
Content Analysis of the Draft National Education Policy 2019

Bhuvana Anand and Alston D'Souza

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Introduction

A committee chaired by Dr. K. Kasturirangan submitted the Draft National Education Policy (NEP) 2019 to the Ministry of Human Resource and Development on 31 May 2019. The report can be accessed [here](#), and is inviting comments till 30 June 2019.

We carried out a quick content analysis of the Draft NEP 2019. A content analysis is not meant to be a definitive take on the document, but a way of capturing highlights from the whole or parts of the document.

We present our analysis in three parts:

1. **Meta-analysis of the entire text:** This includes frequencies of the top 40 words in the full text and in the Preamble, comparison of mentions of different participants in the education system, and a comparison of the two segments of the education system, school education and higher education.
2. **Segment-wise analysis:** Here we present word count frequencies of Part 1 (School Education), and Part 2 (Higher Education).
3. **Curated analysis of special interest:** abbreviations (indicating critical stakeholders), words referring to the regulatory and governance architecture of the system, role of the Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (RSA), and restriction counts in the document.

A content analysis exercise is by definition stilted, in that the researchers' preferences influence the writing of the code, particularly in the discretion they apply to omitting words. Hence, we have made our methodology, code, and process available for scrutiny and feedback on our website.

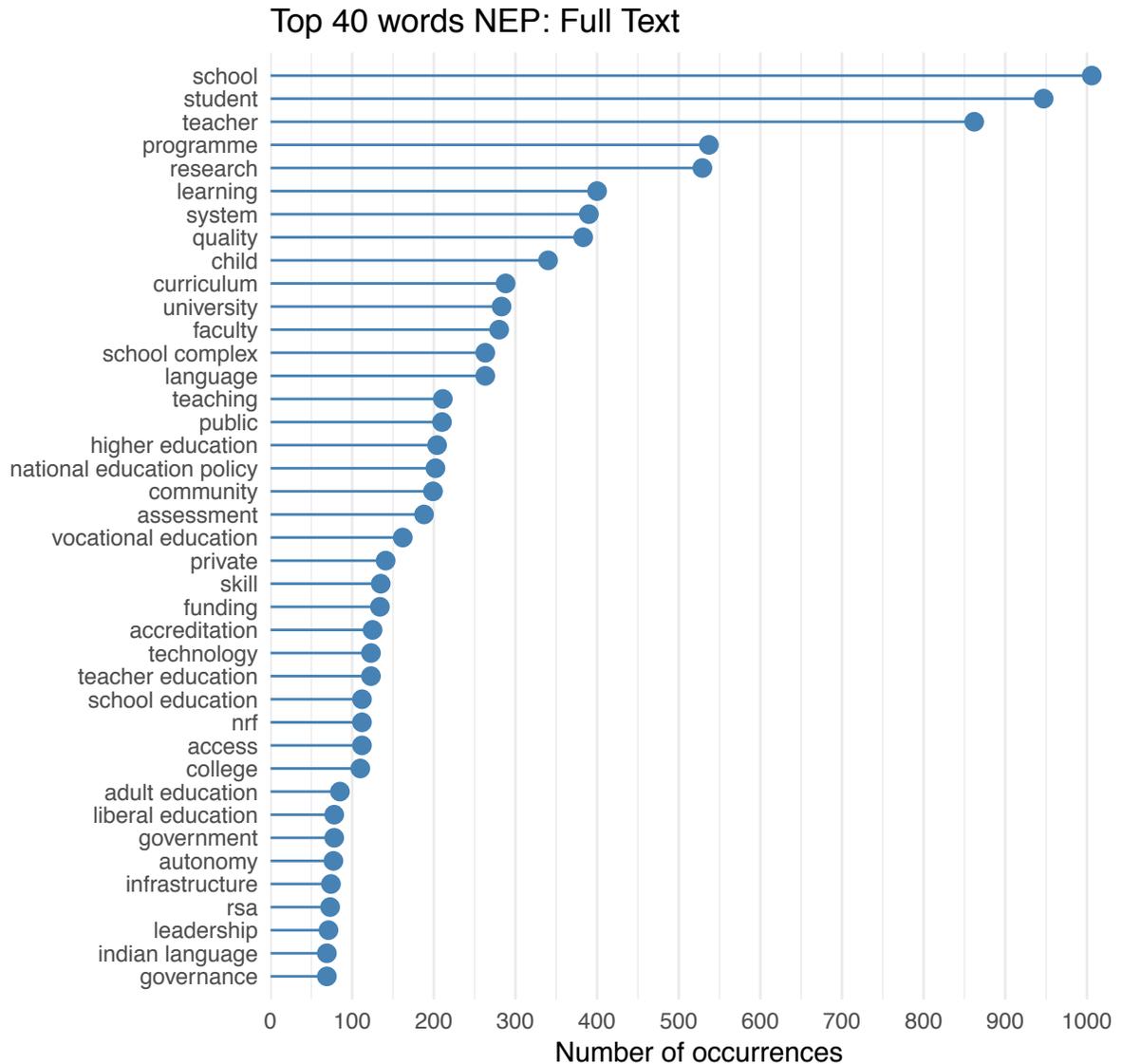
Summary Findings

- The fulcrum around which the NEP is structured is the 'school'.
- Key themes in the education debate over the past few years, including assessment, accreditation, autonomy and governance appear less frequently than references to agents or units of delivery.
- The low weight accorded to parents is particularly troubling.
- The emphasis on rules and outcomes-based accreditation for all schools is novel.
- The repeated references to separation of functions indicates a shift in the philosophy governing education delivery.

