

Role of School Leadership in Context of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

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Abstract

The study reveals concept of school leadership in context of major education policies of India including NEP 2020. It explores brief introduction, achievements and failures of national education policies of India like National Policy on Education (NPE) 1968, National Education Policy (NEP) 1986 and NEP 2020. On one side, NPE was a major step in the direction of reshaping the education system to meet the aspirations and challenges of a newly independent India. However, the NEP (1986) on other side focused on the principles of quality, access and equity in education. The study also reveals some basic tenets of NEP 2020 which includes an equitable and inclusive education, continuous professional development and career management and progression, efficient resourcing and effective governance, standard setting and accreditation. Moreover, the policy lays stress on the principle that education must widen not only the horizons of cognitive capacities- both the foundational capacities of literacy and numeracy and higher order cognitive capacities like critical thinking and problem solving, but also social, ethical and emotional capacities and outlook. The main part of study deals with role and performance of school leaders in context of, transparency, effectiveness and accountability type of indicators. It also assesses vision and mission of NEP 2020 in school leadership perspective.

Keywords: *School Leadership, NEP 2020, Transparency, Effectiveness, Accountability*

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I. Introduction

Leadership occupies pivotal position in every sphere of human activities, be it social, economic, political, education etc. So far as education is concerned, leadership can be instrumental in reshaping, reinventing and reorienting the growth and dynamics of education system. Even leadership in school education is a critical component of Indian education system. India is a vast country in size and diversity so it needs proactive leadership who can navigate this diversity. India after independence experienced a series of national education policies. The first one was National Policy on Education (NPE) implemented by Government of India in 1968 and next after a long gap in 1986 under the banner of National Education Policy in 1986 and the recent one under the guidance and direction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020(Kumar, 2020, p. 10).

The NPE 1968 gave impetus to equal educational opportunities to all, national growth, higher education, research and fostering a scientific temperament. However, NEP 1986 is considered watershed development and a milestone in the nation's educational history. The policy focused on the principles of quality, access and equity in education (Swargiary, 2023, pp. 30-31). Moreover, the policy laid emphasize on universalization of primary education, widening the exposure and scope of adult literacy, and to correct social and regional imbalances. Though, NPE 1968 was a major step in the direction of reshaping the education system to meet the aspirations and challenges of a newly independent India. However, the policy faced shortcomings related to quality disparities, vocational focus, implementation challenges and gender disparities. Subsequently, NEP 1986 also faced challenges related to infrastructure, resource allocation, and pedagogical transition and equity(Swargiary, 2023, pp. 30-31).

The New Education Policy (NEP2020) is devised to revamp and revitalize landscape of Indian education system including its regulation and governance and to create a new system that is aligned with the desired goals of 21st century. NEP lays special emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. further, the policy lays stress on the principle that education must widen not only the horizons of cognitive capacities- both the foundational capacities of literacy and numeracy and higher order cognitive capacities like critical thinking and problem solving, but also social, ethical and emotional capacities and outlook. Moreover, this NEP 2020 visualizes an 'education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge super power (NEP 2020, p. 6). Furthermore, NEP

2020 explore school education in its part-I envisages not only a desirable change in 10+2 structure but also prompt to cover early childhood care and education, universal access to education, holistic and integrated learning, experiential learning and continuous professional development in school leaders (School Principles/school complex leaders) (NEP 2020, p. 22). Even the policy reaffirms the debate on the role of school leaders in ushering in school improvement (Bakshi, 2022, pp. 66-67).

II. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine nature, character and content of National Education Policies of India, and to look into their merits and demerits.
2. To examine main principles of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in school leadership perspective. The study also examines the role of school managers in exploiting the potential resource within complexes and to usher sustainable change in teaching and learning environment.
3. To evaluate the role and performance of school leaders in context of, transparency, effectiveness and accountability type of indicators.

III. Methodology

The methodology of this study consists of comprehensive literature survey related to school leadership concept and National Education Policy 2020. The study also unveiled some genuine indicators for measuring the performance of school leaders as well as teachers in school education.

IV. Discussion

4.1 NEP 2020

National Education Policy 2020 got approval by Union cabinet on 29th July 2020. It proposes reforms both in school education as well as higher education including technical education. Even the policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure including its regulation and governance. (PIB, 2022, p.1)

Moreover, the policy envisages an India centred education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high quality education to all.

