



**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

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## Today's Child, Tomorrow's Star

***NEP 2020 will help take India's young to the top of the global knowledge economy***

**Dharmendra Pradhan, [ The writer is Union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship ]**



The education system in the country is evolving at a substantial pace. With a reboot of this system through the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP), the government has instituted a series of far-reaching reforms to achieve a paradigm shift from traditional learning towards flexible, equitable and inclusive education.

NEP is a document that will reshape India's destiny both in terms of internal resilience and enhanced resources and its standing in the world. It is a guiding philosophy, a sacred text, if you will, for the Modi government, a tool to transform the hopes and aspirations of millions of youth into reality – building on the principles of quality, equity, access and affordability.

NEP creates a knowledge economy through multiple pathways of linguistic proficiency, with a three-language policy to enable use of the mother tongue or local language or regional language as the medium of instruction. The government has also taken a big step by introducing/allowing institutes to impart technical education in the mother tongue or regional language from the current academic year – so that language does not become a stumbling block for talent. Fourteen engineering colleges of eight states will impart education in five Indian languages – Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Bangla.

NEP promotes integration of vocational education programmes into mainstream education. It foresees a bold new future in vocational education for skilling the future generation. Towards this, skill labs will be set up in schools in a hub-and-spoke model which will allow other schools to use the facility. Secondary schools will collaborate with ITIs, polytechnics, local industry etc.

Across the globe, classroom teaching is pursued in a range of regional languages, be it in France, Germany, Russia or China, which has over 300 languages and dialects with eight of them being major ones. Also, studies around the world have shown that children are able to learn multiple languages if they are taught from an early age. One can actively promote regional languages without compromising

knowledge of the English language, which can be taught as a subject. It is important to remember that English is one of the many skills which one can equip children with, for them to fully participate in and experience the world.

NEP equates quality education with making learning fun and prepares a child for formal schools through the new 5+3+3+4 system. The idea of playschools till date had been largely confined to the middle or upper classes in cities who can afford private schools.

The rigid classifications between skilling and schooling (academic), curricular and extra-curricular, humanities and the sciences have been broken – thus fostering multidisciplinary, conceptual understanding and critical thinking. This also unleashes the potential for creative combinations, for instance of math with painting. To counter the numerous pressure points that a student's life has come to acquire, a holistic progress card instead of a marksheet will be provided at the end of the session, which will assess aptitude vis-à-vis skills, efficiency, competency and other talents.

Every high school child will undergo vocational education that will start from grade 6 and include internships. There will be multiple entry and exit options for an undergraduate and postgraduate student, with appropriate certification for each exit point.

A digital infrastructure for school education that will function independently but interoperably called NDEAR – which is a set of principles, standards and guidelines – has been created. This will energise the digital education ecosystem and is indispensable to the reformative changes envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

For the higher education sector, an Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) will facilitate digital storage of all academic credits earned from different higher education institutions (HEIs), including for vocational and academic training, grades accumulated if the student has exited the system at some point, and other such unique situations so that these can be transferred into a final degree form. Crucially, this will help twinning arrangements with foreign universities as envisaged under NEP, for students to complete a semester in a partner foreign institute.

Also, HEIs across the country barring legal and medical institutions will have a single regulator called the Higher Education Council of India (HECI). This will ensure a “light but tight” regulatory framework.

The threads tying all these initiatives together will be the special emphasis on socially and economically disadvantaged groups, setting up of a gender inclusion fund, special education zones for disadvantaged regions and groups, while states will be encouraged to establish Bal Bhavans or daytime boarding schools.

The PM envisions that NEP will nurture the highest potential of the child by breaking unproductive silos. This policy has come after one of the largest consultation processes in the history of education systems globally, and it reflects the resolve and vision of our leadership to situate India at the top of the knowledge economy.

As we celebrate Amrut Mahotsav, or 75 years of India's independence, NEP will teach children who today fall between the age of 5-15 years and who will be in the peak productive age of between 30-40 when India hits the mark of 100 years of independence, or Azadi

100. It is my privilege that I have been given a part in this process of creating a workforce who will be the flagbearers of a global community based on scientific thought, critical thinking and humanism.

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## THE ECONOMIC TIMES

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### **Time Govt Scrapped Mandatory CSR**

*Voluntary CSR is less wasteful, more effective*

#### **ET Editorials**

A Crisil study finds that India Inc's cumulative corporate social responsibility (CSR) spending since 2014 has crossed the ₹1 lakh crore milestone. This is not a mean achievement, although 40% of the spending over the last two years has been on account of companies counting Covid relief measures as CSR. Companies are mandated to spend 2% of average net profit over the past three years on CSR and non-compliance attracts a penalty (thankfully, the offence has been decriminalised). When multiple entities attempt the same task in discrete efforts, there are multiple inefficiencies, ranging from absent economies of scale to diversion of funds to publicity, administration and duplication. The larger the spending on CSR, the greater the wastage. To avoid this, the government must scrap mandated CSR and let companies go back to voluntary CSR.

