

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SCHOOL EDUCATION MINISTERS

2 June 2022



Highlights of the Address by

Dr. K. Kasturirangan

*Chairman, National Steering Committee for
National Curriculum Framework*

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Ahmedabad, Gujarat

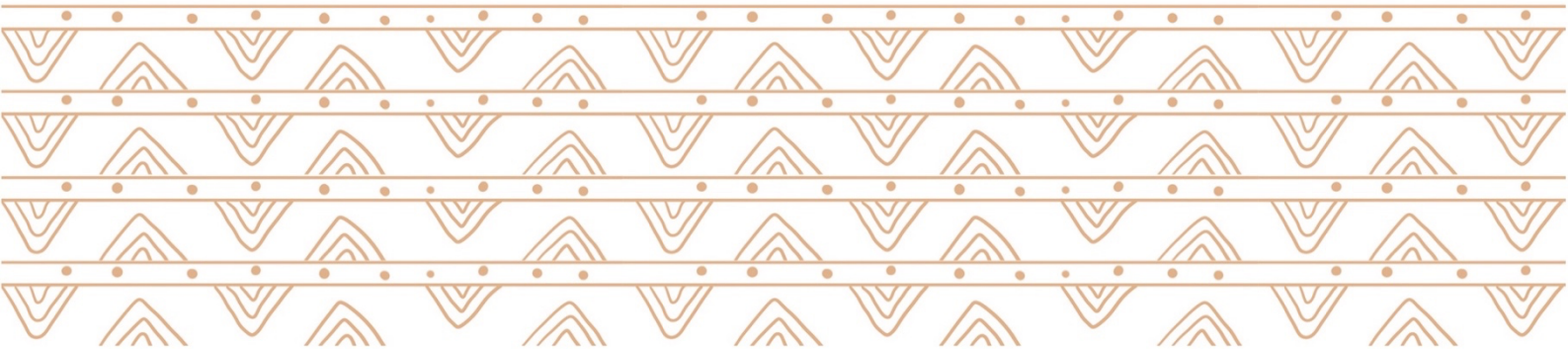
Organised by

Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, GoI

Department of Education, State Government, Gujarat

The National Conference of School Education Ministers was chaired by **Honourable Minister of Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan** and attended by Education Ministers of nearly all States/UTs. Other participants included Shri Bhupendra Rajnikant Patel, Hon'ble CM of Gujarat, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, MoS Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Electronics & Information Technology; Smt. Annapurna Devi, MoS for Education; Dr. Subhash Sarkar, MoS for Education, senior officials of Ministry of Education and Dr. K. Kasturirangan, Chairman of National Steering Committee for National Curriculum Framework.

This note has highlights of the address given by Dr. K. Kasturirangan at the conference. It is intended to be used by senior officials as a ready-reference for main points from National Education Policy 2020 and Mandate Document for National Curriculum Framework. Dr K. Kasturirangan was generously supported by Prof Anurag Behar, CEO of Azim Premji Foundation in the preparation of this address.



Highlights of the Address

1. We are in the midst of a historic period in Indian education. We all have the privilege being leaders in the implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. With this we will truly transform Indian education. And with that and through that we will transform India.
2. This meeting is an extraordinary occasion that brings together Ministers of Education from all the States and Union Territories at a critical juncture in the implementation of the NEP 2020.
3. It is after 34 years that a National Education Policy was developed. In these years we have made some progress – without doubt. However, equity in and quality of education still remain a massive challenge. While we have established some world-class-institutions, we still struggle to create similarly effective learning opportunities and environments for all our students.
4. In these 34 years, the social, political, and economic environment in India and the world has also changed significantly. The economy has opened up, social structures have changed, there is increased participation of all groups in political, social and economic processes and communication has grown exponentially. New global challenges such as climate change have emerged, while rapid changes in technology present both opportunities and challenges to human well-being.
5. At the same time there has been significant research and development of understanding in the fields of neurosciences, brain studies, and cognitive sciences. This has significant implications for school education.
6. This NEP 2020 is a transformative response to address all these matters, and to prepare Indian youth and India for the 21st century.
7. The Policy is also unique in terms of the extent and comprehensiveness of consultations involving stakeholders from the grassroots level onwards. These extensive consultations and their systematic incorporation have ensured that the federal nature of our Constitution is reflected in the NEP 2020.
8. The process of developing the Policy began in 2015 under the able guidance of Ms. Smriti Irani, the then Minister of Human Resource Development.