Salient Features of NEP 2020:

- i. Ensuring Universal Access at All Levels of schooling from pre-primary school to Grade 12;
- ii. Ensuring quality early childhood care and education for all children between 3-6 years;
- iii. New Curricular and Pedagogical Structure (5+3+3+4);
- iv. Establishing National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy;
- v. Setting up of a new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development);
- vi. Equitable and inclusive education - Special emphasis given on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs);
- vii. Robust and transparent processes for recruitment of teachers and merit based performance;
- viii. Ensuring availability of all resources through school complexes and clusters;
- ix. Setting up of State School Standards Authority (SSSA);
- x. (xiv) Exposure of vocational education in school and higher education system;
- xi. Increasing GER in higher education to 50%;
- xii. (xvi) Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education with multiple entry/exit options;
- xiii. Establishment of Academic Bank of Credit;
- xiv. Establishing a National Mission for Mentoring.
- xv. Strengthening of the Central Advisory Board of Education to ensure coordination to bring overall focus on quality education.(PIB, 2022, p.1)

Assessment and Evaluation of NEP 2020

- No doubt, NEP 2020 is a visionary document of 21st century lays special emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. However, the policy does not contain any content which can uplift most downtrodden sections of society who remained far away from school education past several decades.
- By and large, NEP 2020 envisages revamping, rebuilding and reorienting the structure of education in line with the aspirational goals of 21st century. The policy focused on creativity, innovation and holistic development. However, the successful execution of the policy requires collaborative efforts from all stakeholders including policy makers, academicians and the community.

- It is also true that NEP 2020 proposed reforms in the sphere of national curriculum which aims to create exponential learning environment in the education sector. But, these appealing reforms require the participation of educationists, teachers, parents and civil society members who must extend their cooperation in ensuring effective curriculum design and delivery.
- NEP 2020 made an extensive focus on continuous assessment, competency- based evaluation and to monitor student's capabilities and progress. However, the methods of assessment and capacity building programmes need to be implemented for continuous professional development.

4.2 School Leadership

School leaders/school managers play an instrumental role in exploiting the potential resource within complexes and to usher sustainable change in teaching and learning environment. School leaders often ignite the staff of school to get the things done properly. So, if school heads are ill equipped the system gets a setback and the results will not be reasonable and satisfactory. NEP 2020 set clear-cut roles and competency framework for academic leaders. To bring desirable learning outcomes in institutions, there is a dire need to improve the leadership and management skills among leaders and leaders are expected to participate in maximum time for their professional development under CPD (continuing professional development). NEP 2020 lays emphasis on competence of teachers and system leaders from school to Educational administration for effective change in management because the leaders play pivotal roles in initiating and sustaining any change in the system. In order to reap productive and result oriented benefits in school complexes, the role of school leadership becomes central not only to attain visible change in teaching learning process but also through their influence on staff by motivation, inspirations, responsiveness, and commitment. In the contemporary scenario, school heads are considered to be main catalysts with new roles and responsibilities emerging thereof. School leaders can utilize resourceful capacities and energy of their teachers in bringing-out sustainable changes. Moreover, there are numerous ways in which school heads can usher progressive and proactive change in the institution on holistic and integrated manner (Rising Kashmir, 2022, p.6).

First, it is imperative for both school heads as well as teachers on staff must show curiosity and promptness in learning new ideas and concepts for school improvement and innovations. Second, school leaders must imbibe inquisitive spirit and the requisite skills for crisis management and conflict resolutions in crucial situations which arise due to various factors in the school system or due to differences of opinions. Third, there is need to establish school grievance redress mechanism or port also that genuine issues and concerns must be addressed at an earliest. Fourth, school leadership development programmes, capacity building programmes and refresher courses must be organized and conducted in a timeframe manner. Fifth, school leaders must have good rapport with society and alumni to get feedback and check the undesirable developments. The schedule for timely periodical appraisal of system, meetings and review of all the components of schools make the school leaders active, and the sustainable efficient system thrives. Sixth, as per NEP 2020, school leaders must be given adequate financial and administrative support to work in an environment of self-governance (Rising Kashmir, 2022, p. 6).

Now, the main part of this study is to explore the possibilities of unveiling the acronym of "TEACH" theoretically in order to measure role or performance of school leaders/complex heads. In this case, the author after went through in-depth study of numerous measures or indicators used by premier institution at global level, the following indicators has been theoretically deciphered out of the acronym of "TEACH".

T = Transparency

E = Effectiveness

A = Accountability

Transparency: Generally, transparency can be seen in various fields like commerce, politics and education etc. Transparency means 'allowing light to pass through so that objects behind can be distinctly seen, clear and obvious'. In the contemporary scenario, transparency can be considered an authentic indicator to measure performance and success of any organization on its being fair and consistent (Bozbayindir, 2016, pp. 45-46). In order to measure transparency in education sector, several methods or approaches have been used by international agencies. Let's discuss some of the prominent methods applicable at global level.