Meta-analysis of the entire text

Full document

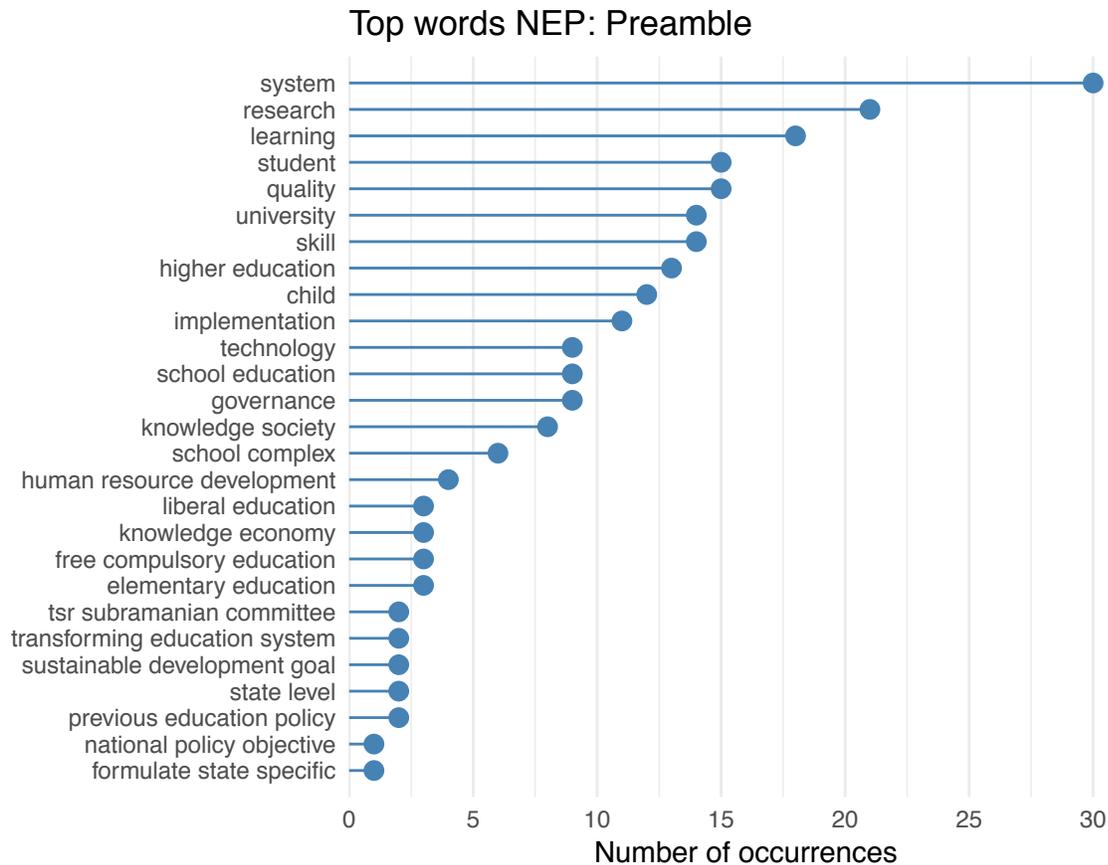
The 480-page Draft National Education Policy 2019 is a comprehensive document covering all segments of education, from early childhood to adult literacy. The Minister for Human Resource Development in foreword says “the path-breaking reforms recommended herein will bring about a paradigm shift by equipping our students, teachers and educational institutions with the right competencies and capabilities (for)... and enabling and reinvigorated educational eco-system...”.



Our analysis suggests that the fulcrum around which the NEP is structured is the ‘school’. It is heartening to see repeated references to student (and child), but disheartening that parents do not appear in this list. In addition, key themes in the education debate over the past few years, including assessment, accreditation, autonomy and governance appear less frequently than references to agents or units of delivery. The emphasis on research (in higher education, in particular) and technology is a new development.

Preamble

The Preamble lays out the vision behind the National Education Policy, and presents what the Committee considers the most significant developments proposed in the text.



