

# National Education Policy-2020 and Marginals

## A PRIMER



**CENTER OF POLICY  
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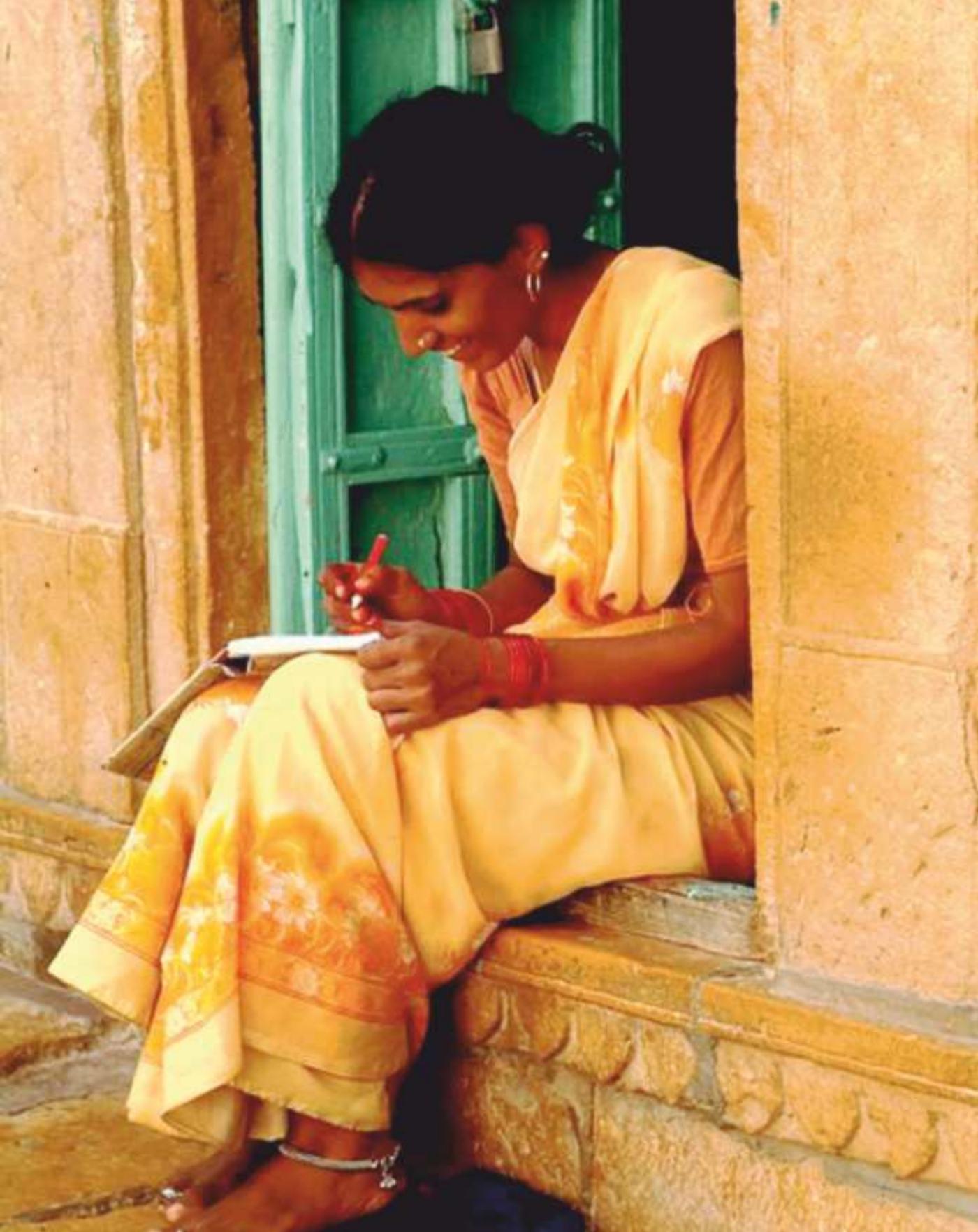
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*‘App Dippo Bhav’*

- Bhagwan Buddha



**T**he National Educational Policy is one of the visionary and iconic documents which we have seen in our time. The document gives hope of the revival of our education system and motivates building 'New India'.

