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# **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

## **SEPTEMBER EDITION**

### **NEWSLETTER FOCUS:**

- **UNION GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS AND POLICIES IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS**
- **NEW EDUCATION POLICY**
- **THE 75<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

### **MAJOR EVENT:**

**INDIA – CHINA TALKS FOLLOWING THE STAND OFF**

# THE UNION GOVERNMENT'S RECENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS IN A COVID-19 WORLD

The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected several nations, economies, and social structures all over the world. India being the second most populous country is naturally not immune to it. Given the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic, declining economy, changing political procedures, continuous medical research, all is taking place in India. In such a time, the actions, reactions and the steps taken by the country's central government become even more crucial and every move of the government could be called its policy in its own right. The following article is a humble attempt to analyse a few of the recent steps taken by the Union Government of India in different domains.

## **A. HEALTH:**

No one is new to the COVID - 19 pandemic in the country as it has been more than 6 months since the first case was recorded in India back in early March. Being a highly populous nation with lack of adequate amount of space and resources, the country's covid positive count has been increasing manifold. India recently went on to overtake Brazil as the country with second highest number of coronavirus cases in the world after the United States of America. As of 29th September, 2020, India has crossed the covid positive cases count by 6216590, with 941064 active positive cases, 5177637 recoveries, and 97889 deaths.

The Union Government has tried various ways to curtail the outspread of the virus in the country, be it the nationwide lockdown, its extensions or reopening of the country in different phases in accordance to the situation in different areas and states, enforcement of various guidelines to maintain social distancing, creation of apps like 'Aarogya Setu' for covid positive cases tracking and testing. However, even after such measures, the covid situation is growing at an unprecedented rate and is nowhere near to reducing. All these results prove the inefficient implementation of the covid action plan of the country.

It is true that initiatives have been taken to control the pandemic, however in a highly populated country like India, not just the Union Government, but all State Governments have been unable to garner the attention of the masses and educate them about the harms this virus carries. With the notion of the recovery rates being high, people are now not giving much heed to the rules set by the government of wearing masks, maintaining social distancing; the streets of various cities are a proof of the same. While the Central Government's move to increase testing all over the country and the passing on the baton to the State Governments in handling the lockdown situation of their respective states which they are more aware of and updated with was a smart and efficient one, it too has not been able to reap much benefits as such.

It is understandable as to why the government is focussing on opening up the country to stabilize the economy, but it is also imperative to keep in mind the degrading covid situation of the country. If the citizens don't remain healthy, the economy would not be able to function anyway. All rules demand for stricter enforcement in the nation. Apart from this, the Union Government has also been called out for the delay in the revealing of the COVID -19 vaccine which they regularly promoted and publicised to be launched on Independence Day. While phase 2 and phase 3 trial tests have started, the incident in the United Kingdom related to the trials of vaccines made by the Oxford University and AstraZeneca, trials have been stopped around a number of places, including India.

## **B. POLITICAL:**

The sessions of the Parliament and the functioning of the Legislature are highly important and essential for any democracy. With the prime focus of the Legislature being the creation and modification of several bills, laws and regulations, it also incorporates debates and discussions over different issues and holds the responsibility of questioning the accountability of the Executive. The government's functioning can be scrutinised by both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha of the Parliament.

A lot of emphasis currently resides on the Monsoon Session of the Parliament. In India, the Parliament meets thrice a year in the Budget Session, Monsoon Session and the Winter Session,

with the mid-year session usually organised in July or August. 2020 truly lived up to its name of the year of uncertainty by bringing in a shift in the schedule of these sessions and delaying this year's Monsoon Session. The delayed 18-day long session, which started from 14th of September has garnered attention for a drastic change in its structure owing to the pandemic.

Unprecedented times do call for unexpected changes, however, one of the biggest modifications brought up for this year's Monsoon Session has to be the cancelling of the Question Hour. As the name suggests, Question Hour refers to an hour dedicated in both the houses of the Parliament where MPs raise questions directed towards specific MP, ministries and the working of the government. Questions can be of different types, two of the most common ones being the 'starred' questions which need to be answered by the MPs orally during the session, and the 'unstarred' questions which can be answered in writing. Both these types of questions have to be submitted on a prior notice and a list and order of the same is decided on a random ballot basis. It is the most authentic way the government's power to be kept in check and aligns with the opposition's most important duty to question the government for ensuring the best functioning of the country for its citizens.