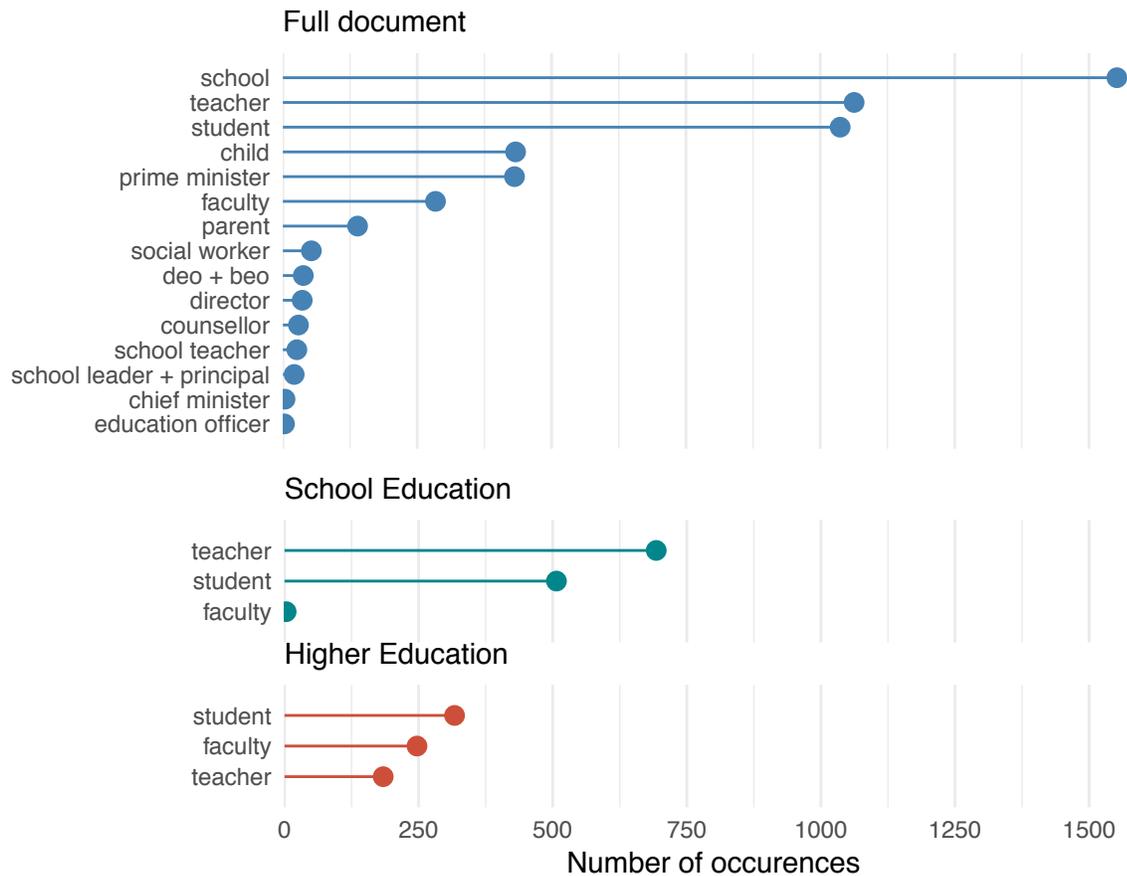
In the Preamble, Committee members have ‘proposed the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, its regulation and governance, to create a new system aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, while remaining consistent with India’s traditions and value systems’.

The content analysis of the preamble matches this sentiment closely. Words referring to the education structure such as system, research, quality, governance, school complex, and liberal education are emphasized. Surprisingly, the repeated mentions from the main body of the document such as assessment, accreditation, governance and autonomy do not make an appearance in the most frequent words of the Preamble.

Weight of Different Stakeholders across the Full Text

We listed all the key players in the education system, and observed how often the Policy document refers to them. We suggest that this frequency analysis is a proxy for the weight and importance accorded to different players.

