

St. Xavier's Institute of Education

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National Webinar on

Transforming School Education- NEP 2020 (PERSPECTIVES & CHALLENGES)

Report

Convener

Dr. Sosamma Samuel,
Principal

Advisor

Fr. Blaise D'Souza SJ.
Manager, SXIES

Organizing Secretaries

Dr. Geeta Shetty
Dr. Vini Sebastian
Dr. Elvina Pereira

Resource Persons

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Leena Chandran
Wadia
Senior Consultant,
Committee on the
National Education
Policy 2020; Sr.
Fellow at ORF, Mumbai.

Response to Keynote

Address by

Dr. Frazer Mascarenhas
SJ, Manager, St.
Stanislaus High School;
Former Principal, St.
Xavier's College,
Mumbai

Panelist

Dr. Gagan Gupta,
Dept. of Education in
Science & Mathematics ,
NCERT, New Delhi

Panelist

Dr. Haneet Gandhi,
Assistant Prof., Central
Institute of Education,
New Delhi

Day & Date: Saturday, 12th December, 2020

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

St. Xavier's Institute of Education has organized National Webinar on, 'Transforming School Education- NEP 2020' (Perspectives & Challenges) on Saturday, 12th December, 2020. The objectives of the Webinar were:

- To understand the key focus areas of NEP 2020
- To analyze the changes in the school curriculum and the stages of school education
- To understand the ways of improving Teacher Quality and transforming Institutional culture
- To understand the nature of school governance and accreditation process
- To assimilate the vision and future impact of the NEP 2020
- To reflect on the sessions and provide insights on the same

The webinar was conducted into two parts the first half of the day was where the Keynote Speech was delivered by Dr. Leena Chandran Wadia Senior Consultant, Committee on the National Education Policy 2020; Sr.Fellow at ORF, Mumbai. Response to Keynote Address was delivered by Dr. Frazer Mascarenhas SJ, Manager, St. Stanislaus High School; Former Principal, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. Overview of the NEP 2020 was given by the Dr. Sosamma Samuel Principal, St. Xavier's Institute of Educaiton. Input sessions on School Education as per NEP 2020 were conducted by Dr. Geeta Shetty; Associate Professor, St.Xavier's Institute of Education, Dr. Vini Sebastian, Associate Professor, St.Xavier's Institute of Education, and Dr. Elvina Pereira Assistant Professor, St.Xavier's Institute of Education,

The second half of the day was the Panel Discussion. The Panelists were Dr. Gagan Gupta, Dept. of Education in Science & Mathematics , NCERT, New Delhi and Dr. Haneet Gandhi, Assistant Prof., Central Institute of Education, New Delhi. The session was moderated by Dr. Geeta Shetty Associate Professor, St. Xavier's Institute of Education. Concluding remarks were given by Fr. Blaise D'Souza SJ. Manager, St. Xavier's Institute of Education Society.

The Webinar started by invoking God's presence through the hope filled poem written by Rabindranath Tagore. Principal, Dr. Sosamma Samuel welcomed the dignitaries' and the participants and also said how NEP 2020 will a path breaking step for a vibrant India. Dr. Samuel focused on how we need to study the policy and develop the insights and highlighted the need to through understanding of NEP 2020 to face the challenges of 21st century.

Dr. Geeta Shetty introduced the Key Note Speaker Dr. Leena Chandran Wadia. In keynote speech Dr. Leena Wadia highlighted and spoke about various aspects of Draft NEP 2020.

Dr. Leena Wadia gave background of NEP and also deliberated about why it took almost 30 years for the new education policy to materialise and as she gave the timeline of NEP 2020 and how it came into being.