This decision comes in place after reducing the timings of the sessions which are now to be held in two sets, starting from 9 am to 1 pm for the Rajya Sabha and after a two-hour break, from 3 pm to 7 for Lok Sabha on all days including Saturdays and Sundays till 1st October. Because of the time crunch, the government decided to seize this mechanism and focus on passing more bills in the two houses of the Parliament.

With the scrapping of the Question Hour, the opposition claims its most essential right being snatched away by the current government in power. This reduces the authority of the various Members of Parliament to question the accountability of the government and demand answers on an array of issues. Several opposition leaders like Derek O'Brien have openly conveyed their disapproval and disappointment with this move. One day prior to the beginning of the Monsoon Session he said, "the government continues to mock Parliament. They have cancelled Question Hour, slashed Zero Hour by half, want to rush bills without any scrutiny and create an ordinance raj like never seen before in the last 70 years. The world and our glorious nation must know, this is very dangerous for democracy". The government has claimed that it had already started talks regarding the cancellation of the Question Hour with the opposition much before the beginning of this session.

The public too did not take this step well and demanded the reinstalment of the Question Hour for the Monsoon Session of the Parliament. With pressure from both sides, the government did partially bring back this mechanism by allowing unstarred questions which could be answered in writing in the Zero Hour. This might not be a complete win for keeping the government in check and maintaining transparency with even the Zero Hour being restricted, however by allowing unstarred questions, the faith of the citizens has been reinstalled till some extent. Completely scraping the Question Hour, which is a significant way of maintaining the accountability of the people's representatives, the centre would violate the right of every citizen to question and know the functioning of the government and steal the essence of the country being the people's nation.

One day prior to the commencement of the session, the traditional All-Party Meet, which takes place for the agenda of the complete session was also called off, the first time in two decades. Instead, The Speaker called a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee on 13th September, to discuss the agenda for the session that concludes on October 1. Some of attendees of the meeting were the Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, BJP's Arjun Ram Meghwal, Congress's Adhir Ranjan Choudhury, AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi. Many are anticipating this session for it is the first after the country went into the lockdown.

While certain bills have been passed by the two houses of the Parliament, a set of 3 bills related to agriculture have drawn quite the attention and uproar amongst the opposition, farmers and the people of India. The three contentious bills over which Shiromani Akali Dal's lone minister in the PM Modi-led NDA government, Harsimrat Kaur Badal quit the cabinet after referring to them as 'anti farmers' are the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, and Amendment to 1955 Essential Commodities Act.

While the party in majority, BJP believes it to be a historic, revolutionary step in liberalising the agricultural sector and opening a number of opportunities and market avenues for the farmers of India, the farmers take a completely opposite stand. The passed bills raise concerns regarding the lack of protection of the farmers' interests; big industrial players may take control over the output and prices of the crops, with the farmers having a little say in it. The farmers also fear not receiving the minimum support price of their produce. The government must understand the concerns of the farmers, for whom they want to get these laws implemented in

the first place. Protests too have been organised in order to gain the attention of the centre. By removing the limit to the quantity and price of the produce, the bill not only directly disadvantages the farmers but also creates the stage for a potential crisis of hoarding, food crisis and inflation which might take a huge toll on the already suffering economy. The recent muting of the Rajya Sabha TV while the session was in place and the passing of the bill through a voice vote has strengthened the outrage.

Due to rising cases of COVID-19 among Parliamentarians and staff of the Parliament complex, the Monsoon Session of 2020 had to be called off sine die. The session began on 14 September and was adjourned 8 days before schedule on 23 September.

### **C. ECONOMIC:**

All over the world, the economies have been immensely suffering because of the COVID - 19 pandemic which halted almost all business activities. Naturally, India's economy too received a huge blow because of the coronavirus. But the recent revelation of the decline in the Gross Domestic Product for the first quarter of the fiscal year to a negative of 23.9 percent has jolted the entire nation. For the first time in 40 years, India's already slow and burdened economy has faced a decline. While everybody was prepared for a decline, economists had predicted for it to be sound 19.1 percent; the recently revealed numbers came as a huge shock and only threw limelight of the distressing situation of the Indian economy.

