ETMA

Presents

EducationMatters@ETMA

October 2020

- ■ **Digitalized Pedagogy and Classrooms**

- ■ **Early Childhood Care and Education**

- ■ **Higher Education**

NEP2020

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"Dr Kalam used to say - 'The purpose of education is to make good human beings with skill and expertise. Enlightened human beings can be created by teachers.' Changes in the education policy is a major way to provide the nation better students, professionals & better human being."

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Editor's Note

*T*he National Educational Policy announced by the Ministry of Human Resource Development sets for itself the goal of transforming the system to meet the needs of 21st Century India. It is the first omnibus policy after the one issued in 1986, and it has to contend with multiple crises in the system. It is no secret that primary schools record shockingly poor literacy and numeracy outcomes, dropout levels in middle and secondary schools are significant, and the higher education system has generally failed to meet the aspirations for multi-disciplinary programmes.

This Issue of Education Matters @ETMA has tried to cover a few of the NEP's measures to introduce early childhood care education from age 3, digitalization of classrooms, remedial reforms for special children, restructuring curriculum and pedagogy; investing in teacher training, Phenomenon based learning, Implications of higher education, role of NEP in making India self-reliant.

Though the NEP 2020 seeks to bring a holistic change in the education system of India, its success depends on the will and way in which it will be implemented.

The Requirement of Enormous Resources.

An ambitious target of public spending at 6% of GDP has been set. Mobilising financial resources will be a big challenge, given the low tax-to-GDP ratio and competing claims on the national exchequer of healthcare, national security and other key sectors.

Since education is a concurrent subject (both the Centre and the state governments can make laws on it), the reforms proposed can only be implemented collaboratively by the Centre and the states. Thus, the Centre has the giant task of building a consensus on the many ambitious plans. Among the many imperatives, the deadline to achieve universal literacy and numeracy by 2025 should be a top priority as a goal that will crucially determine progress at higher levels.

NEP 2020:
Digitalized Pedagogy and Classrooms

By Anindita Guha

> "We complain that learners want to be spoon fed, but then we won't let them hold the spoon."
>
> *— Jane Bozarth, Director of Research, The e-Learning Guild*

Digital learning gives students the opportunity to have more of a hand in their learning experience. By offering personalized and interactive course content, students can approach the course at their own pace, or go back and review content that's still a bit fuzzy. Give your students the "spoon"

- A.K.A., a customized online curriculum and personalized support.

technology to look after the e-education needs of both school and higher education and to make India a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

Main challenge here is the scale at which internet connectivity, technological devices and infrastructure needs to be developed and implemented. Teachers also require suitable training and development to be effective online educators. It cannot be assumed that a good teacher in a traditional classroom will automatically be a good teacher in an online classroom.

There are numerous challenges to conducting online examinations at scale, including limitations on the types of questions that can be asked in an online environment, handling network and power disruptions, and preventing unethical practices.

A few types of courses/subjects, like performing arts and science practical have limitations in the online/digital education space, which can be overcome to a partial extent with innovative measures. So, unless the online education is blended with experiential and activity-based learning, it will tend to become a screen-based education with limited focus on the social, affective and psychomotor dimensions of learning.

The policy does recognises the importance of technology intervention as an integral part of its charter and stresses upon specialised learning, character development, blended learning, inter-disciplinary methods, outcome-based learning, creative thinking and all the skills which are necessary to dwell in the 21st century.

So, it will be interesting to see how the education industry and academia at large uses the various opportunities laid out by the government to maximum advantage in imparting quality education with educational technology as a medium.

Anindita Guha is a primary Teacher with DAV School

Despite all the furore over online education not being for the economically and socially backward, India will focus more on the use of technology in education and plan its path accordingly.

Technology in education is a journey and not a destination and capacity will be needed to orchestrate the various ecosystem players to implement policy objectives. A dedicated unit for the purpose of orchestrating the building of digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building will be created in the Ministry to look after the e-education needs of both school and higher education.

Since technology is rapidly evolving we need specialists to deliver high quality e-learning, a vibrant ecosystem has to be encouraged to create solutions that not only solve India's challenges of scale, diversity, equity, but also evolve in keeping with the rapid changes in technology, whose half-life reduces with each passing year.

The initiative of digital India and current crisis of pandemic has been the motive behind the need and creation of digital libraries, digital content, digital pedagogy and online digital classrooms in NEP 2020.

Sec 23 and 24 of the policy gives details of integrating technology through a dedicated unit for planning and development of digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building of institutes in

Grab 'em young': Is what NEP2020 has for Early Childhood Care and Education

By Himani Gupta

NEP 2020 has many changes like inclusion of multilingualism till grade-5 and inclusion of vocational studies in later stages as a subject and many more. But my concern is related to the reform which includes the ECCE years in the whole structure of schooling more formally.

The policy has major reforms that divides the education system in 4 stages keeping in mind the age of the learners. 10+2 level has been replaced by 5+3+3+4 level of schooling. The pre- primary years or basic foundation years which were not given much importance are taken into consideration now. We didn't have any formal ECCE curriculum earlier to cater the needs of the children under the age groups of 6.

I think the idea is to create a framework that will serve as a guide to both parents and early childhood care and education institutions. Pre-primary age-group was not being paid much attention earlier. It was more to do with feeding the children and providing them basic nutrition which they might lack. However, the curriculum that was followed at those Anganwadis was hardly a concern. But the early age-group has more

needs rather than just being provided food.

We have n number of theories supporting the fact that actual learning starts in the earlier stages, and NEP seems to have identified the fact that 85 percent of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6 and hence proper stimulation to the brain of the child is very crucial for this age group.

This acknowledgement is agreeing to the fact that they are the foundation years to make a human being, a valuable resource which is ultimate objective of the entire education system. Though I have worked with that age group and hence I can say it more confidently that it is indeed the most crucial age for life-long learning, and I appreciate the reforms in the NEP 2020, which had envisioned those 5 years of early childhood care and education and made it more fruitful for the young learners.

