

Implementation of NEP 2020

A meeting took place for the TCBC Commission for Education which was headed by His Eminence Cardinal Anthony Poola. In this meeting he quoted, "It gives me great pleasure to address you on the preparedness to rollout the National Education Policy- 2020. The National Education Policy- 2020 is a landmark policy that is aimed at transforming the education system in India to meet the needs and aspirations of the 21st century. Though the government had extensive consultations with stakeholders across the country, and it is based on the principles of accessibility, equity, quality, and affordability, the minority character of the institutions are omitted in the policy, as it speaks only Public and Private.

As we all know, education is the key to unlock the potential of individuals, communities, and nations. The National Education Policy- 2020 claims that it is designed to provide a holistic, student-centric, and multidisciplinary education system that will enable our students to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to succeed in the rapidly changing world.

When we look back to the Education history of India, the Christian Missionaries were the pioneers in bring Education in India even to the rural areas and villages in establishing number of educational institutions like schools, colleges, and hospitals. But the present Education Policy- 2020 did not acknowledge much about the contribution of the early Christian Missionaries to the cause of education. However, our presence in the field of education- the service that we render to the poor, marginalized and tribals cannot be side-lined or wiped out by anyone. Let us go ahead in our mission of enlightening the world, while we ourselves remain in the light of the world.

To implement this present policy NEP- 2020 effectively, we need to be prepared on multiple fronts. The managements of our institutions must wake up and work for its implementation at various levels. But I shall propose 4 important areas that we need to concentrate on before we rollout the policy:

1. Firstly, we have to educate our Principals and teachers with continuous professional development opportunities to upgrade their skills and stay relevant. They are to be adequately trained to deliver the curriculum. They should be equipped with 21st century skills, such as **critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication so that they would be effective facilitators**. Whether the State Governments are going to implement today or tomorrow, the market for a good educational institution always has a great demand from the public. Hence, prepare your human resource at your institutions to engage the students using different teaching methodologies and technologies.
2. Secondly, about **the learning environment**: As I travel now to many places due to my present assignment and even earlier, we need to ensure that our infrastructure at our institutions are in place. The policy envisages the creation of vibrant and well-equipped

schools that provide a stimulating environment for our students. We need to invest in the necessary infrastructure, such as classrooms with interactive boards, libraries, laboratories, and sports facilities. We should come out from the age-old practice of operation blackboard in a four wall rooms, and chalk and talk method. The smartphones have invaded all our old system of teacher centric education; it is student centric learning.

3. Thirdly, we need to work out to ensure that our students are **evaluated by 360 degrees** and feedback is offered to them for a corrective measure. The policy emphasizes the need of formative and continuous assessments that provide timely feedback to students, parents, and teachers.
4. Fourthly, we need to ensure that our education system is **inclusive and caters to the diverse needs** of our students. Being the Chairman of TCBC Commission for Education, I shall request/insist that our Catholic educational institutions should be inclusive. I mean, in terms of admission, in terms of fees, in terms of dealing with all the stakeholders. **No Catholic student should be out of our Catholic institution in the name of excellence principle. Excellence without inclusion is not excellence; it is discrimination.** The policy also emphasizes the need for education to be accessible to all, irrespective of their socio-economic background, gender, or physical ability.
5. **Holy Father Pope Francis** has spoken extensively about the role and importance of Catholic educational institutions at various occasions. He said:
 - i. The Catholic schools and universities have a special responsibility **to provide holistic education** that integrates faith and reason, fosters the development of the whole person, and promotes social justice.
 - ii. In a speech to Catholic educators in 2015, Pope Francis stated that Catholic schools should be **'inclusive schools capable of forming students and ready to seek together the good of all.'**
 - iii. In a speech to Catholic university leaders in 2017, he said, 'Catholic universities are called to be institutions of the common good, dedicated to the service of the human family and of creation.'
 - iv. Additionally, Pope Francis has called on Catholic educational institutions to be agents of social change and to promote a culture of encounter and dialogue. In a message to Catholic schools should be **'actively engaged in the transformation of society, promoting a culture of encounter and dialogue, a culture capable of overcoming conflicts and divisions and of fostering the dignity of every person and the common good.'**