The NEP-2020 has been able to make the balance between future challenges and present need. NEP understands that we need to expand our education. However, we also need to strengthen our education system, which still struggles with some fundamentals issues like poor infrastructure, pedagogical issue, research culture and outdated curriculum etc. NEP-2020 has tried to address all the concerns in this policy document in a very comprehensive manner.

NEP-2020 is one of the most inclusive documents that address all sections of the society's concern and issues, but there is still some misinformation prevalent in society. CPRG is committed to making people aware of the policies which affect them. This document is an effort to make people aware of NEP-2020 and how it will help them in future.

This document explains the term 'SEDG'. The document focuses on the recommendation, which aims to a substantial change in the lives of social and marginal groups.

We are thankful to Prof. Badri Narayan for his insights and guidance, he provided in preparing this document. We hope this document will help people in understanding the NEP-2020 holistically.

**Ramanand**  
Director, CPRG

# National Education Policy-2020 and Marginals

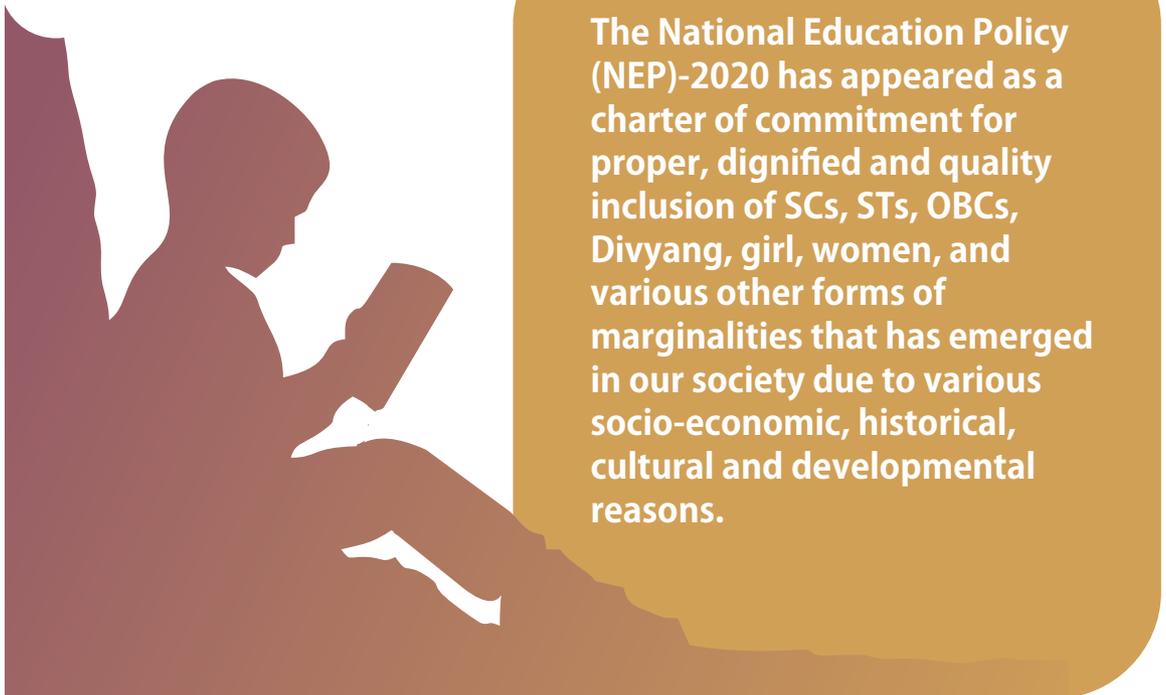
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### 'Knowledge is Power'

- Francis Bacon-1597

**T**he complete abolition of social inequality is one of the biggest challenges for the democratic governance in India. It is also needed for acquiring social harmony and happiness for all in the Indian society. The education may be one of the most potent and effective instruments for abolition of inequalities rooted in the Indian society. The access to education may create a condition for acquiring social justice, equity and dignity for marginal communities in India. Their entry in the educational landscape will certainly remove caste ridden social inequalities in the society. It is true that these social inequalities caused social-economic deprivation and produced a disadvantageous social group in our society. From Gautam Buddha to Baba Saheb Ambedkar many Indian thinkers and social reformers highlighted access to *Vidya* (education) as the most emancipatory tool for the empowerment of the marginal communities (*vanchit*) in India. The access to education amongst the weaker sections of our society will certainly help us in equal distribution of democratic resources so that we can ensure social justice and also develop capacities to the socio-economically disadvantageous groups to participate as a complete citizen of democratically carved Indian Society. The education may help them to become 'app- dippo bhav' as advised by Lord Buddha. The education provides us dignity, quality life and livelihood. It makes us competent to respond to the social-developmental requirement of the nation.