I am happy as it would have a positive impact on grade-1 and 2 learners as well, as they were also considered in primary education and hence the system was not that activity-based, concrete or play-based which their age needs.

Earlier, it was a huge leap for a child from kindergarten to grade-1. But the NEP2020 has taken care of the transition in that stage and came up with reforms to make it much smoother.

Hence I liked the idea of improved cognitive development and motor skills in children's early life and make them "school ready". So, I feel NEP2020 will bring a positive change in the entire education scenario and will give a new direction to future of education system.

Ms. Himani Gupta, a primary teacher with 5years of experience in ECCE

# The New Remedial Reforms for the Special Children in NEP2020

By Sukrita Datta Guha

India's National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) has been hailed as a new era in educational reform. The NEP asserts that children with special needs will have opportunities for equal participation across the educational system. There are innate talents in every student, which must be discovered, nurtured, fostered, and developed. These talents may express themselves in the form of varying interests, dispositions, and capacities. The students who show strong interests and capacities in a given realm must be encouraged to pursue that realm beyond the general school curriculum. The teachers will be equipped with methods for the recognition and fostering of such student talents and interests.

There is an urgent need for additional special educators for certain areas of school education. Some examples of such specialist requirements include subject teaching for children with disabilities/Divyang children at the Middle and Secondary school level, including teaching for specific learning disabilities. Such teachers would require not only subject-teaching knowledge and understanding of subject-related aims of education, but also the relevant skills for understanding of special requirements of children. Therefore, such areas could be developed as secondary specializations for subject teachers or generalist teachers, during or after pre-service teacher preparation. Greater synergy will be enabled between the course curriculum of NCTE and RCI to ensure adequate availability of qualified special educators who can handle subject teaching as well.

The NCERT and NCTE will develop guidelines for the education of gifted children. B.Ed. programmes may also allow a specialization in the education of gifted children. The policy has provisions for recruitment of special educators with cross-disability training and incorporates disability awareness within teacher education. There will be resource centres, accommodations, assistive devices, appropriate technology-based tools and other support mechanisms tailored to suit their needs.
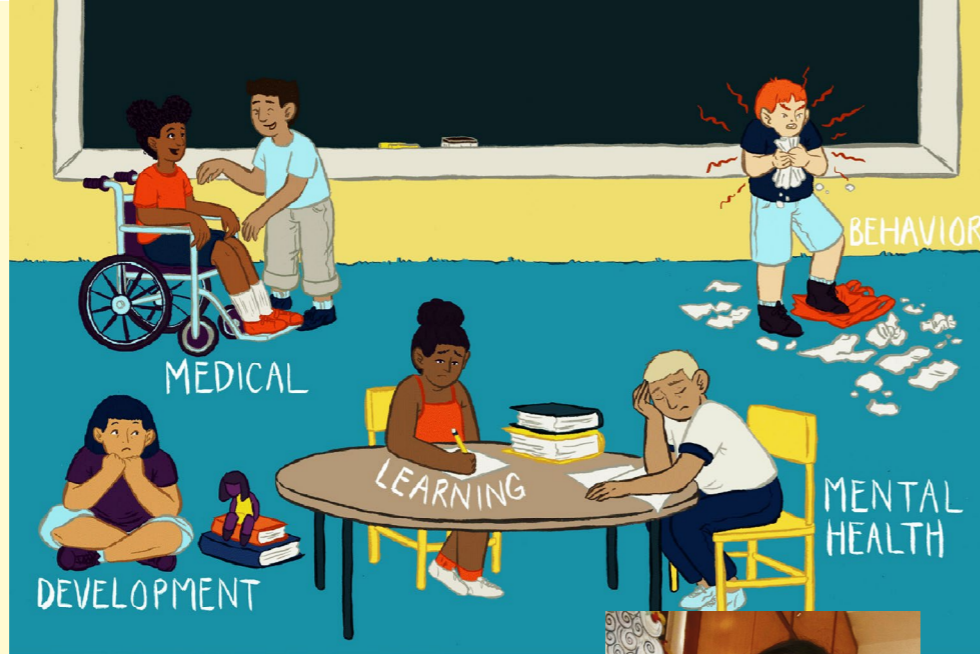
Every state/district will be encouraged to establish "Bal Bhavans" as a special daytime boarding school, to participate in art, career and play-related activities. Free school infrastructure can be used as Samajik Chetna Kendras. The NEP schools and school complexes will be provided resources for the integration of children with disabilities.

Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawarchand Gehlot has said that barrier-free access to education will be enabled for all children with disabilities in the New Education Policy. He said, "knowledge on how to teach children with specific disabilities will be an integral part of all teacher education programmes under the New Education Policy" and "NIOS will develop high-quality modules to teach Indian Sign Language, and to teach other basic subjects using Indian Sign Language," he added.

As per the RPWD Act 2016, children with benchmark disabilities shall have the choice of regular or special schooling. Resource centres in conjunction with special educators will support the rehabilitation and educational needs of learners with severe or multiple disabilities.

The success of this policy will be in effective implementation and its remedial results, as a lot of policies are made with the best of intentions but only those which are effectively implemented, are the ones which benefit any community.

