

Global Citizenship Education and the National Education Policy 2020

Some Insights

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Abstract

It is being increasingly recognised across the world that addressing challenges to peace, and human and fundamental rights is important for the stability of societies. This requires increased levels of dialogue and cooperation among countries which will result in mutual benefit. It is also being recognised that the role of education in building just and peaceful societies and trust in institutions cannot be underestimated. This is particularly true when such learning begins at a young age and is reinforced throughout the educational trajectory in school. This is achievable through a combination of character attributes, such as being respectful, honest, helpful, and above all, developing the ability to listen. These traits are learnt over time. As the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), a response to contemporary global challenges that empowers learners to become aware of and understand global issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, and sustainable societies, has become a matter of interest to educators. Indeed, the education policy of many countries has included GCED in their curricula. The National Education Policy of India, released on 29 July 2020, envisages many changes in education. One of them is the inclusion and integration of the concept of GCED, which resonates with the Indian concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, meaning, 'the world is one family'. This paper examines GCED in the context of the New Education Policy at school and higher education levels.

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INTRODUCTION

The boundary between the words 'national' and 'international' is getting blurred. World leaders have emphasised that to build a sustainable world, there is a need for collective action. There are issues and concerns such as climate change, environmental laws, displaced populations, and others that transcend national boundaries.

These cannot be solved by any one country acting alone; it is neither feasible nor desirable. A dialogue will encourage goal-directed behaviour towards peace, while cooperation will combine energies to work towards a common goal. Not surprisingly, the concept of global citizenship is being explored with increased intensity and, as might be expected, there has been a corresponding and growing interest among educators in various parts of the world to strengthen the global dimension of citizenship education (GCED) in school curricula at all levels. (UNESCO, 2010)

Educational reforms and school improvement efforts have become globalised, moving at a pace that would have been inconceivable in the 20th century. For many policymakers, a degree of consensus has been attained on what knowledge matters most, how it should be measured, and how countries should compare their progress with one another. For instance, in September 2000, India was among 189 member states of the

United Nations that came together to adopt the Millennium Development Goals, which acknowledged education as an indispensable means for people to realise their capabilities, and prioritised the completion of a primary school cycle. In 2009, India became one of the 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child. At the international level, the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) was launched in 2012 by the UN Secretary General. It includes global citizenship education as one of its three priorities, along with access to education and quality of education. With GEFI, the world education community entered a new era in which education is expected to contribute not only to the fulfilment of individual and national aspirations but also to ensure the well-being of humanity and the global community. In 2015, global citizenship education was included as one of the topics of Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on education that countries must promote and address. These two developments provided the impetus for the world community to pay attention to this particular area at the policy level. According to UNESCO's International Bureau of Education, the curriculum represents a conscious and systematic selection of knowledge, skills and values, which shapes the way in which teaching, learning and assessment are

organised by addressing questions such as what, when and how people should learn. (IBE, 2016)

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 was released by the government of India on July 29, 2020. It is a 66–page document that talks about the vision of education in the country for ECCE (Early Childhood Care Education), school education, higher education, and professional education. It is a comprehensive framework for elementary education, higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India.

The NEP 2020 replaces the previous National Policy on Education 1986. It may be mentioned here that the previous policies on education in India had focused largely on issues of access and equity. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, a major development since the last policy of 1986–1992 has been the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (which came into force on 1 April 2010) that laid down legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education.

The NEP 2020 reiterates India’s commitment to the global education development agenda reflected in Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015, which seeks to

ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require “the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning so that all the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved” (NEP 2020, Introduction).