School Report Cards: School Report Cards (SRCs) serve as vital means to provide school level information to schools, parents, and communities, which in turn increases accountability and transparency in the education system. In general, School Report Cards refers to the cumulative information of education at the school level. For instance, an education system may present school level information in the report card on pupil-teacher ratios, student achievement, and teacher absenteeism. SRCs help decision makers to monitor progress, developments and outcomes of education. The report card also helps decision makers of education to plan budgets, and make informed policies. Even some SRCs also include the government as a target audience; they

are normally used to inform the general public about school performance, so as to enable stakeholders to more effectively hold schools accountable for education quality (Cheng & Moses, 2016, pp. 23-24).

Motivation and Purpose of SRCs: School Report Cards are initiated for a multitude of reasons including political initiatives that promote transparency in public service sectors, demand from local communities and civic groups, education decentralization process. They can serve a variety of purposes including increasing accountability in the education system, assisting in school planning and budgeting processes, providing feedback to administrators and teachers and increasing social participation which in the larger interest can improve civil society (Cheng & Moses, 2016, pp. 23-24) (Table 1).

Table 1: Format of SRCs

Score Cards	<i>It can be numerical or Letter scale that represent performance or Progress.</i>
School Profiles	<i>It can be quantitative or qualitative that can represent overall picture of school operation.</i>
School Education Index	<i>It presents a composite score based on indicators (like student learning outcomes etc) for each school, enabling users to compare schools and assess how a school changes over time.</i>
School Ranking	<i>It rank schools from best to worst at the national or regional level based on a set of indicators like school performance on standardized learning assessment.</i>

Source: Cheng, J. and Moses, K. (2016). *Promoting Transparency through Information: A Global Review of School Report Cards*, International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO.

Effectiveness: Teacher effectiveness is a broad term, however in its narrow sense, refers to a teacher’s ability to improve student learning as measured by student gains on standardized achievement tests. Even though, it is one component of teaching ability, and it is not a comprehensive and robust view of teacher effectiveness (Little, Goe& Bell, 2009, pp. 20-22).

Methods of Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: There are several methods through which teacher effectiveness can be evaluated:

Value Added Mode: Value added models are considered to be new measures of teaching effectiveness. The supporters of this model argue that it can provide an objective means of determining which teachers are successful at improving student learning. Value Added models actually provide a précis score of the contribution of various factors toward growth in student achievement. No doubt, statistical models are cumbersome but the underlying assumptions are simple, for instance, student’s prior achievement on standardized tests can be used to predict their achievement in a specific subject the next year. When most students in a particular classroom perform better than predicted on standardized achievement tests, the teacher is credited with being effective, but when most of his or her students perform worse than predicted, the teacher may be deemed less effective. It is also true that some models take into account only students prior achievement scores; others include student characteristics (e.g. gender, race and socio-economic background); and still others include information about teachers’ experience.

Classroom Observation: Classroom observations are instruments through which teacher evaluation can be done. They can measure general teaching practices or subject specific techniques. In order to measure teacher effectiveness through classroom observation method, following important aspects are crucial:

- Well trained and calibrated observers are required who can use standard ways and means so that results shall be comparable across classrooms.
- Gathered observations must provide significant, authentic and useful information about teachers practice and role in class.

Analysis of Classroom Artifacts: This method considers teaching assignments, lesson plans, assessments, student work, and other artefacts to determine the quality of instruction in a classroom. The idea behind analysing classroom artifacts is that evaluators can garner a better understanding of how a teacher creates learning opportunities for students on a day to day basis.

Student Evaluation: Most often student evaluations come in the form of questionnaire that asks students to rate teachers on a Likert type scale (usually four or five point scale). This method usually gives chance to students to assess various aspects of teaching, from course content to specific teaching practices and behaviours (Little, Goe& Bell, 2009, pp. 20-22) (Table 2).

Table 2: Matching Measures to Specific Purposes

<i>Purpose of Evaluation of Teacher Effectiveness</i>	<i>Value Added</i>	<i>Classroom Observations</i>	<i>Analysis of Artifacts</i>	<i>Student Ratings</i>	<i>Other Reports</i>
<i>Find out whether grade-level or instructional teams are meeting specific achievement goals.</i>	X				
<i>Determine whether teachers/students are meeting achievement growth expectation.</i>	X		X		
<i>Gather information in order to provide new teachers with guidance related to identified strengths and shortcomings</i>		X	X		X
<i>Examine the effectiveness of teachers in lower elementary grades for which no test scores from previous years are available to predict student achievement</i>		X	X		X
<i>Examine the effectiveness of teachers in non-academic subjects (e.g. art, music, and physical education)</i>		X	X		X
<i>Determine whether a new teacher is meeting performance expectations in the classrooms</i>	X	X			X
<i>Establish whether a teacher is effectively communicating with parents/guardians.</i>	X	X			X
<i>Determine who would qualify to become a mentor, coach or teacher leader.</i>		X			X

Source: Little, O., Goe, L., and Bell, C. (2009). *A Practical Guide to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness*, National Comprehensive Centre for Teacher Quality, Learning Point Associates, Vanderbilt University.