9. To ensure the spirit of cooperative federalism, the consultation process was discussed and agreed upon in the 63rd meeting of the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) held in August 2015.
10. On October 31, 2015, a Drafting Committee to Frame the New Education Policy and develop a Framework for Action was constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr T.S.R. Subramanian. The Committee used the inputs from the consultations so far, and also incorporated inputs received after the consultation process had ended. The Committee submitted its Report on 30 April 2016.
11. After due process of reviews of this report and recognising the need for further examining, some specific issues, on June 24, 2017, the Committee for the Draft National Education Policy was constituted involving many of us. Both, Hon'ble Shri Prakash Javadekar and Hon'ble Shri Ramesh 'Nishank' Pokhriyal steered the activities until Hon'ble Shri Dharmendra Pradhan took over the present reins.
12. The Committee incorporated the inputs from the previous consultations as well as the Report of the Subramanian Committee, while also extending consultations to seek inputs from 74 Ministries and various Bodies and 217 eminent persons, in addition to incorporating cutting edge research in education.
13. Rigorous work with the very best of people – who truly understand education, and the reality and needs of our country, converted this massive input that the country had given in to the 484-page Draft National Education Policy (DNEP) 2019, which was released on May 31, 2019.
14. In continuation with the participative process thus far, views were invited on the DNEP 2019 from all stakeholders. Overall, nearly one and half lakhs suggestions and comments were received from (i) individual citizens and citizen groups, (ii) educational institutions and organizations, (iii) States, State Ministries and State government departments, institutions, and organizations and (iv) Central Ministries, Central government departments, institutions and organizations between July 22 and August 15, 2019. The inputs were used to further fine tune the DNEP 2019.
15. With DNEP 2019 as the basis, the development of the final Policy was carried out and the National Education Policy 2020 was released to the Nation on July 29, 2020.
16. In a very real sense, the overall process of the development of the NEP was unique – it brought together deep expertise and cutting-edge research, with real democratic desires and needs of the Indian people; which is what makes the NEP truly transformative. And I have no doubt that all this has been the result of extraordinary

leadership and vision of the Honourable Prime Minister Shri Modi. He has not only guided us at every step, but has personally got into real details and given invaluable suggestions. We have all seen the kind of focus and energy he is putting behind the NEP, and that is because he does believe that the NEP, is one of the most important transformational tools for the country.

17. The NEP 2020, anchored in and based on the 484-page DNEP 2019, provides a clear roadmap and action-dimensions for the transformation and reinvigoration of education in India, such that by 2040, India has the one of the world's best education systems in the world.
18. The Policy envisages some critical changes from the current system:
 - a. New school structure in four stages - 5+3+3+4 (from the current 10+2) – aligned to cognitive and socio-emotional developmental of children based on neuroscience research.
 - b. Integrative and holistic curriculum with equal emphasis on science, social sciences, visual and performing arts, languages, sports, mathematics.
 - c. No hard separation or hierarchy of subjects; integration of vocational and academic streams.
 - d. Emphasis on key concepts, experiential learning, analysis and reflection, values, and life skills.
19. The Honourable Minister of Education Mr. Pradhan is leading a truly rigorous and inclusive effort for a comprehensive implementation of NEP 2020 both in school education and higher education. Convening this meeting is a clear indicator of his approach of how we will need to work together to implement the NEP in its spirit. I have known Mr. Pradhan for some time, and I cannot imagine a better leader for the country for the implementation of this transformation in education. His energy, his insights, his real understanding of the ground realities, and his simplicity are remarkable. I am truly glad he is leading us.
20. The first critical step in the implementation of the NEP 2020 for school education is the development of the National Curricular Frameworks (NCFs) for school education, teacher education and adult education. Under the leadership of Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, the Ministry of Education and NCERT have already laid the foundations though initiating the necessary fundamental groundwork.
21. The Ministry has constituted a National Steering Committee to guide the process of development of the NCFs, on one side to ensure the integrative and holistic nature of curriculum as envisaged by NEP and on the other side to ensure seamless working with

the Ministry and NCERT. To this end, the National Steering Committee assisted by the Mandate Group has developed a Mandate document to detail out the NCF development process, output, timelines and anchoring to the NEP 2020, and to provide detailed guidelines for all stakeholders involved in the process.