Companies that are good at carrying out CSR would do it by themselves. Already, investment that takes into consideration environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices creates an incentive for many companies to carry out voluntary CSR. It would be less wasteful than mandatory CSR, making the case for the government to scrap mandated CSR compelling. Soap makers promoting handwashing and manufacturers spending good money on developing shop floor skills are good examples of CSR that add to, rather than taking away from, the bottomline and benefiting society at large. Profitable companies contribute a lot to society, just by being what they are. They generate jobs and incomes, meet social needs, pay taxes and allow people's savings to be converted into capital that generates returns for capital providers. These firms also nurture the common good by advancing the frontiers of creativity and innovation.

Many companies go beyond and tackle problems of the environment and of social underdevelopment. They become a draw for ethical investors. It helps improve their valuations. Finally, mandating CSR is akin to levying an additional tax and asking the companies to spend the proceeds themselves.

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## It's time for Industry 4.0

### *Adopting Industry 4.0 technologies would make MSMEs more efficient and competitive*

**Sameer Mittal & Milind Kumar Sharma, [ Sameer Mittal is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Tampere University, Finland, and Milind Kumar Sharma is a Professor at M.B.M. Engineering College, Jai Narain Vyas University, Jodhpur ]**

The term 'Industry 4.0' was coined by the German government in 2011. Additive manufacturing, Internet of Things, Cyber Physical Systems, Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality and data analytics are some of the technologies associated with Industry 4.0. With the help of these technologies, the manufacturing industry will be able to make data-driven decisions. The reduced costs of electronics like sensors, transmitters, and cloud have allowed us to capture the data produced during operational activities. With the availability of advanced algorithms, this captured data can be analysed for decision-making in real time. Thus, Industry 4.0 integrated 'data' with manufacturing and Information Technology. To take advantage of data-driven decision-making, the governments of other countries also coined their own industrial initiatives like Industry 4.0. For example, the U.S. calls it Smart Manufacturing, China calls it Made in China 2025, and India refers it to as Make in India or Digital India.

### **The potential of MSMEs**

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are expected to become the backbone of India as the economy grows larger. MSMEs form more than 95% of the industries in India, produce more than 45% of the total manufacturing output and employ more than 40% of the workforce. According to the Economic Survey 2020-21, over 6 crore MSMEs employ more than 11 crore people and contribute roughly 30% to the GDP and half of the country's export. MSMEs are also ancillaries to larger enterprises, leading to a seamless supply chain integration. As a result, making MSMEs more efficient will be advantageous for the whole economy.

However, MSMEs face challenges when it comes to adopting new technologies such as Industry 4.0. First, they lack awareness regarding Industry 4.0 and its benefits. They consider such technologies disruptive and having the potential to demolish their existing system. However, Industry 4.0 believes in improving the existing system. Scientific literature provides evidence of sensors and WiFi networks being integrated with old machines like lathes and mills to improve their performance. Second, MSMEs will need to make major financial investments to adopt Industry 4.0. Investing in the right set of technologies will need experts and consultants as well. Third, for any new technology to be adopted, an organisation requires a positive organisational culture and the support of people. MSMEs need to believe in the advantages that Industry 4.0 technologies can offer. Fourth, the frameworks and steps that can assist MSMEs in adopting Industry 4.0 technologies have been missing. In this regard, MSMEs need to understand the data they are producing from all their operational activities. Based on such data, their readiness can be evaluated. Finally, MSMEs should develop their own vision of Industry 4.0 technologies that they want to adopt and identify the relevant tools and practices they need for such a tailored vision.

### **Transcending impediments**

Though adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies by MSMEs requires transcending a labyrinth of impediments, it will make them more competitive as they will be able to offer world-class quality products to customers. Additionally, delivery timings and the flexibility to meet different needs will improve. As India joined the group of top 50 countries in the global innovation index for the first time in 2020, it is imperative for its MSMEs to embrace Industry 4.0 technologies without any hesitation. Proper sensitisation of the Government of India, higher education institutions, practitioners, entrepreneurs, industrial associations, trade unions, venture capitalists, consultants and research agencies would help to speed up this task. This becomes imperative given the manufacturing challenges abruptly posed by the COVID-19 pandemic when most of the healthcare infrastructure in India is MSME-dependent.

## बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड

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### जातीय राजनीति

#### संपादकीय



राजनीतिक परिदृश्य में जातीय जनगणना की मांग जोरदार तरीके से उठ रही है। भारतीय जनता पार्टी के कुछ नेता भी इसकी मांग कर रहे हैं और संकेत यही है कि इसे टाला जाना शायद संभव न हो। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने इस सप्ताह के आरंभ में 10 राजनीतिक दलों के नेताओं से मुलाकात की, हालांकि इस मुद्दे पर सरकार का रुख अब तक ज्ञात नहीं है। जातीय जनगणना के प्रस्ताव के समर्थकों का कहना है कि पिछली जातीय जनगणना सन 1931 में हुई थी जब देश औपनिवेशिक शासन के अधीन था। स्वतंत्रता के बाद देश की नीतियों में समानता और सामाजिक न्याय का आधार यही है। इसने सरकारी नौकरियों और शैक्षणिक

संस्थानों में चले आ रहे भेदभाव को समाप्त करने की जमीन तैयार की। इस नजरिये से देखा जाए तो मौजूदा दौर में भारतीय समाज की जातीय स्थिति यदि स्पष्ट हो तो निर्णय प्रक्रिया को बेहतर और कम विवादास्पद बनाया जा सकता है। कम से कम सामाजिक नीतियां तैयार करने में यह सहायक होगा।

जातीय जनगणना के मामले में पहली बाधा व्यावहारिक है। दशक में एक बार होने वाली जनगणना में पहले ही काफी देर हो चुकी है। उसका प्रारूप और सॉफ्टवेयर दोनों तैयार हैं इसलिए इसमें नया तत्व शामिल करने से देरी बढ़ेगी। देश इसके लिए तैयार नहीं है। दूसरी दिक्कत यह है कि जातीय समीकरण को लेकर सटीक जानकारी कमोबेश अन्य सरकारी आंकड़े जुटाने की कवायद से जुटाई जा सकती है। उदाहरण के लिए राष्ट्रीय नमूना सर्वेक्षण कार्यालय (एनएसएसओ)। यह भी स्वीकार करना होगा कि जनगणना के उलट एनएसएसओ के आंकड़े सर्वे आधारित हैं। जनगणना देश में मौजूद हर

व्यक्ति की गिनती करती है। एनएसएसओ के जातीय आंकड़े मंडल आयोग की सन 1980 में आई रिपोर्ट से बहुत मिलते हैं। देश में मौजूदा आरक्षण नीति की बुनियाद वही रिपोर्ट है।

जातीय जनगणना से दूरी बनाकर रहने की सबसे बड़ी वजह भारत की जातीय राजनीति की कमियों में निहित है। चाहे जो भी नई जनगणना का आधार हो राजनीतिक लाभ की इच्छा नहीं होनी चाहिए क्योंकि इससे केवल जातिवाद को ही बढ़ावा मिलेगा। यहां दो मसले हैं: सामाजिक-आर्थिक आंकड़ों की जटिलता और उनका एक दूसरे पर आरोपित होना। यह दलील दी जाती रही है कि अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग के आंकड़े जुटाना मुश्किल नहीं होना चाहिए क्योंकि जनगणना में पहले ही अनुसूचित जाति और अनुसूचित जनजाति के आंकड़े शामिल होते हैं। लेकिन वह केवल एक गणना है। अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग का मामला इस तथ्य से जटिल हो जाता है कि यहां वर्ग का मामला भी सामने आता है। अनुसूचित जाति और अनुसूचित जनजाति के उलट जो पिछड़े वर्ग 'क्रीमी लेयर' में आते हैं, वे आरक्षण नीति के दायरे से बाहर रहते हैं। क्रीमी लेयर में एक खास स्तर से अधिक आय अर्जित करने वाले पिछड़ा वर्ग के लोग आते हैं।

पिछड़ा वर्ग में जाति और वर्ग के अतिव्यापन ने अलग तरह का तनाव पैदा किया है जबकि इस बीच पात्रता वाली राजनीति तेजी से बढ़ रही है। आर्थिक सुधारों के बाद सरकार रोजगार बाजार में बहुत कम प्रभावी रह गई है और मराठा, पटेल और जाट भी सामाजिक-आर्थिक आधार पर आरक्षण की मांग कर रहे हैं। असली खेल आरक्षण नीति और अनगिनत उपजातियों पर उसके प्रभाव में छिपा है। ऐसी करीब 2,000 उपजातियां अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग में हैं। यह बात राजनेताओं को विशिष्ट उपजातियों के सहारे अपनी राजनीति संवारने का अवसर देती है। मोदी सरकार ने इन जातियों का वर्गीकरण करने तथा उनके बीच आरक्षण के समुचित बंटवारे के लिए एक आयोग बनाया है। इस आयोग के निष्कर्ष सामाजिक रूप से विस्फोटक हो सकते हैं (2017 से इसकी अवधि कई बार बढ़ाई गई है) ऐसे में फिलहाल जातीय जनगणना से बचा जाना चाहिए। 21वीं सदी की अहम शक्ति बनने की मंशा रखने वाला देश में जाति को समाज और राजनीति के लिए अतीत का विषय होना चाहिए।

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