To contribute in the making of democratically carved New India as proposed by PM Narendra Modi , the National Education policy evolved as a central conceptual argument to provide access to the education to all and specially for SCs, STs, OBCs, Divyang, Women, Transgender and many other forms of marginals. It is true that Indian Society is suffering from multiple marginalities since long back, that is why NEP-2020 sensitively tried to map various forms of vertical as well as horizontal marginalities. It has also conceptualized and outlined various programmatic strategies to provide social justice to the weaker and marginal sections of society through education. The National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 has appeared as a charter of commitment for proper, dignified and quality inclusion of SCs, STs, OBCs, Divyang, girl, women, and various other forms of marginalities that has emerged in our society due to various socio-economic, historical, cultural and developmental reasons. It makes various creative and path breaking provisions to reduce inequality through educational intervention. In this small booklet we are trying to bring some of the provisions of NEP-2020 together in brief which are going to work as catalyst for their educational inclusion and ensuring social justice to them for making of an equitable society.



The National Educational Policy (NEP-2020) proposes an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly in transforming India, that is to transform Bharat sustainably in to an equitable and vibrant knowledge society. The NEP-2020 in its essence commits an inclusive educational space for Dalits, Tribal, women, backward communities, minorities and other newly emerged categories of marginal population. The NEP will not only evolve as an inclusive educational space but also constantly identify new, smaller and invisible forms of marginalities emerged during the process of development. (NEP-2020,p.3)

## **Confronting Myths, Telling Reality**

There is some apprehension in a section of the society that NEP-2020 is going to reduce educational space for marginals in the society. As far as reservation issues in the educational institutions is concerned, the National Education policy-2020 affirms by the constitutional mandate of the reservation enshrined in Article 15 and 16 of the Indian constitution. In this context it does not need any reiteration in provisions of reservation in the draft of NEP-2020 which is already working under the frame of the Indian constitution. It is declared in the NEP that successful ongoing programs and policies will continue and along with some new efforts will also be added to bring educational inclusion of SCs, STs, OBCs, Divyang and other Socio-economic disadvantageous groups. Our Education minister has already clarified in his various statements that the ministry will take appropriate action if we receive any complain regarding it.



**It is declared in the NEP that successful ongoing programs and policies will continue and along with some new efforts will also be added to bring educational inclusion of SCs, STs, OBCs, Divyang and other Socio-economic disadvantageous groups**

Another kind of doubt is being manufactured that it does not have any program and package for marginals such as SC, ST, OBC and minorities. To prove these mythical arguments, the term and category SEDG proposed in the NEP is being misrepresented by a section of intelligentsia. The category- SEDG and policy proposal around it is being misinterpreted by few educational analysts in our society. A constant campaign to disseminate rumors of dilution of space of marginal communities through NEP-2020 is being launched by some groups who are being guided by some vested interest. The category SEDG (Socially-economically disadvantaged groups) appropriately deals with caste based inequalities which causes marginalization of few groups in educational landscape of our country.

The policymakers and government have clarified that the term has been used in sync with global terminology as UNDP and Planning and in recent NITI Ayog document has also used the same term to achieve the target of SDG-2013. There is an urgent need to address this concern and campaign because this can spread misinformation in the disadvantaged group who are going to get the maximum benefit from this society. The aim of this booklet is to highlight all the recommendation for marginalized groups and why we need to sync a common terminology to get maximum benefit of the policies. This booklet will also try to do a comparative analysis of previous and present educational programs and policies of the government for the marginal section.

This booklet will give an overview about the present NEP-2020 in the context of educational empowerment and how this is going to a game-changer for the marginal population of the country as it gives detailed implementation plan and fixes the accountability of the institution and the government.