22. The Steering Committee is working in close collaboration with Mrs. Anita Karwal, Secretary School Education, and the team at MoE, and needless to say that the NCERT is an integral part of our team and anchor. I must say that the work that Mrs. Anita Karwal had already done before the Steering Committee was formed has laid a solid foundation and made our task so much easier. She continues to be absolutely integral to our efforts by her thoughtful guidance and steering of the whole process.
23. There will be 4 curricular frameworks: for ECCE, for school education, for teacher education, and for adult education. The ECCE and School Education frameworks will be seamless and integrated, as they must be to bring to life the vision of the NEP of the Foundational Stage in the 5+3+3+4 system. The teacher education framework will be deeply informed by the ECCE and School Education Frameworks. The Mandate Document guides the process of the development, anchors the whole effort clearly in the NEP, and lays out the vision for the NCF. My request to all of you would be to read the Mandate Document, because that is the bridge between the NEP and the NCFs.
24. States have an important role in the development of the NCFs. The NCF will draw heavily from all the 25 Position Papers developed by each State, the District level consultations and mobile app surveys that have happened and happening across the country. District level consultations and the survey have included teachers, parents, teacher educators, community members, experts, students (school and higher education), anganwadi workers, school principals, non-literates, neo literates, etc. 25 National-level Focus Groups are also providing inputs into the NCF development process. Both the State and National Focus Groups have conducted widespread consultations – these consultations will continue as the NCF development process moves ahead.
25. The **NCFs** will reflect the key transformations in the NEP 2020 and become the basis for teaching and learning in our schools.
 - a. Once the draft NCF is developed, it will go back to the States for review. The NCF will be finalised after feedback is received from all States.
 - b. Based on the NCF, each State will develop its own State Curricular Framework (SCF). The SCF will be the basis for the syllabus, textbooks and learning material in schools along with the approach to in-service teacher education in the State.

- c. All this will together drive improvement in classroom teaching and student learning outcomes.
26. The NEP 2020 says the purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values and a rootedness in India.
- a. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution and **ready for the 21st century**.
- b. Preparing for the world of work is also an integral part of education and this means not just skilling for a particular vocation but also developing competencies that will help young people in the world (e.g., working with their hands, task completion, taking responsibility, good communication skills, working in teams, critical and analytical thinking).
- c. States must ensure that their SCFs, their syllabi, textbooks, learning material reflect these skills and capabilities. Schools and teachers will need to support to gear up for this change. SCERTs and DIETs must be especially capacitated for this.
27. Two critical areas of focus in the NEP 2020 are a strong emphasis on high quality **early childhood care and education** for all children and the achievement of **foundational literacy and numeracy** by all children by Grade 3.
- a. The Foundational Stage of the 5+3+3+4 design comprises five years between the ages of 3 and 8 years which includes time spent by the child in both the anganwadi and the school.
- b. While different departments may handle different parts of the Foundational Stage, States must ensure that both the Department of Women and Child Welfare and the Department of Education work closely together to ensure the synergy required for this.
- i. NIPUN Bharat is now a flagship program of the Ministry of Education, Government of India. States must take advantage of this and implement it with full rigour to achieve the objective of all children having attained foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3 by 2025.
28. The NEP 2020 sees **teachers** as central to good education.
- a. Once the NCF for School Education is complete, the NCF for Teacher Education (NCFTE) will be developed. It will be the basis on which both pre-service and in-service teacher education should be designed in the country.