Dr. Wadia spoke in the context of the matters or areas which needs urgent attention like the learning problems such as lack of school preparedness, hunger, language problems etc. Also there are several sources of learning problems and every state in India has different problems. So there is need to focus on three things early childhood care and education, foundational literacy and numeracy. Further Dr. Wadia explained the need of making a commitment to universalization of education which meant extending the scope of Right to Education from 3 years to secondary school levels and making education free till the age of 18years. With this 3 -6 years age group is included in the formal education by NEP 2020. With respect to socially and economically disadvantages groups and traditional disadvantage groups -SC/ST, Minorities etc there is one more very important disadvantage group which is regional variation which is a very large source of disadvantages. Also economic disadvantage a lot along with problems of migrant children, girls and women.

Dr.Wadia also highlighted that larger vision in NEP 2020 is that we must strengthen government schools because 55% enrolment is still in the government schools and it is the only way to have equitable and inclusive education. Hence the focus of the NEP 2020 is government schools. To strengthen the government schools we need to add pre-primary classes into the formal system and Aaganwadis must not be disturb as they are doing good job. She also mentioned that NEP 2020 does not interfere with the role of State Governments in education.

While speaking about language learning Dr. Wadia said children learn through language. The recent researches have shown that the brains of children during foundational years are completely blasting and they can learn any language without much effort. Also Children learn languages through interactions with adults.

Dr.Wadia also pointed out that the approach to curriculum and pedagogy needs to lift the separation from subjects and make it flexible curriculum. In this process the teachers are the torch bearers. This will further strengthen with the efforts to get professional education status to teaching. She also mentioned why Non-academic work given to the teachers should be limited. Further she deliberated about if the aim of the policy is to bring out the best in each child and to encourage each and every child to find his or her own strength then obviously the teachers play a prominent role and take the centre stage. Hence we need to relook at the all the aspects like teachers initial preparations, recruitment, conditions of work, carrier pathways. Mainstreaming Vocational Education is concern and can help in focusing learning by doing. Connect with the community etc. All this will help in developing not just visuals, athematic, oratory but tactile and kinaesthetic skills etc.

NEP also has very sharp focus on disadvantage students of all kinds and at very young children shuld be provided with early childhood care and education. Also the need for Teachers and Administrators should adopt some principles and stick to them. She also pointed the need to streaming vocational education-which will help in learning by doing to develop many skills.

Dr. Frazer Mascarenhas in his response to the keynote address expressed the concerns like:

- The NEP is now in its implementation stage which adopts UN SDGs 2030 goals of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and it explains very beautifully the principles and processes of education. There are lofty goals which require the entire education system to be reconfigured to sustain and to support foster learning. This requires clarifications. It is important to understand and get clarification on these implications for our schools. There are certain conclusions which are very difficult to accept.
- The constitutional values are mentioned the great deal in the document but there is no mention of secularism which is one of the pillars of the constitution. This is disturbing especially for minority community. This side-lined is a concern. Also no mention of minority educational rights at all as per the constitution. Whereas minority educational institutions both linguistic and religious are eminent institutions in the sphere of education in the country so since it is not mentioned so it needs clarification. It is still important for the minority institutions to know whether the minority rights are still being upheld.
- The NEP seems to remove the present governing structure of all public or government institutions including private minority institutions. Hence there is a need to understand that as document does not give any role to the present managing structures of private aided schools and even colleges. It's a concern because these institutions have been built up over the years. So what is the situation of the present trustees of the aided private schools and colleges? Needs more clarifications.
- In NEP 2020 under school complex it is mentioned that the department will endorse and confirm the school development plan of each school and complex. But are the trustees of these schools have role to play that is not clarified at all. Hence there seems to be a problem. Because the schools have been run by these trustees but to put them perhaps under others stakeholders is very disconcerting because schools might lose the directions that they would get from the management.
- With respect to higher education the Board of Governors (BOG) shall be established and there shall be overarching legislature that will supersede any contriving positions of earlier legislation. This means the colleges which will become Universities now will be run by a board of governors who will be appointed by the government this is almost like a nationalization of education taking over educational institutions because they are partially funded by the government. Whether or not these aided institutions will be considers just government institutions? This will be unacceptable because of the high traditions that some of the institutions have set which the country has profited. This is also concern and would need clarification.
- About sharing of resources several schools have established very good infrastructures which is being used to the optimum by the students of the school and also some of the schools are sharing their resources. But to share these resources under a management of school complex committee that would be

the degrading the infrastructure that schools have built up over the years. This perhaps the refusal of the government to provide infrastructure and resources for all.