Weight of Different Stakeholders across NEP

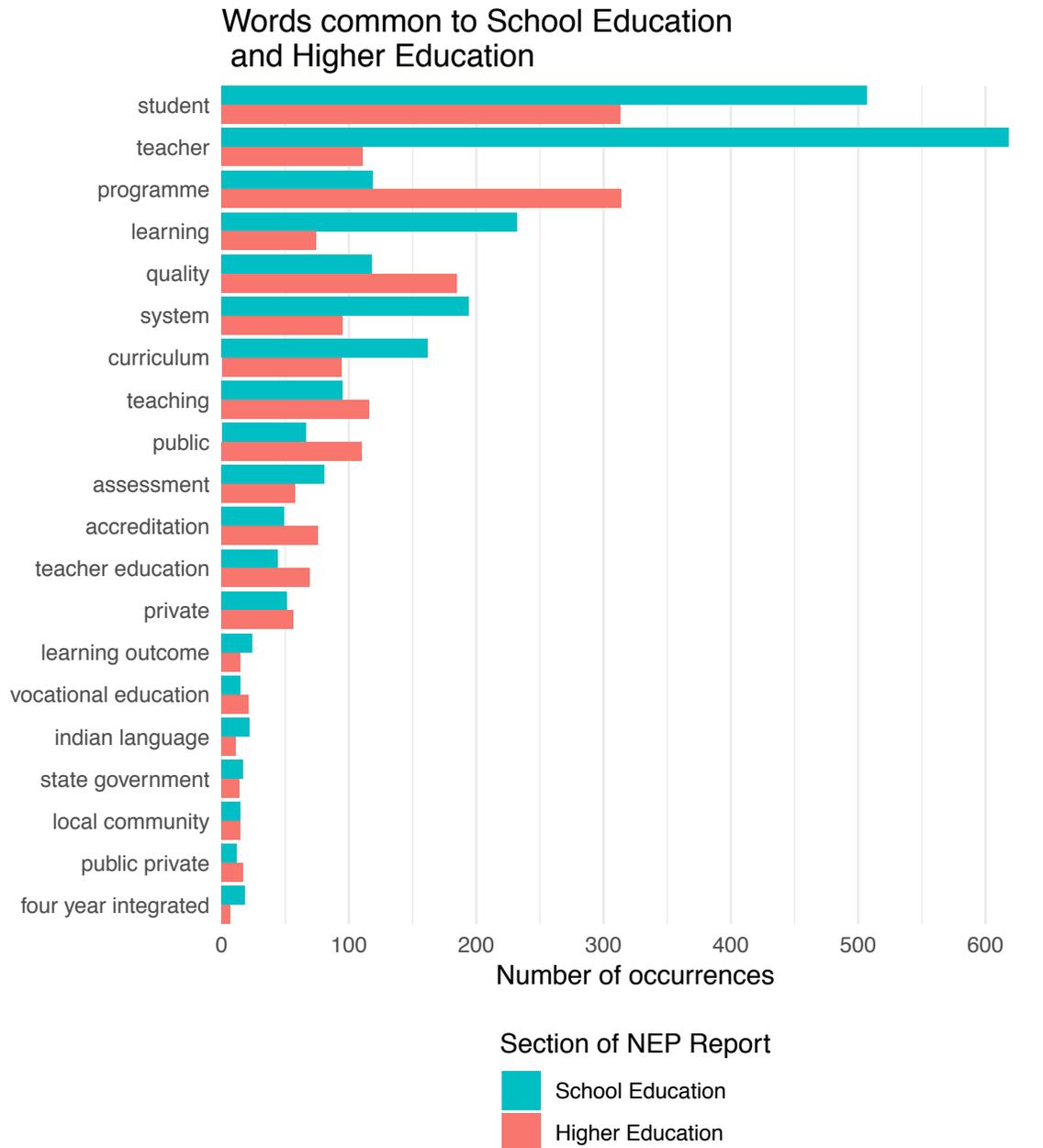


Unsurprisingly, the school and teachers are the most highly weighted actors in the system. There is no doubt that education is only as good as the teacher, though in our view a policy document ought to be centered around the most important beneficiary of the policy, i.e the student and the child.

The low weight accorded to parents is particularly troubling. Surely, parents deserve as much attention as the Prime Minister, if not more. Over the last few years, there has been much debate over parental empowerment in the choice of school, and the policy document ought to have placed greater emphasis on the parent as the primary decision maker on behalf of students/children.