Accountability: Accountability refers to that course of action by which actors provide reasons to stakeholders for their actions and the actions of their organization. They do so with a reasonable purpose, which has to do with complying with existing laws and regulations and accounting for the quality and efficiency of the services provided. Moreover, the results of the actions already carried-out should be the basis for improvement. As such, the information collected during accountability process is a vital part of the feedback actors need for learning (Shewbridge, Foster & Rouw, 2019, pp. 40-41).

Accountability system includes traditional hierarchical mechanisms to check that actors across the system comply with laws and regulations set at the central (regulatory accountability). Regulatory accountability has been gradually supplemented with mechanisms of school performance accountability as non-governmental actors have been involved in education governance through decentralization reforms such as increased school autonomy and parental choice. Standard setting and testing are the most prominent characteristics of this shift towards a more evaluation centred role of the state. Both regulatory and performance accountability are systems of vertical accountability. In the former, the central level steers decision making through input steering mechanisms such as detailed school pedagogical and organizational instructions and overseeing mechanisms. In the latter, steering works through a focus on outputs such as standardized testing and the publication of its results (Shewbridge, Foster & Rouw, 2019, pp. 40-41) (Table 4).

Table 4: Vertical and Horizontal forms of accountability in Education

Vertical	<p>Regulatory School Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with laws and regulations. • Focuses on inputs and processes within the school • Mechanism: Reporting to higher levels of authority 	<p>School Performance Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic school evaluations. • Mechanisms: a) Standardized student testing. b). Public reporting of school performance. c). Rewards or sanctions
Horizontal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional standards for teachers and other educational staff. • Mechanisms: Credible, useful standards and the creation of professional learning communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving students, parents, communities and other stakeholders in formulating strategies, decision making, and evaluation.

Source: Shewbridge, C., Marc Fuster, M., and Rouw, R. (2019). *Constructive Accountability Transparency and Trust between Government and Highly Autonomous in Flanders*, Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, OECD

Both vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms independently are ready hand references for ensuring the concept of accountability on ground. However, the constructive accountability mechanism which is a combination of both horizontal and vertical fulfil all dimensions of accountability in coherent manner. On the one hand, constructive accountability can be invoked in order to address potential accountability gaps, for instance, situations where the central level may no longer be the driving force for accountability purposes but

there is not a clear or functioning replacement. There is also a very real question about which actors at which levels should be held accountable for which outcomes.

Accountability should aspire to be a central piece of broader feedback machinery. It should aim at providing actors with information on what they do and how they do it. To this end, education system needs robust monitoring and evaluation system at the local level that are based on rich data sets, count on individual and organizational capacity to use them, and a shared understanding among the different actors of the aims and underlying concepts of evaluation.

There are several other methods or tools to usher accountability in education system. At the end, multiple perspectives of accountability arrangement are in dire need to capture holistic vision of education. The combination of administrative databases, professional knowledge, and students, parents and other stakeholders views allow decision makers and practitioners to obtain a clearer picture of the reality they face (Shewbridge, Foster & Rouw, 2019, pp. 40-41).

V. Assessment of NEP 2020 in School Leadership Perspective

NEP 2020 is a comprehensive and development oriented document of 21st century which aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. The main purpose of this policy is not only to revamp, revitalize and reorient basic ideals of good education but also to reenergise Indian cultural ethos. No doubt NEP 2020 focuses on equitable and inclusive education, continuous professional development and career management and progression, efficient resourcing and effective governance, standard setting and accreditation etc; however, the policy skipped the role of school leadership in determining, organising and devising basic indicators of leadership performance in school education system. On one side, NEP 2020 encompasses innovative, progressive, holistic and integrative approaches which in larger interest fulfil desired goals of each individual in the 21st century, however institutionalization approach in delivering services is somewhat missing.

VI. Conclusion

In contemporary scenario, school leadership occupies pivotal position in every field of human life. No doubt, NEP2020 is considered to be inclusive, equitable, holistic, comprehensive and integrative document of the 21st century. However, the policy did not explicitly mention the role of school leadership in bringing-out transparency in school administration. In order to revitalize and revamp the role of school leaders in context of quality education, transparency, effectiveness and accountability type of indicators applied in this study theoretically. Moreover, NEP-2020 is a visionary document 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. Furthermore, the policy focuses on one side skill development, experiential learning, critical and creative thinking, and continuous professional development of teachers but the policy on other side failed to evolve realistic approaches of human resource development.

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