Sukrita Datta Guha, project manager, ETMA

Phenomena-based Learning

By Mrityunjoy Kaibartya

Introduction:

Nature, the environment and the world are constantly changing over time. As the world around us has become more complex, new and versatile skills are required in order to thrive. Traditional learning system imparts knowledge to us in isolation. Isolated subject knowledge is not sufficient to solve a complex problem. Different problems arise in our daily life and we have to solve those problems ourselves. To deal with such a situation, knowledge of a specific subject cannot solve the problem. It requires knowledge of many subjects to be combined and applied according to the situation. So in our education system, we need multidisciplinary learning approach. In order to solve a real-world problem, it is necessary to look at the phenomenon as a whole, not as a part of it. So a holistic approach is needed for learning at the present time.
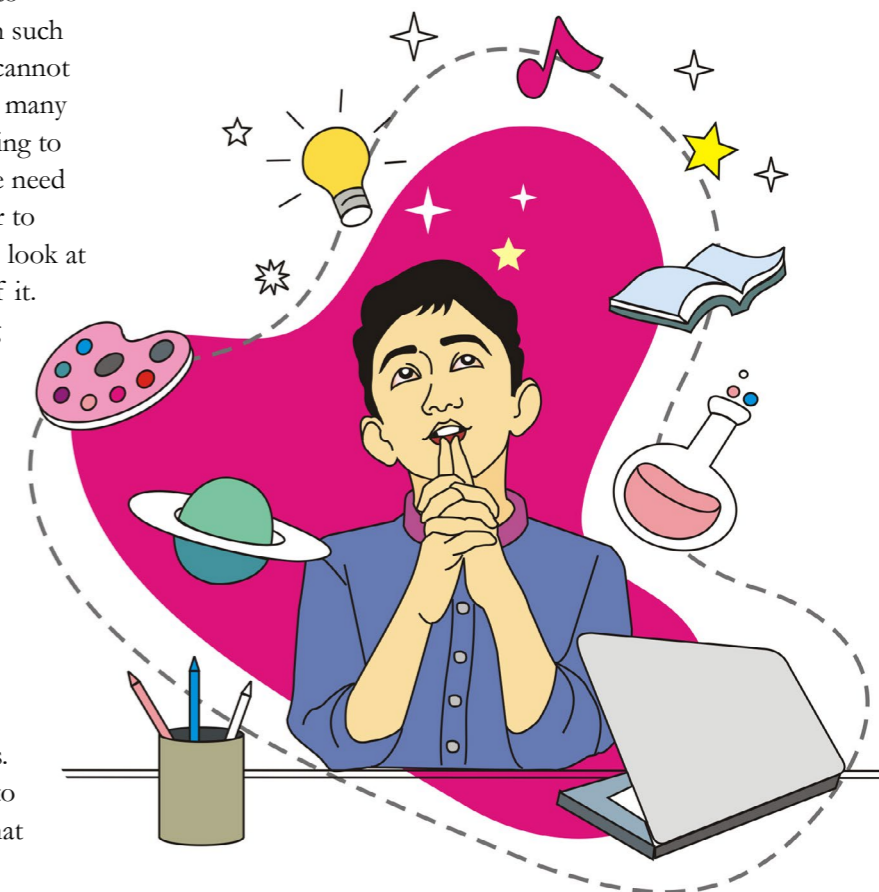
What is Phenomenon-based learning?

Phenomenon-based learning is a student-centred multi-disciplinary approach based on student inquiry and problem-solving. No specific subject is taught, or predefined learning has no purpose. Instead, students solve their own questions by investigating and applying topics relevant to the problems. Phenomena-based learning is learning how to handle any situation or solve any problem that arises in real life.

For example, the students were asked why the water of a certain pond inside the village was previously usable but now it is not suitable for bathing or household purposes. Now Students have to investigate the phenomenon by asking their own questions, researching facts, and delivering an answer/solution. To solve this question students need the basic knowledge of physical since, geography, environmental science and also the history of the local area. Since Phenomena-based Learning is related to real life, it fosters 21st-century skills like communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving and self-sufficient workforce. Thus Phenomena Based Learning can be defined as a student-centred, multidisciplinary, enquiry, problem-solving and real-world based learning approach.

Dimensions of Phenomenon-based learning:

According to Vasileios Symeonidis and Johanna Schwartz (2016), there are five dimensions of a phenomena-based Learning approach: holisticity, authenticity, contextuality, problem-based inquiry, and open-ended learning processes.

Holisticity refers an overall view of a Phenomenon and multidisciplinarity of phenomenon-based learning.

Authenticity means that the learning situation will be realistic and the methods, tools and materials used for learning will be real-life based and significant for the society.

Contextuality means that all phenomena will be based on real situations and students will observe them in their larger context. Students will review the content and learn from it according to the phenomenon context.

Problem-based inquiry and raising questions from there is one of the ways to self-learning. The solution comes out of the inquiry.

Open-ended learning processes is that where students discover their own learning methods and learn their own self. In this way, students learn how to learn. This is a very important skill for education in the 21st century.

Teachers Role

The role of a teacher in Phenomena based Learning is to present a real-life problem to the learner and observe student's activity, provide him / her clue if needed to solve that problem. Teachers guide them through the process, scaffolding the steps and help them through the complexity.

Curriculum of Phenomenon-based learning

As Phenomenon-based learning is a Multidisciplinary approach, it needs a carefully constructed curricular structure. In Phenomenon-based learning

Teacher identifies a phenomenon or asks students to one from the real world; the phenomenon should have larger social, national or even global that topic will have a global context and implications

Students will create research questions around this topic.

Identify the basic ideas related to the chosen questions; they will search information from books, internet, and other learning resources, discuss and debate, collaborate and cooperate with peers; wherever necessary consult teachers (but minimally); construct solutions/responses and submit the results to the larger group for further discussion.

Ensure a free framework of time for students to engage in the necessary investigation and problem solving related to the phenomenon.

Simplify the process by establishing a framework that will help students navigate the process and develop their own way of solving problems.

Indian Perspective

The term Phenomena Based Learning is not mentioned in the Indian National Education Policy 2020, but the emphasis is given on holistic multidisciplinary education in higher education. NEP 2020 recommended setting up of MERU (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities) to attain the highest global standards in quality education. NEP 2020 mentioned "A holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings -intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner. Such an education will help develop well-rounded individuals that possess critical 21st-century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities….".