**The category SEDG (Socially-economically disadvantaged groups) appropriately deals with caste based inequalities which causes marginalization of few groups in educational landscape of our country.**

## Scs, STs and other SEDGs: Framing a cluster for Policy focus

The New Education Policy-2020 proposes a category of **Socio-Economic Disadvantage Groups (SEDG)** which plans for the educational upliftment of SC, ST, OBC, minorities and Divyang together. The NEP-2020 provides special focus to ensure inclusion of minorities in India. The term not only provide educationally empowering condition for conventional state led categories of the marginals but also provide proper space for newly identified categories like transgender, divyang and most other marginals. Apart from ongoing categories of marginalities, NEP also tried to explore various other categories such as Divyang, transgender, ecological and geographically marginalized Zones and realized the need for their educational inclusion . It created a separate cluster for various forms of marginalities which are facilitating inequalities in the Indian society. This cluster is defined as socio-economic deprived groups (SEDG) extensively in the document of NEP-2020. The NEP defines need for exerting special focus on these various forms of marginalities prevailing like viruses in the Indian society. The strategy appears to form diverse policies but cultivate unified impact for these marginal groups



NEP also tried to explore various other categories such as Divyang, transgender, ecological and geographically marginalized Zones and realized the need for their educational inclusion . It created a separate cluster for various forms of marginalities which are facilitating inequalities in the Indian society.

This category of SEDG provides space for socially deprived and economically backward communities in educational planning of the country. This term is being already successfully used in framing developmental and educational planning in various country of the world. The New Education Policy (NEP), in its umbrella category-'SEDG' not only includes Dalit, Tribals, OBC, Divyang but also includes minorities of the country and promises to grant them excessively special privileges. In this way, the NEP has used this term to describe the broader category of disadvantageous section that has been deprived of the education due to socio-economic reasons. *'Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) can be broadly categorized based on gender identities (particularly female and transgender individuals), socio-cultural identities (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities), geographical identities (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspiring districts), disabilities (including learning disabilities), and socio-economic conditions (such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor),.* (NEP-2020, 6.2,p.24)

This term and category is evolved by various eminent social scientist of the world to address deprivation of marginal groups based on social experience of different parts of the world. It was first time used by Bernstein (1960). He used this term for denoting socially disadvantaged to cover a large group like for handicapped children in schools, keeping them away from fully using their potentialities, and who have parents of low educational level. Another development scientist, Gordon (1965) extended the meaning of this term to describe, 'Socio-economic deprivation', 'socially disadvantage' and 'culturally alienated' who reflects certain differences in the stimulus conditions of childhood. David Bores (Quoted by Spurlock, 1970) has viewed social deprivation as 'Experience wherein an individual is deprived of the opportunity to develop his capacities to work to provide for his needs and enjoy the dignities of life.' Whiteman and Deustch (1968) have considered social deprivation as 'relative term referring exclusive to specific types of environmental factors.' According to them, the environmental factor may be considered derivational when that factor is associated with certain social groupings such as socio- economic status (SES) or race, and when the environmental variable is associated with impaired performance.

The SDEG is a conceptual and policy effort to fulfill the vision of NEP which is centered on the making of inclusive and equal society. (P.40-46, 67-68). NEP-2020 diagnoses one of the major problems for making Indian education inclusive and equitable while analyzing the dropout trends of schools. The NEP documents-

“While overall enrolments in schools decline steadily from Grade 1 to Grade 12, this decline in enrolments is significantly more pronounced for many of these SEDGs and often even steeper in higher education”. Along with gender identities, socio-cultural, socio-economic

identities and disabilities, geographical identities too are included in the SEDGs. This will help these areas to get the necessary attention and incentives from the governments in the future. (6.2-p.24)

## **Making Inclusion: Marginal, Vanchit and Left out**

NEP creates a category “SEDG”, i.e. Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups, and includes minorities in it, besides SCs, STs, OBC, etc. Since the existing educational system already has continuing provisions for SC, ST, OBC, and girls, the purpose of creating this new category “SEDG” is to bring out various marginalised group together which may help in cohesive and equal educational planning. The NEP-2020 reiterates that while the Indian education system and successive government policies have made steady progress towards bridging gender and social category gaps in all levels of school education, large disparities still remain-especially at the secondary level-particularly for socio-economically disadvantaged groups that have been historically underrepresented in education while overall enrolments in schools decline steadily from Grade 1 to Grade 12 ,this decline in enrolments is significantly more pronounced for many of these SEDGs, with even greater declines for female students within each of these SEDGs and often even steeper in higher education. A brief status overview of the SEDGs that come within socio-cultural identities is given in following sub-sections.



