरह से निर्भर हैं। और, इस महामारी के पहले तक अपने सभी अल्ट्रा-मॉडर्न उपायों से जल्दी से जल्दी चीन को पीछे छोड़ने पर आमादा थे। जहाँ तक शिक्षा का प्रश्न है, आज भी हम यूरो-अमेरिकी मॉडल पर ही अपनी शिक्षा-व्यवस्था, पाठ्यक्रम और विचार-दृष्टि बनाए हुए हैं; और, मौत, बीमारी तथा युद्ध के भय पर आधारित (बीमा, फार्मास्युटिकल और हथियार के व्यापार पर आधारित) इनकी अर्थव्यवस्था को भी हम अपना सर्वस्व दाँव पर लगाकर और शीघ्रतिशीघ्र पीछे छोड़कर विश्वगुरु बनने का स्वप्न पाले हुए हैं।

कहा जा सकता है कि अठारहवीं सदी जहाँ हमारे लिए आर्थिक क्रूरता की सदी रही, वहीं उन्नीसवीं सदी हमारे लिए शैक्षिक क्रूरता की सदी रही। किन्तु, बीसवीं सदी तो हमारे लिए आर्थिक और शैक्षिक क्रूरता की मिश्रित और घनीभूत सदी रही। अमेरिकी नव-उपनिवेशवाद के रूप में हम जिस आर्थिक और वैचारिक क्रूरता को भुगत रहे हैं उसके चिह्न और प्रभाव को चतुर्दिक देखा जा सकता है। शैल्डन पोलक और वेन्डी डोनिगर द्वारा जो भारत-विरोधी वैचारिक अभियान विश्व-पटल पर कोलम्बिया, हार्वर्ड, ऑक्सफोर्ड और शिकागो जैसे विश्वविद्यालयों में चलाया जा रहा है, उसको अनन्या वाजपेयी, अक्षय मुकुल, संजय सुब्रमण्यम, गायत्री स्पिवाक, सुनील खिलनानी, पार्थ चटर्जी और संजय बरुआ जैसे अनगिनत भारतीय मूल के वामपंथी-उदारवादी-दलित विचारकों द्वारा भारत के अन्दर और बाहर पोषित-पल्लवित किया जा रहा है। इन गतिविधियों के प्रति आत्मघाती उपेक्षा-भाव रखते हुए भारत की नई शिक्षा-नीति में विदेशी विश्वविद्यालयों को भारत में अपना परिसर खोलने का आमंत्रण दिया जा रहा है।

गत दो वर्षों से विश्वव्यापी कोविड-महामारी ने भी एक सभ्यतापरक विमर्श को केन्द्रस्थ भूमिका प्रदान की है। इस दौरान आधुनिक सभ्यता और इसके पोषक सभी विश्वास और मान्यताएँ एकदम से प्रश्नांकित हो गईं। ध्यातव्य है कि आधुनिक विश्वविद्यालय और उनमें पढ़ाए जाने वाले पाठ्यक्रम इन्हीं विश्वासों व मान्यताओं पर टिके हुए हैं। आज विश्वविद्यालयों के अकादमिक अनुशासन को जो समाजशास्त्रीय और नृशास्त्रीय मान्यताएँ निर्धारित करती हैं, उनके सम्बन्ध में प्रोफेसर ए.के. सरन तो स्पष्ट रूप से यह मानते हैं कि यदि औद्योगिक क्रान्ति न हुई होती तो समाजशास्त्र, और यदि साम्राज्यवाद की व्याप्ति न हुई होती तो मानव-विज्ञान जैसे विषयों का अस्तित्व ही न होता। इस प्रकार, विज्ञान के क्षेत्र में हमने पश्चिम का अनुगामी बनने से अधिक कुछ हासिल नहीं किया और इस अनुगमन के लिए हम अपनी तथाकथित वैज्ञानिक मेधा को पश्चिम के यंत्र-बाजार में अनवरत रूप से विनिवेशित करते जा रहे हैं। दूसरी ओर साहित्य, कलाओं, मानविकी और समाज-विज्ञानों में भी हमारी स्थिति भिन्न नहीं है। राजनीतिशास्त्र और समाजशास्त्र के क्षेत्र में हमारी शिक्षा का गोपनीय प्रयोजन उदारवादी-पूँजीवादी-साम्राज्यवादी 'जीवन-मूल्यों' के प्रति अपनी पीढ़ी को नम्र और सह्य बनाना है। कुछ ऐसी स्थिति बना दी गयी है कि जैसे आधुनिक जनतान्त्रिक तरीकों के अतिरिक्त किसी मनुष्य, नायक, गुण या विचार की सामाजिक स्वीकृति का कोई औचित्यपूर्ण आधार हो ही नहीं सकता। एक प्रकार से यह अपनी सुदीर्घ परम्परा के प्रति विद्रोह और तिरस्कार का भाव उत्पन्न करने का अभियान है। आज साहित्य और कलाओं में अतिशय लौकिकता और प्रयोगधर्मिता के नाम पर जिस प्रकार उच्छृंखलता बढ़ रही है, वह इसी मनोवृत्ति का परिणाम है। आधुनिक अर्थशास्त्र के सभी मानक आधुनिक जीवन-दृष्टि के प्रति अपेक्षित इसी नम्रता और सहनशीलता का आंकलन करने की प्रणाली के अतिरिक्त और कुछ नहीं हैं; और इसी अर्थशास्त्र की विफलता से उत्पन्न समाज की छिन्न-भिन्नता को व्यवस्थित करने के असफल उद्यम के रूप में आधुनिक विधिशास्त्र और प्रबन्धन-शास्त्र को हम आज भ्रमवश प्रतिष्ठा दे रहे हैं। मानव-विज्ञान और आधुनिक मनोविज्ञान तो स्पष्ट रूप में साम्राज्यवादी विज्ञान हैं, जिनकी स्वीकृति का अर्थ साम्राज्यवादी शक्तियों के प्रभुत्व और तर्क को स्वीकार करना है। यह अवलोकनीय है कि मानव-विज्ञान की समस्त विषय-वस्तु एशिया, अफ्रीका और ऑस्ट्रेलिया की मनुष्य-जातियों के अध्ययन पर केन्द्रित है, यूरोप की कोई

एन्थ्रोपॉलॉजी आज तक विकसित क्यों नहीं हो पायी ? एन्थ्रोपॉलॉजी के अध्ययन में यह अन्तर्निहित है कि यूरोप का मनुष्य ही मानक मनुष्य है, और शेष मनुष्य की तरह दिखने वाले वे प्राणी (Anthropodes: Anthro = man, po = like) हैं जिन्हें यथासंभव मानक मनुष्य बनाना यूरोप का 'Civilizing Mission' है। इसी आधार पर यूरोपीय लोगों ने आस्ट्रेलिया की मूल जनजाति को मनुष्य न मानते हुए, आस्ट्रेलिया को मानव-रहित भूमि (Virgin Land) घोषित करके उस पर अपना आधिपत्य स्थापित कर लिया। आधुनिक मनोविज्ञान तो हमें इन प्रश्नों पर विचार करने की योग्यता और स्वतंत्रता भी अनुमोदित नहीं करता। इसी प्रकार, भारतीय परम्परा में इतिहास का अभिप्राय सनातन की लोकयात्रा को प्रतिध्वनित करना है। इतिहास के अध्ययन का महत्व अपने सनातन आदर्शों से उपयुक्त संकेत प्राप्त करने में निहित है। इस महत् उद्देश्य को विस्मृत करके इतिहास को क्षुद्र राजनीतिक मन्त्रव्यों को सिद्ध-असिद्ध करने का अखाड़ा बना दिया गया है। सबाल्टर्न अध्ययन और डि-कालोनाइजेशन की आवाजें तो भारतीय अकादमिक फलक पर उठीं, किन्तु आधुनिक पश्चिम के बौद्धिक घेरे से वे भी मुक्त नहीं हो पायीं। निष्कर्ष यह है कि न तो हम अपने सनातन सन्दर्भों से परिचित रहे, और न हमारा काल-बोध ही अक्षुण्ण रहा। ऐसे में शिक्षक बनाने का भारतीय उद्यम जिस शिक्षाशास्त्र के सहारे चलाया जा रहा है, वह पश्चिम में भी निरस्त कर दिया गया है। पश्चिम की उन घटिया तकनीकों/यंत्रों के संकलन/प्रशिक्षण से अधिक यह कुछ नहीं है। कुल मिलाकर ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि हम एक अनजान वीथिका में भटकते रहने को अपनी नियति मान चुके हैं।

कोविड-काल में आधुनिक जीवन की सभी वैयक्तिक, सामाजिक, राष्ट्रीय, वैश्विक और अस्तित्वगत मान्यताएँ एकदम से सन्देह के घेरे में आ गयीं। अपनी पूरी सामर्थ्य और अपने पूरे वेग से चाँद-सितारों को छूने निकली ये दुनियाँ इक्कसवीं शताब्दी की दहलीज पर जिस प्रकार से अकस्मात ठप पड़ गई, उससे, श्मशान-ज्ञान की तरह कुछ काल के लिए ही सही, किसी भी विचारशील व्यक्ति को यह दिखाई देने लगा कि आत्ममुग्धकारी अहंकार से ग्रस्त यह सभ्यता अन्दर से कितनी अशान्त, अस्थिर और दुविधाग्रस्त है। वास्तव में यह उस, पूरी सभ्यता के अस्तित्व और औचित्य पर लगा बड़ा प्रश्न चिन्ह है, जिसे हम 'आधुनिक' सभ्यता कहते हैं। आधुनिक सभ्यता की सभी आधारभूत मान्यताएँ - जिनमें एक उदारवादी-पूँजीवादी अर्थतन्त्र, एक प्रत्यक्षवादी विज्ञानवाद, एक बाजार-उन्मुख शहरीकरण और एक उपभोग-प्रधान इहलोकवाद (a consumerist secularism) प्रमुख हैं - गम्भीर रूप से सन्देहास्पद हो गयीं। मनुष्य की तृष्णा की प्रतिपूर्ति में संलग्न एक ऐसी अर्थ-व्यवस्था जिसने अनवरत् उत्पादन और उपभोग के माध्यम से अधिकतम लाभ, आर्थिक समृद्धि और प्रचुरता तथा विस्तृत उत्पादन तन्त्र को ही जीवन की महत् उपलब्धि मान लिया था, उसकी गम्भीर विसंगतियाँ एकदम से प्रकट हो गयीं। इस अर्थ-व्यवस्था ने, अंग्रेज़ कवि वर्ड्सवर्थ के शब्दों में, 'प्राप्त करने और खर्च करने को ही हमारे जीवन का साध्य' मान लिया था। औद्योगीकरण, मशीनीकरण और तकनीकी अनुसंधान की बढ़ती प्रवृत्ति ने पहले ही हमारे 'जीवन का तकनीकीकरण' (technicization of life) कर दिया था; आगे चलकर ऑटोमेशन डिजीटलीकरण आभासीकरण था। कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता ने इस व्यवस्था से मनुष्य की भूमिका को भौतिक और बौद्धिक- दोनों रूपों से विस्थापित कर दिया। आनन्द कुमारस्वामी के शब्दों में, आधुनिक औद्योगिक सभ्यता में मनुष्य का जीवन कृत्रिम, रसहीन, कला-कौशल-विहीन और सौन्दर्य-बोध-रहित तो हो ही गया था, अब यह आजीविका-रहित भी होता जा रहा है।

प्रसिद्ध फ्रांसीसी विचारक रेने गेनो के अनुसार मनुष्य की प्रतिभा और अन्ततः उसके अस्तित्व को ही संख्यात्मक और अंकीय करके वस्तुतः हमने न केवल मनुष्य की महत्ता को प्रश्नांकित किया है, वरन् उसकी स्वतन्त्रता को भी बाधित किया है। बहुराष्ट्रीय कम्पनियाँ और जटिल से जटिलतर होती जा रही आधुनिक राज्य-व्यवस्था ने मनुष्य के समक्ष गम्भीर अस्तित्वगत विसंगतियों को उपस्थित कर दिया है। मनुष्य को सुविधा-सम्पन्न बनाने के उद्देश्य से निर्मित राशन कार्ड, वोटर-पहचान-पत्र, पैन, आधार, पासपोर्ट, बैंक खाता संख्या, एटीएम कार्ड, मोबाइल नम्बर तथा सोशल मीडिया प्लेटफार्म और इनसे जुड़ी हुई अनेक योजनाओं/सुविधाओं का एक ऐसा तकनीकी मकड़जाल फैल चुका है कि मनुष्य की सामान्य चेतना भी धीरे-धीरे जड़वत होती जा रही है। क्या ये कभी

