

Draft National Education Policy 2016: 20 Salient features

The draft of New Education Policy 2016 was made public on Wednesday on www.mygov.in website. The 43-page document focuses on addressing gender discrimination, the creation of educational tribunals, and a common curriculum for science, mathematics and English.

Revision of no-detention policy, promotion of Sanskrit, and bringing back Class 10 board examinations are some of the key changes that the policy talks about. *We take a look at the policy's 20 salient features:*

1) Pre-school Education: Pre-school education has not received the necessary attention in the past as Government schools do not provide pre-primary education, according to the draft National Education Policy. The following policy initiatives will be taken:

- a) Pre-school education for children in the age group of 4 to 5 years will be implemented.
- b) To strengthen the pre-school education in Anganwadis, steps will be taken in consultation with states to frame curricula and develop learning materials.
- c) State Governments will prepare cadres of pre-primary teachers.
- d) All primary schools will cover pre-primary education.
- e) Appropriate regulatory and monitoring rules and mechanisms will be designed for private pre-schools.

2) Curriculum Renewal and Examination Reforms

- a) Curricular reforms will be carried out to meet the emerging aspirations and align to national goals of social cohesion, religious amity and national integration.
- b) NCERT will undergo a re-orientation to address issues of deteriorating quality of school education and periodic renewal of curricula and pedagogy to move from rote learning to facilitate understanding and encourage a spirit of enquiry.
- c) For science, mathematics and english subjects, a common national curriculum will be designed.

d) High failure rate in class-X examination is attributed to a large extent to poor performance in three subjects: Mathematics, Science and English. In order to reduce the failure rates, class X examination in Mathematics, Science and English will be at two levels: Part-A at a higher level and Part-B at a lower level.

e) Procedural reforms will be undertaken, such as, doing away with migration certificate, school leaving certificate, etc. in order to encourage mobility of students from one institution to another.

f) It will be mandatory for the students to take class X board examination conducted by the Board to which their school is affiliated. Class X Board examination will cover the entire syllabus of class X.

3) Learning outcomes in School Education

a) Norms for learning outcomes will be developed and applied uniformly to both private and government schools.

b) Within the parameters prescribed by the RTE Act, States will have the flexibility to design and plan for the infrastructure keeping in view the local conditions.

c) The present provisions of no-detention policy will be amended, as it has seriously affected the academic performance of students. The no detention policy will be limited up to class V and the system of detention will be restored at the upper primary stage.

d) Effective steps will be taken to improve teaching standards in schools

4) School Education

a) Each State will undertake a detailed exercise of school mapping to identify schools with low enrolment and inadequate infrastructure.

b) Minimum standards for provision of facilities and student outcomes across all levels in school education will be laid down.

c) Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) will be expanded and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) will be expanded and upgraded

5) Protection of Rights of the Child & Adolescent Education

a) Framework and guidelines for ensuring school safety and security of children will be developed.

b) Every Principal and teacher will be made aware of the

provisions of the relevant Acts, Rules, Regulations, etc.

c) The Adolescent Education Programme and National Population Education Programme will be integrated into the curriculum of schools in a phased manner.

d) Adolescent Education will be included in pre- and in-service training programmes of secondary school teachers.

e) Self-learning online programmes on child rights will be developed for the benefit of students, teachers and parents.

f) Schools will engage trained counsellors to confidentially advise parents and teachers on adolescence problems faced by growing boys and girls.

6) Inclusive Education and Student Support

a) Curriculum will cover the issues of social justice and harmony and legal measures in order to avoid social discrimination.

b) With the objective of encouraging merit and promoting equity, a National Fellowship Fund, primarily designed to support the tuition fees, learning materials and living expenses for about 10 lakh students will be created.

c) A zero tolerance approach on gender discrimination and violence will be adopted.

d) There will be dedicated funds for R&D to strengthen disability studies in higher education.

7) Literacy and Lifelong Learning

a) Existing initiatives will be strengthened and curricula revamped with multi-pronged strategies involving Self Help Groups, NGOs, Government etc.

b) The Government will set up an apex body of experts to look into remodelling and strengthening of AE programmes and develop scientific criteria for assessing the learning outcomes of adults in literacy, skill development, prior learning and equivalency for certification which may also facilitate entry into the formal education system.

c) Adult literacy programme will incorporate skill development and digital, financial and legal literacy.

8) Skills in Education and Employability

a) Skill development programmes in school and higher education system will be reoriented

b) A detailed plan for the creation of skill schools for improving employment opportunities for secondary school students in special focus districts will be prepared.

c) Joint certificates by the Sector Skill Council and the School/College authorities to help students take up wage-employment or start their own enterprise.