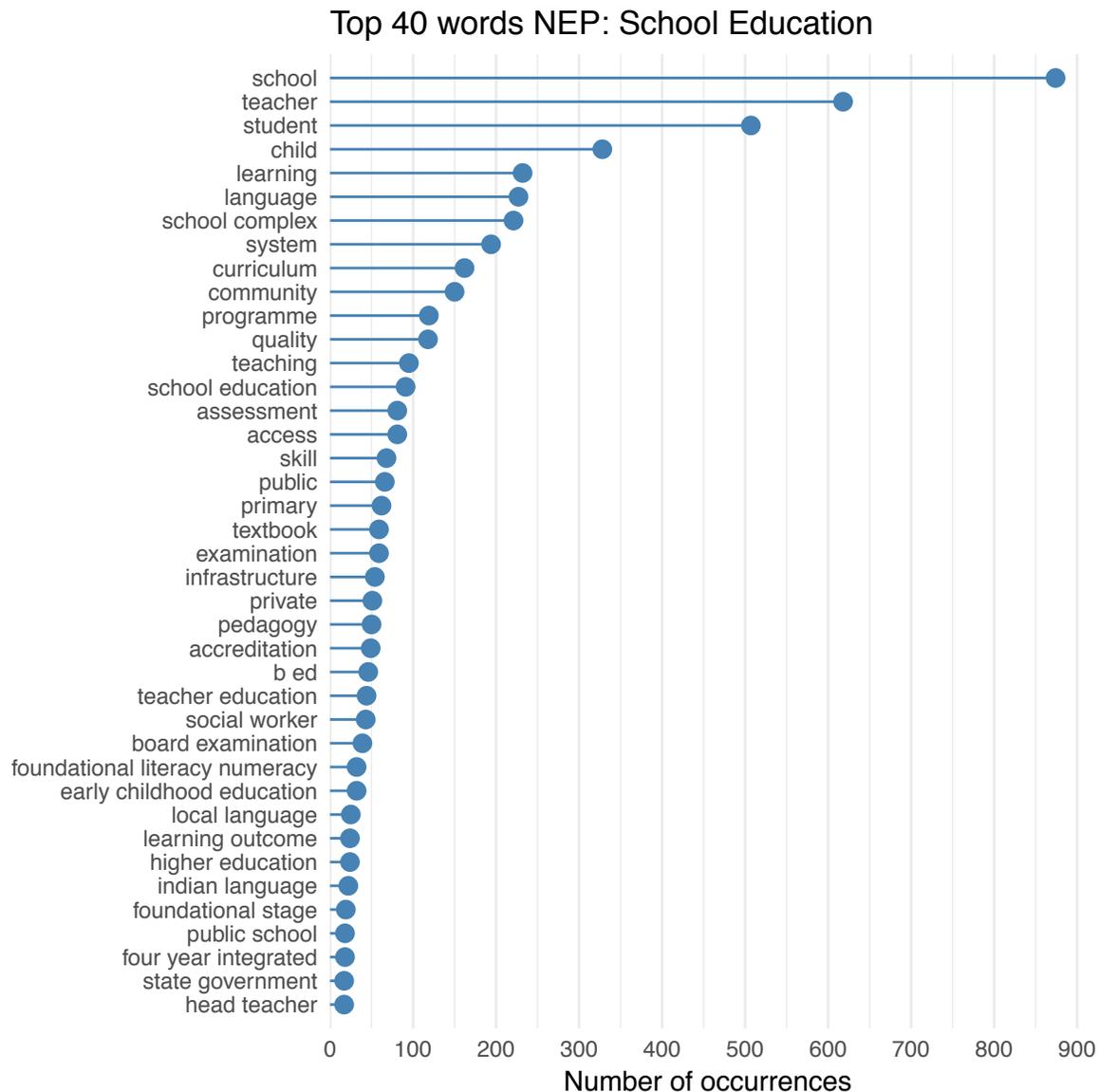
Common in School and Higher Education

While the target groups and challenges of K-12 and Higher Education are distinct, they pose similar governance and value for public spending challenges. We compared the emphasis placed on common words in both documents, acknowledging the differences in the two segments. Even on common elements such as teacher and student, the policy places different emphasis on these actors in the two segments.



