



## EARLY CHILDHOOD AND CARE : AN OVERVIEW

*\*Dr. Anjusha Gawande and \*\*Asst. Professor Manisha Mohite*

*\*School of Education, MIT World Peace University, Pune*

*\*\* School of Education, MIT World Peace University, Pune*

### Abstract :

*Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is universally recognized as a vital component of education. Early childhood care and education (ECCE) play important role in children's long-term development. Government of India initiates for the quality in ECCE in the form of policies, plans, constitutional amendments, acts, curriculum framework, and schemes etc.*

*National Education Policy, 2020 is one of the steps towards it. In this Policy, Indian Government focused the immediate attainment of foundational literacy and numeracy for all children which become an urgent national mission.*

*The purpose of this paper was to understand the nature of early childhood care and education (ECCE), Its National Curriculum Framework, System of Early-Childhood Education institutions, Anganwadi Centers, Teachers Qualifications & recruitment Process, Professional Development of Teachers, Pupil-Teacher ratio. The researcher has completed the Document Analysis of Draft of National Education Policy,2020.*

**Keywords:** *ECCE, School Education, NEP 2020, Anganwadi Centres*

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## Introduction :

### What is ECCE?

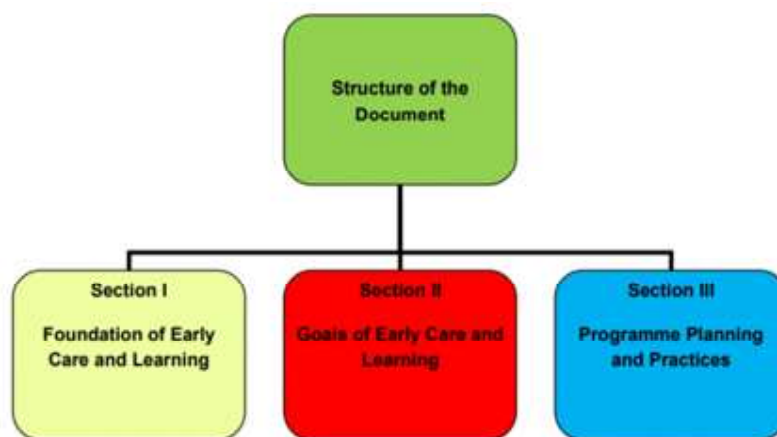
According to reports, the ECCE is aiming to assist brain development at an early age in socio-economically deprived communities across the country. According to reports, by the year 2030, the policy will determine steps to establish child development activities, care driven initiative and educational goals.

The notification also stated that “The first six of life are critical years of human life since the rate of development in these years is more rapid than at any other stage of development. Global brain research also informs us about the significance of early years for brain development. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE in NEP) makes a positive contribution to children’s long term development and learning by facilitating an enabling and stimulating environment in these foundation stages of lifelong learning.”

According to reports, the ECCE program is closely associated with the learning results in primary schools along with the improved retention rates, attendance of children and the aim to touch learning outcomes as per a study conducted by NCERT.



Ministry of Women and Child Development has given following diagram to understand what ECCE is



**Image credits: Ministry of Women and Child Development website**

The ECCE will also focus on the activities which involve sensory involvement. It will establish play-based study modules, and a feedback and inquiry-based study pattern. Apart from that, it will involve interactions that focus on the physical development of a child, while studying in a primary division.

The notification reads, “The purpose of this framework is to promote quality and excellence in early childhood education by providing guidelines for practices that would promote optimum learning and development of all young children and set out the broad arrangement of approaches and experiences rather than a detailed definition of the content. A cautious approach is being adopted to not provide a detailed curriculum/syllabus which would be prescriptive and ‘delivered’ to the young children in a ‘straight-jacketed manner’. The Curriculum Framework calls attention to the common principles and developmental tasks, at the same time, respecting the diversity in the child-rearing practices and contextual ECCE needs.”

### Review of literature :

*Chandra Reetu, Gulati Renu & Sharma Adarsh (2017)* pointed out the historical development of ECCE, they stated ECCE as the most important aspect of education system worldwide 21st century, its significance formally recognised by the whole world, that led us delineate global commitments towards Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 and Education for All (EFA) movement contributed as major signposts.