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Mrityunjoy Kaibrata, Educational professional, Vishwa Bharati University

Higher Education:
National Education Policy 2020
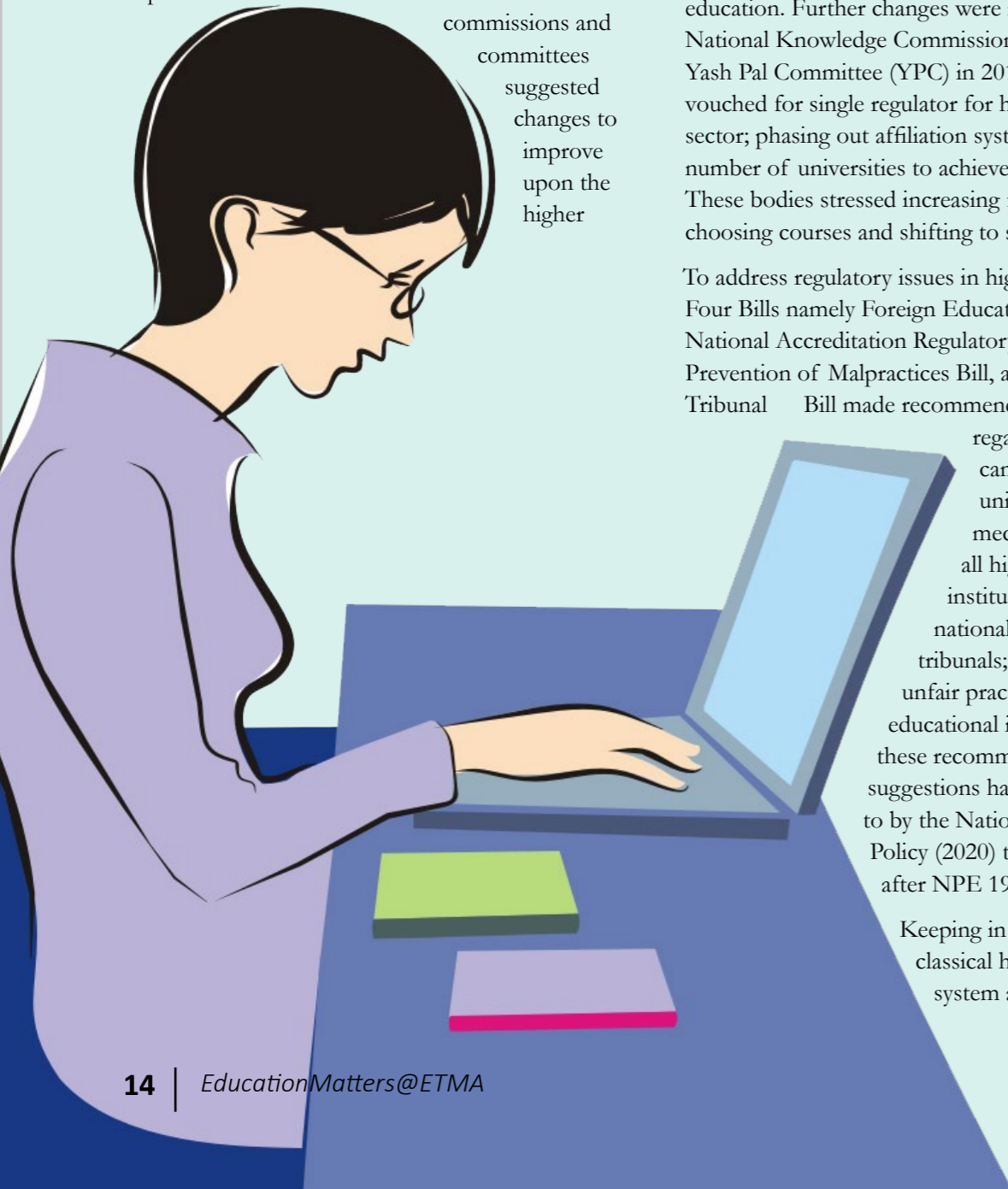
By Dr. S. P. Malhotra

NEP2020

The day three Indian universities Bombay, Calcutta and Madras were established in 1857 requirement of reforms in higher education started. Indian Education Commission (1882-83), Indian Universities Commission (1902), Indian Universities Act (1904) are examples. Even on the day of Independence, University Education Commission under the chairmanship of legendary S. Radhakrishnan was established who gave its report in 1948. All these commissions and committees suggested changes to improve upon the higher education system. Even after years of independence different education commissions, committees and policies of education suggested changes to reform Indian Higher education to model as per the man-power requirements of the time.

In Independent India reforms started firstly with Secondary Education Commission (1952) that restructured education to 8+3+3; secondly Kothari Commission (1964-66) restructured education to 10+2+3 and introduced quality as an objective and added vocational education, distance education etc. to improve upon. Third wave of reforms came with 1986 Policy on Education, Programme of Action, Ramamurthy Committee in 1992. Fourth wave of reforms kicked off with Right to Education, RMSA and Public Private Partnership in higher education. Further changes were recommended the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) and the Yash Pal Committee (YPC) in 2010. Both bodies vouched for single regulator for higher education sector; phasing out affiliation system and increasing number of universities to achieve higher GER. These bodies stressed increasing flexibility of choosing courses and shifting to semester system.

To address regulatory issues in higher education Four Bills namely Foreign Education Providers Bill, National Accreditation Regulatory Authority Bill, Prevention of Malpractices Bill, and Education Tribunal Bill made recommendations regarding setting up campuses by foreign universities in India; mechanism to accredit all higher educational institutions; creating national and state level tribunals; penalizing unfair practices of private educational institutions. All these recommendations and suggestions have been adhered to by the National education Policy (2020) that came 34 years after NPE 1986.

Keeping in view Indian classical higher education system and pondering over various issues of higher education (mentioned on Page33) the NEP emphasized Multidisciplinary education system in universities, Higher education institutions cluster; Autonomous colleges with aim to enroll 3000 or more students. It envisaged continuum of up- gradation of institutions from college to autonomous college and then to University on the basis of accreditation. The policy envisioned to have multidisciplinarity in all HEIs up to 2040 and one large HEI in every district by 2030. Higher education institutions could be Teaching Intensive or Research Intensive.