Segment-wise analysis

School Education

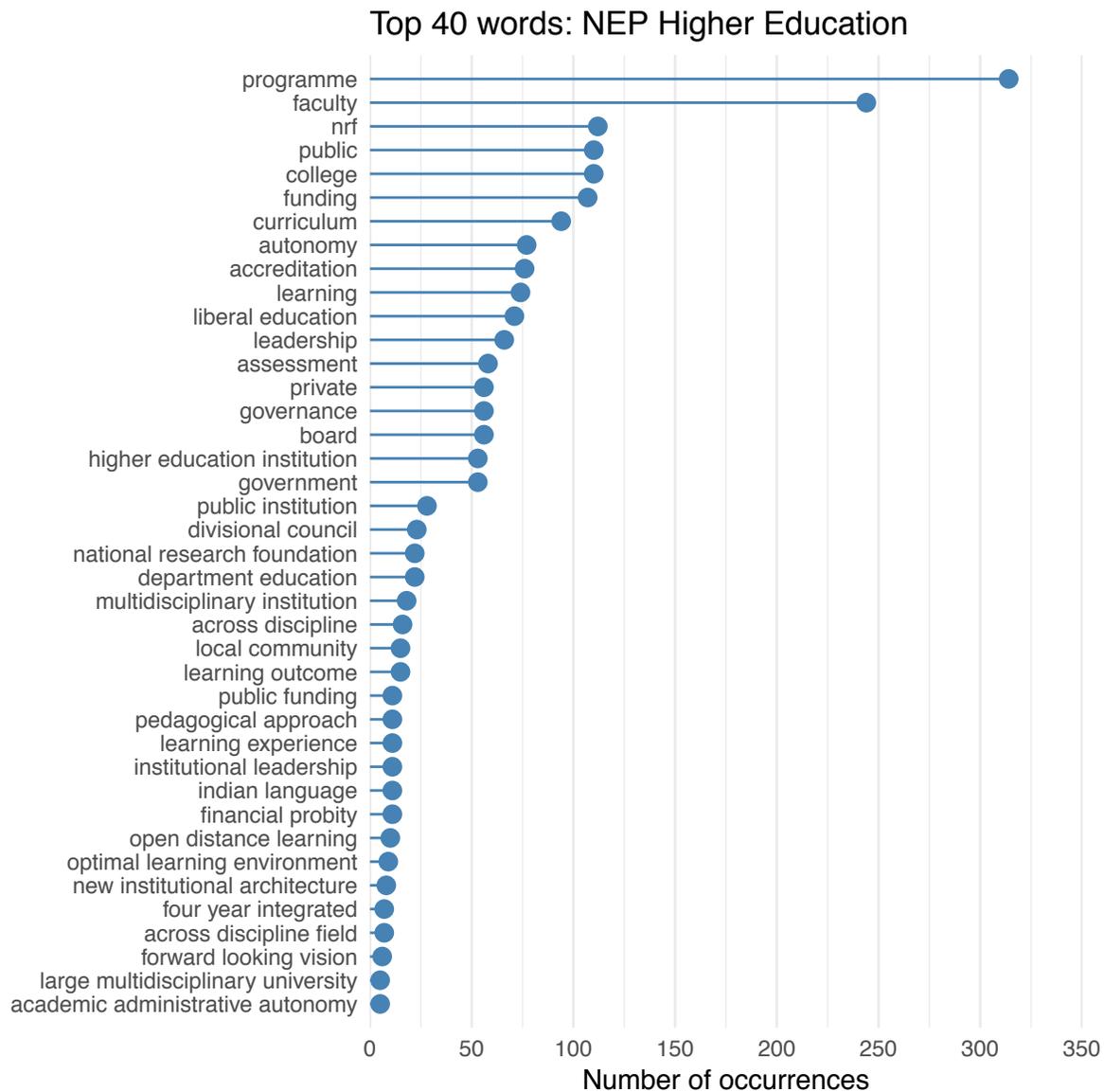


Repeated references to learning, quality, outcomes and assessment are welcome, both from the lens of systemic accountability and individual child welfare. The emphasis on language will be accompanied by many challenges as recent media debates show.

While the two out of eight chapters of Part 2 (School Education) of the Draft Policy were centered around governance and regulation, we were surprised that ideas from these chapters were not more prominent.

The emphasis on the school complex likely points to public infrastructure and resource rationalization, a conceptual departure from previous policies. The concept of accreditation for all schools is novel and welcome, particularly as the document emphasizes a rule and outcomes-based framework for accreditation.

Higher Education



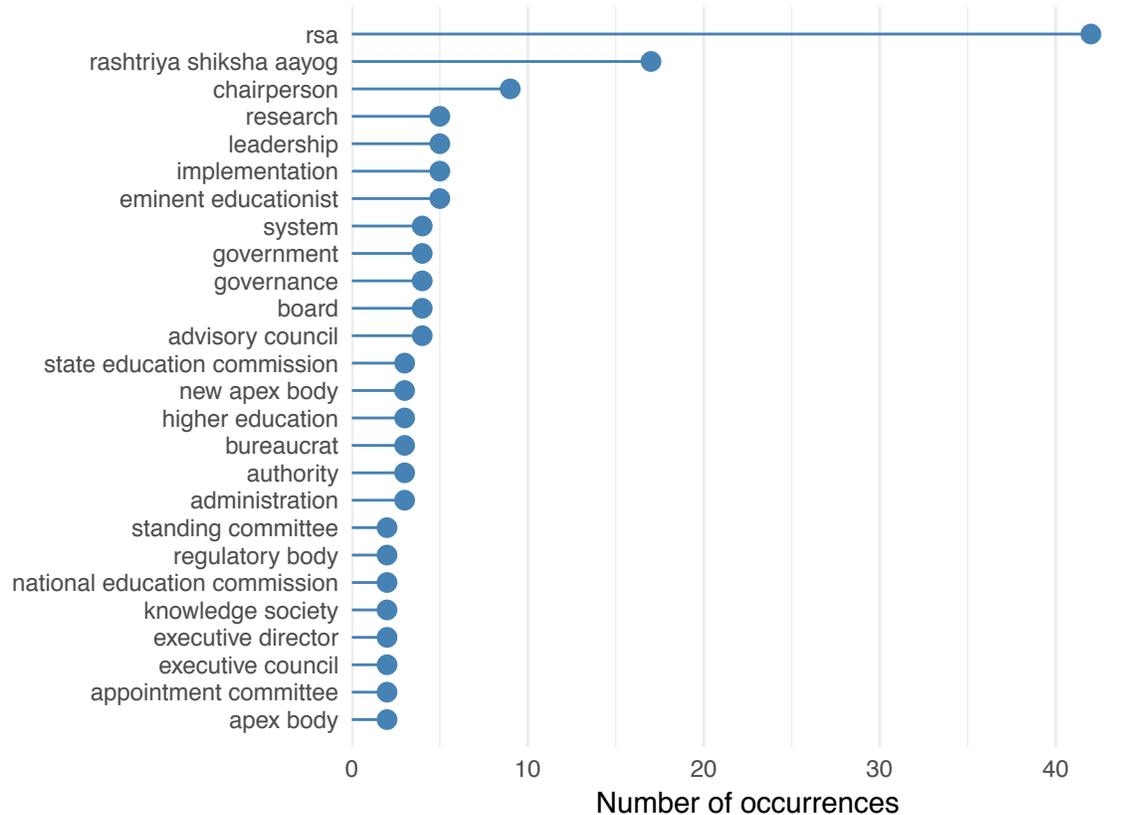
Even accounting for segment differences between school and higher education, the content analysis for this part of the Draft Policy is striking. The Draft Policy is clearly taking a ‘system pathology’ view and not an intervention-centric one as in the case of school education.