सोचा जा सकता था कि किसी व्यक्ति की अकादमिक मेधा को API जैसी अविवेकपूर्ण, अनिश्चित और अविश्वसनीय विधि से आगणित किया जाएगा, या फिर किसी शिक्षण संस्था या विश्वविद्यालय को अपनी ही गुणवत्ता या श्रेष्ठता पर विश्वास करने के लिए NAAC तथा अन्यान्य देशी/विदेशी एजेन्सियों का मुख्यापेक्षी होना पड़ेगा। विश्वविद्यालय तो किसी भी राष्ट्र की युग-युगान्तर से संचित विद्या और मेधा के विग्रह होते हैं, उनकी प्रतिष्ठा को इतनी हड़बड़ी और आपाधापी में गठित की गई इन नवजात संस्थाओं के ऊपर आश्रित करना कहाँ की बुद्धिमत्ता है, जिनके मानक और जिनकी प्रामाणिकता स्वयं संदिग्ध है। ये सब केवल व्यक्तिगत या संस्थागत मूल्यांकन का प्रश्न नहीं है, यह हमारी अकादमिक गुणवत्ता और उसकी स्वायत्तता के गम्भीर रूप से संकटग्रस्त और दिशाभ्रष्ट होने का परिणाम है। यह पूरी तरह से व्यक्तिगत और संस्थागत चरित्र-भ्रष्टता की स्वाभाविक नियति है कि दुनियाँ के बाजार में अपने आधिपत्य को सुनिश्चित करने वाले संस्थान अब हमारी बौद्धिक-नैतिक स्वायत्तता को ही हड़पने लगे हैं। कोरोना-काल में उपजी विसंगतियाँ इस संकट की ओर स्पष्ट निर्देश करती हैं। जहाँ एक ओर Globally Vibrant होने के नाम पर विदेशी कम्पनियाँ और विदेशी पूंजी-निवेश के साथ अब विदेशी विश्वविद्यालयों को भी भारत-भूमि पर अपना विस्तार करने का अवसर प्रदान किया जा रहा है, उन्हें बढ़-चढ़ कर सुविधाएँ दी जा रही हैं, वहीं दूसरी ओर स्थानीयता पर बल देने (Vocal for local) की विरोधाभासी अपेक्षा भी की जा रही है। आधुनिक अर्थ-रचना के संसाधनों की अपोषणीयता (Un-sustainability) अब सुधीजनों से छिपी नहीं है। हमारे प्राकृतिक संसाधन तेजी से समाप्त होते जा रहे हैं, और हमारी जीवात्मा का प्राण-प्रवण लौकिक आश्रय, अर्थात् हमारा पर्यावरण, अब तेजी से हमारी जीवनी-शक्ति को ही क्षीण करता जा रहा है। कोई भी संवेदनशील व्यक्ति यह आसानी से समझ सकता है कि जिस सूचना तकनीक (Information technology) को हमने अनर्गल प्रतिष्ठा प्रदान कर रखी है, वह बाजार पर कब्जा करने वाली तथा धीरे-धीरे स्वयमेव नष्ट होने वाली हृदयहीन और शुष्क बौद्धिक मजदूरी का एक क्षेत्र होने के अतिरिक्त और कुछ नहीं है। सूचना-तकनीक के प्रति हमारा अतिशय आकर्षण हमें एक digital colony बनाता जा रहा है। उधार की तकनीक और उस पर आधारित बाज़ार के माध्यम से हमारा परिवेश, हमारी शिक्षण-संस्थाएँ एक वृहत्तर साइबर बाज़ार को खुला क्षेत्र प्रदान कर रही हैं और, यही कारण है कि कोविड-संकट के दौरान जब आधुनिक उदारवादी-पूँजीवादी अर्थव्यवस्था की ये विसंगतियाँ प्रत्यक्ष हुईं, तो लोभ के स्थान पर आवश्यकता, स्थानीयता, श्रम-पूँजी-सहयोग, कम मशीनीकरण और स्थिर तथा पोषणीय अर्थ-रचना की अवधारणाएँ जोर-शोर से विचारकों और नीति-नियन्ताओं के बीच चर्चा का विषय बनी। यह अनायास नहीं था कि इस दौरान विचारशील और प्रबुद्ध जनों ने ई.एफ. शुमाकर की रचना Small is Beautiful और महात्मा गांधी की रचना हिन्द स्वराज को बार-बार याद किया।

आधुनिक अर्थ-रचना के साथ-साथ आधुनिक प्रत्यक्षवादी विज्ञान और इसकी पद्धति तथा उपादेयता को लेकर भी गम्भीर सवाल खड़े किये गये। प्रयोग और त्रुटि (Trial and Error) तथा अनन्त संशोधनीयता (indefinite corrigibility) की कमजोर आधार-भित्ति पर खड़े इस विज्ञान के अनन्यताबोधक अहंकार (exclusivist arrogance) से तो सुधीजन परिचित हैं ही, कोविड-संकट के दौरान इसकी आंतरिक विसंगतियाँ, कमजोरियाँ, अनिश्चितताएँ, और सीमाएँ भी उभरकर सामने आ गयीं। कृषि, पशुपालन, वानिकी, चिकित्सा-विज्ञान, स्थापत्य आदि क्षेत्रों में आधुनिक विज्ञान के हस्तक्षेप के नकारात्मक परिणाम सामने आने ही लगे हैं; प्रकृति और मनुष्य के सम्बन्ध-निर्धारण के मामले में ईश्वरीय विधान की केन्द्रस्थ भूमिका को समाप्त कर विज्ञान के द्वारा इस भूमिका का प्रतिस्थापन किये जाने का पर्यावरणीय परिणाम हमारे सामने है ही; कोविड-संकट ने आधुनिक विज्ञान के अनन्यताबोधक अहंकार को भी जन-सामान्य के सामने खुलकर प्रकट कर दिया है। नव-कोरोना-विषाणु की उत्पत्ति (origin), प्रकृति (nature), पद्धति (trend), रूपान्तरण (mutation), विस्तार (expansion), प्रबन्धन (management), इलाज (treatment), रोकधाम (prevantion) और टीकाकरण (vaccination) - इन सभी मामलों में आधुनिक विज्ञान की अनिश्चितता, लाचारी और बेबसी हास्यास्पद स्तर तक पहुँच गई।

विषाणु की प्राकृतिक और कृत्रिम उत्पत्ति तथा प्रकृति का प्रश्न अभी तक अनसुलझा है, और शायद कभी

भी यह सुलझ न पाए। इसके फैलने की पद्धति और इसके विभिन्न प्रकार के रूपान्तरणों को लेकर गहन अनिश्चितता बनी हुई है। संक्रमण के सम्बन्ध में सरकारों के आँकड़े और सीरो सर्वे की रिपोर्ट में कई गुना का अन्तर साफ दिख रहा है। इसके विस्तार की गति और दिशा तथा इसके प्रबन्धन (यथा- लॉकडाउन, क्वारण्टाइन, कण्टेनमेण्ट और आइसोलेशन आदि) से जुड़ी मान्यताएँ प्रश्नांकित होती जा रही हैं। इसके इलाज़ और रोकथाम में प्रयोग की जाने वाली औषधियों (यथा- हाइड्रॉक्सीक्लोरोक्वीन, आइवरमेक्टिन, डॉक्सीसाइक्लीन, एज़िथ्रोमाइसिन, रेमडेसिवीर, फेवीपीरावीर, टोसिलीजुमैब और डेक्सामेथासोन या प्रेडनीसोलोन आदि) तथा तकनीकों (यथा- वेण्टिलेटर, प्लाज्मा-थेरेपी आदि) को लेकर राष्ट्रीय और अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर की संस्थाओं, वैज्ञानिकों और चिकित्सकों की अलग-अलग तथा विपरीत रायों की अनदेखी नहीं की जा सकती। और, इसके प्रति टीकाकरण को लेकर भी कई अनुत्तरित प्रश्न बने हुए हैं। टीकों की तुलनात्मक गुणवत्ता, उनकी तात्कालिक और दीर्घकालिक प्रभावशीलता, उनकी आवृत्ति और अन्तराल तथा विभिन्न स्ट्रेन्स के प्रति उनकी उपयोगिता को लेकर स्थिति अस्पष्ट बनी हुई है। इस पूरे प्रकरण से यह लगभग सिद्ध हो गया कि आधुनिक विज्ञान अन्य वैकल्पिक ज्ञान-प्रणालियों से किसी भी अर्थ में बीस नहीं है।

अन्ततः और तथ्यतः, एक ही बात सामने आई कि सारा प्रकरण एक विषाणु और मनुष्य की जीवनी-शक्ति, जिसे Immunity कहा जा रहा है, के बीच के संघर्ष का है; और यही कारण है कि बहुत हाथ-पैर मारने के बाद भी इस विषाणु से उत्पन्न बीमारी का इलाज़ इसके पूर्व-परिचित लक्षणों के आधार पर ही किया जा रहा है, जिसे आधुनिक चिकित्सा-विज्ञान की भाषा में conservative treatment कहा जा रहा है।

किन्तु, विडम्बना यह है कि आधुनिक मनुष्य बौद्धिक रूप से अग्राह्य और तत्त्वतः सर्वाधिकारवादी वैज्ञानिक आविष्कारों एवं तथाकथित उपलब्धियों का दास हो गया है। फ्रिड्रिच शूआँ के शब्दों में यह एक ऐसा विज्ञान है, जिसे स्वयं अपनी सीमा का ज्ञान नहीं है, और इसी कारण वह अपने से परे के अस्तित्व के सम्बन्ध में अनभिज्ञ है। सम्प्रति, इस सम्पूर्ण समस्या को हम पर्यावरण के संकट के रूप में देख सकते हैं। विकास की स्वपरिभाषित (Autotelic), रेखीय (Linear) और असीम (Unlimited) अवधारणा ने श्रेष्ठता (Goodness) और सद्गुण (Virtue) जैसे परम्परागत गुणों को प्रतिस्थापित और विस्मृत कर दिया है। विकास की इस स्वयं सिद्ध दौड़ में हमें कभी इस बात का स्मरण ही नहीं होता कि हम किसका, किस दिशा में, किस सीमा तक, किस उद्देश्य से और किस कीमत पर विकास करते जा रहे हैं। इसलिए, यदि थोड़ा भी ठहरकर सोचा जाए तो यह आसानी से समझ में आ जाता है कि पर्यावरण का वर्तमान संकट मूलतः आध्यात्मिक चेतना के हास, विज्ञानवाद के अभ्युत्थान और प्रसार तथा मानव व प्रकृति के विच्छेद, विनिपात एवं अपवित्रीकरण के वृत्तान्त का निष्कर्ष है। दूसरे शब्दों में, पर्यावरण का संकट आधुनिक विज्ञान की पराचेतना-विहीन निरा जड़-प्रधान दृष्टि का परिणाम है।

वस्तुतः, यह दृष्टि ही आधुनिक विज्ञान का जन्मजात विकार है। यदि सम्पूर्ण जगत को इस परिप्रेक्ष्य में देखें तो पर्यावरण का संकट केवल वातावरण के प्रदूषण की समस्या तो नहीं ही है, वरन् मुख्यतः आधुनिक सभ्यता और संस्कृति का संकट है। यह वैयक्तिक बुद्धिवाद और यांत्रिक विज्ञानवाद द्वारा मनुष्य की प्रकृति पर विजय की महत्वाकांक्षा का सहज स्वाभाविक परिणाम है। इसी बुद्धिवाद और विज्ञानवाद की देन है- आधुनिक उद्योगवाद, जिसे हम विकास का प्रतिरूप मानते हैं। इस दृष्टि के रहते आधुनिक विज्ञान कभी पर्यावरण जैसे संकट का समुचित समाधान प्रस्तुत कर ही नहीं सकता। कारण कि आधुनिक विज्ञान पर्यावरण को जड़ भौतिक पदार्थों का आपतित संकलन या बाह्य शक्तियों का प्रासंगिक संयोग-मात्र मानता है। जबकि, सम्यक दृष्टि में पर्यावरण जीवात्मा का सजीव, प्राणप्रवण लौकिक आश्रय है। सम्पूर्ण दृश्य-जगत एक अदृष्ट पारमार्थिक सत्ता का प्रतिबिम्ब है। पदार्थ की सत्ता में भी एक अत्यंत सूक्ष्म, रहस्यात्मक और तत्त्वबोधक लाक्षणिकता सन्निहित है। इसके अतिरिक्त आकाश, पृथ्वी, वायु, जल और अग्नि जैसे तत्त्वों में घनिष्ठ पारस्परिक सम्बन्ध भी विद्यमान है, क्योंकि वे एक ही सत्य की विभिन्न अभिव्यक्तियाँ हैं। उनके अपने सर्वथा पृथक् या स्वतन्त्र अस्तित्व का प्रश्न ही नहीं है। आधुनिक प्रत्यक्षवादी विश्लेषणात्मक पद्धति प्रकृति को उसके विभिन्न अवयवों में विभाजित करके विखण्डन-संयोजन (resolution-

composition) प्रक्रिया द्वारा उसके स्वरूप को समझने का प्रयत्न करती है, किन्तु इससे उसकी समग्र एकता नष्ट हो जाती है; इसीलिए पर्यावरण की समस्या कोई तकनीकी समस्या नहीं है। यह मानव के पृथ्वी पर अस्तित्व का प्रश्न है। आत्मबोध के अभाव में इस समस्या का समाधान असम्भव है।

बुद्धिवाद मानव और मानवोत्तर, दैहिक और दैविक को संयुक्त करने वाली शृंखला अर्थात् प्रज्ञा की अवज्ञा करता है, और इस प्रकार हमें वैयक्तिक एवं ऐहिक जगत तक सीमित कर देता है। दूसरी ओर, यांत्रिक विज्ञानवाद पदार्थ, उसके विस्तार एवं उसकी संरचना को ही अन्तिम सत्य समझता है। बीसवीं सदी के प्रसिद्ध तत्त्वशास्त्री, विचारक और पर्यावरणविद् प्रोफेसर सैयद हुसैन नस्र इस विज्ञानवाद की समीक्षा करते हुए कहते हैं कि यद्यपि विज्ञान अपने आप में एक वैध विद्या है, किन्तु विज्ञान की भूमिका, उसका कार्य और उसका प्रयोग इस कारण अवैध तथा खतरनाक हो जाता है क्योंकि इसमें एक उच्च-स्तरीय पराविद्या का अभाव तो है ही जो विज्ञान की समग्रता के लिए आवश्यक है, साथ ही यह प्रकृति के पवित्र और आध्यात्मिक मूल्यों का क्षरण भी करता है।

आधुनिक विज्ञान की ज्ञान-प्रक्रिया भाज्य से अविभाज्य की ओर, खण्ड से अखण्ड की ओर जाने की है। यह प्रक्रिया भी आत्म-विरोधी है। अखण्ड से ही खण्ड का ज्ञान हो सकता है। जो सम्पूर्ण है, पूर्णता है, उसके ज्ञान से ही अपूर्ण का ज्ञान सम्भव है। इस प्रकार, विज्ञान (अर्थात् खण्ड ज्ञान या अधूरे ज्ञान) को समाज का आधार बनाना खतरनाक और असम्भाव्य है। वर्तमान में प्रस्तुत पर्यावरण-संकट, आणविक संकट आदि विज्ञान की अधूरे ज्ञान की प्रक्रिया की ही देन हैं। प्रोफेसर ए.के. सरन के अनुसार, ये विज्ञान की पथभ्रष्टता के नमूने नहीं हैं, वरन् विज्ञान के स्वभाव के ही फलित हैं। ये संकट विज्ञान के स्वाभाविक अर्थ की उपलब्धि हैं।