Policy recommended flexible curriculum structure with CBCS credit programme wherein STEM and liberal arts will be combined for 21st century capacity requirements across disciplines and gave flexibility to students to choose courses for the graduate programmes. The duration of Undergraduate degree could vary from 3-4 years where 4th year will be research programme. Each year of completion will lead to certificate. Quality intensive Policy has stressed high quality students support centres to be set up in HEIs. The ODL and online as well regular classes will be integrated in natural form with credit transfer policy for students coming from India and abroad.

Faculty motivation has been visualized in terms of teaching, research and service with transparent process for faculty recruitment. Fast track promotion has been recommended for good contributors in research & teaching. Teachers will have autonomy in curricular and pedagogic approaches. In order to recruit good quality teachers NET/SLET will be restructured. The Selected teachers will be exposed to training by revamping academic staff colleges for organizing short and long term courses. Research faculty will be incentivized by establishing a new constitutional body – the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER).

To prohibit and punish educational malpractices in higher education rules based system has been suggested by enacting law for the same. For expansion of higher education private investment in education is acknowledged for offering courses directly relevant to the market. Entry of foreign educational institutions has been permitted to encourage competition for quality in higher education. In order to keep a tab on the quality of education accreditation has been made mandatory for each institution. For that purpose more than one agency for accreditation and multi-rating agencies of HEIs have been recommended.

Since knowledge is linked with production and economic growth human resources is to be equipped with wide diversity of knowledge and its applications. For the said purpose the education institutions will develop human resource with capacity to innovate, to produce knowledge and absorb knowledge. Market-friendly reforms in the economic sectors will be extended to education sector so that Universities become both managerial and entrepreneurial in their approach as well as operation.

The HEIs will be autonomous with respect to academics, governance and finances will be accountability to stakeholders with respect to their performance. The institutions located in border, hilly, small towns and educationally backward areas will be supported with special scholarship, hostel facility, remedial coaching and infrastructure. This support will be available for institutions with larger student population of SC/ST/girls/challenged students. Hostels will be made available for low GER ratio localities.

Policy has envisioned various sectors to make higher education competitive in global market keeping Indian ethics and values intact. However, there are large number of questions in the minds of stake holders including beneficiaries and functionaries. The questions like- will Indian higher education be able to achieve excellence in the ocean of mediocrity; will weak financial support to state universities and colleges be able to sustain competitiveness; Is system prepared to produce world class graduates; do our universities have networking in knowledge management; will the public sector and private sector in higher education come out of profiteering and corruption. All such questions need to be addressed.

Prof. S. P. Malhotra, Former Chief Consultant to EDCil, MHRD, Government of India; Director, ETMA

Education connects you with the stories, theories and accomplishments of faraway cultures and generations. It offers you a body of knowledge greater than you can ever gain on your own in one lifetime.

Self-Reliant India

By Niharika Meena

The New NEP (National Education Policy) 2020 have been introduced on 29 July, which brought sea of changes at the different stages of our education system. It has been designed, considering many aspects, but the most important one is its role in creating a self-reliant India. It aims to provide global exposure for Indian students. It has been designed in a way, to create an innovative, skilled, and entrepreneurial mind-set.

India has always been determined to implement solutions, out of its own challenges. The government of India has initiated many different programs and schemes in this direction, such as 'Make in India', 'Skill India', 'Start-Up India', 'Digital India' and now 'Atma- Nirbhar Bharat'. These schemes have a common goal that is to promote entrepreneurship over jobs.

The current Covid19 crisis has impacted our economy adversely, which urge the necessity of a self-reliant society, aiming to boost the economy and in redirecting an unemployed youth to find employment through a self-sustained skill-based model.

Therefore, NEP has given prime importance to skill-based education in school and higher education, to empower each student in one vocational skill. The policy has also decided to open campuses of foreign universities in India and India's prestigious higher education institutions will open their branches in foreign countries, which will lead to capacity building and infrastructure development and our students will get global exposure. Research collaboration and student exchange programs between Indian

and foreign universities will be encouraged.

The NEP has given liberty to students, to choose the subjects of their own choice. It has been made multi-disciplinary. The policy's step to link education with technology can create wonders. Technology is going to be intrinsic to the learning process as this policy has also emphasized the use of artificial intelligence. A National Research Foundation (NRF) has also been proposed in the NEP, to promote the research programs. The NRF will provide funds for research in all disciplines and the potential research works will be recognized and implemented.

With proper monitoring and implementation, these approaches will definitely aid to develop a whole new skilled mindset which can generates ideas, invent new technologies, and power new markets and industries. One challenge, though, is the skilled human resources and the transition time needed. But overall, when I look at this policy from the lens of a parent, I feel jubilant. After laying a strong foundation for healthy India through Ayushman Bharat, this policy has laid the foundation for the next pillar in education as assurance for a self-reliant India.

**Niharika Meena,**
a successful homemaker

ETMA News

Webinar on Implications of NEP2020

Under the SIP, ETMA has organised a series of webinars on National Education Policy 2020 to orient primary teachers on the new National Education Policy, Implication of NEP in ODL, Implication of NEP in higher education, NEP; Educational Technology and Implications of NEP in Language Education.

