

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE OF
GOVERNORS ON NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, 7 September 2020

1. This Education Policy has been formulated after an unprecedented and extensive process of consultations. I have been told that in formulating this policy, more than two lakh suggestions received from two and a half lakh gram panchayats, more than twelve and a half thousand local bodies and about 675 districts have been taken into consideration. Due to such a nationwide and extensive participation, this Education Policy truly embodies national expectations and solutions. This Education Policy will be able to take the countrymen, especially the youth forward in accordance with the needs and aspirations of the 21st century. It is not only a policy document, but a reflection of the aspirations of the learners and citizens of India.
2. I thank the Union Minister of Education, Minister of State for Education and all officers of the Ministry and people of other institutions for successfully completing the elaborate and complex process of formulating and finalising the Education Policy. Dr. Kasturirangan, a recipient of Padma Vibhushan, and all the members of his team, who gave the present form to this education policy, deserve special appreciation. I congratulate the Prime Minister for his visionary leadership and inspiring role in shaping the historical document of 'National Education Policy 2020'.
3. After the announcement of the National Education Policy, discussions have started at various levels and areas. This policy has been welcomed by academics, parents, students and general public. It is being said that if changes are effectively brought about

in accordance with this policy, India will emerge as an education superpower.

4. Governors will have an important role in the implementation of this Education Policy. At present, more than two and a half crore students get education in more than 400 state universities and more than 40,000 colleges affiliated to them. State universities have a special responsibility from this point of view. Mostly, Governors are Chancellors of these universities. Governors need to contribute to the implementation of the Education Policy by establishing dialogue and coordination with universities, colleges, institutions and other stakeholders.
5. I am told that some states have already started consultation in the direction of implementation of the Education Policy through virtual conferences etc. All such efforts are commendable.
6. Education is the most effective means of social justice and personal advancement. There is no better investment than that in education to improve the future of society. From the 1968 Education Policy to the current one, it has been consistently clarified that the central and state governments should jointly aim to invest 6 percent of GDP in the field of public education. The 'National Education Policy – 2020' recommends to reach this goal at the earliest.
7. Teaching and learning should aim to develop exploration, problem solving, spirit of enquiry and creativity in the students and instil in them the ability and the new approach to use new information as required. They should be given education that develops character building, ethics, compassion and sensitivity and also makes them employable. Through a complete overhaul of the higher education system, this policy seeks to provide education to the youth according to their aspirations and needs.
8. The Education Policy clearly states that a robust public education system is the basis of a vibrant democratic society. Therefore, strengthening public educational institutions is very important. It has been emphasized in the National Education Policy that we have to develop a modern education system based on Indian

values. At the same time, efforts have to be made to provide opportunities for high quality education to everyone and to create a vibrant and equitable knowledge society. One of the aims of this education system is to generate awareness and respect among students for Fundamental Rights, Duties and Constitutional values, patriotism and their responsibilities in a changing world. The importance of public purpose and ethics has been emphasized in all areas of higher education, especially in those which groom professionals.

9. With the help of the Education Policy, we have to nurture students who are imbued with national pride as well as a sense of global well-being and can truly become global citizens.
10. Through this policy, the nature of India's education system in the digital and globalized world has been clearly enunciated. Special emphasis has been laid on inclusion of people from socially and economically disadvantaged groups or SEDGs into the education system. The highest priority of this education system will be to provide foundational literacy and numeracy to all children at primary school level by the year 2025. The structure of higher education can stand only on this foundation. Teachers will have a central role in bringing about the fundamental changes being made in the education system. It has been made clear in this Education Policy that the most promising people should be selected for the teaching profession. Their decent livelihood, dignity and autonomy should be ensured.
11. To give a strong foundation to school education, it is targeted to create by the next year i.e. 2021, a new and comprehensive curriculum for teachers' education based on this Education Policy. Teachers' education is a part of higher education. Therefore, at the State level, all of you have to achieve the very important goals related to teachers' education. In this context, there is a provision for starting sound, multi-disciplinary and integrated teachers' education programs. By the year 2030, only high-quality institutions will remain functional in this area.

12. In view of the global scenario, a new ambitious approach has been adopted in the area of Vocational Education. According to the 12th Five-Year Plan estimates, less than 5 percent of the workforce in India received formal vocational education. This number was 52 percent in the United States, 75 percent in Germany, and 96 percent in South Korea. Given the need to accelerate the spread of vocational education in India, it has been decided that at least 50 percent of the students in the school and higher education systems will be provided exposure to vocational education by the year 2025. This will help realise true potential of our demographic dividend. The 'Lok-Vidya' evolved in the Indian tradition will be linked to vocational education by higher education institutions. It has been made clear in this policy that vocational education will be considered as a part of mainstream education and such education will be given equal status. This will make our children and youth more skilled and also generate among them respect for the dignity of labour.
13. The Education Policy envisions a higher education system that derives inspiration from our rich tradition and is also modern and futuristic in outlook. From the view point of pedagogy and child psychology, it has been acknowledged that the mother tongue should be the medium of primary education. In line with this approach, the Education Policy adopts the spirit of the three-language formula. The Policy puts emphasis on the Indian languages, arts and culture. This will develop creative potential in the students and further strengthen the Indian languages. It will be helpful in preserving the unity and integrity of our country characterised by great linguistic diversity.
14. The promotion of Indian languages, arts and culture has been given special importance in the National Education Policy because they are important for India's identity as well as economy. One hundred tourist places will be identified to introduce to the students India's cultural richness and diversity. Students will be taken to those places on study tours by the institutions so that they understand the multifaceted civilization, culture, knowledge-systems, science and literature of our country. All of you can get prepared good study material about such places in your respective

states. You can also give necessary directions for the development of tourist facilities at such places.

15. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, was in favour of scientific and technical education. He believed that experts should be connected with the common people and the Indian languages. Many of his important thoughts on education plan are reflected in this Education Policy. Bapu had said, "Under my scheme there will be more and better libraries, more and better laboratories, more and better research institutes. Under it we should have an army of chemists, engineers and other experts who will be real servants of the nation and answer the varied and growing requirements of a people who are becoming increasingly conscious of their rights and wants. And all these experts will speak not a foreign language but the language of the people. The knowledge gained by them will be the common property of the people. There will be truly original work instead of mere imitation."
16. Drawing inspiration from ancient universities like Taxila, Nalanda, Vallabhi and Vikramashila, it has been recommended to establish large and multi-disciplinary universities and higher education institutions or clusters. Multi-disciplinary Education and Research Universities i.e. 'MERU' will be set up with the aim of achieving world-class quality education. This will enable the development of qualified, versatile and creative youth in every part of the country.
17. Such efforts will increase the number of international students in India. India will emerge as a global study destination where excellent education will be available at affordable cost. High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries. Also, the world's top universities will be allowed to come to India and impart education.
18. It is targeted to set up at least one large multi-disciplinary higher education institution in or around each district by 2030 to provide higher education in underserved regions. For this, several steps will have to be taken at the State level. Good higher education institutions are to be set up in Aspirational Districts and Special Education Zones. This will be an important step in the interest of

socially and economically disadvantaged groups. An effort will be made to make education accessible to all by leveraging technology for online and digital education.

19. Besides access, opportunity and quality, accountability has also been fixed in the Education Policy. This Policy also recommends giving greater autonomy to educational institutions and faculty.
20. It has been observed that the level of investment in research and innovation is 2.8 percent of GDP in the US, 4.2 percent in South Korea and 4.3 percent in Israel as compared to only 0.7 percent in India. To give impetus to a large and vibrant economy like India, it is necessary to encourage knowledge-creation and research. The Central and State governments will have to increase the percentage of investment in research and innovation.

A National Research Foundation will be constituted to guide quality academic research in all fields. To promote a research-culture, all universities and higher education institutions will work with the National Research Foundation.

21. The use of technology and its integration will accelerate reforms in the learning process and lead to better results. For this, the National Educational Technology Forum – NETF will be established. NETF will provide consultation to the state government agencies also. All aspects of the education system will be made simpler and more accessible with the help of technology. Research and technology-use will be encouraged in the context of Artificial Intelligence so that effective changes may be carried out in areas such as healthcare, agriculture and climate-change.
22. The success of this Education Policy will depend on the effective contribution of both the Centre and the States. Education is enumerated as a subject in the concurrent list of the Constitution. Therefore, it requires joint and coordinated action by the Centre and the States.
23. There are inter-state variations on the various parameters related to education. States have to adopt the measures recommended in the National Education Policy according to their local conditions,

characteristics and expectations. In order to effectively implement this Education Policy, the Central and State governments will have to work relentlessly in coordination with all the stakeholders. In order to ensure timely implementation of the recommendations of this Policy in the sphere of higher education, it is necessary to appoint highly qualified and deserving persons to fill the vacancies of the Vice Chancellors and Faculty in the universities.

Pradhanmantri ji and Shikshamantri ji,

24. I spoke to all the Governors and Lt. Governors a few days ago in the context of the discussion on National Education Policy being held today. I was very happy to observe their eagerness, enthusiasm and preparation. All the Governors have held meetings with their Education Ministers and the Vice Chancellors of the State Universities and have come prepared to discuss the National Education Policy today. I will also be present in the next session of this conference. Continuing the process of dialogue and consultation related to the implementation of the Education Policy, the Union Ministry of Education has scheduled a virtual conference of central universities and higher education institutions on 19 September. I will take part in that conference also. Integrating the findings of all such discussions will lead to a holistic view on issues related to the implementation of this Education Policy.
25. I would like all the Governors to have a theme-based virtual conference with regard to implementation of the new Education Policy in their states. After carrying out extensive consultations on the various aspects of the Education Policy, you may like to send your important suggestions to the Union Ministry of Education so that they can be utilised in the entire country.
26. All the Governors and Education Ministers have important responsibilities in the implementation of recommendations of the National Education Policy. I am sure that by contributing to the implementation of the National Education Policy, all of you will be playing an important role in transforming India into a 'knowledge-hub.'

Thank you,
Jai Hind!