**The purpose of creating this new category “SEDG” is to bring out various marginalised group together which may help in cohesive and equal educational planning.**

The NEP-2020 in its draft paper address the problem of SEDG in detail- While describing educational condition of SEDG groups, it suggests that –

*' According to U-DISE 2016-17 data, about 19.6% of students belong to Scheduled Castes at the primary level, but this fraction falls to 17.3% at the higher secondary level. These enrolment drop-offs are more severe for Scheduled Tribes students (10.6% to 6.8%), and differently-abled children (1.1% to 0.25%), with even greater declines for female students within each of these categories. The decline in enrolment in higher education is even steeper.*

*A multiplicity of factors, including lack of access to quality schools, poverty, social mores & customs, and language have had a detrimental effect on rates of enrolment and retention among the Scheduled Castes. Bridging these gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes of children belonging to Scheduled Castes will continue to be one of the major goals. Also, the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) which have been identified on the basis of historically being socially and educationally backward also need special focus.*

*Tribal communities and children from Scheduled Tribes also face disadvantages at multiple levels due to various historical and geographical factors. Children from tribal communities*



**While several programmatic interventions to uplift children from tribal communities are currently in place, and will continue to be pursued, special mechanisms need to be made to ensure that children belonging to tribal communities receive the benefits of these interventions.**

*often find their school education irrelevant and foreign to their lives, both culturally and academically. While several programmatic interventions to uplift children from tribal communities are currently in place, and will continue to be pursued, special mechanisms need to be made to ensure that children belonging to tribal communities receive the benefits of these interventions.*

*Minorities are also relatively underrepresented in school and higher education. The Policy acknowledges the importance of interventions to promote education of children belonging to all minority communities, and particularly those communities that are educationally under represented.*

*The Policy also recognizes the importance of creating enabling mechanisms for providing Children with Special Needs (CWSN) or Divyang, the same opportunities of obtaining quality education as any other child.*

*Separate strategies will be formulated for focused attention on reducing the social category gaps in school education as outlined in the following sub-sections'. (6.2.1-4,p.25)*

The NEP-2020 commits for increasing Gross Enrolment Ratio up to 50 percent till 2035 in higher education. It is a commitment which certainly includes SCs, STs, OBCs and many others SEDGs groups in educational land scape of the country in a bigger frame. It will distribute educational resources to provide social justice to the weaker sections of our society. The aim of 50% GER can not be achieved without the increasing the number of SEDG.

## **Special Education Zones (SEZs) for Deprived**

To ensure inclusion of marginal communities in quality educational space of India, the NEP 2020 proposed the policy strategy to identify special education Zones(SEZs).The SEZs will be the identified regions where significantly large populations from educationally-disadvantaged SEDGs resides. In these SEZs, all the schemes and policies are to be implemented to the maximum through additional concerted efforts. This policy strategy will help to change the educational landscape of these areas.

In addition to this, the NEP-2020 also identifies specific geographical locations as Aspiring Districts which require special interventions for promoting educational development.

These new categorization and policy strategies around them can prove to be a very effective measure in eliminating educational deprivation of the marginal communities that has sustained for long.

It is Section 6.6 states:

*“regions of the country with large populations from educationally-disadvantaged SEDGs should be declared Special Education Zones”.*

This is adding, improvising and renovating with new vision of the inclusion of the educationally excluded, of the MSDP (Multi- sectoral Development Plan) scheme introduced by UPA.

## Direct Cash Transfers and Special Scholarships

The new education policy encourages the government to provide special scholarships and cash transfers for SEDGs. Section 6.4 clearly says (emphasis added):

*“there have been various successful ... schemes such as ... scholarships, conditional cash transfers ... that have significantly increased participation of SEDGs in the ... schooling system. ... These successful schemes **must be** significantly strengthened across the country”.*

This provision will make almost impossible misappropriation scholarship for children and successfully disseminate direct benefit to the weaker sections which will make them capable of taking part in the world of education in India.