India recognized UNCRC in 1992 and pledged to the Education for All across the nation in the form of policies, plans, constitutional amendments, acts and schemes of Government of India. The most noteworthy are the Five-Year Plans; National Policy for Children, 1974; Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), 1975; amendment in the National Policy on Education (1986) Programme of Action (POA), 1992 on National policy of Education, 1986; District Primary Education Programme (DPEP); Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA); 86th Amendment Act in the



Constitution under Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy in part IV; National Plan of Action (NPA), 2005; Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE)-2009 under Section 11, Chapter III and National Policy for Children (NPC), 2013.

A review of research on the effects of early childhood Education and Care (ECEC) upon child development. CARE project Edward Melhuish Katharina Ereky-Stevens Konstantinos Petrogiannis Anamaria Ariescu Efthymia Penderi Konstantina Rentzou Alice Tawell Paul Leseman Martine Broekhuisen.

This report considers international research on the impact of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) provision upon children's development, using studies reported from a wide range of sources including journals, books, government reports and diverse organisation reports.

High-quality childcare has been associated with benefits for children's development, with the strongest effects for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is also evidence that negative effects can sometimes occur.

The results of studies partly depend upon the context and ECEC systems in place in different countries, but there is sufficient commonality of findings to indicate that many results are not culture-specific.

Discrepant results may relate to age of starting and also differences in the quality of childcare. In addition, childcare effects are moderated by family background with negative, neutral and positive effects occurring depending on the relative balance of quality of care at home and in childcare. Recent large-scale studies find effects related to both quantity and quality of childcare. The effect sizes for childcare factors are about half those for family factors. The analysis strategy of most studies attributes variance to childcare factors only after family factors has been considered, and, where the two covary, this can produce conservative estimates of childcare effects.

### **Impact of Quality of ECCE Programs on Cognitive Development and School Readiness of Children :**

International Journal of Advanced Research (IJAR), 28 Jul, 2016.

The significance of Early Childhood Care and Education for human resource development has been globally recognized. There is a growing body of research evidence to prove that children who received quality early childhood education are not only more likely to be healthy and ready for formal education but also show better progress at the primary stage and thus it helps in reducing wastage and stagnation. The present study examined the effectiveness of ECE programs run by government (Aanganwadi) and Non- government organizations in terms of cognitive development and school readiness of children. The sample included six ECE centers of Jaipur city. Out of those six ECE centers, three were Aanganwadi center and three centers were run by NGOs. From each center 25% of children present in the class were included in the sample. The information were collected with the help of cognitive development tool developed by Dr. Hema Pandey and school readiness tool prepared by the World Bank and CECED department of Ambedkar university. The findings of the study shows that Aanganwadi run under ICDS program are lagging behind the ECE centers run by NGO's in terms of cognitive development and school readiness of children enrolled in it. Although the infrastructure facility were not found upto the mark in ECE centers run by non-government organization but the condition was found worse in government run Aanganwadi



centers. They are not properly equipped to deal with the educational needs of preschool children. Moreover the ECCE personnel working in Aanganwadi lacked sufficient skills to deliver educational training to the enrolled children. To reap the maximum educational benefits of existing ECCE programmes the staff need to be trained along with boosting the infrastructure inputs.

An Empirical Study on NEP 2020 [National Education Policy] with Special Reference to the Future of Indian Education System and Its effects on the Stakeholders , Pawan Kalyan. Journal of Management Engineering and Information Technology (JMEIT), Volume 7 Issue 5, Oct 2020.

Education plays a powerful role in building nation, education decides the future of the nation, the destiny of its people. The impact will be a long-lasting one in terms of growth and development of the nation and citizen. The role of education and its importance cannot be ignored in today's scenario. The growth and development can be seen if we compare the pre independence and post -Independence era. After 34 years Indian Govt. is going to change the way we study, this is the third amendment in the education policy. There are many changes proposed in new National Education Policy 2020 that would certainly effect all the stakeholders. In this paper the author is going to explore about National Education Policy 2020 and its effects on the stakeholders and also try to bring awareness and future impact of National Education Policy 2020 by asking a series of questions floated on all the available social media and analyzing the same.

NEP 2020 : A progressive step

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Lakshmi Annapurna Chintaluri

National Education Policy 2020: What is in it for a student, a parent, a teacher, or us, as a Higher Education Institution/ University.

Mridul Madhav Panditrao, Minnu Mridul Panditrao

Department of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care, Adesh Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Bathinda, Punjab, India.