9) Use of ICT in Education

a) A concerted effort will be made to make ICT an integral part of education across all levels and domains of learning.

b) Online maintenance of all records of a child from the time of admission till the time of leaving the school will be made mandatory.

c) IT reporting systems will be a powerful tool to better school management and performance.

10) Teacher Development and Management

a) A transparent and merit based norms and guidelines for recruitment of teachers will be formulated in consultation with the state governments.

b) All vacancies in teacher education institutions and all positions of head teachers and principals will be filled up.

c) At the National level, a Teacher Education University will be set up covering various aspects of teacher education and faculty development.

d) A separate cadre for teacher educators will be established in every state.

11) Language and Culture in Education

a) All states and UTs, if they so desire, may provide education in schools, upto Class V, in mother tongue, local or regional language as the medium of instruction.

b) Indian culture, local and traditional knowledge will be given adequate space in the school education.

c) Educational institutions will instill among students civic sense, discipline, punctuality, cleanliness, good conduct, empathy towards elderly.

d) Keeping in view special importance of Sanskrit to the growth and development of Indian languages and its unique contribution to the cultural unity of the country, facilities for teaching Sanskrit at the school and university stages will be offered on a more liberal scale.

12) Self -Development through Comprehensive Education

a) Physical education, yoga, games and sports, NCC, NSS, art education, Bal Sansad, covering local art, craft, literature and skills, and other co- scholastic activities will be made an integral part of the curriculum and daily routine in

schools for the holistic development of children. Facilities for the above will be a pre-requisite to the recognition of schools.

b) Funds will be earmarked by the government/ school management for all co-scholastic activities in schools.

13) School Assessment and Governance

a) The framework of school standards with various parameters and indicators to measure school quality, professional competence of teachers, school leadership and the school management, as well as, self-appraisal and performance assessment will be used throughout the country

b) A mechanism will be put in place for accreditation of school boards.

c) Principals/head teachers will be held accountable for the academic performance of the schools and its improvement.

14) Regulation In Higher Education

a) An independent mechanism for administering the National Higher Education Fellowship Programme will be put in place.

b) A Central Educational Statistics Agency (CESA) will be established as the central data collection, compilation and consolidation agency with high quality statistical expertise and management information system which will be used for predictive analysis, manpower planning and future course corrections.

15) Quality Assurance In Higher Education

a) An expert committee will be constituted to study the systems of accreditation in place internationally. It will draw from the experiences of some of the best practices followed by countries having well performing systems and will suggest restructuring of NAAC and NAB as well as redefining methodologies, parameters and criteria. .

b) Evaluation/ Accreditation details of each institution will be available to the general public through a dedicated website, to enable students and other stakeholders to make informed choices.

16) Open and Distance Learning & MOOCs

a) The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), in collaboration with Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, will redefine itself to address the large potential demand for vocational education. The issues of management, monitoring and oversight of NIOS will be addressed

appropriately.

b) A quality assurance mechanism for accreditation of all universities/institutions offering ODL / MOOCs will be put in place to ensure quality, promote, innovation and reshape and modernise the ODL / MOOCs courses and programmes.

17) Internationalisation of Education

a) Selected foreign universities, from the top 200 in the world, will be encouraged to establish their presence in India through collaboration with Indian universities.

b) In order to increase acceptability of Indian students abroad and to attract international students, Indian HEIs will be encouraged to work towards internationalization of curricula aligned with international levels so as to make it globally compatible with best ranked institutions of the world.

c) Internationalisation will be included as one of the components for allocating additional financial resources to government-funded HEIs.

18) Faculty Development in Higher Education

a) A task force of experts will be set up to study the recruitment, promotion and retention procedures, followed by internationally renowned universities and institutions and suggest measures to promote intellectual and academic excellence in HEIs.

b) A national campaign will be launched to attract young talent into the teaching profession. In order to attract young talent into teaching profession, a career growth of research students, such as M.Phil & Ph.D scholars, will be created.

c) A mechanism of assessment of academic performance of faculty including peer review will be put in place so as to ensure academic accountability of public-funded institutions.

19) Research, Innovation and New Knowledge

a) A clear reorientation of research agenda of National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) will be undertaken to reflect actual issues on the ground.

b) Steps will be taken to promote generation of new knowledge and their applications and introduction of these new domains into the curricula of higher education to consolidate and strengthen India's position as a soft power.

c) In order to promote innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, 100 more incubation centres will be

established in HEIs over a period of next 5 years.

d) International collaborations and networks will be promoted for developing human resources required to sustain new knowledge with special focus on inter-disciplinary research and studies.