The role of the Government of India in the worsening of the economy is pointed out in the way the lockdown of the country was imposed. With a prior notice of just four hours, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced a nationwide 3-week long lockdown, not giving any time to the various sectors and businesses to figure out a plan of action to sustain the burdened economy. While one may say that the sudden lockdown was done keeping the health of the citizens and possible containment of the virus by stopping people from leaving the places they were at, this in turn backfired and the current numbers of the virus are a proof of it. The government's move of a lockdown affected everyone's economic life drastically, especially the marginalised like the migrant workers. People lost their jobs, homes, and daily earnings for making a living. Stranded, they roamed aimlessly and the clause of maintaining social distance was not

followed, proper masks and sanitizers couldn't be afforded by many. Currently, the pandemic has rendered more than 12.2 crore people unemployed in India.

Over this pandemic ridden months, the Government of India has made several attempts for assisting the marginalised and the ones who were economically worse hit by the shutdown of the nation. On 28th March itself, to strengthen the spirit of solidarity and encourage people to help fellow Indians, the Prime Minister launched the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund), where people could donate any monetary amount which would be provided for pandemic relief. However, this too has faced criticism especially on the need for a new fund apart from the already existing parallel Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF). Concerns centred around the transparency of the fund and an RTI for the same was filed. After a delay, the RTI was rejected on the grounds that PM CARES Fund was not a Public Authority under the ambit of Section 2(h) of the RTI Act, 2005. In early June, the PM CARES website was updated to announce that a company called SARC & Associates had been appointed as "independent auditors" for the fund. A fund created for the relief of the public in these tough times was not regarded as a public authority, was questioned and criticized as a citizen was not authorised to know the details of how the money one donated was utilised.

After seeking donations from the people, the Prime Minister launched one of the largest COVID -19 relief economic packages in the world, of about Rs. 20 Lakh Crores. The relief package roughly accounts up to 10 percent of the GDP and focuses on helping the marginalised, on tax breaks for small businesses as well as incentives for domestic manufacturing as explained by the Finance Minister and the ministry. The package would focus on land, labour, liquidity and laws. It will cater to various sections, including cottage industry, MSMEs, labourers, middle class, and industries. Another scheme, the Garib Kalyan Yojna (PMGKY) announced by the Prime Minister in particular promised a relief up to Rs. 1.7 lakh crores. The government under this scheme, which had been extended up to the end of September will provide free wheat or rice plus pulses to poor, cash payment to women, poor senior citizens and farmers and employment opportunities to the marginalised.

To further promote the suffering export industry and domestic production, the government also launched the campaign 'Vocal for Local' which aimed at internal production of goods and services and providing assistance to small businesses. This also led to the reduction and

boycotting of internationally made products, especially from China in lieu of border tensions and also uplifted several people as the consumers' interest rose for 'made in India' products and services.

While the lockdown imposed was for the safety of the citizens, it has resulted in an immense contraction in the economy. Even today, during the different phases of unlocking, the covid situation is nowhere near to being controlled and the economy is underperforming. The Prime Minister urges the citizens to wear a mask, use a sanitizer and maintain social distancing in this era of uncertainty, however, a complete lockdown now is unlikely for the sake of saving the Indian economy.

#### **D. DEFENCE:**

The India - China standoff in this era of the COVID - 19 virus is a serious concern and added problem for the nation in the times of the pandemic. The skirmishes between the countries began since May 2020 and have occurred several times in different regions. One particular incident that jolted the entire nation was the Galwan Valley standoff between these two countries in June 2020. The confrontation which occurred between the soldiers from both the Indian and Chinese sides was fought without armed weapons but with sticks and makeshift weapons; 20 soldiers from the 16th Bihar Regiment of India were martyred. While the Chinese side too faced losses, their government never commented on the same. Each of the countries played the blame game, expressing the view of the opposite side instigating it.

This act of China was conceived to be pre planned and was firmly condemned by the Government of India, State Governments and people from all over the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation regarding it, conducted important meetings with the different State Governments to discuss Sino - Indian relations and visited Indian soldiers in Ladakh to interact, address and motivate them as well as review the security situation. This step further agitated China and a spokesperson from the Chinese Foreign Ministry warned India to not take any actions which could escalate the situation. India asserted that the nation does honour the spirit of friendship, but the Prime Minister also stressed that the country is capable of giving an appropriate response to any adversary.