Alternative forms of schools, will be encouraged to preserve their traditions or ...pedagogical styles



## Strengthening not withdrawal

A myth has been manufactured in some corner of the society that NEP-2020 may withdraw various ongoing special programs for SCs, STs, OBC and other marginal communities. However, NEP-2020 ensures the strengthening of successful ongoing programs which helped in the educational inclusion of the marginal communities. The NEP-2020 tells-

*'In addition, there have been various successful policies and schemes such as targeted scholarships, conditional cash transfers to incentivize parents to send their children to school, providing bicycles for transport, etc., that have significantly increased participation of SEDGs in the schooling system in certain areas. The successful policies and schemes must be significantly strengthened across the country' (6.4,p.25)*

## Funding for alternative forms of schools

To expand educational landscape in India the NEP-2020, plans to support alternative forms of schools run by various smaller and marginal communities in India.

Section 6.15 of NEP states:

*“alternative forms of schools, will be encouraged to preserve their traditions or ...pedagogical styles”.*

As we know the tribes, smaller communities, most marginal groups run alternative forms of schools in the various parts of the country. Thus, through the NEP such alternative schools will be strengthened. The schools will get *“financial assistance to evolve and develop properly.”*

## Forming Inclusive Culture of Regular Schools

The NEP-2020 outlines the policies to change entire culture and environment of regular schools to make them dignified and comfortable educational zones for SC, ST, OBC, minorities and other SEDGs communities.

The NEP-2020 draft in its Section 6.19 states *“a change in school culture (of entire) school education system”* and 6.20 states *“changes in school curriculum”* will be implemented to promote *“inclusion and equity”*.

## **Special Hiring of Teachers from SEDGs communities**

The policy also promotes targeted hiring of teachers and leaders from minorities and other SEDGs. This recommendation may create more space for jobs in educational sector for SCs, STs and other SEDGs.

## **Gender Face of SEDGs for educational empowerment.**

The NEP-2020 gives special attention for the empowerment of women of SEDGs.

The policy recognizes the special and critical role of the women in the upliftment of SEDGs, not just in the present but also in future generations. The policy thus recommends that special focus will be carved to all policies and programs launched for the educational inclusion of SEDGs students especially towards girls in these SEDGs.

Under the NEP provision, the Government of India will also constitute a 'Gender- Inclusion Fund' to build the nation's capacity to provide equitable equality in education for all girls as well as transgender students. 'The fund will be available to States to implement priorities determined by the Central government critical for assisting female and transgender children in gaining access to education (such as the provisions of sanitation and toilets, bicycles, conditional cash transfers, etc.); funds will also enable States to support and scale effective community-based interventions that address local context-specific barriers to female and transgender children's access in participation in the field of education. Similar 'Inclusion Fund' schemes shall also be developed to address analogous access issues for other SEDGs'

## **Reinventing Distance Learning: an opportunity for SEDGs**

The NEP -2020 recommends the effective and quality use of Distance learning for insuring educational inclusion for marginal communities and other SEDGs.

It proposes to facilitate learning for all students; with special emphasis on Socio Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), the scope of school education will be broadened to facilitate multiple path ways in learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes.

*' Open and Distance Learning(ODL) Programmes offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling(NIOS) in National Education Policy-2020 and State Open Schools will be expanded and strengthened for meeting the learning needs of young people in India who are*

*not able to attend a physical school. NIOS and State Open Schools will offer the following programmes in addition to the present programmes: A,B and C levels that are equivalent to Grades 3,5,and8 of the formal school system; secondary education programmes that are equivalent to Grades 10 and 12;vocational education courses/programmes; and adult literacy and life-enrichment programmes. States will be encouraged to develop these offering in regional languages by establishing new/strengthening existing State Institutes of Open Schooling (SIOS).'*

The NEP-2020 suggests that one-on-one teachers and tutors-'peer tutoring, open schooling, appropriate infrastructure, and suitable technological interventions to ensure access can be particularly effective for certain children with disabilities'. Schools providing quality ECCE reap the greatest dividends for children who come from families that are economically disadvantaged. Meanwhile, counselors and/ or well-trained social workers work with and connect with students, parents, schools, and teachers in order to improve attendance and as a result learning outcomes have been found to be especially effective for children in urban poor areas.