20) Financing Education

a) The government will take steps for reaching the long pending goal of raising the investment in education sector to at least 6% of GDP as a priority.

b) Instead of setting up new institutions, which require huge investments, priority of the Government will be to expand the capacity of existing institutions.

c) In order to encourage excellence and efficiency, performance-linked funding of higher education institutions will be implemented.

Source: xaam.in

Panchayati Raj Ministry: A downgrade for democracy

Confining it to just the Ministry of Rural Development would be the most retrograde step in democratic decentralisation in over a quarter century.

If, as [**The Hindu's exclusive on Wednesday**](#) indicates, Prime Minister Narendra Modi were to close down the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, it would confirm one's worst fears about his government's hypocritical approach to grass-roots democracy for grass-roots development.

This was a lacuna that was evident in the 'Gujarat model' of development long before it began being inflicted from the Centre. For Mr. Modi was just about the only Chief Minister to

refuse me entry to the State when, as the first ever Union Minister for the subject during UPA-I, I was attempting to round off my visits to all States and Union Territories to propagate the cause and work with State governments on State-specific action to be undertaken.

Mani Shankar Aiyer

A de-democratising move

Among other initiatives we took for strengthening panchayat empowerment was the Index of Devolution prepared by independent experts and geared towards rewarding States that over the previous year had made the most incremental progress towards more effective devolution in terms of the Constitution and their own State legislation. Many States that had been slow starters, including Bihar, Tripura, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, and Rajasthan, found their scores rising and were appropriately recognised. Gujarat never figured because its pattern was frozen.

Worse, Gujarat ran a system under which democracy at the village level was discouraged by financially incentivising panchayats elected without contest. Rajasthan, and now Haryana, have followed suit by placing regressive restrictions on less educated and poorer candidates, particularly Dalit women, from even contesting panchayat elections.

This de-democratisation of local self-government will be aggravated if a Cabinet Minister for Panchayati Raj is not available to advocate and promote the cause with Chief Ministers and his counterparts in the States. After all, the 73rd amendment, now incorporated as part IX of the Constitution, is the joint responsibility of the Union and the States, calling for high-level coordination to promote and protect the provisions of the longest and most detailed amendment ever carried out to the Constitution. It was passed virtually unanimously in December 1992 as representing the

consensus among Central and State stakeholders. This consensual method must be persisted with by bringing State ministers together; convening academic experts and field-level NGOs; promoting feedback from and best practices among elected panchayat representatives; monitoring the special interests of women representatives, Dalits and tribals; maintaining and updating data-banks on all aspects of panchayat raj; commissioning expert studies and preparing periodic reports such as the biannual State of the Panchayats reports. These are among the key activities undertaken by the Ministry. Providing such an all-India perspective will be seriously diluted or even entirely lost without an independent Ministry for the subject.

The constitutional mandate

Moreover, merging or subordinating panchayat raj under rural development amounts to a grossly inadequate reading of the Constitution, in particular the Eleventh Schedule that lists the proposed jurisdiction (“powers, authority and responsibilities”) of national-level panchayati raj. While schemes of the Rural Development Ministry, like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, rural housing, National Rural Livelihoods Mission and the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, are indeed covered under more than one entry in the Eleventh Schedule, the range of entries covers virtually the entire gamut of development and welfare in rural India, beginning with entry 1, “agriculture, including agricultural extension”, as also “animal husbandry, dairying and poultry” (entry 4) and “fisheries” (entry 5) that are the responsibility of the Agriculture Ministry; “minor irrigation, water management and watershed development” (entry 3) that falls under the Ministry of Water Resources; “social forestry and farm forestry” (entry 6) and “minor forest produce” (entry 7) that jointly concern the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Drinking water (entry 11) and sanitation

(entry 23), including the much-hyped Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, are the responsibility of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. The Eleventh Schedule goes on to detail “small scale industries, including food processing industries” (entry 8) and “khadi, village and cottage industries” (entry 9), that fall respectively under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and the Ministry of Textiles.

“Family welfare” (entry 24) and “health, including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries” (entry 23) are part of the National Rural Health Mission run by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; while the massive Integrated Child Development Services programme falls under “women and child development” (entry 25) that is run by the Ministry of the same name. “Education, including primary and secondary schools” (entry 17), “technical training and vocational education” (entry 18), “adult and non-formal education” (entry 19) and libraries (entry 20) belong to the domain of the Human Resource Development Ministry, especially the transformative Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, while “cultural activities” (entry 21) are part of the Ministry of Culture. “Social welfare” (entry 26), “the welfare of the weaker sections, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes” is in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. “Public distribution system” (entry 28) belongs to the Ministry of Food and Public Distribution. This listing is illustrative rather than comprehensive.