In early September, China accused Indian troops of illegally crossing a disputed Himalayan border and firing provocative warning shots at patrolling soldiers. On the other hand, India rejected these allegations and accused Chinese troops of approaching a forward Indian position near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and firing a few rounds in the air. India reinforced that at no stage did the Indian army transgress across the LAC or resort to use of any aggressive means, including firing. If firing actually took place, it would have been the first time in 45 years that shots were fired at the disputed border; a 1996 agreement between both countries bars the use of guns and explosives from the Line of Actual Control.

Many analyse the various causes of these clashes between the two Asian giants to be the building of infrastructure near the Line of Actual Control which is perceived as a threat to the territorial integrity of both the nations. Others also consider China's actions to be a way of re-establishing its superiority internally, in the continent and internationally after receiving backlash for the outbreak of the COVID - 19 virus which resulted in the pandemic. Through military power, China not only aims to show its strength after its economy got damaged, but to also dominate and lead its region.

Time and again India has stated that the Indian Army is committed to maintaining peace and protecting national integrity and sovereignty at all costs. Rather than using hard power to reply and use resources in this crucial time, India decided to directly affect the structural power of China - its economy. In a series of ban on Chinese based mobile applications, the Indian Government through the IT Ministry has banned 59 apps in June, 47 apps in July and another 118 apps in September, which included immensely popular applications like PubG, TikTok, Shein among many. The three waves of ban on mobile applications took place in order to ensure safety of all citizens and to avoid emerging security threats. The Transport Ministry of India too has announced the ban on Chinese companies participating in any highway projects in India. While many more measures are being taken by several public and private institutions to avoid the involvement of Chinese based institutions or firms, as discussed earlier in this article, the Government of India has also been strongly advocating for being 'Vocal for Local', which targets the dual aim of boycotting Chinese products as well as supporting and empowering domestic producers by using their products.

One must admit that India's step to tackle the whole situation in a different way by not responding through hard power, maintaining a sort of deterrence and avoiding as well as

reducing the use of our limited resources for defence purposes but to directly impact the unstable economy of China by targeting the structural power it had has been a strategic one and indeed a big blow to the neo colonialism China was building. While this response was a mature one, India should not take it to a level which starts impacting it negatively as China still remains an important trade partner for the country. Presently, the tension between the Sino - Indian relationship keeps increasing at the borders.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The realisation that COVID -19 is a part of our 'new normal' daily lives must take place for us to accept and move forward towards progressing, in all fields. The Government of India has not been able to curb the outbreak of this pandemic; we currently reign as the country with second highest number of cases. However, we must also understand that it is also not an easy task for a country as densely populated as India in a limited space to eliminate the virus. Countries who have been able to tackle the virus in an appropriate manner, like South Korea, have quite less population as compared to India. Therefore, it is important to weigh the number of cases in accordance with the population that a country has. If we look at the country with the highest number of coronavirus cases, we realise that the United States of America, being hailed as the hegemon of this unipolar world has performed even worse in containing the virus. In comparison to India, it has a larger territory over which citizens are sparsely populated; India has managed the situation better with more population and lack of enough space. But at the same time, we must learn from recovering nations too and try inculcating their different plans of action in the country with stricter implementation.

The Government of India certainly lacks at some places when it comes to handling the pandemic and its consequent changes in different structures and institutions. The Indian Government must allow there to be greater accountability of the central government in the Parliament Session and must initiate ways to make its functioning, especially regarding the PM CARES fund more transparent. The farmers' rage and demands should also be taken seriously by the centre. The deteriorating rates of the coronavirus also demands the government for stricter implementation of the rules and their greater involvement in educating people about the pandemic. At the same time, India's tactic decisions internationally have proved to be

mature and the introduction of some new policies have provided a little monetary relief to some. Just like everything, there are both pros and cons related to the functioning of the government during these stressful times, however the only way to overcome this is for both the people and the government to move towards progress with positivity and practicality while understanding each other and reaching a consensus.

