Taking Forward the National Education Policy

What is the issue?

- It is one year since the launch of the National Education Policy 2020.
- For the NEP to move forward, there is need for more robust institutional mechanisms.

How has it performed so far?

- The NEP is essentially about learning through observation, listening, exploring, experimenting and asking questions.
- National boards have tried during the Covid year to bring in some changes in classroom transaction.
- The changes were in relation to well-being, inclusive education, joyful learning, a compilation of best teaching practices, assessment models etc.
- As a result of schools having closed down, the big shifts did not take place in areas of thematic learning or multiple pedagogical approaches.

What do the new challenges demand?

- Currently, there are huge learning gaps.
- Schools cannot be compared to institutions of higher education asneeds of children are more personalised and cannot be addressed only online.
- With the extension of school closures and fear of infections, children are losing touch with understanding, comprehension, reading and speaking skills.
- There is a need for effective strategies to physically equip teachers and students.
- These include better tools in the classroom, increased access to laptops and other gadgets, interactive white boards, and fast and reliable internet access.
- Technology has not been able to touch the aspects of schools as a reflection of community, time, care and values.
- Beyond the technological limitations, parents do not have the time or ability to support their children in this venture.
- Only a fraction of students across the country have moved to online

learning.

- This exposes the deep inequity in the system, and opens up a digital abyss.
- Students, teachers and other stakeholders are grappling with new technologies.
- This has led to a fragile learning system with implications for the implementation of the NEP and, in fact, education in general.

What are the changes required?

- A great deal of capacity building is required.
- Every stakeholder at the state, district, sub-district, block level has to have ownership and understanding of the concepts.
- Directorates of education have to be strengthened, for the policy to permeate to the district and zonal level educational clusters.
- Every teacher at the foundational, primary and middle school level should develop a sense of ownership for transformation to take place.

What is the right policy approach?

- The NEP is certainly extremely experiential; it cannot be brought in through online devices.
- Schools have to determine their capacity for restructuring, mobilising teachers, strategizing the operational needs required to navigate their understanding and implementation of the NEP.
- The state and national boards across the nation will have to start with pilot programmes.
- Creation of master trainers should be done who will train principals and teachers in urban and rural areas, replicating the model across all schools.
- For better implementation of the NEP, research, evaluation and documentation is essential.
- There also has to be coordination and convergence of the policy and programmes connected with it.

Source: The Indian Express

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