The NEP 2020 envisages many changes in education. It also includes new and contemporary issues important for school education as well as for higher education, such as climate change, environmental concerns, artificial intelligence, and global citizenship education. The philosophy of GCED is rightly placed in the vision of the policy which reads as follows:

The vision of the Policy is to instil among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen. (NEP 2020)

Moreover, the NEP 2020 very adeptly puts forward this issue in the Higher Education section:

As the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), a response to contemporary global

challenges, will be provided to empower learners to become aware of and understand global issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies. (NEP 2020, p.25)

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION (GCED)

The idea of global citizenship states that one's identity transcends geography or political borders and that responsibilities or rights are derived from membership in a broader class: that of 'humanity'. This does not negate one's nationality, or sense of patriotism. Extending this concept to education, GCED bases itself on the principle of respect and appreciation of various cultures, different forms of expression, and diverse human realities, to ensure an equitable educational environment. GCED attempts to achieve these through global consciousness and by developing competencies to address global issues.

Research (Krysan and Moberg, 2016; Schafer and Shaw, 2009; Plaut, 2010, Schuman, Steeh, Bobo and Krysan, 1997; Verkuyten, M. and Yogeewaran, K., 2017) has found that those who are high in global human identification are less prejudiced towards many groups, and care more about international human rights, worldwide inequality, global poverty, and human suffering.

They are more likely to take the next step— proactively attempt to alleviate poverty and suffering.

GCED offers students and teachers—

- an approach which takes into account the whole of human society and the environments;
- an emphasis on the future, the dynamic nature of human society, and each person's capacity to choose and shape preferred futures, and
- an opportunity to explore important themes such as change, interdependence, identity and diversity, rights and responsibilities, peace-building, poverty and wealth, sustainability and justice;
- an emphasis on critical thinking and communication, and
- an opportunity to develop positive and responsible values and attitudes, important skills, and an orientation to active participation.

GCED AND NEP

Central to the GCED policy and practice is its transformative potential: either as a framing paradigm for education policy, or as a way of strengthening and enhancing the educational experience of learners and educators. Therefore, the values that inform GCED, such as justice, equality, dignity, inclusion, and respect, should be reflected in GCED policy development processes, which should be collaborative and open,

so that diverse backgrounds and perspectives could be included.

GCED focuses on three aspects of learning—cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural.

- Cognitive: Knowledge and thinking skills necessary to better understand the world and its complexities;
- Socio-emotional: Social skills, along with values that promote harmony and peaceful co-existence, and
- Behavioural: Conduct, performance, practical application, and engagement.

The NEP 2020 acknowledges that the gap between the current state of learning outcomes and what is required must be bridged by undertaking major reforms in all stages of education.

Thus, as times change, and societies adapt themselves to new challenges, education systems are redesigned. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India reflects this metamorphosis; it is an approach that takes into account the whole of human society and the environments, yet maintains an identity rooted in Indian values. Another key step is to determine whether GCED can be integrated into existing policies or whether a new policy needs to be developed. In both cases, it is important to consider the objectives of mainstreaming GCED in education, the outcomes it is expected

to deliver and the consequences of not mainstreaming GCED. (APCEIU, 2017)

There are two ways of including GCED in an education system— to develop a curriculum for GCED and introduce it at all levels, or to integrate GCED through a holistic approach at all levels of the education system. The NEP has chosen the latter.

The NEP elaborates the fundamental principles that will guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions within it. The principles are stated as follows—

- creativity and critical thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation;
- ethics, human and constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, the spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice;
- promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning;
- life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience, and
- respect for diversity and respect for the local context in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, and being aware that education is a concurrent subject. (NEP 2020)

Implementation of GCED in the NEP

In India, the NEP 2020 has emphatically included GCED with other contemporary issues. The document clearly states that “Concerted curricular and pedagogical initiatives, including the introduction of contemporary subjects such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Design Thinking, Holistic Health, Organic Living, Environmental Education, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), etc. at relevant stages will be undertaken to develop various important skills in students at all levels.”