प्रसिद्ध फ्रांसीसी तत्त्वशास्त्री और विचारक रेने गेनों पारम्परिक विद्या और आधुनिक विज्ञान के मध्य अन्तर स्थापित करते हुए कहते हैं कि परम्परा-प्राप्त सनातनी विद्या अथवा ब्रह्मविद्या के तत्त्व में कोई परिवर्तन नहीं होता। ब्रह्मविद्या के विवरण में भिन्नता की सम्भावना है, विषय में नहीं; ब्रह्मविद्या के आवरण में विकास हो सकता है, किन्तु उसका ब्रह्मरूप विषय निर्विकार है। दूसरी ओर, आधुनिक विज्ञान में विभाग करने एवं सामान्य को छोड़कर विशेष पर ध्यान देने की वृत्ति इतनी घनीभूत और व्यापक हो चुकी है कि विभिन्न विषयों की एकभूत समग्रता और इस रूप में इनकी ग्राह्यता लगभग असंभाव्य हो चुकी है। स्वाभाविक है कि ऐसे विज्ञान पर विश्वास करना कितना अधूरा और खतरनाक हो सकता है।

प्रोफेसर नस्र के समकालीन और लखनऊ समाजशास्त्रीय पीठ के परम्परानिष्ठ विद्वान प्रोफेसर ए.के. सरन तो आधुनिक विज्ञान की वैधता को ही चुनौती देते हैं। प्रोफेसर सरन इस अर्थ में विशिष्ट हैं कि वे आधुनिकता की अन्तर्निहित विसंगतियों की आंतरिक और निर्मम आलोचना प्रस्तुत करते हैं। प्रसिद्ध फ्रांसीसी तत्त्वशास्त्री रेने गेनों भी वर्तमान काल की भ्रमपूर्ण दृष्टियों का मुख्य कारण उस मानवीय अहंकार को ही मानते हैं जो अपने और सृष्टि के मध्य किसी पारमार्थिक अथवा आध्यात्मिक नियामक सत्ता को नहीं स्वीकार करता। उनके अनुसार यह अहंकार सनातन-धर्म-विरुद्ध-दृष्टि का ही नामान्तर है। यही इस युग के विप्लव, संभ्रम आदि का प्रधान कारण है। यही कारण है कि वर्तमान युग में हम जिस विज्ञान-आधारित-उपलब्धि को विकास कह रहे हैं, वही दूसरी ओर हमारे विप्लव, संकट और विनाश का कारण बन रहा है। आधुनिक मनुष्य अपने संभ्रम के कारण यह सोच ही नहीं पा रहा है कि वह मनुष्य की किस विभूति का विकास कर रहा है और यदि भौतिक विकास कर रहा है तो उसका अन्तिम लक्ष्य, उसकी सीमा और उसका मूल्य क्या है ?

इस विसंगतिपूर्ण विकास की अवधारणा के सम्बन्ध में दो अर्वाचीन मतों की भी चर्चा कर लेना समीचीन होगा। एक मत है सम्भरणशील (सम्पोषणीय या धारणीय) विकास (Sustainable development), तथा दूसरा मत है नोबेल पुरस्कार विजेता अमर्त्य सेन द्वारा प्रतिपादित चुनने की स्वतंत्रता की क्षमता (Capability of freedom to choose) सम्बन्धी मत।

सम्भरणशील विकास से तात्पर्य ऐसे विकास से है जो स्थायी हो सके और जिसमें प्राकृतिक संसाधनों का प्रचुर प्रयोग करने के उपरान्त भी भावी पीढ़ी के लिए पर्याप्त सामग्री अवशेष रह जाए। किन्तु, वस्तुतः, यह विकास

के सिद्धान्त की पुनर्व्याख्या के स्थान पर उसकी आलोचना है। दूसरे शब्दों में, सम्भरणशील विकास की अवधारणा विकास की आधुनिक अवधारणा के सर्वथा प्रतिकूल है। सम्भरणशीलता में परिमिति (measure), संयम एवं स्थायित्व की भावना का विशेष रूप से सन्निवेश है जो अनवरत, असीम किन्तु अनिर्दिष्ट गतिशीलता की आधुनिक परिकल्पना के सर्वथा विपरीत है। सम्भरणशीलता की मांग है कि विकास को विराम दिया जाए, आन्तरिक और बाह्य जीवन में समन्वय स्थापित किया जाए और मध्यम-मार्ग का अनुसरण किया जाए। सत्य तो यह है कि वैज्ञानिक-प्रौद्योगिक विकास और पर्यावरण या ब्रह्माण्ड के आश्रय-विन्यास (eco-system) की रक्षा- इन दोनों में मौलिक विरोध है। दोनों तत्त्वतः दो परस्पर विरोधीविचार-सरणियों से सम्बद्ध हैं। एक बाह्यमुखी, एकांगी, व्यष्टिपरक, परिमाणात्मक एवं रेखीय (linear) है; दूसरा अन्तर्मुखी, बहुआयामी, समष्टि-मूलक, द्वन्द्वात्मक एवं गुणात्मक है। पर्यावरण सृष्टि के विभिन्न तत्त्वों, प्राणियों, वनस्पतियों और पदार्थों के अन्तर्सम्बन्धों की समग्र एकता है; अथवा विश्व के विभिन्न अवयवों का पूर्ण रागात्मक समन्वय (harmony) है; अर्थात् इसका एक-एक अवयव परस्पर तथा सम्पूर्ण व्यवस्था से घनिष्ठ गुणात्मक रूप से सम्बद्ध है। विकास के नाम पर इसमें एक सह्य सीमा के बाहर तक हस्तक्षेप किया जा रहा है जिससे उसका सहज सन्तुलन, उसकी सावयव एकता नष्ट हो रही है। वर्तमान युग में विकास एक अंधविश्वास का रूप धारण कर चुका है। बिना यह बताए कि किस वस्तु का किस अर्थ में विकास हो रहा है या विकास किस अर्थ में वांछित है, विकास को एक सर्वग्राह्य तथा स्वयं सिद्ध अवधारणा के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया जाता है। विकास एक प्रक्रिया है, वह स्वयं अपना ध्येय व साध्य (End, Telos) नहीं हो सकती। परन्तु इसे अपने आप में प्रक्रिया का उद्देश्य, उसका साध्य या उसकी परिणति समझ लिया जाता है। यदि विकास एक असीमित प्रक्रिया है तो उसका कोई अर्थ नहीं है; अथवा, यदि विकास का कोई अन्त है तो वह सीमित हो जाएगा और यदि वह अन्तहीन है तो उसका कोई प्रयोजन नहीं है। एक सीमित क्षेत्र में तो विकास का कुछ अर्थ हो सकता है, किन्तु विकास एक सामान्य अवधारणा के रूप में अर्थ-विहीन शब्द है। और यदि विकास का अभिप्राय यह है कि लोगों की प्राथमिक आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति हो अथवा शोषण-विहीन, न्यायोचित समाज की स्थापना हो तो यह सम्यक अर्थव्यवस्था व न्याय का सिद्धान्त हुआ, न कि विकास का। परम्परा में इसके लिए धर्म को मान्यता दी गई है जिसे ऋत, Tao, Dike, Justice, Righteousness आदि भी कहा जाता है। इसकी मुख्य विशेषताएँ हैं- सामंजस्य, स्वरानुरूपता (harmony), सन्तुलन, समानुपात (ratio), परिमिति, दैवी-अभिक्रम (Divine Order, Hierarchy: Hieros=Divine + Archy = Order) एवं पूर्णत्व (Perfection)। इसलिए, अच्छा होता यदि हम सामाजिक विज्ञानों एवं सामान्य चिन्तन में प्रचलित विकास की शब्दावली का ही सर्वथा परित्याग कर देते।

इसीलिए यह समझ लेना चाहिए कि पर्यावरण का संकट स्थूल-जगत की विद्वृपता-मात्र नहीं है, अपितु एक आध्यात्मिक संकट है; यह परम्परागत दर्शन एवं जीवन के प्रति अनास्था एवं ऐहिक जीवन में अनावश्यक आसक्ति का परिणाम है। आधुनिक विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी इसे वैचारिक आधार प्रदान करते हैं और वर्तमान 'विकासमूलक' उपभोगवादी संस्कृति एवं आर्थिक संसाधनों की प्रचुरता उसे संपोषित एवं सम्बद्धित करते हैं।

विडम्बना ये है कि तमाम राजनीतिक दावों-प्रतिदावों के बावजूद पं. नेहरू से लेकर नरेन्द्र मोदी तक हम इसी दुविधा और असमंजस के संकट से जूझ रहे हैं। किन्तु ऐसा लगता है कि अपने तरीके से एक सम्यक् जीवन जीने की हमारी चाह, सामर्थ्य और आत्मविश्वास सब चुक गया है, और इसीलिए, कोविड-काल के इस श्मशान-ज्ञान से निकलकर पुनः हम अपनी पुरानी राह पर आ चुके हैं- जैसे उड़ि जहाज को पंछी पुनः जहाज पै आवे! वस्तुतः यूरोपीय लोगों ने अपनी यशोगाथा ही इस प्रकार लिखी है कि उससे यह भ्रम होता है कि उनके ज्ञानात्मक विकास ने ही उनके औपनिवेशिक विस्तार का मार्ग प्रशस्त किया है। मार्क्स की भारत-विरोधी निन्दात्मक टिप्पणी का भी यही आधार है। किन्तु, जो लोग पश्चिमी विज्ञान के इतिहास से परिचित हैं, वे जानते हैं कि अधिकांश वैज्ञानिक खोजें युद्ध की आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करने के लिए हुईं। इसलिए, उदयावपात तो प्रत्येक सभ्यता में घटित होता है, किन्तु अपने गौरवपूर्ण इतिहास का गौरवपूर्ण वारिस बनने की आकांक्षा वह पहली शर्त है, जिसकी प्रेरणा से हम भारतीय दृष्टि का अवाहन कर सकते हैं, और इस दृष्टि के अनुरूप अपने योग-क्षेम को सुनिश्चित कर सकते हैं।

कोरोना-काल के दौरान आधुनिक विज्ञान और परम्परागत विद्या का व्यावहारिक घाल-मेल करने का भी प्रयास व्यापक रूप से दिखा। इस घाल-मेल का परिणाम यह होता है कि न तो हम आधुनिक विज्ञान की सीमाओं और विसंगतियों को समझ पाते हैं, और न ही परम्परागत विद्याओं के स्वरूप और उनके विनियोग को ही। एक दृष्टि से यह आधुनिक मनुष्य की डाँवाडोल और दुविधाग्रस्त मनःस्थिति का द्योतक है। अपने सामान्य जीवन में आहार-विहार और विचार के स्तर पर अस्त-व्यस्त हो चुका मनुष्य महामारी के आपद् काल में योग, आयुर्वेद, ध्यान व भक्ति का सहारा लेकर अपनी आन्तरिक जीवनी-शक्ति और आत्मबल बढ़ाने का उद्यम करने लगता है। उसे इस बात का बोध ही नहीं है कि आधुनिक जीवन-दृष्टि और आधुनिक जीवन-शैली के साथ इन परम्परागत विद्याओं और साधना-पद्धतियों का कोई सामंजस्य बन ही नहीं सकता। महामारी को 'परास्त करने', उस पर 'विजय प्राप्त करने' जैसी जिस शब्दावली का प्रयोग शासनतन्त्र और मीडिया द्वारा आम आदमी से कराया जा रहा है, उस शासनतन्त्र, मीडिया और आम आदमी को इस बात का तनिक भी अहसास नहीं है कि महामारियों के दैहिक और भौतिक कारण ही नहीं होते, उनके दैविक कारण भी होते हैं। श्रीदुर्गासप्तशती (12.39) में महामारी को देवी के कुपित रूप की अभिव्यक्ति कहा गया है।

सैव काले महामारी, सैव सृष्टिर्भवत्यजा।

स्थितिं करोति भूतानां, सैव काले सनातनी॥

कहने का आशय यह है कि इस महामारी के दौरान विज्ञान की लाचारी और बेबसी के साथ-साथ शासन-तन्त्र, मीडिया और आमजन की अन्तर्भूत दुविधा भी खुल कर प्रकट हुई।

प्लेटो ने लोभ-आधारित गुलामी को अनेक विक्षिप्त दुरात्माओं की दासता (slave of many mad masters) कहा है। कोविड-संकट के दौरान जब ठहरकर सोचने का अवसर मिला तो यह स्पष्ट दिखाई दिया कि हम एक बेचने-खरीदने, लुभाने-ललचाने और ठगने वाली सभ्यता बने जा रहे हैं। हमें साफ-साफ दिखाई देने लगा कि एक बाजार-उन्मुख तथा निरन्तर विस्तृत और जटिल होता जा रहा शहरीकरण कोई बहुत श्रेष्ठ समाज का लक्षण नहीं है। इस प्रकार की महानगरीय सभ्यता हमारे सांस्कृतिक उन्मेष की नहीं, वरन् सांस्कृतिक क्षरण की सूचक है। किसी भी श्रेष्ठ समाज की बुनियादी संरचना परिवार है, और परिवार तथा घर की संस्कृति के लक्षणों में खान-पान, संस्कार, इत्मीनान, ठहराव, सम्बन्ध और सम्बल सम्मिलित हैं। स्पष्ट है कि ये लक्षण किसी महानगरीय सभ्यता में दुर्लभ या लगभग असम्भव हैं। जिस व्यवस्था में पुरुष और स्त्रियाँ अपने गरिमा-बोध (sense of dignity) को भूलकर येन-केन-प्रकारेण पैसा कमाने में लगे हैं, ऐसे घर और परिवार धीरे-धीरे अपसंस्कृति के केन्द्र बनते जा रहे हैं। कोरोना-संकट के समय जब मजबूरी में परिवार कुछ पटरी पर आए, तो इस प्रकार का अनुभव बहुत लोगों को हुआ।