Event

ETMA has partnered with Teach for India, Fikri, ticklinks and many others for inspirED 2020, a National conference on Reimagining Education amongst students, educators, policymakers, parents and funders.
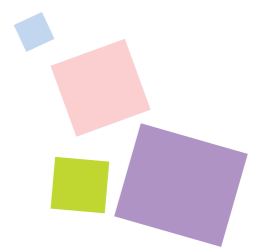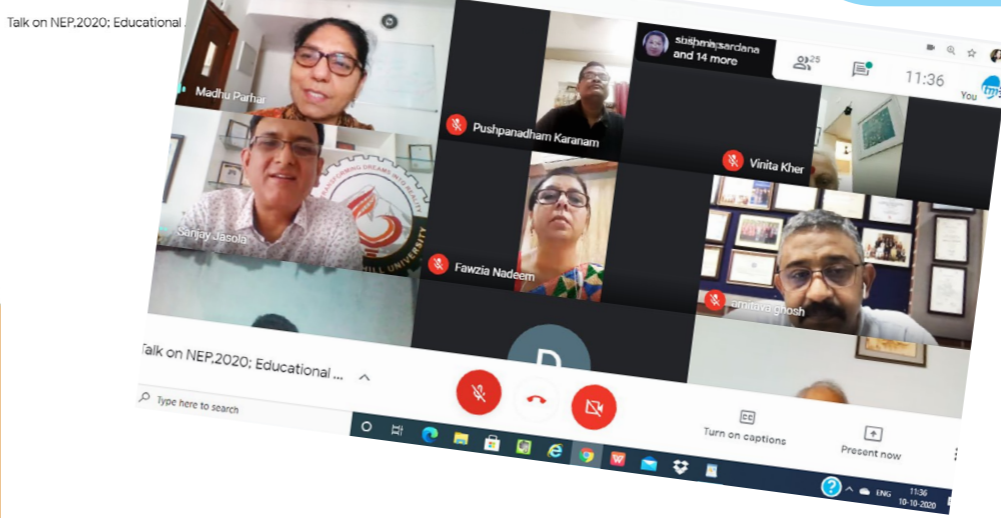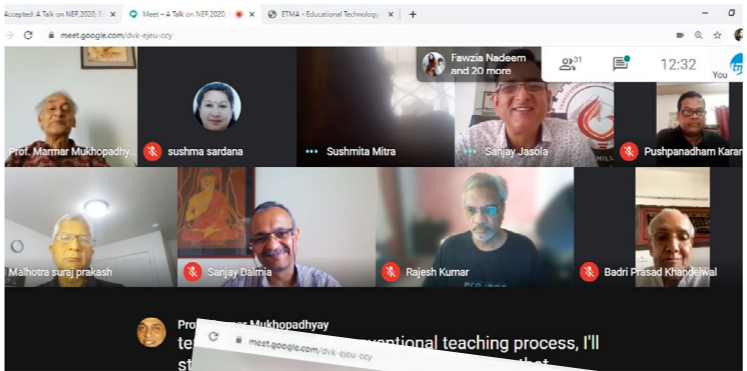
Science of Parenting for Pre-Schoolers

ETMA has been working on parenting of nursery children. Dr Subhash Chandra and Dr Sweta Singh Rathore developed six modules in the form of short messages pertaining to children's Physical Development, Health and Hygiene, Intellectual Development, Language Development, Social and Emotional Development, and Moral and Values Development. The material and the approaches were earlier tried out with a group of parents of children enrolled in Salwan Public School, New Delhi. The material has now been published as a printed book for larger circulation.

Schools are procuring copies for distribution among the parents of preschoolers. ETMA is also offering online and offline workshops for parents integrating this publication.

Educating the 3rd Child

In the project, Educating the 3rd Child, two new brilliant students have been added - Rakhiaj Molla from Sundarbans and Bidhan Roy from Gopalpur in Coochbehar who wants to pursue science and social science respectively.

Further, all the scholars currently receiving scholarships and many of the scholars who have already graduated from the IITs, Engineering Colleges, Polytechnics and Universities have been enrolled in a WhatsApp group. They now regularly interact with each other.

Academic audit

ETMA conducted to academic audits of schools. The first academic audit was conducted on global Indian international schools located in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo, Abu Dhabi, Noida, Ahmedabad, and Bengaluru. Each school was visited by a team of four auditors comprising reputed senior school principals led by a senior professor from the University and other national institutions. The team visited each school for three days looking into every aspect of academic and academic support structure. This included classroom observation using Mukhopadhyay's Classroom Teaching Competence Scale with teacher behaviour rubrics. Unlike the quality assessment exercises for accreditation, the academic audit was more in the form of health check-up of already high-quality schools.

The academic audit was also conducted on BVB's Sarda Vidya Mandir, Raipur. Same instruments were utilized, and same procedure was followed in this school as well.
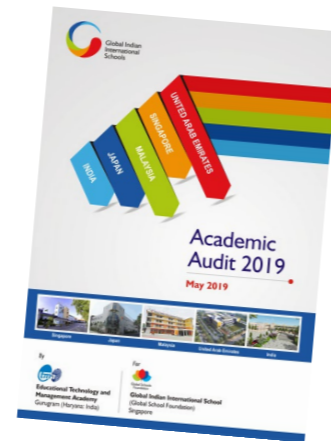
Online Course

Prof. Mukhopadhyay developed a test for assessment of employability skills of young graduates. The test will be offered online by ETMA.

ETMA is now developing an online course on Technology Integration in Classrooms for the benefit of the teachers. Following the international trend and practices, ETMA plans to launch a few more mini online courses that can be completed in a few hours or in a few days. Participating teachers may collect badges leading to ETMA certificate in Educational Technology.

Capacity Building in Flipped Blended Learning Design

ETMA has been working and promoting flipped blended learning design for the last few years. ETMA conducted two programs - one each in Bluebell's International School, New Delhi and Mira model School, New Delhi. Instead of the conventional approach, ETMA sent in advance a self-learning module on Flipped Blended Learning Design prepared by Prof. Marmar Mukhopadhyay. The set planning model has been developed with a series of exercises and worksheets. On completion of all the exercises and worksheets, the outcome is a flipped blended learning design on one of the selected chapters are part of the chapter. Following the self-learning, ETMA conducted a short two-day tutorial-cum-workshop. About two hours are spent on workshop more for clarifying adults in the questions raised by the teachers. Remaining time is utilized in workshop more by teachers prepared and other flipped blended learning design on a second theme.