Ministry of Human Resource Development of Government of India has projected an elaborate and all-encompassing National Education Policy 2020 (NEP2020). Before independence, the education in India was under the complete control of the “Masters, the British Empire.” The education policies, like the one drawn by Macaulay, as would be obvious, were not for providing any quality education to the Indians, but to churn out the “Babus;” clerks and bureaucrats, to serve the masters, pure and simple. After independence, the society went through series of changes, policies were charted and certain reforms were brought in, but the impact was still not achieved. In 2015, the GOI adapted, “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD)” and since then the impetus has been initiated. The final culmination of a long drawn and all-inclusive process is NEP2020. NEP2020 has been a very elaborate planning document. The salient features of the issues, principles, aims, vision, challenges and solutions have been dealt with in this article. The main focus has been on the higher education and its implementation. Due importance also has been



accorded to other issues such as vocational education, research and online and digital education to mention a few. Overall, it is a commendable and a very positive step forward on the part of the government. Only the time will judge, how much net effective output is actually garnered.

### **A National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) :**

NCERT will develop the Frame work for ECCE. It will reflect in two parts,

- a sub-framework for 0-3-year-olds,
- a sub-framework for 3-8-year-olds,

The framework will serve as a guide both for parents and for early childhood care and education institutions. The latest research on ECCE, and national and international best practices will reflect in the programme in particular with curriculum related to the rich local traditions of India like art, stories, poetry, games, songs, and more, will also be suitably incorporated.

### **Goals :**

- To ensure universal access to high-quality ECCE across the country in a phased manner.
- To provide Special attention and priority to districts and locations that are particularly socio-economically disadvantaged.

### **Aim of ECCE :**

To achieve optimal outcomes in the areas of:

1. physical and motor development,
2. cognitive development,
3. socio-emotional-ethical development,
4. cultural/artistic development, and the development of communication and early language,
5. Literacy, and numeracy.

### **Nature of ECCE :**

System of Early-Childhood Education institutions will be consisted of-

- (a) Standalone Anganwadis
- (b) Anganwadis co-located with primary schools
- (c) Pre-primary schools/sections covering at least age 5 to 6 years co-located with existing primary schools
- (d) Stand-alone pre-schools - all of which would recruit workers/teachers specially trained in the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE.

All the needed support system will be provided to Anganwadi Centres to strengthen with high-quality infrastructure, play equipment, and well-trained Anganwadi workers/teachers. It will have a qualitative equipment, Good air circulation, well-designed infrastructure, child-friendly and well-planned structure with an enhanced learning setting.



Anganwadis shall be cohesive with schools, so that they can meet the teachers and students of their local primary schools, with the intention of the progression from Anganwadi Centres to primary schools. Anganwadi children, parents, and teachers will be invited to attend and participate in school events and vice versa.

Every Child prior to the age of 5 will move to a 'Preparatory Class' or 'Balavatika', After completing this class he will be promoted to Class 1. For Preparatory Class, ECCE-qualified teacher will be recruited. The emphasis will be given on play-based learning with a focus on developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities and early literacy and numeracy.

The Mid-Day Meal programme shall also be extended to the Preparatory Classes in primary schools. Similarly, Health check-ups and growth monitoring system will be followed in Preparatory Class students also like Anganwadi Students. For universal Access, Tribal subjugated areas also, ECCE will be introduced in Ashramshalas in all formats of alternative schooling in a phased manner. The process for integration and implementation of ECCE will be followed on the same guideline.

### **Teachers in ECCE :**

To ensure the high-quality in ECCE, New teachers & current Anganwadi teachers will be trained professional through a systematic way in accordance with the curricular/pedagogical framework developed by NCERT. Alongside, Current Workers will also be trained to their duties & responsibilities successfully. The ECCE training of Anganwadi workers/teachers will be mentored by the Cluster Resource Centres of the School Education Department which shall hold at least one monthly contact class for continuous assessment

Anganwadi workers/teachers with qualifications of 10+2 and above shall be given a 6-month certificate programme in ECCE. Lower educational qualifications holders shall be given a one-year diploma programme which will cover important aspects like early literacy, numeracy.