Liberal education, teacher education, technical education, multi-disciplinary/cross-disciplinary education are emphasized, as is also evident from chapter titles of the Draft. The emphasis on funding and encouraging research comes through clearly, as does the prioritization of principles-based regulatory overhaul.

Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog

The Draft Policy proposes the creation of a National Education Commission (NEC)/Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog as an apex body for Indian education, responsible for ‘developing, articulating, implementing, evaluating, and revising the vision of education in the country on a continuous and sustained basis, and to create and oversee the institutional frameworks that will help achieve this vision’. Given that the Draft Policy has dedicated an entire chapter to this body, we culled out the most frequent words in the section.

Top 40 words NEP: Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog



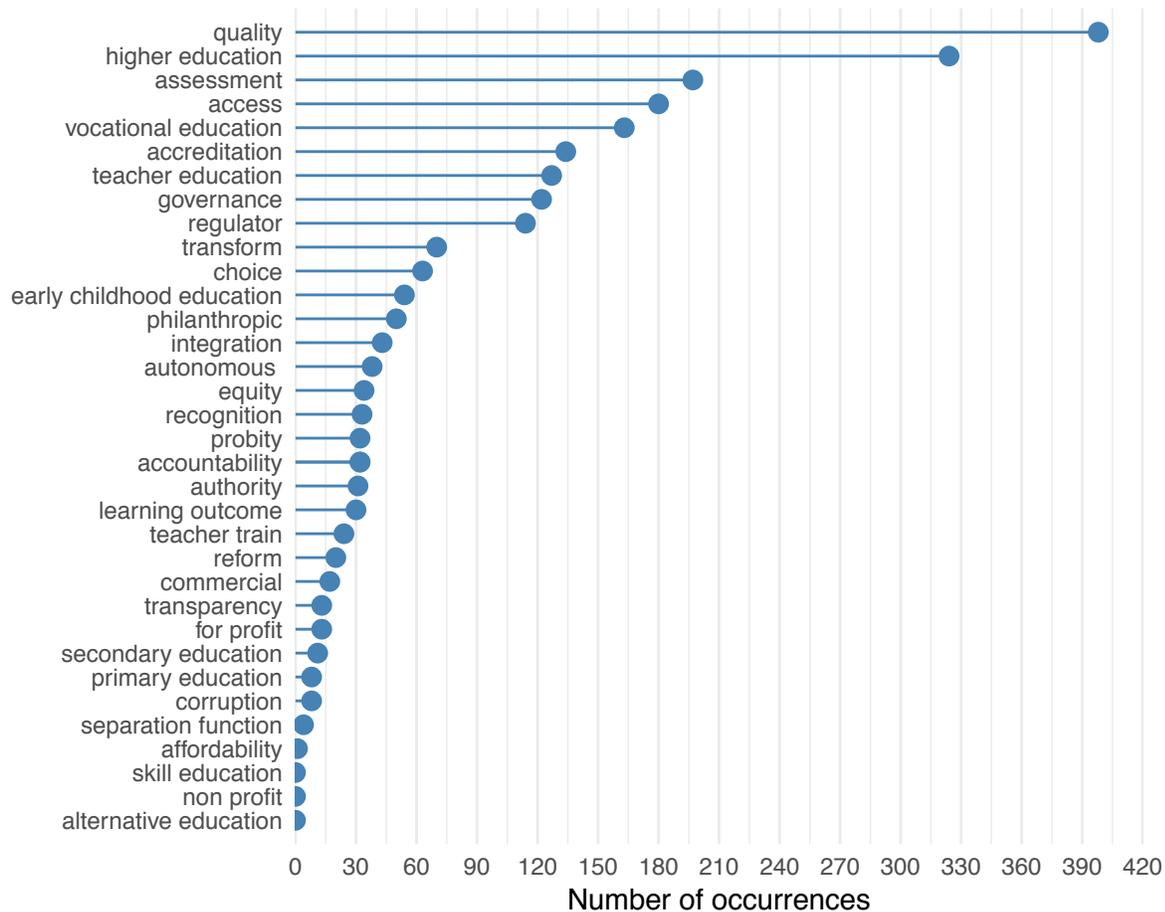
The word count analysis seems to suggest that the overarching role of this body will be to prize research, provide leadership and guide governance. However, when we glanced through the Ministry of Human Resource Development’s mandate, there were several areas of overlap between their mandate and the emphasis areas relating to the role and functioning of the RSA. From the word counts it is unclear how the two bodies will delineate their roles and what the statutory obligations of the RSA will be.