इसी प्रकार, आधुनिक सभ्यता की चौथी आधारभूत मान्यता-एक उपभोग-प्रधान इहलोकवाद की निःसारता की ओर भी सुधीजनों का ध्यान गया। सब कुछ अपनी मुट्ठी में कर लेने के अहंकार से ग्रसित इस इहलोकवादी विचार-पद्धति में जीवन और जगत की अनिश्चितताओं के लिए कोई स्थान शेष नहीं है। ऐसे में किसी संकट, विपदा या व्याधि के समय यह आधुनिक विचार-पद्धति बहुत जल्द ही मनुष्य का साथ छोड़ देती है; और ऐसी स्वाभाविक अनिश्चितताओं के यथार्थ के सामने आने पर आधुनिक मनुष्य प्रायः चिड़चिड़ेपन, क्रोध, झुंझलाहट, असंतुलन, भय, विषाद, अवसाद और हताशा का शिकार हो जाता है तथा आत्महत्या तक कर बैठता है।

उक्त विश्लेषण का अवलोकन करने से यह स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि विश्व-इतिहास में महामारियों का आना कोई नई बात नहीं है। प्लेग, कालाज़ार और स्पेनिश फ्लू जैसी महामारियों के तीन शताब्दियों के ज्ञात इतिहास का हमें बोध भी है। इन महामारियों से व्यापक जन-धन की हानि भी होती रही है, जिसके दूरगामी समाजार्थिक प्रभाव से भी इनकार नहीं किया जा सकता। किन्तु, 2020 की विश्वव्यापी कोरोना-महामारी अपने आप में कई दृष्टियों से विशिष्ट और महत्वपूर्ण है। इस महामारी का अन्य महामारियों की तरह एक चिकित्सकीय परिप्रेक्ष्य तो है ही, इसके समाजार्थिक, राजनीतिक, मनोवैज्ञानिक और पर्यावरणीय निहितार्थ अन्य ज्ञात और पूर्वगामी महामारियों की अपेक्षा

अधिक गम्भीर और व्यापक हैं। अपनी पूरी शक्ति और वेग से चाँद और सितारों को छूने की तमन्ना लेकर निकली ये दुनियाँ इक्कीसवीं शताब्दी के इस प्रथम चतुर्थांश में एकदम से ठप पड़ जायेगी, इसकी शायद किसी ने कल्पना तक नहीं की थी। कोविड-संकट से उपजे इस ठहराव-काल में, श्मशान-ज्ञान की तरह ही सही, कुछ विचारशील लोगों को ठहरकर अपनी सभी निवर्तमान व्यक्तिगत, सामाजिक, राष्ट्रीय, वैश्विक, पर्यावरणीय और अस्तित्वगत मान्यताओं पर पुनर्विचार करने का अवसर भी प्राप्त हुआ।

इस दौरान आधुनिक उदारवादी, पूंजीवादी और इहलौकिक प्रकल्प के परिपोषक के रूप में स्थापित या संक्रमणशील हमारी सभी सामाजिक और आर्थिक मान्यताएँ डगमगा गयीं। राष्ट्रीय और वैश्विक राजनीति के नये आयाम उभरकर सामने आये। नई पर्यावरणीय और मनोवैज्ञानिक चुनौतियों का उदय हुआ, तथा इन सभी के अन्तर्भूत लक्षणों की सम्परीक्षा और अनुमोदन करने वाली हमारी शिक्षा व्यवस्था के समक्ष दृष्टि और प्रविधि (vision and method) - दोनों आयामों से पुनर्विचार और उभरती सम्भावनाओं का एक विस्तृत क्षेत्र उद्भूत हुआ।

कोविड-संकट को घनीभूत और इसके प्रभाव को व्यापक बनाने में उस आधुनिक विश्वदृष्टि की प्रमुख भूमिका रही, जिसकी अन्तर्विसंगतियों को महात्मा गांधी ने 1909 में ही पहचान लिया था। भारत और विश्व के इतिहास में गांधी जी एक ऐसे विलक्षण महापुरुष हुए हैं, जिनमें आधुनिक जीवन की सैद्धान्तिक और व्यावहारिक विसंगतियों को पहचानने की न केवल अद्भुत अन्तर्दृष्टि थी, वरन् उसे कह सकने का अप्रतिम साहस और परिणामस्वरूप एक वैकल्पिक जीवन जीने की विलक्षण जीजीविषा भी उनके अन्दर विद्यमान थी। उनका हिन्द-स्वराज इसी पहचानने, कहने और जीने का कालजयी दस्तावेज़ है। गांधी के बाद आनन्द कुमारस्वामी, कृष्णचन्द्र भट्टाचार्य, श्रीअरविन्द, बद्रीशाह तुलधरिया और पण्डित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय इसी विचार-दृष्टि के समर्थक हुए। इन सभी विचारकों की यह मान्यता रही कि भारत की सभ्यता एक आत्मबोधमूलक सभ्यता है, जिसके अनुरूप उसका एक सुविचारित तत्त्वशास्त्र और दर्शन है; ऋत् और धर्म द्वारा धारित एक सामाजिक अधिष्ठान है; इस अधिष्ठान का पोषण करने के लिए एक कला-कौशल-युक्त समृद्ध अर्थ-रचना है, संस्कृति है। इस संस्कृति का परिरक्षण करने के लिए एक सुविचारित राज-विद्या और इसका उन्मीलन करने के लिए एक गुरु-शिष्य-परम्परायुक्त अक्षय ज्ञान-निधि है। स्वाभाविक ही, तत्त्वशास्त्र से लेकर ज्ञान-निधि अथवा शिक्षा तक की ये व्यवस्थाएँ एक साथ प्रतिष्ठित हैं। प्रोफेसर ए.के. सरन के शब्दों में, भारतीय जीवन-विधान ईश्वर-मनुष्य और प्रकृति के मध्य एक सामंजस्ययुक्त सन्तुलन की साधना है। आधुनिकता इस प्रवाह को खण्डित करती है। यह विद्या और विज्ञान के मध्य एक टकराव को जन्म देती है। आधुनिकता के रूप में इस टकराव के कारण को न समझने के कारण ही हम कभी अपनी परम्परागत विद्याओं को व्यावसायिक बनाने की चेष्टा करते हैं, तो कभी वैज्ञानिक विषयों को मानवीय बनाने पर जोर देते हैं। इसी उपक्रम को साधने के लिए हम बार-बार अपनी शिक्षा-नीति पर भी पुनर्विचार करते हैं। ऐसा करते समय हम यह भूल जाते हैं कि किसी राष्ट्र में बार-बार शिक्षा-नीति का प्रश्न उठना कोई शुभ संकेत नहीं है, वरन् यह राष्ट्र के बौद्धिक, नैतिक और आध्यात्मिक संकट का द्योतक है।

जिस आत्मबोधमय दृष्टि की चर्चा पहले की गई है, उसे व्यक्त, धारित, संपोषित और परिरक्षित करने वाले सभी प्रत्ययों के मध्य एक सांगोपांग और सर्वांगपूर्ण अंगांगी भाव विद्यमान है। इसलिए आत्मबोधमय जीवन का केन्द्रीय उद्देश्य, तत्सम्बन्धी तत्त्वशास्त्र, दर्शन, ऋत्, धर्म, संस्कृति, सभ्यता, समाज, अर्थ, राजनीति और शिक्षा-सभी परस्पर निबद्ध हैं। नई शिक्षा-नीति को समावेशी, बहुलतावादी और समानतामूलक बनाने का ध्येय रखा गया है। इन सन्दर्भ-रहित प्रत्ययों के भारतीय सन्दर्भ को समझे बिना इनका पारायण करने का कोई औचित्य नहीं है। इन प्रत्ययों का सम्यक् सन्दर्भ हमें परम्परागत भारतीय समाज-रचना में दिखाई देता है।

भारत में शिक्षा का तात्पर्य भी भारतीय प्रत्ययों की इस विराट् अन्योन्याश्रित योजना के सापेक्ष ही समझा जा सकता है। भारत में शिक्षा अपने आत्मबोधमूलक राष्ट्रीय चरित्र के अनुरूप अपने नागरिकों को ढालने की, उन्हें सुपात्र बनाने की कला है। भारतीय शिक्षा-संरचना में एक ओर शास्त्र का राजपथ और दूसरी ओर लोक का जनपथ

विद्यमान है। शास्त्र के प्रकाश को अभिव्यक्त करने का दायित्व लोक का है। इसीलिए कुमारस्वामी लोकमार्ग को 'Sideway to eternity' कहते हैं। नई शिक्षा-नीति में शास्त्रीय भाषा, लोकविद्या, कला, संगीत, प्राचीन व आधुनिक संस्कृति व ज्ञान-प्रणालियों का समन्वय स्थापित करने का आवाहन तो किया ही गया है, नई शिक्षा-नीति को प्रज्ञा और सत्य की सनातन भारतीय ज्ञान व विचार की परम्परा के आलोक में इस प्रकार विकसित करने का भी संकल्प व्यक्त किया गया है, जिससे भारत पुनः एक 'महाशक्ति' और 'विश्वगुरु' के रूप में स्थापित हो सके। विद्यार्थियों में नैतिकता, प्रेम, सौहार्द और संवेदनशीलता के साथ-साथ संस्कृत भाषा के प्रति अनुराग, राष्ट्रीयता तथा लोकतान्त्रिक और संवैधानिक मूल्यों का भी समावेश हो- ऐसी आकांक्षा भी इस शिक्षा-नीति में कई बार प्रकट की गई है।

अब यहाँ पर तीन-चार प्रकार की समस्याएँ हैं- एक, क्या सनातन भारतीय ज्ञान-परम्परा को अभिव्यक्त करने वाले तत्त्वों - सत्य, प्रज्ञा, शास्त्रीय भाषा, संस्कृति, लोक-विद्या, कला, संगीत, राष्ट्र - तथा नैतिकता, प्रेम, सौहार्द और संवेदनशीलता जैसे चारित्रिक मूल्यों की वर्तमान शिक्षा-दृष्टि के साथ कोई संगति बन सकती है ? दो-क्या इन तत्त्वों और मूल्यों का संविधान और लोकतन्त्र की वर्तमान प्रकृति के साथ कोई ताल-मेल बन सकता है ? तीन- क्या संविधान और लोकतन्त्र की भारतीय मान्यता को स्वीकार करने की मनोदशा में हम हैं ? और चार- क्या इन सद्गुणों की संगति 'महाशक्ति' और 'विश्वगुरु' जैसी अवधारणाओं के साथ समीकृत हो पाएगी ?

परम्परागत ज्ञान-परम्परा और चारित्रिक मूल्यों की वर्तमान शिक्षा-दृष्टि के साथ संगति/विसंगति का परीक्षण प्रोफेसर ए.के. सरन ने अपने एक बहुचर्चित लेख 'On the Promotion of Gandhian Studies at the University Level' में किया है। आधुनिक मान्यताओं के आत्मघाती स्तुतिगान में आत्ममुग्ध और गर्वोन्मत्त वर्तमान विश्वविद्यालयों में गांधी-दर्शन के अध्ययन-अध्यापन की निरर्थकता और असंभाव्यता को रेखांकित करते हुए इस लेख में प्रोफेसर सरन ने गांधी-दर्शन के माध्यम से परम्परागत विश्वदृष्टि का एक विशद परिचय तो दिया ही है, इस विश्वदृष्टि के अनुसार किसी विषय का पठन-पाठन कर सकने में आधुनिक विश्वविद्यालयी व्यवस्था की सामर्थ्य और नीयत पर गंभीर प्रश्न भी खड़े किए हैं।

अपनी परम्परा को विस्मृत करके जो लोग जनवादी आकांक्षाओं के अतिशय उभार को लेकर अधिक आशान्वित हैं, उन्हें यह नहीं भूलना चाहिए कि किसी राष्ट्र का सुशासन और सुमंगल उसके युगों-युगों के आत्मानुशासन के अभ्यास के कारण सम्भव हो पाता है, न कि संविधान, सेना, प्रशासन या तकनीक के सर्वथा कृत्रिम उपायों से। मध्य-पूर्व में लोकशाही की स्थापित करने के प्रयास इसीलिए सफल नहीं हो पा रहे हैं, क्योंकि उनकी परम्परा में इस आत्मानुशासन के अभ्यास का तत्त्व अनुपस्थित है। स्वयं लोकतंत्र का सबसे बड़ा समर्थक बनने वाले अमेरिका को इसी आत्मानुशासन की परम्परा के अभाव के कारण अपने नागरिकों के ऊपर नियम-कायदों के एक मजबूत तन्त्र को आरोपित करने के बावजूद सामाजिक सुरक्षा के नाम पर बड़ी धनराशि व्यय करनी पड़ रही है। अपने नागरिकों को आर्थिक रूप से संतुष्ट रखने के लिए जिस अतिशय संसाधन की आवश्यकता है उसे पूरा करने के लिए ही उसने विश्व की राजनीतिक-आर्थिक-सामाजिक व पर्यावरणीय प्रणाली को अस्त-व्यस्त कर रखा है। उसके द्वारा 'लोकतान्त्रिक उद्देश्यों' के लिए प्रायोजित युद्धों से यह तथ्य पुष्ट होता है। ध्यातव्य है कि लगभग प्रत्येक दशक में वह अपने देश के अन्दर या बाहर किसी न किसी प्रकार से युद्धरत रहा है। परिणामस्वरूप, उसकी वर्तमान सामाजिक-आर्थिक दशा तथा उससे प्रतिद्वन्द्विता करने वाले चीन की क्षरणशील पर्यावरणीय और विखण्डनशील सामाजिक दशा को देखा जा सकता है।

