Concerns with Draft Education Policy

What is the issue?

- The draft of New National Education Policy was recently submitted by the Committee on education policy led by Dr. Kasturirangan.
- In this backdrop, here is an overview of the shortfalls in and concerns with the proposed policy.

What are the concerns and possible measures?

- **Rationale** – Given the diversity of the country, the very rationale for a national education policy is questioned.
    - The country could instead attempt to develop action plans for each state, clearly spelling out the priorities, mechanisms and deadlines.
    - All these should go into providing quality education to every child in the country.
- **Teachers** - The draft highlighted issues relating to pre-service training, selection of teachers and in-service training for skill-upgradation.
- However, all these aspects are already well known and discussed upon in the previous draft policies.
    - The draft should have gone into the reasons for issues like prevalence of poor pre-service training facilities in the country.
- There are numerous virtually non-existent B.Ed (Bachelor of Education) and D.El.Ed (Diploma in Elementary Education) colleges.
- The draft does not suggest anything new to resolve this issue.
- Also, there is lack of appropriate training for teachers before they get down to teaching.
    - Addressing this and a transparent mechanism for teachers' recruitment in government schools are essential in delivering quality education.
- The draft recognizes the role that DIKSHA (a portal already in place for teachers) plays in imparting in-service training.
    - DIKSHA has the potential to resolve a large number of other issues relating to teachers.
    - The draft should have reflected upon this.
- **Examinations** - The draft recommends large-scale changes in the conduct of examinations by boards, and introduction of examinations at various levels.
- However, no mention is made about the practical problems and the cost of

conducting such exams.

- A separate regulatory authority for school education has also been suggested.
- However, whether such changes would help in qualitative improvements in learning outcomes is debatable.
- **Finance** - There are other ambitious recommendations, including those relating to 'school complexes'.
- Apart from the issues relating to the utility and efficacy, the question over the source of funds for these remains unanswered.
- When the states are struggling to pay regular salaries of teachers, how will they be able to implement these recommendations is uncertain.
- **NGOs** - Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are doing significant work to improve the quality of education.
- There is only a passing reference about the role of NGOs in the draft.
    - There is a need for scaling up public-private partnership in this regard.
    - This could prove to be an effective way towards quality education without much infusion of funds from government.
- **Private schools** - A large number of students are migrating from government schools to private schools.
- The draft does not delve into the details on the reasons for such trends.
    - Private schools are, nevertheless, playing an important role in imparting school education, and will continue to do so.
    - The unresolved issues in private schools, such as high cost, reservations, etc should be addressed.
- **RTE Act** - The contentious Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education (RTE) Act provides for mandatory schooling of children belonging to weaker sections of the society.
- It is widely known that there is inappropriate implementation of this provision.
- The draft, however, does not suggest any remedy except a 'review' of this.
- Besides these, the draft does not provide for a definitive and time-bound action plan for its implementation.
    - Plans have already been prepared for Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.
    - What is required is to prepare such action plans for each state separately, as each state has a different set of issues.
    - Going forward, there has to be a mechanism to ensure implementation of these plans.

Source: Financial Express



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