Curated analysis of special interest

Words of Special Interest

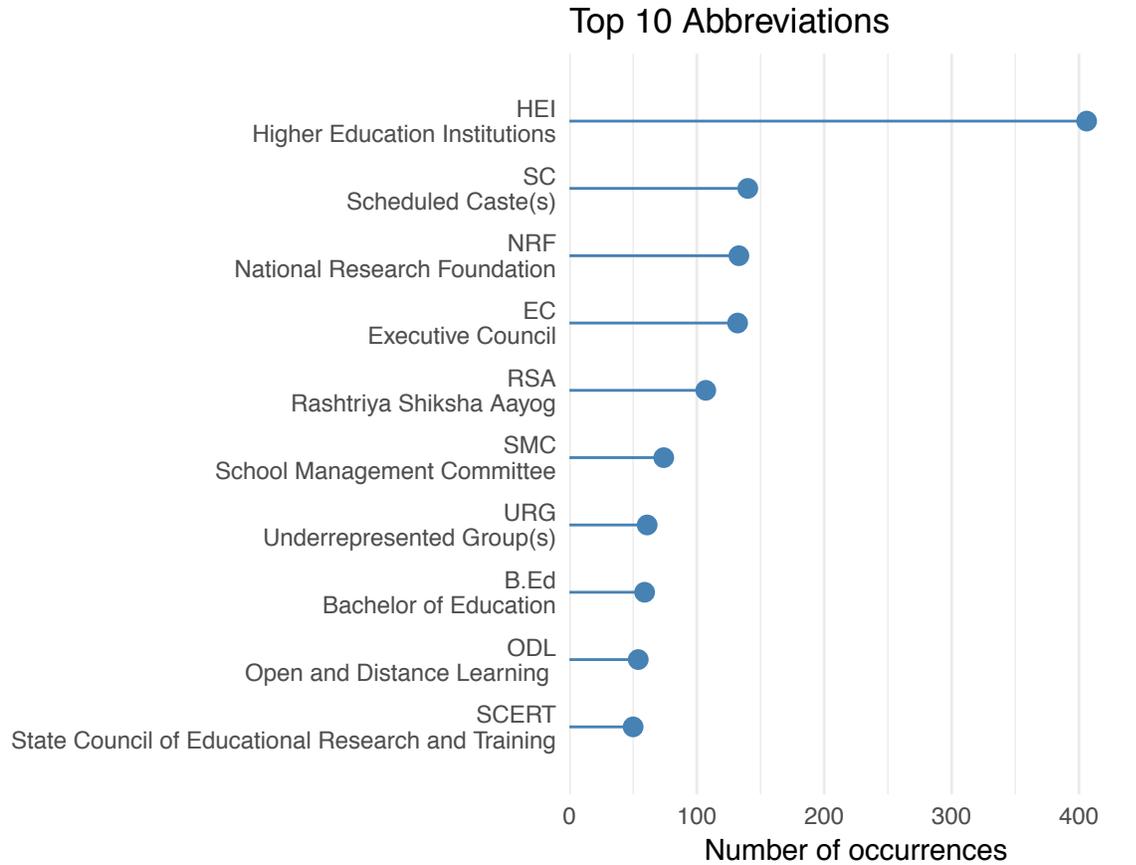
Minister’s foreword articulates that ‘access, equity, affordability, quality, accountability’ are the foundational pillars of the 2019 Draft National Education Policy. Centre for Civil Society (CCS), with its focus on good governance and an enabling environment for school choice, has developed a similar vocabulary around these precepts. We compiled a list of such key-words of interest and ran the frequency analysis. The NEP clearly prizes quality of education, which CCS has long argued should be the mainstay of any education policy. The emphasis on accreditation, governance, regulation, autonomy and separation of functions are welcome.

Top 40 words NEP: Special words



Abbreviations

Abbreviations typically refer to agencies or programmes, and sought to examine if any abbreviations stood out in the document. Higher Education Institutions are a central feature of the Draft Policy. Inclusion (particularly of Scheduled Castes) and research are perhaps two other themes that emerge from this quick check.



Constraining Words

Centre for Civil Society emphasizes individual choice and a restrained state. We were curious to see how many restraints the Draft Policy puts in place. While the Draft Policy is not binding, the use of hard modal auxiliaries may indicate a top-down prescriptive approach, rather than a flexible and emergent one. Given that ‘will’ is the most frequently used constraining word, it perhaps suggests a strong intent to follow through on the ideas presented in the Draft.