ध्यान देने वाली बात यह है कि उदारवादी हों अथवा समाजवादी- दोनों ही समुदायों के वैचारिक सन्निकर्षों में कोई तात्त्विक भेद दिखाई नहीं देता। भारतवर्ष में तिलक, गांधी, टैगोर व अरविन्द जैसे कुछ राजनेता अपने प्रगाढ़ संस्कारों और चमत्कारी समझ के कारण इस प्रवाह से बचे रहे, किन्तु दुर्भाग्य से सही और गलत में भेद करने का हमारा विवेक जाता रहा। इसका बहुत बड़ा कारण वही विद्रोही या आन्दोलनात्मक मनोवृत्ति है, जो कभी अस्मिता के नाम पर, कभी जनतंत्र या जनसहभागिता के नाम पर, और कभी सामाजिक न्याय के नाम पर भारत को

अराष्ट्रीय (De-nationalize) करने पर तुली हुई है। हमने एक विचित्र प्रकार की राजनीतिक संस्कृति को जन्म दिया है, जिसने हमारे प्रत्येक विचार, प्रत्येक संस्था, प्रत्येक कार्यक्रम को आच्छादित कर रखा है। इस राजनीतिक संस्कृति में किसी सम्यक् जीवन-दृष्टि और उस पर आधारित किसी अर्थ-पूर्ण जीवन-विधान के सम्बन्ध में किसी सामान्य सहमति की कोई संभावना दिखाई नहीं देती। कुछ आकस्मिक अवसरों पर कभी-कभी ऐसी कृत्रिम सहमति का भ्रम होता है, जिसका आधार भी ठोस व स्थायी न होकर मात्र भावनात्मक होता है। स्वाभाविक है कि ऐसे गुण-द्रोही समाज की न तो कोई 'अस्मिता' हो सकती है, और न ही कोई 'लोक' या 'समाज'।

भारतीय परम्परा में 'प्रजा', 'लोक' और 'जन' के विशिष्ट अभिप्राय हैं। इसी प्रकार 'संविधान' का भी अपना देशज सन्दर्भ है। अब हमें यह देखना है कि इन देशज सन्दर्भों से ओत-प्रोत भारतीय राजनीतिक विचारों को स्वीकार करने की मनोदशा में हम हैं, या नहीं। भारत में राज्य-व्यवस्था का औपकरणिय महत्व है। यह भारतीय जीवन-दृष्टि के अनुरूप मनुष्य को उसका परम लक्ष्य प्रदान कराने वाली व्यवस्था की रक्षक अथवा कंटकशोधक है। भारत एक धर्मप्राण अधिष्ठान है- यहाँ धर्म का लोक-विग्रह ही संस्कृति अथवा सभ्यता है। जैसा पहले कहा गया है, यह भारतीय अधिष्ठान एक विशिष्ट जिज्ञासा-केन्द्रित अधिष्ठान है। यह जिज्ञासा है - मैं कौन हूँ - आत्मबोध यहाँ की मूल-जिज्ञासा है - आत्मबोध की प्रकृति ही एकात्मबोधमय है - यह केन्द्रीय विचार समग्र भारतीय जीवन-विधान के दौरान अवान्तर-कथा की तरह विद्यमान रहता है। इसी की चाह किसी भी भारतीय उपक्रम का औचित्य तय करती है। अतः, भारतीय अधिष्ठान एक आत्मबोध-मूलक अधिष्ठान है। धर्म (अथवा शिक्षा) का प्रयोजन आत्मबोध की इस दृष्टि के अनुरूप मनुष्य को गढ़ने में निहित है। दूसरे शब्दों में, धर्म यहाँ मनुष्य को आत्मबोध के लिए सुपात्र बनाने की कला है। धर्म की इसी व्यवस्था को यहाँ ऋत (order) कहा गया है। राज-विद्या इसी धर्म-व्यवस्था की रक्षक/परिपोषक है। भारत में विद्याएँ ब्रह्मविद्या का अंश मानी गयी हैं। उनका महत्व ब्रह्मविद्या का अंश होने के कारण ही है। देवता इन विद्याओं के अधिष्ठान हैं तथा शब्द या शास्त्र इनके प्रमाण हैं। इसीलिए किसी व्यवस्था या विचार का धर्मसम्मत या शास्त्रसम्मत होना यहाँ अपरिहार्य माना गया है। इसी प्रयोजन से भारतीय राजशास्त्र में समस्त शास्त्रों के सांगोपांग निर्णय और कर्तव्याकर्तव्य के निर्धारण हेतु धर्म-मूलक त्रयी का विधान है, संघ-शास्त्रानुष्ठान की एकता हेतु अर्थ-मूलक वार्ता का विधान है, योग-क्षेम की रक्षा हेतु राज्य-मूलक दण्डनीति का विधान है, तथा बुद्धि का स्थैर्य स्थापित करते हुए पारस्परिक द्वन्द्वों का समाधान करने हेतु विद्या-मूलक आन्वीक्षिकी का विधान है। ब्रह्मविद्या का स्वरूप साधनागम्य या तप-मूलक है- अतः विद्या का स्वरूप भी यहाँ साधनात्मक या तपोद्भूत है। ऋषि यहाँ वह तपः-पुंज है, जिसने विद्या का साक्षात्कार किया है, जो विद्या का साक्षात्, सम्मुख द्रष्टा है। भारत में ऋषि-प्रणीत और शास्त्र-प्रणीत शुद्ध विद्या की मीमांसा का एक राजपथ है, जिस पर आधिकारिक गुरुओं और सुपात्र शिष्यों की स्वायत्त अथवा सम्प्रदायबद्ध परम्परा चलती रही है।

इस शास्त्रीय परम्परा के प्रथम-सिद्धांत कर्म और पुनर्जन्म, चराचर का विचार, पुरुष-प्रकृति-संबंध, त्रिगुणात्मकता, वर्णाश्रम, पुरुषार्थ और ऋण-त्रय के रूप में अभिव्यक्त होते हैं। यही प्रथम-सिद्धांत आचरण और विधि-निषेध के व्यवहार का आधार हैं। गुण का प्रश्न तात्त्विक प्रश्न है, यह अस्तित्व का दर्शन है, तथा इस पर आधारित वर्णाश्रम का मुख्य प्रयोजन वृत्ति का संरक्षण है, और इसका अनुपालन राज्य का आधारभूत कर्तव्य है। स्पष्ट ही ये व्यवस्थाएँ मनुष्य की इच्छा, कामना अथवा परिस्थिति की उपज नहीं हैं।

भारतीय राज्य-व्यवस्था का स्वरूप आधुनिक राज्य की भाँति न तो शक्ति-केन्द्रित है, और न ही संरचना-मूलक, वरन् यह तत्त्व-प्रधान है। सनातन धर्म के ये प्रथम-सिद्धांत ही इस तत्त्व की प्रकृति का निरूपण करते हैं। यह उल्लेखनीय है कि जो रामराज्य भारतीय राज्य-व्यवस्था का आदर्श माना जाता है, उसमें राजा और राज्य का सम्बन्ध जीवन-मरण का सम्बन्ध है। भगवान राम अपनी समस्त प्रजा की मोक्ष की कामना के साथ राज्य करते हैं। यह राम की अविचल धर्मनिष्ठा, उनके तप, तेज और प्रताप का प्रभाव है कि उनकी प्रजा भी धर्मनिष्ठ और निश्चित है, उनके राज्य में देवता और पितर संतुष्ट हैं; तथा परिणामस्वरूप, प्रकृति मनोरम है, जीवन समृद्ध है, और राज्य स्थिर है।

इसी प्रकार, यहाँ लोकतंत्र का तात्त्विक अर्थ भी केवल विकेंद्रीकरण तक सीमित नहीं है। 'लोक' का तात्पर्य धर्म के प्रकाश से, चिति के प्रकाश से 'आलोकित' जन से है। केवल ऐसे ही जन का सुशासन संभव है, केवल ऐसे ही 'लोक' का 'तंत्र' सम्भव है। धर्म के आलोक के अभाव में शासन की व्यवस्था चाहे केन्द्रित हो अथवा विकेंद्रित-एक निरंकुशता को जन्म देगी तो दूसरी अराजकता को। आधुनिक व्यवस्था में जिसे लोकतंत्र कहा जाता है, वह एक संदर्भहीन और विसंगतिपूर्ण व्यवस्था है। यह आम मनुष्य की असहमति-आधारित मतगणना पर आधारित वह व्यवस्था है, जो श्रेष्ठता और योग्यता की सामाजिक स्वीकृति का अन्य कोई आधार नहीं मानती। मनुष्य और परिवार के आधार पर असहमति को बढ़ावा देने वाली यह व्यवस्था राष्ट्र के निर्णायक प्रश्नों के सम्बन्ध में सहमति की असंभव खोज करती फिरती है।

इसी प्रकार, भारतीय सन्दर्भ में 'जन' वे लोग हैं जिनकी चिति जागृत व विराट् प्रकाशमान रहता है। ब्रह्मीशाहकृत दैशिक-शास्त्र में जाति के प्रकरण को चिति और विराट् की धारणाओं की सहायता से स्पष्ट करने का यत्न किया गया है। दैशिक-शास्त्र के अनुसार, किसी भी जाति के, चाहे वे भारतवंशी हों अथवा यूनानवंशी, दो तत्त्व प्रधान समझे जाते हैं- चिति और विराट्। चिति किसी जाति के चरित्र-वैशिष्ट्य की ओर इंगित करती है। जब तक चिति जागृत और निरामय रहती है तब तक जाति का अभ्युदय होता रहता है, चिति का तिरोधान होने पर अथवा उसमें किसी प्रकार का विपर्यास आने से जाति का अवपात होने लगता है, और चिति का लोप हो जाने पर जाति निश्चेतन देह के समान निष्प्राण, निष्क्रिय, निश्चेष्ट हो जाती है। ऐसी चिति-शून्य जाति के लिये दूसरे की भोज्य-वस्तु बने रहने के अतिरिक्त और कोई चारा नहीं रह जाता।

दूसरी ओर विराट् सामाजिक जीवों को प्रदत्त एक विशेष प्रकार के सहानुभूतियुक्त तेज को कहते हैं। यह तेज ही व्यष्टि को समष्टि के हितार्थ आत्मत्याग करने को प्रेरित करता है, जिससे व्यष्टियों में परस्पर सहानुभूति रहती है, और समष्टि की रक्षा के लिये व्यष्टिगत शक्ति न्यूनाधिक रूप में एकीभूत होकर केन्द्रस्थ रहा करती है। ध्यातव्य है कि यह विराट् व्यक्तियों के हृदय में चिति के प्रकाश से ही जागृत होता है, चिति के अन्तर्हित होने पर विराट् का भी हास होता चला जाता है। यह विराट् जाति रूपी शरीर का प्राण है। जिस प्रकार मनुष्य-देह में समस्त मानसिक और शारीरिक शक्तियाँ एक प्राण के रूपान्तर होती हैं, उसी प्रकार जाति की समस्त दैशिक चेष्टाएँ उसी विराट् का रूपान्तर होती हैं। जैसे शरीर में जब तक प्राण रहता है तब तक उसमें अन्नादि से बल-संचय होता रहता है किन्तु प्राण के चले जाने पर, शरीर के चले जाने पर शरीर के तत्त्व अपने काम न आकर दूसरे के काम में आने लगते हैं।

इसी प्रकार जब तक विराट् ठीक रहता है तब तक जाति का स्वास्थ्य भी ठीक रहता है, और जब मिथ्या आचार-विचार से विराट् का स्वरूप धुंधलाने लगता है, तो जाति रूपी शरीर में स्वार्थ रूपी महाव्याधि उत्पन्न हो जाती है। उसके सब अंग निस्तेज, निर्बल और प्रतिरोधहीन हो जाते हैं, सबको अपनी-अपनी सूझने लगती है, परिणामतः वह सान्निपातिक दोषों से युक्त हो जाता है, और दिन-प्रतिदिन उसका शतोमुखी पतन होने लगता है। इस प्रकार, देशरूपी वस्त्र को धारण किये हुए जाति-रूपी शरीर की आत्मा चिति है, और प्रकाश विराट्। चिति और विराट् का सम्यक् सामंजस्य ही किसी देश की समुन्नति का अन्तर्निहित कारण है। दूसरे शब्दों में, चिति किसी राष्ट्र का चरित्र-वैशिष्ट्य है, और विराट् जागृत चिति के द्वारा मनुष्य के हृदय में उत्पन्न वह प्रकाश है, जो इस वैशिष्ट्य के प्रति मनुष्य को आत्मत्याग करने की प्रेरणा देता है। जागृत चिति के अभाव में विराट् का प्रकाश भी धुँधला पड़ जाता है और राष्ट्र का अवपात हो जाता है।

भारतीय राजनीतिक चिन्तन की इसी पृष्ठभूति में हमें संविधान के भारतीय स्वरूप को भी समझ लेना चाहिए। संविधान से हमारा तात्पर्य उस विधान से होना चाहिए जो हमारे परमपुरुषार्थ को सिद्ध करने के लिए पर्याप्त बल व वेग उत्पन्न कर सके। नई शिक्षा-नीति में संवैधानिक मूल्यों की स्वीकृति सुनिश्चित और विस्तारित करने की भी बात की गई है। किन्तु, संविधान की सनातन और भारतीय मान्यता के सन्दर्भ में देखा जाए तो इसकी प्रस्तावना में अनेक आधुनिक, इहलोकवादी और सन्दर्भहीन मूल्य-मान्यताओं का ही उल्लेख किया गया है। यही

कारण है कि देश में जहाँ एक ओर श्रेष्ठ नागरिक और श्रेष्ठ मनुष्य की मान्यताओं के मध्य गंभीर अन्तर्द्वन्द्व दिखायी देता है, वहीं राज्य और नागरिकों के मध्य कोई सहज-स्वाभाविक सम्बन्ध नहीं स्थिर हो पाता। राज्य में सदैव बहुस्तरीय और बहुआयामी प्रतिद्वन्द्विता का वातावरण बना रहता है, तथा न तो नागरिकों की राज्य के प्रति अविचल निष्ठा विकसित हो पाती है, और न ही राज्य नागरिकों को उनके सम्यक् योग-क्षेम को वहन करने का विश्वास ही दिला पाता है। राज्य और नागरिकों के बीच एक बेगानेपन का सम्बन्ध ही बना रहता है।