- With respect to shifting teachers from one school to another where each school has its own ethos, culture and learning environment. This may be profitable in rural areas but would it be also applicable to the schools in urban set up like Mumbai? Which already have the culture and producing students that the NEP is talking about so in this regard there needs to clarification.
- About the impact of NEP 2020 on the poor and the disadvantaged the emphasis on digital learning, open schools, etc. is likely to leave the girl child, socially and economically disadvantaged, the differently abled, minority community students without the opportunity for the normal quality education. Also Dr. Mascarenhas was surprised to see the recommendation for state open schooling at primary level students. The main problem is the use technological solutions at very young age which doesn't really works even in city like Mumbai this may push out students who may not be able to get technology support where there is fear of certain children may get pushed out of the system
- At the university level degree would help students to get most productive employment. Hence coming back to the system is bit difficult and need to take care.
- Regarding centralization of creative content from pre-primary till 12th standard states will be given the right to develop its own content is fine. But at the same time policy is saying ECCE Curriculum is the responsibility of the MHRD. With respect to NEP 2020 which pushes National Textbooks where local content and importance could be side-lined.
- With respect to centralization of school assessment and centralized admission process where there are chances of nobody taking 12th standard examination seriously due to entrance through national tests at the undergraduate level.
- Finally Dr. Mascarenhas concluded saying that major changes in education would require massive infrastructure and recruitment of staff. Also thousands of pre-primary schools have to be started and manned. Training of these pre-primary teachers for in-service 6 months online perhaps for time being may lead to very poor quality of education. When government is talking about giving 6% to build up infrastructure which may not come from the government but through private partners and philanthropic participation this means privatization of education system. Where the private parties aim may be something else and suddenly expecting them to be generous may not be a very reasonable thing to expect.
- Dr. Mascarenhas requested the keynote speaker Dr. Wadia to throw light on the concerned raised by him regarding NEP 2020 which will help greatly in the implementation of NEP 2020.
- Dr. Wadia in her response said that there is some suspect about the private institutions in the country but at the same time there are some very good private institutions. There is no intension of constraining the

private institutions. We as a community should wait for the plan of action of NEP 2020 to be implemented. Hence we need to be alert when the first draft is released and check. The school complex was primarily for rural areas where there is single teacher schools and no intension to impose school complex. Also it is meant to assist schools function better. Speaking about national assessment survey Dr. Wadia said they are key surveys to make sure that foundational literacy which is happening at the end of 3rd and the 5th grade and at the 8th Grade. Common Entrance Examination for the admission was to lift the pressure at 10th and 12th standard. Since the numbers of good colleges are less there is pressure on these colleges. Finally she said the intension of the policy is not to takeaway rights and we need to translate these concerns into alertness when we see the program of implementation. Also if the concerns raised by private aided institutions which are small in number are not given due attention then we must push it and she will be happy to work towards it.

The opportunity was provided to the participants to ask questions and some of the participants put forth the questions and the responses were given by the keynote speaker.

The second half of the morning session started with the inputs given by Principal and SXIE faculty members. The input sessions were planned to present the various aspects of NEP 2020- Part I School Education.

Dr. Sosamma Samuel Principal, SXIE presented the overview that is the Vision and the objectives of NEP 2020.

Dr. Geeta Shetty Associate Professor, presented on the theme NEP 2020- Early Childhood Care and Education and stages of Education

Dr. Vini Sebastian, Associate Professor presented on the theme NEP 2020--Nurturing an inclusive culture, Teacher Recruitment and Professional Development , Teacher Education and Institutional Culture

Dr. Elvina Pereira Assistant Professor presented on, NEP 2020- Governance and Accreditation

The input sessions provided the participants an opportunity to know the major aspects of Par I School Education -NEP 2020.