Digital/distance mode using DTH channels as well as smartphones will be used to run the courses. It help teachers to obtain ECCE qualifications with minimal disturbance to their current work. State Governments shall prepare cadres of professionally qualified educators for early childhood care and education, through stage-specific professional training, mentoring mechanisms, and career mapping. Major focus will be given on professional development of teachers. Accordingly, Essential facilities will also be formed for the initial professional preparation of these educators and their Continuous Professional Development.

MHRD will take the responsibility for ECCE curriculum and pedagogy. It will ensure its continuity from pre-primary school through primary school, and to ensure due attention to the foundational aspects of education. Ministries of HRD, Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW), and Tribal Affairs will take care of planning and implementation of early childhood care and education curriculum.

As per NEP 2020, The highest priority of the Indian education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025. An implementation plan will be prepared by all State/UT governments to attain universal foundational literacy and numeracy in all primary schools, identifying stage-wise targets and goals to be achieved by 2025.



### Main Features :

- universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025
- A pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of under 30:1
- Teachers will be trained, encouraged, and supported - with continuous professional development - to impart foundational literacy and numeracy
- focus on reading, writing, speaking, counting, arithmetic, and mathematical thinking
- interim 3-month play-based 'school preparation module' for all Grade 1 students,
- Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) A national repository of high-quality resources on foundational literacy and numeracy
- Digital libraries will also be established. School libraries will be set up - particularly in villages
- The Mid-Day Meal programme
- Health check-ups especially for 100% immunization in schools and health cards will be issued to monitor the same.

### NEP-2020: Implications for ECCE :

The aim is not only to cover the children belonging to the general population but children from socio-economic disadvantaged sections and minorities as well National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 has replaced 1986 policy on 29th July 2020. NEP-2020 has not erupted from somewhere all of a sudden. The revolutionary document is the result of an evolution of so many years.

We all know that the first 05 years of life are extremely vital. A child's brain remains the most flexible and more receptive to learning during these five years. So these first five years form the central building blocks of prospect health, happiness, learning, and achievement. Keeping these vital things in view, NEP-2020 has focused on ECCE and included it in its pedagogical structure in the form of the foundation stage.

NEP-2020 is the first policy of its kind to initiate ECCE and has operationalised it in its pedagogical structure as Foundation Stage. The policy has introduced it with a good number of opportunities with Positive intent.

NEP-2020 ensures universal access to ECCE and has made provisioning of quality early childhood care and education to be achieved within 10 years. The main purpose of the programme is to catch and attract children when they are very young and shall also attract parents to send their children from the age of 03 years to the available centers or schools. The aim is not only to cover the children belonging to the general population but children from socio-economic disadvantaged sections and minorities as well. The foundation stage surely will prepare children to be school ready and to get adjusted to school ethos which will have a definite impact on the reduction of dropout rate at the primary, elementary and secondary education levels. ECCE will ensure elastic, playful, and curiosity-based learning, comprising of semantic and creative temper development. It will also focus on developing social capabilities, compassion, and cooperation. Thus, the policy aims to get the best outcomes in the physical, cognitive, and emotional domains of a child.



### Conclusion :

To conclude this big policy that has been proposed by Indian government to improve the Indian Education System is a big task. There was the need for a big change after 34 years of education system there was the gap that could be seen between Industry and academia and this gap result into the production of the skilled and educated students that won't find their place in Industry or corporate results into unemployment scenario or if employed they are under paid. In both the situation a person gets frustrated and leads towards depression and similar other things. New Education policy is still a proposal may be there could be some corrections needed that could be done either before implementing or after seeing the outcomes of the policy in practical. Mostly all the proposal that have been proposed in NEP 2020 are having great potential to give success to all the stakeholders in future. Introduction of vocational courses is a new concept, lowering the tension of board exams, introduction of new subjects, diminishing the wall of streams and many more positive things are proposed. Now students can choose their subject combination, in practical sense now they will learn what they want to learn. The education system has shifted the focus from learn what the system want to provide to learn what the students wants to learn according to their choice and preferences. In choosing the potential areas the Dermatoglyphics can reveal students intrinsic qualities and talents. The Fingerprints of the person remain unchanged during a lifetime of an individual. If an individual plans the selection of subjects according to the skill set and internal talent there are more chances of getting success. The final words to conclude, it is yet a proposal in coming few months it will take its final shape and ready for implementation. The implementation and execution of the plans in real ground level will yield the actual results, just wait and watch the outcomes of the NEP 2020.

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