कहने की आवश्यकता नहीं है कि सम्पूर्ण भारतीय जीवन-विधान में तात्त्विक एक-सूत्रता, इस एकता से उद्भूत अनेकता और धर्म के विधान से आच्छादित ईश्वर-मनुष्य और प्रकृति की सोपानवत् व्यवस्था विद्यमान है। इसी सांगोपांगता के कारण भारतीय जीवन-विधान के अन्तर्गत सम्यक् स्थिति में तत्त्व, अध्यात्म, धर्म, समाज, राजनीति, अर्थ— सभी या तो साथ-साथ प्रतिष्ठित होते हैं, या विपर्यय के उत्पन्न होने पर साथ-साथ ही अप्रतिष्ठित होते हैं। यही कारण है कि धर्म के अभाव में नैतिकता, प्रेम, सौहार्द, संवेदनशीलता और मानवीय मूल्य जैसी मान्यताएँ खोखली रह जाती हैं। धर्म की परिधि में ही इन मूल्य-मान्यताओं की पुष्टि होती है, और धर्म ही जीवन में इनका वाहक बनता है। यही कारण है कि धर्म से रहित उपदेशों और प्रेरणाओं का हमारे जीवन पर कोई निर्णायक और स्थायी प्रभाव नहीं पड़ता।

जीवन की इस सांगोपांगता का एक वैश्विक सन्दर्भ भी है, किन्तु इस वैश्विक सन्दर्भ की अन्तर्धारा अपनी सांस्कृतिक विशिष्टता से होकर ही प्रवाहित होती है। आजकल वैश्विकता का प्रभाव भारतीयों पर कुछ बढ़ा हुआ है, और इस वैश्विक एषणा की कीमत वे अपनी विशिष्टता की क्षति करके भी देने को तैयार दिखते हैं। गीता, आयुर्वेद, योग, संगीत, कला और वास्तु को वैश्विक आयाम बनाने की ललक में वे भूल रहे हैं कि इन विद्याओं के विशिष्ट सन्दर्भ हैं। गीता का मूल प्रश्न जीवात्मा का ब्रह्म के साथ सम्बन्ध का है, जिसके निष्पादन में कर्म, ज्ञान, भक्ति आदि विभिन्न उपविषयों का प्रणयन किया गया है। इसी प्रकार योग और योग-मूलक जीवन के लिए विशिष्ट जीवनचर्या और आहार-विहार का विधायन करने वाले आयुर्वेदशास्त्र का एक विशेष भारतीय सन्दर्भ है। यही बातें संगीत, कला और वास्तु के सम्बन्ध में भी लागू होती हैं। राजनीति इसी प्रकार की विशिष्टताओं से युक्त जीवन-विधान का रक्षा-उपकरण या परिपोषक है, अर्थ इसी का संसाधन, शिक्षा इसी का उपाय और समाज इसी का अधिष्ठान है। अतः, नई शिक्षा-नीति में अपेक्षित 'विश्व-नागरिक' की अवधारणा पर भी आलोचनात्मक दृष्टि रखने की आवश्यकता है।

कौटिल्य ने अपने नीति-वचनों में कहा है- सुखस्य मूलं धर्मः, धर्मस्य मूलं अर्थः, अर्थस्य मूलं राज्यः ...। और, इसीलिए अंग्रेजों ने भारतीयों की तत्कालीन शिक्षा-प्रणाली को निरर्थक बना देने के लिए समाज-रचना, न्याय और प्रशासन का स्वरूप बदलकर अपना उद्देश्य साध लिया। भारतीय शास्त्रीय ग्रन्थों में दृश्य सांगोपांगता, समग्रता और सामंजस्य को इसी आलोक में समझना चाहिए। सुदीर्घ ऐतिहासिक अतिक्रमण और विजातीय प्रभाव के कारण भारतीय चित्ति पर्याप्त रूप से अस्त-व्यस्त हुई है। इसका परिणाम अपने सन्दर्भों के प्रति प्रामाणिकता का प्रश्न उत्पन्न होने के रूप में देखा जा सकता है, जो वास्तव में अपनी जीवन-दृष्टि के प्रति ही हमारे विश्वास के दरकने का परिणाम है।

अब संस्कृति का जो स्वरूप भारतीय परम्परा में सुनिश्चित किया गया है उसका विश्वगुरु और महाशक्ति बनने जैसी आधिपत्यवादी धारणाओं से क्या सम्बन्ध हो सकता है- यह विचारणीय है। वस्तुतः 'संस्कृति' शब्द का तात्पर्य ही भूषणभूत सम्यक् कृति या चेष्टा से है। इसलिए मनुष्य की भूषणभूत सम्यक् कृतियों या चेष्टाओं का सम्पूर्ण क्षेत्र ही संस्कृति का क्षेत्र है। जिन चेष्टाओं के द्वारा मनुष्य अपने जीवन के समस्त क्षेत्रों में उन्नति करता हुआ सुख-शान्ति प्राप्त करे, वे चेष्टाएँ ही उसके लिए भूषणभूत सम्यक् चेष्टाएँ कही जा सकती हैं। अथवा, मनुष्य की आधिभौतिक, आधिदैविक एवं आध्यात्मिक उन्नति के अनुकूल चेष्टाएँ ही उसकी भूषणभूत सम्यक् चेष्टाएँ हैं। या फिर, मनुष्य की वैयक्तिक, सामाजिक, आर्थिक, राजनैतिक, धार्मिक आदि सभी क्षेत्रों में लौकिक-पारलौकिक अभ्युदय के अनुकूल देहेन्द्रिय, मन-बुद्धि, चित्ताहंकार की चेष्टाएँ ही उसकी भूषणभूत सम्यक् चेष्टाएँ या संस्कृति

है। देहेन्द्रिय की समस्त चेष्टाएँ 'आचार' के क्षेत्र में और मन-बुद्धि-चिन्ताहंकार की चेष्टाएँ 'विचार' के क्षेत्र में आती हैं; इसलिए संक्षेप में कहा जा सकता है कि मनुष्य के लौकिक-पारलौकिक सर्वाभ्युदय के अनुकूल आचार-विचार ही संस्कृति है।

चूँकि भारतीय संस्कृति धर्म का ही लोक-विग्रह है, अतः यहाँ 'अर्थ' का भी विशेष प्रयोजन है। आधुनिक युग, जिसे अर्थ-प्रधान कहा गया है, वस्तुतः अनर्थ-प्रधान है। कृष्ण-यजुर्वेदीय पुरुषसूक्त में अर्थ-स्वरूपा लक्ष्मी को जगतपालक श्री विष्णु की द्वितीय पत्नी ही, अर्थात् लज्जा के साथ स्मरण किया गया है। यह लज्जा साधारण लज्जा नहीं है। इसका प्रधान केंद्र स्थान भारतवर्षीय धर्माचरणशील समाज है, जिसे अनादिकाल से शास्त्राज्ञा का उल्लंघन करने में लज्जा का अनुभव होता है। केवल ऐसे धर्मशील, लज्जाशील, 'ही'-युक्त समाज में ही 'श्री' का निवास हो सकता है। अपने आचरण से च्युत निर्लज्ज समाज के 'अर्थ' को आप व्यवस्थित कर ही नहीं सकते। इसीलिए श्रीदुर्गासप्तमती में भी कहा गया है कि-

या श्रीः स्वयं सुकृतिनां भवनेष्वलक्ष्मीः

पापात्मनां कृतधियां हृदयेषु बुद्धिः।

श्रद्धा सतां कुलजनप्रभवस्य लज्जा

तां त्वां नताः स्म परिपालय देवि विश्वम्॥¹⁰

राज्य का यह अनिवार्य दायित्व माना गया है कि वह इस प्रकार की अर्थव्यवस्था करे, जिससे लोग अपने धर्म का पालन कर सकें, क्योंकि अर्थ की प्रकृति, अर्थ का प्रभाव या अर्थ का अभाव- वे परिस्थितियाँ हैं, जो लोगों के धर्मपालन हेतु उपयुक्त वातावरण का निर्माण करने में महत्वपूर्ण हैं। सुसाध्य आजीविका का हमारे दैशिक-शास्त्र में महत्वपूर्ण स्थान है। इसी अभिप्राय से आनन्द कुमारस्वामी ने स्वदेशी को 'sincerity' कहा है।

इसीलिए, स्कन्दपुराण में भगवान राम भावी राजाओं का आवाहन करते हुए कहते हैं कि-

भूयो भूयो भाविनो भूमिपाला

नत्वा नत्वा याचते रामचन्द्रः।

सामान्योऽयं धर्मसेतुर्नराणां

काले काले पालनीयो भवति :॥¹¹

(भावी राजाओं, रामचन्द्र आपको पुनः-पुनः नमस्कार करके यह याचना करता है कि मनुष्यों के लिए जो यह वेदादिशास्त्रसम्मत वर्णाश्रमधर्म के अनुपालन से क्रमिक उत्कर्ष को प्राप्त यम-नियमादिरूप सामान्य धर्म-सेतु है, वह अपने-अपने समय में आपके द्वारा अवश्य ही पालनीय है।)

नई (राष्ट्रीय) शिक्षा-नीति के सन्दर्भ में भारत में शिक्षा-व्यवस्था के कला-पक्ष और भाव-पक्ष की इस विशद विवेचना के बाद कुछ ग्राह्य निष्कर्षों पर ध्यान देने की अपेक्षा है। सर्वप्रथम, भारतीय शिक्षा-व्यवस्था की पुनर्प्रतिष्ठा करने की दिशा में प्रमुख आवश्यकता यह है कि अपने वैचारिक अधिष्ठानों को शुद्ध करने का प्रयास किया जाए। आधुनिक युग के विचारों और विचारकों के बारे में बहुत सावधानी और सतर्कता बरतने की आवश्यकता है। हम इस युग की अवहेलना भी नहीं कर सकते, क्योंकि आधुनिक युग के चुनौतीपूर्ण प्रश्नों को समझने के लिए इस युग की गत्यात्मकता (dynamics) की समझ भी अपरिहार्य है। हमारे अकादमिक विमर्श में कई ऐसी अभासी और अपरम्परागत अवधारणाएँ प्रविष्ट कर दी गई हैं, जो भारतीय संदर्भों से रहित हैं, किन्तु उन्हें भारतीय शब्द प्रदान कर दिया गया है। Democracy के लिए लोकतंत्र, Liberalism के लिए उदारवाद, Right के लिए अधिकार, Sovereignty के लिए संप्रभुता, Freedom of Choice के लिए स्वतंत्रता, Equality के लिए समानता, Justice के लिए न्याय, Welfare State के लिए कल्याणकारी राज्य, Law के लिए विधि तथा Tolerance के लिए सहिष्णुता इसी प्रकार के अर्थ-विपर्यययुक्त तथा संदर्भहीन प्रयोग हैं। इसके विपरीत भारतीय जीवन-विधान को समझने के लिए जिन आधारभूत प्रत्ययों और संदर्भों की अपरिहार्यता है, उनके आधुनिक पर्याय अनुपलब्ध होने की दशा में उन्हें अकादमिक विमर्श से लगभग बाहर कर दिया गया है। ऋत,

चिति, विराट्, अभ्युदय, देश, राष्ट्र, जाति, प्रताप, ऐश्वर्य, तेज, तप, पुरुषार्थ, गुण, ऋण, अर्थ, विज्ञान, संस्कृति, इतिहास, तथा काल और काल-बोध से संबंधित अवधारणाओं को इस श्रेणी में सम्मिलित किया जा सकता है। अतः, इन शब्दों के पुनर्परिभाषीकरण तथा स्वपरिभाषीकरण की महती आवश्यकता है। इसी प्रकार, परम्परागत भारतीय दृष्टि से विषयों और विचारों तथा उनके अन्तर्सम्बन्धों का अध्ययन भी आवश्यक है। कुल मिलाकर आधुनिक विश्व-दृष्टि का विकास-क्रम उसकी चुनौतियों, भारतीय विचार-दृष्टि पर उसके प्रभाव तथा उसके प्रत्युत्तर का समानस्तरीय प्रयास करने की आवश्यकता है। यदि व्यापक राजनीतिक फलक पर इन विचारों का अनुप्रयोग संभव न दिख रहा हो, तो सामुदायिक, सांस्कृतिक और अकादमिक फलक पर इनके प्रयोग को आत्मविश्वासपूर्वक तत्काल आरम्भ करने की आवश्यकता है।

दुर्भाग्य यह है कि यूरोपीय पुनर्जागरण की मानस-संतति भारतीय विश्वविद्यालय भी अपनी धर्म-संस्कृति-परम्परा के लिए आपदा सिद्ध हो रहे हैं। नव-साम्राज्यवादी वैचारिक परिवेश को अद्यतन और सार्थक बनाए रखने में ये विश्वविद्यालय अपनी सारी उर्जा लगाने में उद्यत हैं। नारीवाद और उत्तर-आधुनिकवाद जैसे कुछ नकारात्मक तथा पर्यावरणवाद और वैश्वीकरण जैसे कुछ गुमराह करने वाले विचारों के रक्षण-पोषण-सम्बर्द्धन का कार्य इन्हीं विश्वविद्यालयों में हो रहा है। विसंगति यहाँ तक बढ़ गयी है कि इन कु-विचारों को भारतीय परम्परा के सहारे भी सिद्ध करने के प्रयास हो रहे हैं। इस अर्थ में भारतीय विश्वविद्यालय विष-कुम्भ की तरह व्यवहार कर रहे हैं। जबकि किसी सभ्यता और संस्कृति की रक्षा और उसके श्रीवर्द्धन के लिए आवश्यक है कि उसकी एक अक्षय ज्ञान-परम्परा हो, उस अक्षय ज्ञान-परम्परा पर काल-वशात् जो प्रतिघात हों, उनका सम्यक् प्रत्युत्तर देने वाले समर्थ मनीषी उस सभ्यता में उस सभ्यता में हों, और उस सभ्यता की अन्तर्चेतना लोक-जीवन में भी मठों-मन्दिरों, कुलाचारों आदि के माध्यम से प्रतिध्वनित होती रहे।