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# NEW EDUCATION POLICY – A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Education gives us the manpower to achieve anything and everything around us. It is fundamental for achieving complete human potential and creates a tank full of opportunities for everyone. The New Education Policy gives rise to an innovative and transformational approach. It does not just focus on academical capacities but also on foundational capacities; it sets out a vision for 2040. However, drafting the New Education Policy has been a mammoth task. Two committees undertook the task to formulate this policy and later necessary feedback was taken up and widely consulted.<sup>1</sup> (Dhotre 2020) The policy document was examined several times before being sent for approval. The new document is radically different from all its predecessors as it outlines an ideological framework for our education. Good education policy is where wide learning is offered with good infrastructure and appropriate resources are provided.

## **EVOLUTION:**

The first Education policy came in 1968 and the second in 1986 which was revised in 1992 and the third one is The Education Policy under the BJP Government.<sup>2</sup> (Chopra 2020) The cabinet approved the New Education Policy on July 29<sup>th</sup>, after a 34-year gap. The previous policies have focused largely on equality of education and accessibility.<sup>3</sup> The other major development since the 1986/92 policy has been the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Act 2009 which laid down legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education.<sup>4</sup>

The implementation of the policy will further depend on both the States and Centre as education is a concurrent subject. The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/opinion-national-education-policy-2020-a-blueprint-for-self-reliant-india/358711>

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/nep/NEP\\_Final\\_English.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/nep/NEP_Final_English.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/upload\\_document/RTE\\_Section\\_wise\\_rationale\\_rev\\_0.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/RTE_Section_wise_rationale_rev_0.pdf)

4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030.<sup>5</sup>

The major aim of the education policy is to make “India a Global Knowledge Superpower”. (Bhattacharjee 2020)<sup>6</sup> The world is undergoing rapid changes in various technological, scientific and research advancement. The new policy extensively focuses on major changes in the system of rote learning.

### **KEY POINTS:**

Following are the important points of the New Education Policy which help in ensuring the integrity, transparency and empowerment of all students

- It aims to universalize education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 gross enrolment ratio and aims to rise gross enrolment ratio in higher education to 50 percent.
- Recognizing and fostering every individual’s capabilities and sensitizing teachers and parents as well to promote students in holistic development.
- One of the essential fundamentals which have been left unaddressed till now was Early Childhood Care and Education. The policy says, over 85% of a child’s brain development occurs prior to the age 8. Thus, it focuses on achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for all students by grade 3.
- Flexibility for learners to choose their learning projectors and choose their life paths according to their talent. Furthermore, there will be no hard separation between the streams. This also promotes the dispel of various notions of society and hierarchies.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/nep/NEP\\_Final\\_English.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/nep/NEP_Final_English.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thehillstimes.in/featured/making-india-a-global-knowledge-superpower/>

- Multidisciplinary approach in order to promote uniformity and integrity for all knowledge. Emphasis on conceptual understanding and critical thinking.
- The vocational programs from school education. The policy has reconceptualized practical learning and given it a heads up. Which focuses on giving students an opportunity to intern at school level and learn a programming language.

## **A BRIEF:**

While dwelling into the further details of the policy, understanding certain key changes in the school and university level education is highly imperative

- **School Learning**

The policy envisages that the 10+2 old schooling structure will now be modified with a 5+3+3+4 structure which will also cover the age group of 3-6 to constitute the foundational stage of education. The restructuring has been proposed keeping in mind the holistic development of children. The policy will focus on the overarching goal which would ensure universal access to high-quality ECCE across the country and will facilitate an amalgamation project led ecosystem of education which focuses on not just the outcome but also the process. The Boards too have been proposed to be redesigned, a system which will allow students to appear for it twice, one for the main examination and other for improvement if they desire.<sup>7</sup> NEP 2020 also proposes a shift from summative assessments to regular and formative assessments; one of the changes will be the shift from the conventional learning practice of delivering assignments. Developing stronger focus on analysis, critical thinking and conceptual clarity in a central principle of NEP. The government also aims to focus on multilingualism and suggests that students until class 5 should be taught in their mother tongue or regional language. This received mixed reactions, some students and teachers believe it will promote multilingualism while others comment it as a downfall for rural-urban students who wish to learn English.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/nep/NEP\\_Final\\_English.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/nep/NEP_Final_English.pdf)

The Policy shall also introduce vocational studies from grade 6 onwards and create the National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE), a vital decision to remove the societal stigma attached with taking vocation as a career.<sup>8</sup> (ST-ESPRIT 2019) Lastly, one of the significant problematic situations for every student has been choosing the streams. Hence, with the aim to dismantle the rigid distinction of academics, students will get much more flexibility and freedom to choose the subjects of their interest and desires. Therefore, it focuses on universalizing education

- **Higher Education**

According to the policy, some of the salient problems in the higher education institutions in our country are the lack of research, limited teachers, less multidisciplinary courses and poor institutional governance.<sup>9</sup> (NEP 2020) Recognizing these problems, the policymakers came up with various new key ingredients like the decision to break the wall of streams and bring in flexibility, provisions of freedom to exit and enter courses, credit-based system and the introduction to a 4-year degree with research.