- b. Going forward, the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) will be the standard qualification to become a teacher. States must encourage the best Universities and Colleges to offer the ITEP so that high quality teachers can enter the system very soon.
 - c. If good in-service teacher education has to be ensured, academic support institutions like State Councils for Educational Research and Training (SCERT), District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) must be significantly strengthened. Currently, most of them struggle with inadequate infrastructure, learning resources and faculty. States must focus on building these into high quality institutions so that teachers and schools are well supported to make the kind of transitions that the NEP 2020 talks about.
29. The NEP 2020 describes a good education institution as one in which every student feels welcomed and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, where a wide range of learning experiences are offered, and where good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students. The fundamental principle that guides good education is that all children are capable of learning. The NEP 2020 sees **equity and inclusion** as a cornerstone of our education system.
- a. The NEP 2020 also envisages Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 100 across all the school years – from early childhood education to secondary education – by 2030. This means that all children must be in school and that schools must respond to the needs of all children.
 - b. Access to education has increased dramatically in the last decade or so because of tremendous efforts by States and the Centre. The focus must now be on full inclusion. Inclusion means physical, curricular and pedagogical access for all children with full support available for each child.
 - c. States must develop curriculum, textbooks and learning material representative of all, classroom pedagogy must account for all children's needs with sensitivity and care.
 - d. Children with disability must be particularly addressed in this regard. States must ensure that every Block Resource Centre has Inclusive Education specialists, in-service teacher education must include modules on understanding this area and learning to respond to it.
30. Early identification of disability is critical. Again, the Department of Education and the Department of Women and Child Welfare in every State must work together on

ensuring that this is done in all anganwadis, early childhood care centres and early grades in school.

31. Another critical part of the NEP 2020 which will be reflected in the NCF is the importance of the **mother tongue**.

- a. Research from across the world tells us that children learn best in their language of comfort. Research also tells us that children are capable of learning more than one language and that multilingualism is important to cognitive development.
- b. It is critical to learn language well - this is the route to learning other subjects well. The NEP 2020 emphasizes the rich diversity of languages in our country - we must see this as an invaluable asset in education.
- c. Early years education is best done in the local language. States must ensure that there is adequate emphasis on learning language well in school with good teachers and good material available to children.
- d. Many States have worked towards developing an excellent technical vocabulary in different Indian languages. It is important to continue that work and integrate it with textbooks and material developed for children in schools.