यह विडम्बना ही है कि ज्ञानियों एवं मनीषियों की भूमि भारत आज आत्म-विस्मरण एवं संभ्रम की स्थिति में है। कई शताब्दियों के विजातीय शासन ने भारत के सामान्य एवं विशिष्ट जनों को जो आधुनिक विचार-दृष्टि दी, उसने कुविचारों और कुचेष्टाओं को ही स्थापित किया है। पाश्चात्य विचार-दृष्टि देहात्मवादी, देहातिरिक्त आत्मवादी और आत्मातिरिक्त शक्तिवादी है। भारतीय ज्ञान-परम्परा में यह अज्ञान-भूमियाँ हैं, जिनसे कलुषित, दूषित, पतनकारी सिद्धांत ही जन्म लेते हैं। बुद्धि पर अर्थ-कामादि वेगों का प्रभाव उसे चंचल और अस्थिर कर देता है, ऐसी दशा में सम्यक् एवं गंभीर चिन्तन संभव नहीं होता। आधुनिक जड़वादी एवं भोगवादी विचार-दृष्टि के आधार पर मानव-कल्याण के सूत्र तलाशना मृग-मरीचिका ही है। इस विचार-दृष्टि के कारण हमारी शिक्षा-पद्धतियाँ भौतिक-आर्थिक-ऐन्द्रिक लक्ष्यों की प्राप्ति का आधा-अधूरा माध्यम बन कर रह गयी हैं। भारत में शिक्षा को सदैव लोक-द्वय प्रसाधिनी और आत्मोपलब्धिकारिणी माना गया। इस दृष्टि से वर्तमान भारत में शिक्षा के लक्ष्य का घोर संकुचन हुआ। जड़वादी दृष्टिकोण के कारण हमारी शिक्षा-पद्धतियाँ इन्द्रियगत अनुभव (Sensory Experience) और बौद्धिक विश्लेषण (Rational Analysis) तक सीमित हैं। ज्ञाता एवं ज्ञेय के मध्य एक विजातीयता और असम्बद्धता की दुर्लभ्य खाई बन गई। भारतीय विचार-दृष्टि जीवन एवं अनुभव को बहुआयामी (Multi-dimensional), समग्र (Holistic) और ज्ञाता एवं ज्ञेय को सम्बद्ध (Integrated) मानने की रही है। विचार-दृष्टि के बिखराव ने 'विशेषीकरण' (Specialization) की विचित्र अवधारणा को जन्म दिया है। व्यष्टि को समष्टि से सम्बद्ध न देखकर, स्वतंत्र रूप से देखने की आधुनिक वैज्ञानिक पद्धति ने जीवन एवं जगत के बारे में विभ्रम और विखंडनकारी मान्यताओं को ही प्रतिपादित किया है। व्यवहारिकता (Pragmatism) और अनुप्रयोग (Applied) पर विशेष बल दिए जाने के कारण सिद्धांत की घोर उपेक्षा हुई, अथवा उसी सिद्धांत को वैज्ञानिक या सामाजिक प्रतिष्ठा दी गयी, जो भौतिक-आर्थिक दृष्टि से उपयोगी हो, सुविधावर्धक हो— इस प्रवृत्ति ने उन लोकोत्तर सत्त्यों की उपेक्षा की जो मनुष्य के लिए आत्मिक और नैतिक रूप से उन्नयनकारी हैं। लोकोत्तर को अस्वीकार कर लोक-मंगल व लोक-कल्याण के प्रयास निष्फल ही होंगे। आज भारतीय शिक्षा-जगत को आत्म-मंथन की बड़ी आवश्यकता है। शिक्षा और शोध के लक्ष्य का निर्धारण भारतीय विचार-दृष्टि के अनुरूप होना चाहिए। यही नहीं,

भारतीय समाज के प्रश्नों व समस्याओं पर ही हमारी शिक्षा व शोध केन्द्रित होने चाहिए। शोध की आधुनिक वैज्ञानिक पद्धति पर तो स्वयं पश्चिम में ही प्रश्न चिह्न लग गया है, अतः हमें प्रकृति एवं समाज पर भारत की परम्परागत दृष्टि से ही विचार एवं शोध की प्रणाली विकसित करनी होगी। भारत के शोधकर्ताओं को आधुनिक पाश्चात्य Paradigm और Paramet मत से मुक्त होने की आवश्यकता है, क्योंकि इनकी उपादेयता एवं सार्थकता पश्चिमी जगत में ही संदिग्ध घोषित की जा चुकी है। भारत में शिक्षा और शोध के क्षेत्र में कार्यरत विद्यार्थियों, शोधार्थियों और शिक्षकों को विषयवस्तु (Substance) और पद्धति (Methodology) दानों को नितांत भिन्न दिशा देनी होगी। गांधी के शब्दों में, आधुनिक जीवन के प्रश्नों व समस्याओं को पुरातन (सनातन) दृष्टि से विचारने की आवश्यकता है।

स्वतन्त्रता के उपरान्त राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ और इसके विभिन्न आनुषंगिक संगठन, रामकृष्ण मिशन, चिन्मय मिशन, गायत्री परिवार, स्वाध्याय परिवार, महर्षि महेश योगी, कृष्णमूर्ति फाउण्डेशन इत्यादि संस्थाओं द्वारा देश के अन्दर और बाहर शिक्षा और संस्कार की गतिविधियाँ व्यापक पैमाने पर चल रही हैं। जहाँ तक संस्कार-शिक्षा का प्रश्न है, प्रत्यक्ष और परोक्ष अर्थात् मीडिया के माध्यम से देश भर में बड़े पैमाने पर कथा-उपदेश के प्रकल्प भी चल रहे हैं। किन्तु दुर्भाग्य यह है कि या तो ये प्रकल्प शासकीय अनुदान और नियंत्रण के जाल में जकड़कर अपनी आत्मा खो चुके हैं, और शिक्षा की भारतीय दृष्टि का प्रश्न विश्वविद्यालयों के शिक्षाशास्त्र विभागों के पाठ्यक्रम में भारतीय शिक्षा की पुनर्प्रतिष्ठा का एक इतिवृत्त बन चुका है, जिसे प्राणवान अंगी होना चाहिए था वह निष्प्राण अंग बनकर रह गया है; वहीं अन्य प्रकल्पों के उद्देश्य मोटे तौर पर प्रशस्त होते हुए भी या तो कालबाह्य बने हुए हैं, या फिर भारतीय और आधुनिक पाश्चात्य जीवन-दृष्टि और जीवन-विधान के मध्य असंभाव्य 'समन्वय' की आशा करते-करते ये संस्थान और प्रकल्प आधुनिक पाश्चात्य नमूनों की दुर्बल अनुकृति बनकर रह गये हैं। सर्वाधिक दयनीय और निराशाजनक स्थिति तो उस प्रकल्प की है जो शासन द्वारा अधिकृत, मान्यता प्राप्त और अखिल भारतीय व्याप्ति वाला है। प्राथमिक, माध्यमिक और उच्चतर शिक्षा के अविवेकपूर्ण और असम्बद्ध खाँचों में बँटे इस महाप्रकल्प का खण्ड-खण्ड पाखण्ड अब किसी भी सुधी व्यक्ति से छिपा नहीं है। इस सरकारी शिक्षा-प्रणाली में जो विषय, जिस स्तर पर और जिस रूप में पढ़ाए जा रहे हैं, उनका हमारे स्वाभाविक जीवन-विधान के साथ कोई तारतम्य नहीं रहा। धीरे-धीरे सब कुछ अस्त-व्यस्त और निरर्थक होता जा रहा है। इधर शिक्षा में प्रत्येक स्तर पर यांत्रिकता के द्वारा मानवीय तत्त्व को प्रतिस्थापित करने का उद्यम जोर-शोर से साधा जा रहा है, और उधर ऐसी निर्जीव होती जा रही 'शिक्षा' से अधिक से अधिक लोगों को जोड़ने का एक महाअभियान भी चल रहा है। जिस सभ्यता की लाक्षणिकता ही शिक्षा और संस्कृति पर आधारित हो, उसके इतिहास में ऐसे दुर्दिन कभी नहीं आए कि 'आम आदमी' से पूछ-पूछ कर उसके अधिष्ठान राष्ट्र की शिक्षानीति तय की जाए। किसी राष्ट्र के अन्दर बार-बार शिक्षानीति का प्रश्न उठना वैसे भी एक गंभीर आध्यात्मिक संकट और बौद्धिक दृष्टिहीनता की स्थिति का संकेतक है। यही कारण है कि जैसे-जैसे इलाज जटिल होता जा रहा है, वैसे-वैसे मर्ज भी सान्निपातिक होता जा रहा है। आधुनिक शिक्षा का विस्तार उसी अनुपात में विसंगतियाँ और उलझनें भी बढ़ाता जा रहा है। किन्तु दिक्कत यह है कि यह जो सर्वाधिक मान्यता प्राप्त, व्यापक और अधिकृत मुख्यधारा है, वह भारतीय नहीं है, और जो भारतीय है वह अधिकृत नहीं है, तथा उसका आधुनिक जीवन-विन्यास के साथ कोई तारतम्य नहीं है।

दुर्भाग्य से आज ज्ञान और शिक्षा के केन्द्र विश्वविद्यालय या तो आचार-भ्रष्टता के केन्द्र बने हुए हैं अथवा अपने मुख्य दायित्व को विस्मृत कर वे राजनीतिक अखाड़े बने हुए हैं। परम्परागत दृष्टि में विश्वविद्यालय को विश्व-विद्या अर्थात् उच्चतर-सनातन-शाश्वत सत्य का मीमांसा-स्थल माना गया है। ब्रह्म-जिज्ञासा (Theology: Queen of Sciences) इसके केन्द्र में और शेष विषय परिधि पर हैं। इस दृष्टि से प्राथमिक-माध्यमिक और उच्चतर शिक्षा के मध्य एक स्वाभाविक सामंजस्य और सातत्य की अपेक्षा की गयी है, केवल शैली की भिन्नता होगी। उच्चतर शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में शिक्षक और शिक्षार्थी सत्य के मित्रवत अन्वेषक होते हैं, सहपथिक होते हैं। इसलिए शिक्षा का प्रश्न एक सर्वांगपूर्ण प्रश्न है। यह अधिष्ठान, प्रक्रिया और व्यवस्था- तीनों से जुड़ा प्रश्न है। गांधीजी ने

इसी अर्थ में शिक्षा को दिल (Heart), दिमाग (Head) और हाथ (Hand) का परिष्कार कहा है। हाथ के माध्यम से यह कौशल का, दिल के माध्यम से भाव का, और दिमाग के माध्यम से बुद्धि का परिष्कार करती है। यही कारण है कि इहलौकिकता के प्रति अति आग्रहपूर्ण और किसी उच्चतर सत्य के प्रति तिरस्कार से युक्त जिस यूरोपीय पुनर्जागरण (Unmediated/self-mediated knowledge system) का प्रभाव तत्कालीन भारत की जीवन-दृष्टि पर पड़ा, उसने हमारी जीवन-दृष्टि को भी तदनु रूप ही सीमित, खण्डित और संशयात्मक बना दिया; तथा इसी प्रकार का सीमित, खण्डित और संशयग्रस्त हमारा समाज, अर्थ और राज्य-विधान हो गया। 'Trial and Error' की अनन्त संशोधनीयता (Indefinite Corrigibility) की इस आधुनिक वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि का प्रभाव सर्वत्र हमारे शिक्षा-अधिष्ठान, प्रणाली और व्यवस्था पर भी पड़ा। हमारे हाथों में स्वाभाविक कौशल नहीं रहा, हमारा हृदय भावशून्य और हमारी बुद्धि भ्रमित होती जा रही है। भारत में ज्ञान, ज्ञानी और संसाधन की कमी नहीं है; बल्कि ज्ञान और ज्ञानी प्रतिष्ठित नहीं हैं और संसाधन भ्रमित, भ्रष्ट या कमजोर लोगों के हाथों में है। हमने निःस्वार्थी, तेजस्वी और योग्य लोगों को समाज के शीर्ष पदों पर प्रतिष्ठित करने की व्यवस्था तोड़ दी है। शिक्षा का जिस प्रकार का संस्थानीकरण हो चुका है उससे वह प्रकटतः शासन और प्रच्छन्नतः राजनीतिक दलों के नियंत्रण में आ गयी है। अब तो इन्हें औद्योगिक घराने नियंत्रित करने लगे हैं। आचार्य की स्वायत्तता समाप्तप्राय है। यह आत्मगौरवहीनता और पाखण्ड की स्थिति है, जिसे समझते हुए भी शिक्षा में मूल्यों की बात करना अपराध-सदृश है। अपराधी और पाखण्डी किसी व्यवस्था में न तो मूल्य-सृजन कर सकते हैं, न ही मूल्य धारित। इसीलिए हमारी युवापीढ़ी 'not at home anywhere, out of place every where' वाली स्थिति में भटक रही है। 'पुनर्जागरणकाल' की दुविधा अभी तक हमारा पीछा नहीं छोड़ रही है। सनातन और सापेक्ष का हमारा अनुपात बिगड़ गया है। स्मरण और विस्मरण करने योग्य विचारों और व्यक्तियों के मध्य अन्तर करने में हमारा विवेक कमजोर पड़ गया है। हमारी प्रतिबद्धताएँ धूमिल पड़ गयी हैं, और जीवन की इस आपाधापी में अपनी प्रतिबद्धताओं की कीमत लगाते हमें देर नहीं लगती। परिवार, शिक्षा, समाज, राजनीति, कृषि, पशुपालन, वानिकी और उद्योगों में जिस आपाधापी से हम फैसले लेते और बदलते हैं, वह अपनी प्रतिबद्धताओं के लिए जाने जाने वाले समाज का लक्षण तो नहीं है। अपनी कमजोर प्रतिबद्धताओं के कारण ही हमारे सार्थक प्रयास भी फलीभूत नहीं हो रहे। अपनी पाठ्यचर्या में महापुरुषों की कथाओं और नैतिक-शिक्षा को भी सम्मिलित करने का कोई प्रभाव इसीलिए नहीं दिखायी पड़ता। वस्तुतः बुनियादी तौर पर ही हम प्रमादग्रस्त हो चुके हैं। हमारा खान-पान, रहन-सहन, बोली-बानी सब कुछ प्रमादग्रस्त हो चला है। युवक और युवतियाँ अच्छे माता-पिता तो बनना जैसे भूल ही गए हैं और एक-दूसरे की तरह विपरीतधर्मी दिखना-बनना उनका स्वभाव बनता जा रहा है। ऐसे युवक-युवतियाँ निःसंतति, अल्पसंतति या अक्षमसंतति के कारण बन रहे हैं। ऐसे बच्चे जन्म ले रहे हैं जो शारीरिक रूप से तो कमजोर हैं ही, मानसिक रूप से भी उनमें असहनशीलता, अनास्था, भय, तनाव और उत्तेजना के लक्षण दिखायी देने लगे हैं।

