

Recommendations from NEP Consultation Session ICT: Islamabad

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

NEP 2009 acknowledges ECE as a formal stage for foundational development of a child and states that Provision of ECE shall be attached to primary schools which shall be provided with additional budget, teachers and assistants for this purpose.

During the group discussions, participants reviewed the existing ECE policy and its implementation in order to identify gaps. They addressed what age group falls under ECE, what the desired targets are, and whether or not the current policy is reflecting the appropriate age of ECE.

- ECE should be made mandatory and compulsory and a separate budget should be allocated to this sub-sector
- Medium of instruction should be Urdu – prepare children better for primary education and so on
- ECE curriculum should be the same all over Pakistan
- Specialized and trained teachers
- All ECE classrooms must be fully equipped with learning aids, toolkits, and other relevant materials

Primary Education

The NEP 2009 states that all children, boys and girls, shall be brought inside schools by the year 2015. ICT has also passed the Right to Free and Compulsory Act in 2012 which states that free and compulsory education will be provided to all children of the age five to sixteen year. There are, however, still gaps in provision across primary schools and the quality of education is a huge concern as well.

There was a lively discussion on strengthening the monitoring and evaluation system and ensuring every child is getting quality education. Some of the areas highlighted in their discussion included how community awareness can be increased, and how political influence – that hinders with meritocracy – can be prevented.

To achieve higher enrollments and to address other pressing issues, groups in all the districts presented the following recommendations:

- Exchange programs to make students more culturally aware, patient and accepting
- The number of training centers for teachers must also be increased to ensure all teachers are well equipped to deal with the challenges of their jobs
- All teachers must receive training upon induction as well
- Proper planning for IDP war on terror
- The curriculum must be same across the board
- Civic education should be made part of the curriculum as well
- Playgrounds and other facilities in schools must be made available and extracurricular activities encouraged

- Provision of proper moral values and education for children i.e. character building, strong morals and so on

Secondary Education

Article 37 (b) states that the State of Pakistan shall endeavor *“to remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory **secondary** education within minimum possible period”* and the NEP 2009 states that provision shall be expanded at secondary level, particularly in the rural areas and of schools dedicated for girls. Furthermore, priority shall be given to those locations where the ratio of secondary schools is low.

The group discussion on secondary education addressed the issue of a high dropout rate at secondary level and proposed a research based methodology to address gaps in implementation. They discussed how enrollment rates can be increased, what the loopholes in implementation are, and what strategies can be taken to improve secondary education in the Capital.

- Expanding provision of schools should be accompanied by upgrading the existing schools in terms of infrastructure, teachers availability etc. just reaching a quantitative target will be a sunken cost
- To address the problem of drop-outs, schools should provide students support in the form of scholarships, and other incentives such as food, medical checks etc.
- Quality evaluation of teachers should be introduced to ensure the implementation of student centered pedagogies
- Student wellness should be focused on and sports activities encouraged
- Introduce modern assessment systems in schools to prevent cheating and other malpractices

Non-Formal Education and Adult Literacy

The NEP 2009 *literacy rate shall be increased up to 86% by 2015 through up-scaling of ongoing programs of adult literacy and non-formal basic education in the country.*

This groups’ main objective was to identify what the actual problems are in the area of NFE and Adult literacy. They questioned why people have to remain so inaccessible to programs in alternative learning for younger and older age groups, and why government initiatives aren’t as impactful as programs conducted by NGOs etc.

- More public and private institutions and schools to increase literacy rates in the Capital
- Industry linkages are a must, so adults with new skills can find job placements
- ICT and media must be used to create an awareness regarding adult literacy and NFE
- Syllabus should be job oriented so upon completion, students have a higher chance of securing employment

Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) and Special Education

The NEP 2009 states that *special measures shall be adopted to ensure inclusion of special persons in mainstream education as well as in literacy and TVE programs.”*

The discussion focused on providing equal opportunity and support for all, especially children with special needs. They also discussed the importance of practical knowledge so individuals can earn a living. They addressed important questions such as how the government can support special need students in schools, and what can be done to create an environment more conducive to learning.

- Technical education should be linked with general education
- Provide max opportunities to girls and boys in their respective fields
- Establish literacy and skills development center for illiterate populations
- Arrange on-the-job training opportunities for students enrolled in technical centers
- Provide special training to teachers of technical and vocational institutions
- Establish more training centers and programs for agriculture technology
- Create jobs for technical education hold at all levels
- Give max practical training to the students
- Give financial support and easy loan to technically skilled persons so they may start their own businesses

Governance and Finance

When it came to governance, identifying and implementing effective monitoring tools was also significantly discussed.

The main recommendations gathered are as follows:

- Recruitment and selection of educational manager must be on merit and performance based.
- Leadership management academy
- Process of distribution and allocation of funds may be simplified
- Autonomy of decisions to educational managers
- Performance based selection and transfers
- Autonomy of self-generated resources
- Implementation strategies
- Single chain of monitoring and evaluation
- Roles and responsibilities may be specified
- Norms of accountability of performance
- Straight and simple SOPs
- Financial management by the monitoring general
- Communication effectiveness
- Tenure of job (3 years)

Madrassa Education

The NEP 2009 acknowledges that Deeni Madrassas form a component of the private sector, and that this parallel system consists of a curriculum that lies outside the mainstream.

Discussions within this group were started by first analyzing the role of Madrassas in the education system, and explored the challenges faced by budget constraints and lacking technical capacity of the

system. The talked about whether or not madrassa education can be brought under the management of public sector, and what can be done at local, provincial, and national levels to protect the rights and interest of children enrolled in madrassas.

- Curriculum should be revised. This revision must include the point of uniformity and addition of science subjects
- There must be a system of registration and affiliation with boards/university
- There must be a monitoring/governing body at government level
- There must exist points during madrassa education cycle so that the early learners may get inducted in practical life
- Induction of teachers from formal setup