The document also states that top 100 universities in the world will be able to set up in India.<sup>10</sup> However, this will only process once the HRD Ministry brings a new law that includes the details of how foreign universities will operate. We can also expect a partnership between government and private educational programmes which would result in the fruitful outcome and a shift to the latest technologies. Among the several new features of NEP 2020, one of the best is granting more autonomy to educational institutions which are providing quality education. The other is a single regulator for higher education. Another significant reform is the provision of multiple entries and exit points. This will help students to pursue the course of their choice at their own pace and without getting affected by the impact of their personal circumstances.<sup>[11]</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/03/choosing-trade-school-over-college/584275/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/NEP\\_Final\\_English\\_0.pdf](https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/nep/NEP\\_Final\\_English.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/nep/NEP_Final_English.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/featurephilia/story/nep-2020-new-education-policy-to-revamp-the-education-system-of-21st-century-1711501-2020-08-15>

It eliminates the M Phil programme which does not affect higher education trajectory at all as it offers the admission for PHD right after MA. Also, it emphasizes equally on research and offers a 4-year undergraduate degree. The policy envisages the creation of the National Research Foundation (NRF), As research is the foundation of knowledge creation and it plays a crucial role in the upliftment of any human. Its main objective will be to provide areas of themes for research and coordination and build a platform for budding researchers which the nation strives for the next coming decade.

*“Thus, with these changes it aims for quality and inclusion in higher education”<sup>12</sup>*

## **CONCLUSION:**

In conclusion, I would like to say that say that the New Education Policy 2020 appears to be transformational and visionary it sets out a comprehensive vision which can be achieved by 2040. The earlier policy lacked the pragmatic approach and mainly focused upon rote learning and academical marking scheme whereas, this policy aims to promote a holistic, integrated and enjoyable learning and buoys the aspiration of a new and resilient India.

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<sup>12</sup> [https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/nep/NEP\\_Final\\_English.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/nep/NEP_Final_English.pdf)



# UNITED NATION GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## 75 (UNGA 75)

**Theme: ‘The Future We Want, The United Nation We Need: Reaffirming Our Collective Commitment To Multilateralism’.**

The UN General Assembly is the only universally representative body of the United Nations. The other major bodies are the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat, and the International Court of Justice. As delineated in the Charter of the United Nations, the function of the General Assembly is to discuss, debate, and make recommendations on subjects pertaining to international peace and security, including development, disarmament, human rights, international law, and the peaceful arbitration of disputes between nations.

There are 193 UN member states, each with a vote in the General Assembly. The assembly’s president changes with each annual session and is elected by the body itself. The president of the seventy-fifth session is **Volkan Bozkir**, who served as Turkey’s minister of European Union affairs and the chief negotiator for Turkish accession to the EU. The president is empowered to enforce rules of procedure, such as opening debate, setting the agenda, limiting speaking times for representatives, and suspending or adjourning debate.

**“The world is facing pressing problems, including humanitarian crises, deadly conflicts, and a devastating pandemic COVID-19 has shown more clearly than ever that the conflicts cannot address their challenges on their own. Global problems require global solutions, and that is why we need to recommit to multilateralism. The general assembly, where all member states are equal is unequally situated to steer our common efforts” - Volkan Bozkir**

## **BACKGROUND:**

Established in 1945 under the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly occupies a central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Comprised of all 193 Members of the United Nations, it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter. It also plays a significant role in the process of standard setting and the codification of international law.

## **FUNCTION AND POWER OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY:**

The Assembly is empowered to make recommendations to States on international issues within its competence. It has also initiated actions political, economic, humanitarian, social and legal which have benefitted the lives of millions of people throughout the world. The landmark Millennium Declaration, adopted in 2000, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, reflect the commitment of Member States to reach specific goals to attain peace, security and disarmament, along with development and poverty eradication; to safeguard human rights and promote the rule of law; to protect our common environment; to meet the special needs of Africa; to strengthen the United Nations. In September 2015, the Assembly agreed on a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, contained in the outcome document of the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (resolution 70/1: “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”).