The NEP stresses that students will be taught at a young age “the importance of ‘doing what’s right,’ and will be given a logical framework for making ethical decisions” (NEP 2020, 4.28). In later years, this would then be expanded along the themes of cheating, violence, plagiarism, littering, tolerance, equality, empathy, etc., with a view to enable children to embrace moral/ethical values in conducting one’s life, formulate a position/argument about an ethical issue from multiple perspectives, and use ethical practices in all work. “As a consequence of such basic ethical reasoning, traditional Indian values and all basic human and constitutional values such as ahimsa, empathy, compassion, patriotism, democratic outlook, integrity, responsibility, justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity will

be developed in all students.” (NEP 2020, 4.28)

Furthermore, the NEP states that the school curriculum will include, early on, materials on human values such as respect for all persons, empathy, tolerance, human rights, gender equality, non-violence, global citizenship, inclusion, and equity. It would also include more detailed knowledge of various cultures, religions, languages, gender identities, etc. to sensitise and develop respect for diversity. Any biases and stereotypes in the school curriculum will be removed, and more material will be included that is relevant and relatable to all communities. (NEP 2020, 6.20).

In addition to high-quality offerings in Indian languages and English, foreign languages, such as Korean, Japanese, Thai, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian, will also be offered at the secondary level, for students to learn about the cultures of the world and enrich their global knowledge and mobility according to their own interests and aspirations (NEP, 2020 para 4.20).

As with the GCED policy development process, a key step in curriculum development is identifying and reviewing existing teaching materials. The Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India, has initiated the task of curriculum development for school

education by asking all States/Union Territories of the nation to develop a draft curriculum for their state/UTs, based on the NEP, reflecting the needs and concerns of the people. These would serve as input for the National Curriculum. The States/UTs are aware of a fact mentioned in the NEP which states:

While students must have a large amount of flexibility in choosing their individual curricula, certain subjects, skills, and capacities should be learned by all students to become good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings in today's rapidly changing world. In addition to proficiency in languages, these skills include scientific temper and evidence-based thinking; creativity and innovativeness; a sense of aesthetics and art; oral and written communication; health and nutrition; physical education, fitness, wellness, and sports; collaboration and teamwork; problem-solving and logical reasoning; vocational exposure and skills; digital literacy, coding, and computational thinking; ethical and moral reasoning; knowledge and practice of human and constitutional values; gender sensitivity; Fundamental Duties; citizenship skills and values; knowledge of India; environmental awareness including water and resource conservation, sanitation and hygiene; and current affairs and knowledge of critical issues facing local communities,

states, the country, and the world. (NEP 4.23)

Some key aspects are elaborated as follows:

Inclusive Education

The Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act, 1995, was a landmark legislation, which ushered in a new era for the education of children with disabilities in India. In the field of education, this is reflected in the concept of inclusive education, which implies that all learners, with or without disabilities, are able to learn together through access to a common educational setting that would include a diversity of abilities and backgrounds. This would include textbooks in schools and children's literature in libraries and perhaps in home settings as well.

By default, classrooms across India are multilingual in nature. Decisions about language(s) of instruction are loosely governed by India's national language in education policy: the Three Language Formula. Policy documentation, including the legally binding Constitution of India and its recent amendment, the Right to Education Act (Ministry of Law and Justice 2009), champions the multilingual nature of India and recognises the need for its preservation.

Role of ICT in Supporting GCED and Value Education

The media includes print, audio and visual sources of information; it also

includes TV serials, advertisements, talk shows etc. loosely classified as entertainment. The images, symbols and narratives become embedded in minds, thereby influencing thinking, active vocabulary and behaviour. A teacher, or teacher educator, would have to use ICT judiciously: in providing inputs for critical thinking, and to facilitate children to move away from 'incomplete knowledge and an unbalanced picture of culture' (NCERT, 2010) Moreover, value education can be reinforced through traditional methods such as maintaining a Reflective Diary (handwritten or stored in a laptop) with a checklist for self-assessment, as for example;

- Has there been a change in my propensity towards violence?
- Have I become more sensitive to the needs of others?

GCED in the Sciences and Humanities

The Foundational and Preparatory stages of education have an advantage that, since there is no strict compartmentalisation of knowledge, GCED can easily be integrated in the classroom process. In upper primary and secondary stages, concepts such as the globe can be used in mathematics (that all cultures have an understanding of the globe); in geography (to create a sense of wonder that humans can live in such extreme climatic conditions) and usher in

the idea that, in spite of a myriad differences, humanity is one.