World Teachers' Day Celebration@ETMA SIP School

Teachers are the heart of public education. Opening doors to a world of knowledge is the challenge that teachers worldwide undertake and fulfill every day in their schools, their communities and their homes. Through their efforts and imagination, teachers inspire students to reach out and move beyond their horizons. Good teaching results in ensuring that we, as a society, have knowledgeable and forward looking citizens who can assume the mantle of leadership in the future.

On October 5, World Teachers' Day was celebrated in ETMA SIP school.

In this crisis, teachers have shown, great leadership and innovation in ensuring that learning never stops, that no learner is left behind. Around the world, they have worked individually and collectively to find solutions and create new learning environments for their students to allow education to continue.

#worldteachersday

Here's a glimpse of ETMA SIP school students paying tribute to the great teachers then and now.

https://www.facebook.com/ETMA.India/videos/773971936759953

Education News

International Virtual Forum in Teaching and Learning – Voices from HKU

CETL, HKU, 30 September 2020

The Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL) at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) hosted the International Virtual Forum: Students-as-Partners in Online Learning – Voices from HKU on 30 September 2020. Video recordings of the full programme are available.

The Forum has attracted more than 1,200 participants from many countries including from India, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Singapore < IndiaEducationDiary.com>

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How COVID-19 deepens the digital education divide in India

World Economic Forum, 05 October 2020

The education system in India is facing a new crisis thanks to COVID-19. Besides the effect on short-term learning outcomes, extended school closures will result in a loss in human capital and diminished economic opportunities in the long run.

A total of 320 million learners in India have been adversely affected and transitioned to the e-learning industry, which comprises a network of 1.5 million schools.

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Bangladeshi teachers, students to be provided with recovery strategy

The Financial Express, 07 October 2020

The World Bank (WB) will help Bangladesh develop content for online education during Covid-19 and recover from its impact in the post-pandemic period, officials said on Monday.

It has come up with its $15-million grant to help Bangladesh recover from Covid-19's impact on the education system, according to an official of primary and mass education ministry.

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With 9.8 mn online learners, India ranks second in Coursera

Business Standard, 24 September 2020

The United States ranks on top with 14 million learners. Those which lag behind India include Mexico with 3.8 million students, China with 3.5 million and Brazil with 3 million.

Coursera said the new normal after outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the education and online learning sector. Since mid-March, over 21 million learners joined Coursera, a 353 per cent increase from the same period last year.

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Online teaching doesn't have to suck for students or educators.

Channel News Asia, 26 September 2020

This wholesale leap into digital education has also reaped surprising benefits for learning, says NUS' Chris McMorran.

Just as one cannot smoothly go online overnight, one cannot go hybrid without careful thought and planning. Plus, colleagues who have asked students about the possibility of going hybrid found that a large majority prefer to continue with online learning only.

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Study: 7 out of 10 girls don't have distance education

Dhaka Tribune, 29 September 2020

Save the Children conducted the study during the Covid-19 pandemic as part of their ongoing Empowering Girls through Education (EGE) project

About seven out of 10 school-going girls in rural areas are still deprived of distance education, even though the government took initiative to broadcast regular lessons on Sangsad Bangladesh Television, according to a recent study by Save the Children.

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The Pandemic Pushed Universities Online. The Change Was Long Overdue.

Harvard Business Review, 29 September 2020

Higher education is being pummeled by the Covid-19 pandemic. This spring's campus shutdowns led to a quick rush to "remote learning," exposing the fragmented adoption of high-quality education technology and digital capabilities across thousands of colleges and universities. The tumultuous fall semester, complete with aborted campus openings and widely diverging online and blended options, has only increased the pressure on America's colleges and universities.

Pre-pandemic, there was already widespread acknowledgement that the traditional higher education business model is seriously challenged. Fall 2020 marks a clear inflection point as students, educators, and government leaders alike scrutinize the price and value proposition of higher education through the new lens of traditional classroom versus multiple modes of digital delivery.

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Source: Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)

Addressing Educational Inequality and Ensuring Inclusive Education: Lessons for India's NEP from 2020
UNESCO Report

India finally has a new National Education Policy (NEP), the first in over three decades. Much has changed in the intervening years. A lot has remained the same. Despite the significant progress that India has made in the interim, the marginalised communities continue to lag educationally. While 87% and 74% of Kerala and Odisha's richest

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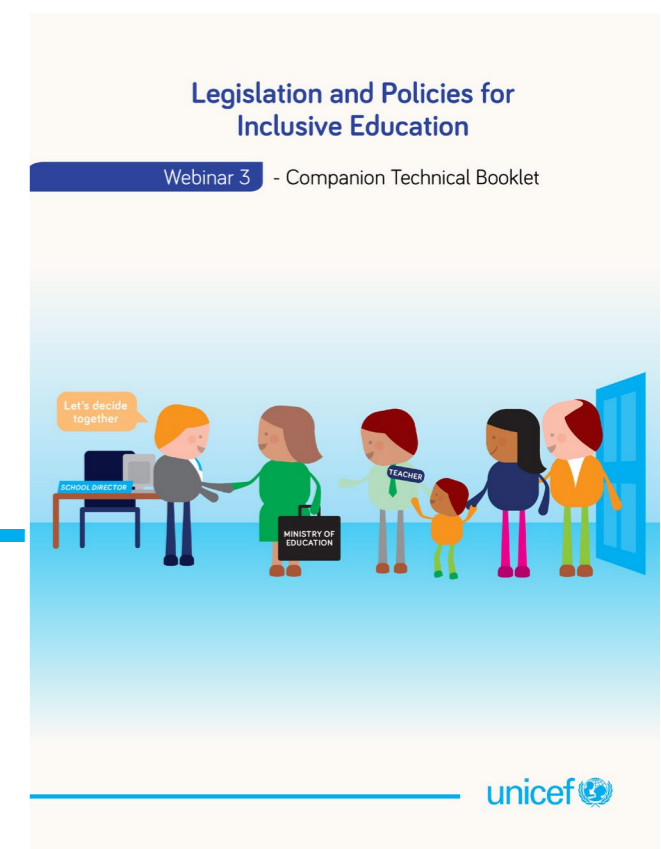
complete higher secondary education, only 5-6% of the poorest in both states finish high school, shows the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)'s World Inequalities in Education database. Wealth remains a great determinant of educational opportunity irrespective of how progressive a state may be. Indeed, educational inequalities between India's richest and poorest have, in some ways, widened over the past few decades.