## **ACCORDING TO THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MAY:**

- Consider and approve the United Nations budget and establish the financial assessments of Member States
- Elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council and the members of other United Nations councils and organs and, on the recommendation of the Security Council, appoint the Secretary-General

- Consider and make recommendations on the general principles of cooperation for maintaining international peace and security, including disarmament
- Discuss any question relating to international peace and security and, except where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed by the Security Council, make recommendations on it
- Discuss, with the same exception, and make recommendations on any questions within the scope of the Charter or affecting the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations
- Initiate studies and make recommendations to promote international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields
- Make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation that might impair friendly relations among countries
- Consider reports from the Security Council and other United Nations organs

#### **FORUM FOR MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATION:**

On Friday, 18 September, the Secretary-General will convene an SDG Moment virtual event, from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m., and over the course of the high-level period, the Secretary-General will also convene a high-level meeting on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond, and a leaders' event on climate change.

The high-level meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations will be held on Monday, 21 September, from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The Assembly's annual general debate, when Heads of State and Government and other senior national representatives present their views on pressing world issues, will be held from Tuesday, 22 September to Saturday, 26 September, and on Tuesday, 29 September.

The Assembly will also convene the summit on biodiversity on Wednesday, 30 September, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.; the high-level meeting on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women on Thursday, 1 October, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; and the high-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, on Friday, 2 October, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Year in year out, every September, Member States have met in the General Assembly Hall at Headquarters in New York for the annual session and its highly visible general debate. The modalities of the 75th session differ this year in light of the global health crisis.

The pandemic is not the only issue the world faces. Racism, intolerance, inequality, climate change, poverty, hunger, armed conflict and other ills remain global challenges. These challenges call for global action, and the 75th session of the General Assembly is a critical opportunity for all to come together and chart a course for the future.

The General Assembly adopted a decision on Wednesday that "each Member State, observer State and the European Union can submit a pre-recorded statement of its Head of State, Vice-President, Crown Prince or Princess, Head of Government, Minister or Vice-Minister, which will be played in the General Assembly Hall during the general debate of the Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, the high-level meeting to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and the high-level meeting.

## **MAIN COMMITTEES:**

Each Member State may be represented by one person on each Main Committee - there are six in total and on any other committee that may be established upon which all Member States have the right to be represented. Most questions are discussed in the Assembly's six main committees, where voting occurs by simple majority:

- First Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee
- Second Committee: Economic and Financial Committee
- Third Committee: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee
- Fourth Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee
- Fifth Committee: Administrative and Budgetary Committee
- Sixth Committee: Legal Committee

## **CONCLUSION:**

There have been many instances in which the Assembly has acted within its area of competence when addressing issues of international peace. If a conflict is characterized by questions of fundamental human rights, then it is arguable that the Assembly should assume the primary role in protecting those rights.

The ability to achieve the overall two-thirds majority within the Assembly to invoke the Uniting for Peace process is very unlikely when political realities are taken into account. Political realities play an even larger role when the Security Council fails to act because of the threat of veto. As a result, vital time can be lost before decisive action is taken to remedy a situation on the ground. In the case of genocide and crimes against humanity, such action will often be too late for victims.

## **SOURCES MENTIONED:**

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# CENTER FOR POLICY RESEARCH AND GOVERNANCE

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### SEPTEMBER EDITION

#### AUTHORS:

Ms. Prachi Belwariar Vishishtha, Ms. Rasleen Grover, and Mr.  
Jai Shankar

**Mr. Ramanand**

The Centre of Policy Research and Governance (CPRG), India strongly believes that in the 21st century an India deprived of gainful opportunities, necessary for the flourishing of a young and emergent India, will prove to be an impediment in the development of human capital and preservation of global security. CPRG thus works towards providing gainful opportunities in an effort to promote the involvement of young people in policy making and politics.



9930912114



cprgindia@gmail.com



cprgindia



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A-3, Dhawan Deep  
Building, 6-Jantar Mantar  
Road, Janpath,  
New Delhi - 110001