A whole-school approach, whereby the school culture or community reflects GCED principles, values, and processes, is also more effective than the isolated efforts of individual teachers.

The NEP and Higher Education

Thus, the policy envisages a sweeping redesigning of the curriculum in school education. In higher education too, it has recommended many changes. Prominent among these is focus on inter-disciplinary learning, which is a welcome step. In fact, the setting up of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) has been recommended to open up new opportunities for India's youth and promote inter-disciplinary research. The NEP states, "Model public universities for holistic and multidisciplinary education, at par with IITs, IIMs, etc., called MERUs will be set up and will aim to attain the highest global standards in quality education. They will also help set the highest standards for multidisciplinary education across India" (NEP 2020, para 11.11). Further, it will increase an interdisciplinary environment, as made clear through the statement "research collaboration and student exchanges between Indian institutions and global institutions will be promoted through special efforts" (NEP 2020, para 12.8).

A significant aspect of the policy is that it allows Indian universities to open their overseas campuses and encourages top universities to open their campuses in India. The NEP recommends the setting up of a National Research Foundation (NRF) which will initiate or expand research efforts in technology. The NRF may consider advancing international research efforts to address global challenges in areas such as healthcare, agriculture, and climate change using AI (NEP 2020, para 23.9).

The above is quite a long list, which, however, is doable. However, the successful implementation of GCED requires a theory-based understanding of the concept by teachers and teachers' educators, for effective implementation. The integration of GCED is proposed as an interdisciplinary matter. GCED teacher education appears not only as a vehicle for the development of skills but also as a process that may underpin attitudinal change (Tarozzi and Inguaggiato, 2018). Moreover, both initial and in-service teacher education are considered by UNESCO to be enabling factors contributing to the successful delivery of GCED. (UNESCO, 2015) Broadly speaking, the lack of systematic but diffused intervention in teacher education is one of the main causes for the feebleness of educational policies which seek to

promote diversity and inclusion. This is recognised by the NEP.

CHALLENGES ON THE WAY AHEAD

India is a very large country with regional, social, economic, cultural, and geographical variations. India is the second-largest education system in the world with an about 350 million students, 2 million educational institutions providing education at various levels, and around 9.5 million teachers. Policymakers should provide support to GCED practitioners, including school administrators, teachers, students, and other local practitioners. First, the educators, the key stakeholders in GCED implementation, must become learners themselves, understanding and embracing GCED fully. Only when they become enlightened can they act as responsible global citizens and become examples and models for students and society. Therefore, GCED's capacity for building key stakeholders, like teachers, should be supported and strengthened. If possible, monetary incentives can also be provided to stakeholders to encourage active participation."

Policymakers may also provide teaching/learning materials for GCED practitioners. Projects to translate the existing materials into local languages may be encouraged, and subsequently, these may be disseminated to the concerned stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

Through education, we gain knowledge and skills to enhance our lives and environment. The values and attitudes of social responsibility also lead to betterment of individual lives and humanity. Thus, education can transform the way we think and act, and thus promote the creation of just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies.

The important role of GCED was reaffirmed in the vision of education for 2015–2030, or Education 2030, declared at the World Education Forum 2015, co-organised by UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, UNDP, UN Women, and the UNHCR in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The Incheon Declaration on Education 2030, focussed on inclusive and equitable quality education and

lifelong learning. It emphasised that while foundational literacy, numeracy, and technological skills are essential, they are not sufficient. Education should ultimately result in responsible citizens, who make informed decisions regarding local, national and global challenges. Nations and citizens have to cooperate to solve conflicts and problems of international and global magnitude, such as terrorism, armed conflicts, violence, climate change, and so on, to make informed choices to transform their communities and society towards more peaceful, just, and sustainable orders (Ross, 2012). Furthermore, such global citizens will respect their nations' rule of law, human rights for all citizens, non-violent resolution of conflicts, social and economic justice, and intercultural respect and integrity.

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