The recent UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report suggests that in low and middle-income countries, adolescents from the richest 20% households are three times as likely as those from the poorest to complete lower secondary school; students from the richest households are also twice as likely as those from the poorest households to reach minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics. This is a criminal waste of human resources.

The NEP's fundamental principles include the commitment to recognise, identify, and foster the unique capabilities of each student, respect for diversity and local context, commitment to equity and inclusion as the cornerstone of all educational decisions. It has a more holistic view of inclusive education and robust emphasis on the education of persons with disabilities. There is, however, no mention of educational inequality or commitment to ensuring the highest, common standard of education of India's young citizens irrespective of class, caste, and creed. Thus, the emphasis on equity is welcome, even if the exclusion of the class dimension as an analytic lens remains a blind spot.

As we understand the new policy, it might be time to understand how the policy's provisions stack up against global best practices on equity and inclusion. Fortunately, the GEM report that was released a month back provides an interesting perspective on the issue. The exhaustive report offers some lessons for India's journey towards greater equity in education.

Build the educational system on equitable foundations standing on a legal commitment to equity: This grounding in India is provided by the Right to Education (RTE) Act which provides

the legal framework for the realisation of right to elementary education. This would need to be extended to include the focus on early childhood and secondary education introduced under the policy, thus providing a justiciable instrument for ensuring equity in the system.

Laws, policies and realities of implementation should not be out of sync:

An example of this cited in the report is the phenomenon of rationalisation or merger of schools in India and the scope of it undermining the gains of the RTE era and beyond. The NEP endorses rationalisation, while suggesting the idea of a school complex as an alternative. The RTE Act provides for the creation of a school within one km from a child's home; this legal entitlement has brought schools to hitherto unreached populations and ensured primary enrolment and completion. However, reaching remote, sparsely populated areas has meant the growth in the number of small schools with limited infrastructure, resulting in an ongoing process of rationalising education resource distribution leading to closure of schools in the most remote areas with the most disadvantaged populations. This has affected school distance for secondary and higher education, particularly for girls and learners with disabilities, potentially pushing them out of school. Research undertaken this year shows that learning levels are no different in small and larger schools, even after controlling for child, household and village attributes. One would hope that the government would go slow with the process of rationalisation in view of clear evidence that the policy inflicts "pain without gain" for India's most marginalised communities.

Address systemic persistence of exclusion and avoid alienating learners:

It is not enough to have a legal commitment to equity. We must address the everyday practice of exclusion in education systems, schools and classrooms. One such systemic practice of exclusion is the choice of language in the classroom. According to this year's GEM report,

10-year-old students in middle and high-income countries who were taught in a language other than their mother tongue typically scored 34% below native speakers in reading tests. The policy's commitment to instruction in the mother tongue and home language needs to be seen in this respect. The report speaks at length about the experience of Odisha in introducing multilingual education for tribal students. It remains India's only state with a multilingual education policy and also has a large-scale programme, mentioned in the report, covering about 1,500 primary schools and including 21 tribal languages of instruction. If an educationally lagging and poor state can do it, so can many others. Overall, the invisibility of marginalised communities in curricula and negative stereotypes in textbooks would need to be addressed.

No-detention policy a critical step for ensuring inclusion:

The GEM report finds that automatic promotion supports disadvantaged children if supplemented with remedial support. In 2017, India rescinded the no-detention policy under the RTE Act which provided the possibility of repetition of a student who failed a grade in classes 5 or 8 and over a dozen states and union territories have since moved away from the policy. However, the GEM report highlights that children who repeat a primary grade are less likely to complete primary school and more likely to leave school early. The GEM report highlights that "the no-repetition policy lowered dropout rates, with a larger decrease among primary school-aged children in states and UTs that implemented the policy after adoption of the RTE Act (Agarwal, 2020). This is important, as the probability of repeating remains higher for children who belong to scheduled castes".

Deregulation and school choice promotes segregation and exclusion:

One of the apparent assumptions in the NEP is that giving parents the freedom to make a relatively more informed choice while choosing their children's school would incentivise schools to improve, thus improving the overall quality

of education. However, evidence suggests that doing so frequently worsens systemic inequalities. The GEM report highlights that school choice exacerbates parental tendency to self-segregate, for instance in Chile (by income), in Denmark (between migrants and natives), in Lebanon (along sectarian lines) and in Malaysia (by ethnicity). Indeed, it is for this reason that home schooling is being banned in many countries in Europe as fostering exclusion. India would do well to heed this warning and work to ensure all schools improve instead of effectively further incentivising segregation in India's already fractured education system.

Disparity in distribution of resources needs to be addressed:

Equity and inclusion cannot be achieved without adequate funding and equitable resourcing of schools, especially with high intakes from marginalised communities. Adequate financing of education, ensuring the best teachers teach in the most difficult schools and introducing pro-equity policies like the midday meal scheme are critical steps. The NEP makes some particularly good suggestions in this respect like incentivising teacher posting in remote areas and proposing introduction of breakfast in schools. However, many more concrete plans are needed to ensure that the policy is financed.

The real test of the education policy would lie in its implementation, especially for India's poor and the marginalised communities. Only time would show whether policymakers and implementers would heed the lessons of history.

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Educational Technology and Management Academy (ETMA)

ETMA is a registered trust engaged primarily in the education space with focus on quality improvement in education through constructively aligned intervention of educational technology and management. ETMA is guided and advised by an interdisciplinary group of educationalists, scientists, medical experts, technologists, management scientists, entrepreneurs and others drawn from IITs, IIMs, Universities, Medical Institutions, Schools, International agencies and corporate leaders in education.

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