**One of the most important feature is its focus on imparting education up to class 5 (preferably class 8 and beyond) in mother tongue and local languages. This focus of NEP may create long term impact in capacity building of society and nation in India.**

## **Mother tongue, Traditional knowledge and social justice:**

With many others features of NEP-2020 in the direction of bringing educational inclusion and empowerment of SEDGs such as SC's, STs and OBCs, one of the most important feature is its focus on imparting education up to class 5 (preferably class 8 and beyond) in mother tongue and local languages. This focus of NEP may create long term impact in capacity building of society and nation in India. The school education in mother tongue or in local languages may bring drastic change in the ongoing process. Mostly students of marginal communities in schools feel comfortable in acquiring education in their own local languages and mother tongues. This is more relevant in the case of children of tribal communities who prefer to take education in their own local languages. This provision may provide them confidence and make them comfortable in participating school education. It will help us to ensure their enrollment in schools in large numbers. After participating in education for some time in mother tongue, they may decide to shift their medium of education in other languages.

Its emphasis on primary and secondary education in mother tongue may also make them competent to explore their own local and indigenous resources available in various local societies of India. The local knowledge, skills, indigenous technology, local products may be explored by the people who are deeply rooted in the languages, culture and social life of local societies. The various marginal social groups in India are very rich in terms of their traditional knowledge systems. The NEP-2020 recognizes the importance of their traditional knowledge in educational curricula and identifies strategies to transform these knowledge patterns to strengthen and empower them

## **The making of New and Inclusive India**

To strengthen our federal national structure and acquiring unity in diversity, the NEP-2020 has made various provisions to support education of minority groups. It commits to continue financial support to their educational institutions and provides various scholarships to their students to enhance their capacity to participate in educational landscape in India. It also talks about modernization of minority institutions so the students can study modern subjects and compete in job market

## **Ideal and Real**

The NEP-2020 with all these recommendations and provisions ensures *samras shikshit samaj* (SSS) in India. It is the first time in the history of educational policy, a larger, major, quality and dignified educational space is being created by Ministry of Education in NDA

government. It is a charter and oath paper (shapathpatra) in one way for the inclusion of all most all forms of deprived in society. We hope during the process of implementation, it may appear more effective and real. 'In essence, this Policy aims to eliminate any remaining disparity in access to education (including vocational education) for children from any gender or other socio-economically disadvantaged group'. (NEP, 2020). So, in this way if NEP-2020 is implemented in a proper way, it is surely going to achieve that 'India' as dreamt by Baba Saheb Ambedkar and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya which is also the 'New India' as aspired by our PM-Shri Narendra Modi.

## Policies in Capsule

- To commit implementation at the government and institution level.
- Access to the education to all forms of marginal.
- Marginals especially refer to SCs, STs, OBCs, Divyang, Women, and Transgender etc.
- NEP-2020 as a charter of commitment for proper, dignified and quality inclusion of the marginal.
- Reducing inequality through educational intervention.
- To identify new, smaller and invisible forms of marginalities.
- NEP-2020 mandates reservation policy as per Article 15 and 16 of the Indian constitution.
- NEP ensures continuation of successful ongoing programs.
- Some new efforts will also be taken for inclusion of disadvantageous groups.
- In case of any complaint received, ministry will take appropriate action.
- SEDG proposed in the NEP is a program and package for marginals.
- SEDG (Socially-economically disadvantageous groups) deals with caste based inequalities.
- NEP defines marginalities are prevailing like viruses.
- SEDG provides space for socially deprived and economically backward communities.
- Commitment for increasing Gross Enrolment Ratio up to 50 percent till 2035 in Higher Education .
- Distributing educational resources to provide social justice to the weaker sections.

- Outlining the policies to change entire culture and environment of regular schools.
- Targets hiring of teachers and leaders from minorities and other SEDGs.
- Recognizes the critical role of the women in the upliftment of SEDGs.
- NEP provisions, the Government of India to constitute a 'Gender- Inclusion Fund'.
- It will provide equitable equality in education for all girls as well as transgender students.
- Recommends the effective and quality use of Distance learning.
- Suggests one-on-one teachers and tutors-'peer tutoring.
- Focuses on imparting education up to class 5 (preferably class 8 and beyond) in mother tongue and local languages.
- Strategize to increase the importance of traditional knowledge in educational curricula.
- Commits to continue financial support to the educational institutions.
- Making provisions to ensure various scholarships to the marginals.
- Targets to achieve the 'India' as dreamt by Baba Saheb Ambedkar.
- Move forward in the path of 'New India' as aspired by our PM-shri Narendra Modi.





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