With such a wide constitutional remit, confining panchayati raj to just the Ministry of Rural Development will be a conceptual infringement, an emasculation of the constitutional role envisaged for panchayati raj institutions. What the 73rd amendment sought to do was a radical reorganisation of last-mile delivery of public goods and services to the panchayats

by devolving “such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government” (Article 243G). Note, “self-government” not “self-governance”: the fundamental mandate was to establish the panchayati raj system as the third tier of government, not to make these institutions implementing agencies for State departments or Union Ministries. This was to be achieved by endowing these “institutions of self-government” with the required functions, finances and functionaries (the three Fs).

Twenty-five years of progress

Clearly such a revolution in political relations between elected local government authorities and the State political set-up requires time and patient experimentation to play out. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj, set up by UPA-I in 2004, has over the past 12 years or so been advocating and incentivising this. It is the primary duty of the Ministry to perform these delicate advisory functions. Panchayati raj remains on the State list but, in view of the 73rd constitutional amendment, the Centre becomes responsible to work with the States to fulfil in letter and spirit the aims and objects of the constitutional legislation. For this revolutionary task, an independent Ministry, preferably under a persuasive and influential Minister, is essential. Otherwise panchayati raj will wither on the vine.

Prime among these is “activity mapping”, that is, identifying the numerous tasks to be undertaken in planning and implementing any given scheme with a view to allocating these different activities to different tiers of the system from the Central to the State government and the three separate levels of rural self-government: the village, the intermediary (taluka or block) and the district would have to be supplemented by parallel and simultaneous devolution to the appropriate tiers of finances and functionaries. To this end, the UPA Prime Minister, through the Cabinet secretary, issued directions in November 2004 and August 2013 to departmental

secretaries of all Ministries concerned to work on such “activity maps” for their respective Centrally-sponsored schemes. This called for a systemic overhaul of district and sub-district level administration (and the politics of administering rural India) involving the effective empowerment of a whole new tribe of elected local representatives.

The numbers alone tell the scale of the tale. As against about 5,000 elected MPs and MLAs to run the “world’s largest democracy”, we have about 28 lakh rural and about 4 lakh urban representatives, with about 14 lakh rural and urban women, making ours also the “world’s most representative democracy”. There are more elected women in India alone than in the rest of the world put together! We have also guaranteed equitable representation for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. The gram sabhas too have been constitutionally recognised to provide a forum of accountability to the beneficiaries. All this is an achievement without precedent in history or parallel in contemporary times. And this massive machinery of social change is, according to *The Hindu’s* report, to be entrusted to a Minister of State! What a recipe for retardation.

Notwithstanding the hurdles, real and imagined, thrown in the way of such empowerment, virtually the whole country is moving forward, at different speeds and with considerable diversity but, nevertheless, in the desired direction. It cannot be faster or more uniform for there are many eggs to be broken to make the devolution omelette.

Quietly, considerable progress has been made in the last 25 years. Panchayati raj has been made ineluctable, irremovable and irreversible, but much remains to be accomplished. To disrupt the process by downgrading the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and making it an adjunct of some other Ministry would be the most retrograde step in democratic decentralisation in over a quarter century. Is this really what Mr. Modi wants?

Mani Shankar Aiyar is a Congress leader and former Union Minister of Panchayati Raj.

Source: xaam.in

China pulls up chief negotiator for limited global support for anti-India position at NSG

The Chinese leadership has pulled up Wang Qun, its lead negotiator and Director General of the Arms Control Division at the Foreign Ministry, for failing to drum up significant global support for China's position in Seoul which blocked India's entry into the NSG.

Highly placed Western and Chinese sources said that Wang Qun had told Beijing that at least one third of the NSG nations would endorse China's position.

However, the position was totally in the reverse, with as many as 44 nations backing India and China only having the support of four nations.

Beijing now fears that the fallout of the NSG outcome could have an impact on a crucial verdict expected soon from the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in a case brought by the Philippines concerning China's territorial reclamation activities in the South China Sea.

As things stand, Beijing's stance flies in the face of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of which it is a signatory.

China's big fear now is India could use the same ploy that Beijing used in Seoul at the NSG plenary and back The Hague Court's decision which is likely to go against China.

Highly-placed sources said that the global support for India's position at the NSG could well be leveraged by New Delhi to back the enforcement of The Hague Judgment – a scenario which could isolate China and could even trigger its exit from UNCLOS.