भारत की जीवन-दृष्टि समन्वयकारी है। पिंड एवं ब्रह्मांड, व्यष्टि एवं समष्टि, प्रवृत्ति एवं निवृत्ति की अन्योन्याश्रितता इसका मूल स्वर है। हमारे चिन्तन में एकनिष्ठता तो गुण कहा गया, परन्तु एकांगिकता दोष है। एकनिष्ठता उत्कर्ष का हेतु है, परन्तु एकांगिकता अपकर्ष और विघटन का। वर्णाश्रमधर्म पर आधारित समाज व्यवस्था में व्यक्ति द्वारा एकनिष्ठ भाव से अपने वर्णधर्म और आश्रमधर्म का पालन अभ्युदय और निःश्रेयस का वाहक माना गया, परन्तु एकांगी दृष्टि अहंकार, अभिमान और विघटन को जन्म देती है। वस्तुतः जीवन अनेकानेक सोपानों की श्रृंखला है, जिसकी हर कड़ी महत्वपूर्ण तो है, परन्तु पूर्ण नहीं। निम्नतर सोपानों की महत्ता एवं सार्थकता उच्चतर सोपानों के संदर्भ व सम्बन्ध से है, एवं उच्चतर सोपानों की उपलब्धि निम्नतर सोपानों पर निर्दिष्ट भूमिका के निष्पादन पर निर्भर है।

अब इसे विडम्बना और दुर्भाग्य ही कहा जाएगा कि भारतवर्ष जैसी ज्ञानवान सभ्यता के इतिहास में ऐसा दुर्दिन भी आया कि इस राष्ट्र की शिक्षा-नीति सबसे पूछ-पूछ कर बनाई जा रही है। विभिन्न विषयों के सम्बन्ध में नीति-निर्माण करते समय विशिष्टता और विशेषज्ञता के महत्व को समझने की हमारी दृष्टि भी जाती रही। ऊपर से

शिक्षा-नीति का दस्तावेज़, जो नितान्त औपचारिक और नीरस अंग्रेजी तथा उससे भी अधिक निष्प्राण व बोझिल हिन्दी में लिखा गया है, रही-सही कसर भी पूरी कर देता है। सही मायने में ये एक ऐसा दस्तावेज़ है, जिसमें शिक्षा-व्यवस्था के संरचनात्मक और क्रियात्मक पक्ष की तकनीकी ही आद्योपान्त हावी है, नीति अथवा दृष्टि जैसा तो इसमें कुछ दिखाई नहीं देता। यदि यत्र-तत्र कुछ सनातन मूल्यों-मान्यताओं की अलंकारिक चर्चा है भी, तो साथ में संवैधानिक मूल्यों और वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि का समायोजन करके एक आत्म-विपर्ययुक्त स्थिति ही उत्पन्न कर दी गई है।

यह स्थिति उस समय और भी दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण प्रतीत होती है जब शिक्षा के सम्बन्ध में दृष्टि प्रदान करने वाले असंख्य समकालीन महापुरुषों की उपस्थिति के उपरान्त भी हम उन्हें और उनके विचारों को उपेक्षित ही करते चले जा रहे हैं। विपिन चन्द्रपाल, लोकमान्य तिलक, महात्मा गांधी, आनन्द कुमारस्वामी, रवीन्द्रनाथ टैगोर, श्री अरविन्द, बद्रीशाह ठुलघरिया, कृष्णचन्द्र भट्टाचार्य, पं. दीनदयाल उपाध्याय, धर्मपाल, पं. विद्यानिवास मिश्र, वासुदेवशरण अग्रवाल, यशदेव शल्य, प्रोफेसर ए.के. सरन, प्रोफेसर रघुवीर सिंह और प्रोफेसर रामाश्रय राय जैसे स्मृतिशेष विद्वानों के साथ-साथ सुश्री इन्दुमति काटदरे, बनवारी, राजीव मल्होत्रा, प्रोफेसर कपिल कपूर, प्रोफेसर गिरीश्वर मिश्र, प्रोफेसर राकेश मिश्र, प्रोफेसर अम्बिकादत्त शर्मा और श्री पवन गुप्ता जैसे अनेक ऐसे विद्वान जो आज भी शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में गम्भीरतापूर्वक चिन्तन-मनन व कार्य कर रहे हैं- इस परियोजना में उपेक्षित ही रहे।

इसी प्रकार, भारत की पाण्डित्य-परम्परा के प्रति हमारी आपराधिक उपेक्षा उस समय प्रकट हो जाती है, जब हम शिक्षा और संस्कृति जैसे प्रश्नों पर विचार करते समय स्वामी ब्रह्मानन्द सरस्वती, स्वामी करपात्री जी, स्वामी चन्द्रशेखरेन्द्र सरस्वती, महामहोपाध्याय चतुष्टय पं. मोतीलाल शर्मा, गिरधर शर्मा चतुर्वेदी, गोपीनाथ कविराज, विश्वनाथ शास्त्री 'दातार' और स्वामी निश्चलानन्द सरस्वती जैसे महानुभावों का विस्मरण कर देते हैं।

वैसे तो हम पश्चिम के प्रभाव से आक्रान्त रहने को अपनी नियति मान चुके हैं, किन्तु आश्चर्य की बात यह है कि पश्चिम के भी समकालीन सम्यक् दृष्टि-सम्पन्न विचारकों रेने गेनो, फ्रिड्रिख शुआँ, सीमोन वील, प्रोफेसर सैय्यद हुसैन नस्र, टी.एस. इलियट और केनेथ ओल्डमीडो की ओर भी हमारा ध्यान क्यों नहीं जाता। इसलिए, ये भी आवश्यकता है कि शिक्षा-व्यवस्था के साज-शृंगार के साथ-साथ उसकी आत्मा की भी चिन्ता की जाए। एक दृष्टि से यह भी कहा जा सकता है कि शिक्षा का प्रश्न संस्थागत जटिलताओं की अपेक्षा समझदारी का प्रश्न अधिक है। हमें साहस और ईमानदारी के साथ सनातन और इसके निषेध पर टिकी आधुनिकता के बीच विकल्प का चयन करना ही पड़ेगा। एक बार पुनः कुमारस्वामी का स्मरण करते हैं-

"East and West" imports a cultural rather than a geographical anti-thesis: an opposition of the traditional or ordinary way of life that survives in the East, to the modern and irregular way of life that now prevails in the West. It is because such an opposition as this could not have been felt before the Renaissance, that we say that the problem is one that presents itself only accidentally in terms of geography ; it is one of times much more than of places.

अपनी बात को आगे बढ़ाते हुए कुमारस्वामी स्पष्ट करते हैं कि यदि आज के आधुनिक दर्शन को अलग रख दें, तो पूर्व और पश्चिम अथवा उत्तर और दक्षिण की संस्कृतियों में, उनकी दार्शनिक मान्यताओं में केवल भाषागत अन्तर ही शेष रह जाएगा। सभी, एक जैसे विचारों को, एक जैसी आध्यात्मिक भाषा में और एक जैसे मुहावरों की सहायता से प्रस्तुत करते हैं; भले ही उनके शब्द अलग-अलग हों।

For if we leave out of account the "modernistic" and individual philosophies of today, and consider only the great tradition of the magnanimous philosophers, ... it will soon be found that the distinction of cultures in East and West, or for that matter North and South, are comparable only to those of dialects; all are speaking what is essentially

one and the same spiritual language, employing different words, but expressing the same idea, and very often by means of identical idioms.

कुमारस्वामी विभिन्न सभ्यताओं के आधारभूत विचारों की शाब्दिक और दृश्यमान अभिव्यक्तियों में पाई जाने वाली इस मूल एकता में ही निवर्तमान वैश्विक व्यवस्था और आचरण से जुड़ी समस्याओं के निराकरण की सम्भावना देखते हैं। वे कहते हैं-

Otherwise stated, there is a universally intelligible language, not only verbal but also visual, of the fundamental ideas on which the different civilizations have been founded.

There exists in this commonly accepted axiology or body of first principles a common universe of discourse; and this provides us with the necessary basis for communication, understanding and agreement, and so for effective co-operation in the application of commonly recognized spiritual values to the solution of contingent problems of organization and conduct.

किन्तु, इस सम्भावना के फलीभूत होने के लिए यह आवश्यक है कि पूर्व और पश्चिम आधुनिक विज्ञानवाद, प्रत्यक्षवाद और व्यक्तिवाद से ऊपर उठकर इस आध्यात्मिक सूत्रबद्धता को पहचानें। इस पहचान के अभाव में पूर्व और पश्चिम के टकराव को रेखांकित करते हुए वे कहते हैं:

East and West are at cross-purposes only because the West is determined, and quite "economically determined," to keep on going it knows not where, and calls this "progress."

... What "the century of the common man" actually predicates is the century of the economic man, the economically determined man whose best and worst are equally unprincipled, a man who is far too common for our ends. How many of our "communists," I wonder, realise that the reference of "the common man," commun is homo, was originally not to the man in the street as such, but to the immanent deity, the very Man in everyman? In the meantime, what "free enterprise" means is "his hand - the common man's in our sense - against every man's, and every man's hand against him": and there lie the seeds of future wars.¹²

हमारे सामने अच्छे अध्यापकों और अच्छे अभिभावकों को निर्मित-प्रतिष्ठित करने की चुनौती है। यह चुनौती इसलिए बड़ी है, क्योंकि हम एक ऐसी 'सभ्यता' में रह रहे हैं, जिसमें विद्या, ज्ञान और साधना के प्रति उपेक्षा तथा भोग, विलास और स्वच्छन्दता के प्रति प्रबल आग्रह विद्यमान है। भारत की सनातन संस्कृति की तासीर के अनुरूप शिक्षण-कार्य यहाँ का First rate profession होना चाहिए, और इसके लिए यहाँ के First rate minds में इस Profession के प्रति स्वाभाविक आकर्षण होना चाहिए। पुरस्कारों के लोभ से बचते-बचाते हुए शिक्षण-संस्थानों में जब तक ज्ञान और ज्ञानी की प्रतिष्ठा (विश्वविद्यालयों में Emeritus व Outstanding) नहीं होती, जब तक संसाधनों को भ्रष्ट, भ्रमित और कमजोर प्रशासकों के स्थान पर ईमानदार, योग्य और दृढ़ प्रशासकों के हाथों में नहीं दिया जाता, तब तक हमारी प्राथमिक शिक्षा रक्तल्पता, हमारी माध्यमिक शिक्षा अपंगता और हमारी उच्चतर शिक्षा अराजकता की स्थिति से बाहर नहीं आ सकती। भारतीय शिक्षण-संस्थानों, विशेषकर विश्वविद्यालयों को यदि 'epi centre of all calamities' की धारणा से अपने को बाहर निकालना है, तो श्रेष्ठ व्यक्तियों को महत्वपूर्ण स्थानों पर स्थापित करने की अपनी सुदीर्घ परम्परा को हमें पुनर्स्थापित करना ही पड़ेगा।

अन्ततः, सर्वाधिक महत्वपूर्ण आवश्यकता है कि अपने मान-बिन्दुओं के प्रति दर के हुए आत्मविश्वास को पुनः सृजित करने का यत्न किया जाए। अपने इतिहास, अपनी जातीय स्मृति, अपनी लोक-मान्यताओं को भूलकर केवल एक उपभोक्ता-समाज बनने की आकांक्षा कोई ऊँची आकांक्षा नहीं है। हमें उससे आगे देखना आना

चाहिए। भारतीय सभ्यता ज्ञान, शौर्य की साधना, मांगल्य और जय को ध्येय बनाकर खड़ी हुई है। हमें अपने इतिहास को एक अत्यन्त उन्नत भारतीय सभ्यता के उत्तराधिकारी के सहज अभिमान से देखना चाहिए, क्योंकि उसी से हमें अपनी सभ्यता से भटके हुए मार्ग से वापस अपने मार्ग पर लौटने की दृष्टि मिल सकती है। श्री अरविन्द ने उचित ही कहा है :

The recovery of the old spiritual knowledge and experience in all its splendour, depth and fullness is its first, most essential work; the flowing of this spirituality into new forms of philosophy, literature, art, science and critical knowledge is the second; an original dealing with modern problems in the light of the Indian spirit and the endeavour to formulate a greater synthesis of a spiritualized society is the third and most difficult. Its success on these three lines will be the measure of its help to the future of humanity.¹³

प्रोफेसर, राजनीतिशास्त्र विभाग,
विद्यान्त महाविद्यालय, लखनऊ (उ.प्र.)

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