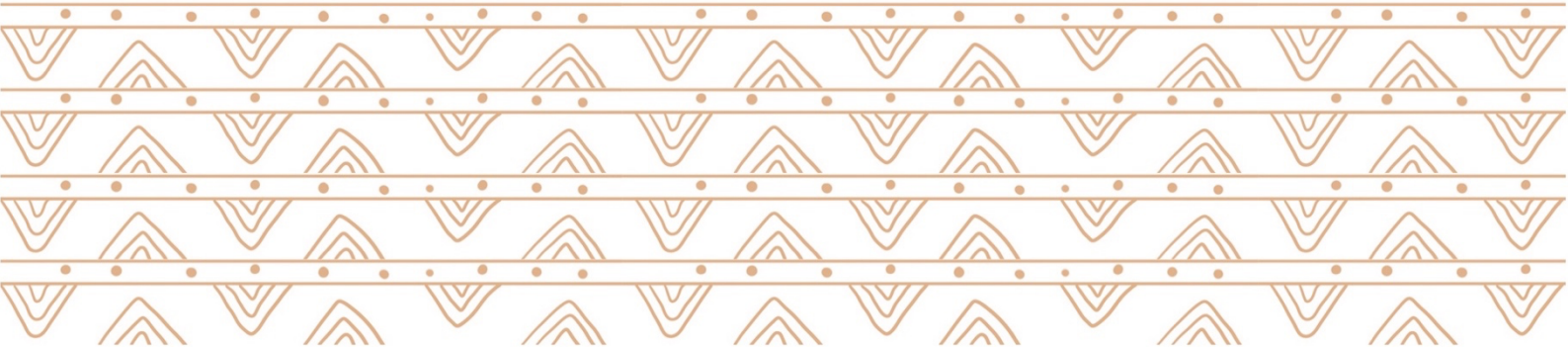
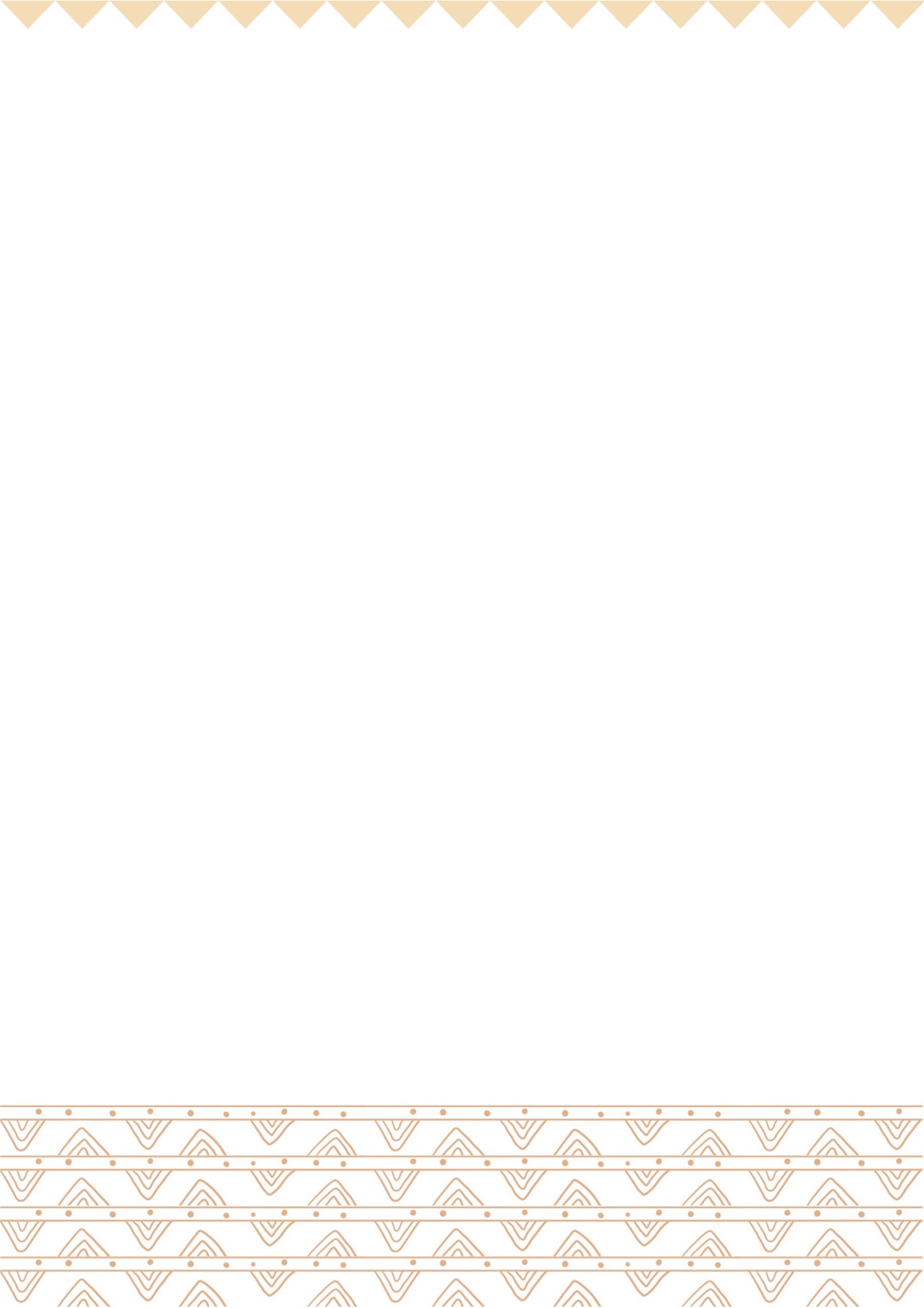
32. I have given you a glimpse of some of the important parts of the NEP 2020 and the critical role of the States in bringing these ideas to life.


33. The success of the Policy will lie in the successful implementation of the NCFs that truly reflect the spirit and specifics of the NEP 2020. The transformation of school education is contingent on this aspect. In turn, implementation of the NCFs largely depends on all of you present in this meeting. It is your vision and leadership that will drive the changes necessary to enable this.

34. Before concluding, I would like to emphasize the importance of meeting the stringent schedules that have been placed on us by both the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble Minister of Education in translating the various actions into concrete reality on the ground. I may also in this connection observe that the Hon'ble Minister of Education while giving us all the freedom and flexibility to complete our tasks is also hard taskmaster. I say in this august forum, because there is a sense of urgency in accomplishing the task ahead of us, since these are critically connected with many dimensions of the national progress- economic, social, cultural strategic and so on.

35. A strong, vibrant public education system is the foundation of democracy. Our public education system must be of the highest quality and complete equity. Implementing the NEP 2020 is an opportunity to make this transformation happen. States and the

Centre must work closely together towards this – this is the synergy that will make this transformation a reality.





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