Informed sources said the focus now shifts from the NSG to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague where a judgment is expected, which when enforced, could force China to give up land in favour of the Philippines.

China has launched a worldwide propaganda campaign enlisting academics, legal experts, diplomats and foreign governments stating that such legal proceedings are invalid.

But this position of China's is contrary to the rules laid out by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of which China is a signatory.

China claims that it has the support of 60 nations who believe that arbitration at The Hague is illegal. China's worry now is that post its inability to generate global support for its anti-India position on NSG at Seoul, its position at the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague could meet the same fate, and this time, it could have to pay a very heavy price.

High-level sources said on background that Seoul's outcome has "shocked China". The government thought that its emerging superpower status would guarantee the support of at least 15 nations against India.

Western sources said China is "very sensitive" to possibilities of being isolated, and the developments and outcome at Seoul "came quite close to isolation".

China is paranoid about might happen once the Permanent Court of Arbitration gives a verdict against Beijing and in favour of Philippines.

To generate global support for its position at the NSG, sources said China is silently bracing itself for a Seoul fallout which would mean an overwhelming International demand on Beijing to accept The Hague court's Judgment and give land to The Philippines.

All of this, said sources, illustrates that China is happy to enforce the letter of the law when it suits its purpose, but is prepared to reject Internationally accepted regulations when it feels its interests are under threat. Its stand at the

NSG meet in Seoul fits into that pattern.

Source: xaam.in

World Bank to lend \$1 billion to India's solar programme

In a major push for India's solar programme, the World Bank has committed more than US \$1 billion in lending over financial year 2017. The Bank will support small and large initiatives, from the installation of solar panels on rooftops to setting up of massive solar parks. This is the Bank's largest ever support for solar power in any country and the announcement comes as World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim visits the country this week.

"India's plans to virtually triple the share of renewable energy by 2030 will both transform the country's energy supply and have far-reaching global implications in the fight against climate change," said Kim in an [official release](#). "Prime Minister Modi's personal commitment toward renewable energy, particularly solar, is the driving force behind these investments. The World Bank Group will do all it can to help India meet its ambitious targets, especially around scaling up solar energy."

Kim will also express support for the International Solar Alliance (ISA), an alliance of 21 countries led by India and France at COP 21. ISA aims to mobilise a trillion dollars in investments to encourage the growth of solar energy.

The World Bank is already supporting other solar projects in India, including the approval of a \$625 million loan for the country's Grid Connected Rooftop Solar programme and setting up of the 750-MW ultra-mega solar power project in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, financed by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank Group's private sector arm.

"The rapid expansion of solar power can improve the quality of life for millions of Indians, especially for its poorest citizens," said Onno

Ruhl, World Bank country director in India. "It can also create thousands of jobs in the solar industry and underpin progress in all areas of development, helping the country fulfill its dream of becoming the 'India of the future'."

At COP 21 in Paris, India pledged to derive 40 per cent of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2030. The country has also announced the ambitious target of developing 100 GW of solar energy.

Source: xaam.in

Varunastra: 5 things to know about the lethal DRDO torpedo for Indian Navy

DRDO's Varunastra, the first indigenous heavy weight ship launched anti-submarine electric torpedo, has been handed over to Indian Navy by Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar.

Varunastra is also known as underwater missile.

It is capable of targeting quiet and stealthy submarines, both in deep and littoral waters in intense counter measure environment, says DRDO, whose lab Naval Science and

Technological Laboratory (NSTL) has developed the torpedo.

This torpedo has more than 95 per cent indigenous content.

Bharat Dynamics has been associated with NSTL in the development of Varunastra as a production agency.

We take a look at five interesting facts about DRDO's Varunastra torpedo for the Indian Navy:

1) Varunastra has been designed with latest technologies such as high speed and long endurance propulsion, software driven intelligence, conformal array acoustic homing with wide look angle and advanced digital signal processing, says DRDO.

2) The torpedo has advanced autonomous guidance algorithms with low drift navigational aids, insensitive warhead which

can operate in various combat scenarios.



- 3) It has GPS based locating aid, a unique feature in contemporary torpedoes in the world, claims DRDO.
- 4) Varunastra has been extensively tested at sea in association with Indian Navy for evaluating the weapon capabilities as per Naval Staff qualitative requirements. The weapon has completed all environmental qualification tests like shock, vibration, temperature cycling, marine environmental tests etc.
- 5) Varunastra can be fired from the Rajput class destroyers, Delhi class and all future Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) ships capable of firing heavy weight torpedoes.

Source: xaam.in

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