

Impact of New Education Policy 2020 On Higher Education

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Abstract

The New Education Policy announced by Government of India (NEP 2020) was a welcoming change and fresh news amidst all the negativities surrounding the world due to the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic. The announcement of NEP 2020 was purely unexpected by many. The changes that NEP 2020 has recommended were something that many educationists never saw coming. Well defined and futuristic education policy is essential for a country at school and college levels due to the reason that education leads to economic and social progress. Different countries adopt different education systems by considering the tradition and culture and adopt different stages during their life cycle at school and college education levels to make it effective. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The policy aims to transform India's education system by 2021. Shortly after the release of the policy, the government clarified that no one will be forced to study any particular language and that the medium of instruction will not be shifted from English to any regional language. The language policy in NEP is a broad guideline and advisory in nature; and it is up to the states, institutions, and schools to decide on the implementation. Education in India is a Concurrent List subject. Karnataka has become the first state to implement New Education Policy 2020. The national educational policy should be implemented in all schools over India by 2022.

Keywords: Higher Education, National Education Policy 2020, NEP-2020.

I. Introduction

The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - 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 of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved.

The gap between the current state of learning outcomes and what is required must be bridged through undertaking major reforms that bring the highest quality, equity, and integrity into the system, from early childhood care and education through higher education.

The aim must be for India to have an education system by 2040 that is second to none, with equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background.

This National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, including SDG4, while building upon India's traditions and value systems.

The National Education Policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities - both the ‘foundational capacities’ of literacy and numeracy and ‘higher-order’ cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving - but

also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions.

The teacher must be at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system. The new education policy must help re-establish teachers, at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly shape our next generation of citizens. It must do everything to empower teachers and help them to do their job as effectively as possible. The new education policy must help recruit the very best and brightest to enter the teaching profession at all levels, by ensuring livelihood, respect, dignity, and autonomy, while also instilling in the system basic methods of quality control and accountability.

The new education policy must provide to all students, irrespective of their place of residence, a quality education system, with particular focus on historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. Education is a great leveler and is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. Initiatives must be in place to ensure that all students from such groups, despite inherent obstacles, are provided various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system.

The implementation of previous policies on education has focused largely on issues of access and equity. The unfinished agenda of the National Policy on Education 1986, modified in 1992 (NPE 1986/92), is appropriately dealt with in this Policy. A major development since the last Policy of 1986/92 has been the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 which laid down legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The policy aims to transform India's education system by 2021. The language policy in NEP is a broad guideline and advisory in nature; and it is up to the states, institutions, and schools to decide on the

implementation. The NEP 2020 enacts numerous changes in India's education policy. It aims to increase state expenditure on education from around 4% to 6% of the GDP as soon as possible. In January 2015, a committee under former Cabinet Secretary T. S. R. Subramanian started the consultation process for the New Education Policy. Based on the committee report, in June 2017, the draft NEP was submitted in 2019 by a panel led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan.

The Draft New Education Policy (DNEP) 2019, was later released by Ministry of Human Resource Development, followed by a number of public consultations. The Draft NEP had 484 pages. The Ministry undertook a rigorous consultation process in formulating the draft policy: "Over two lakh suggestions from 2.5 lakh gram panchayats, 6,600 blocks, 6,000 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), 676 districts were received." The vision of the National Education Policy is: "National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all."

Quality higher education must aim to develop individuals who are excellent, thoughtful, well rounded, and creative. It must enable a person to study one or more specialized areas of interest at an in-depth level and develop character, ethical and constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, service spirit, and the skills of the 21st century across a range of fields, including sciences, social sciences, the arts, humanities, languages, personal, technological the vocational subjects.

The new education policy brings some fundamental changes to the current system, and the key highlights are multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with at least one in or near every district, revamping student curricula, pedagogy, evaluation, and support for enhanced student experience, establishing a National Research Foundation to support excellent peer-reviewed work and effectively seed study at universities and colleges.

The main problems faced by the Indian higher education system includes enforced separation of qualifications, early specialization and student

streaming into restricted research areas, less focus on research at most universities and schools, and lack of competitive peer-review academic research funding and large affiliated universities leading to low levels of undergraduate education.

Institutional restructuring and consolidation aim to end the fragmentation of higher education by transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary, creating well rounded and innovative individuals, and transforming other countries educationally and economically, increasing the gross enrolment ratio in higher education, including vocational training, from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. Holistic and multidisciplinary education should strive in an integrated way to improve all human capacities-mental, cultural, social, physical, emotional, and moral.

In the long term, such a comprehensive education shall be the method for all undergraduate programs, including those in medical, technical, and vocational disciplines. Optimal learning environments and support for students offer a holistic approach including adequate curriculum, interactive pedagogy, consistent formative assessment, and adequate support for students.

Objectives of the study

This National Education Policy envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The Policy envisages that the curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must develop among the students a deep sense of respect towards the Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values, bonding with one's country, and a conscious awareness of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world. The vision of the Policy is to in still 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.

The primary objective of this research is to study the impact of New Education Policy 2020 on higher education. The study also outlines the salient features of NEP and analyses how they affect the existing education system.

Research methodology

This research is a descriptive study. The necessary secondary data was collected from various websites including those of Government of India, magazines, journals, other publications, etc. This data was then analysed and reviewed to arrive at the inferences and conclusions.

II. Salient Features of NEP Related to Higher Education

Higher education plays an extremely important role in promoting human as well as societal wellbeing and in developing India as envisioned in its Constitution - a democratic, just, socially conscious, cultured, and humane nation upholding liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice for all. Higher education significantly contributes towards sustainable livelihoods and economic development of the nation. As India moves towards becoming a knowledge economy and society, more and more young Indians are likely to aspire for higher education.

21st century requirements, quality higher education must aim to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals. It must enable an individual to study one or more specialized areas of interest at a deep level, and also develop character, ethical and Constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, spirit of service, and 21st century capabilities across a range of disciplines including sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, as well as professional, technical, and vocational subjects. A quality higher education must enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to the society. It must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and enable economic independence.

For the purpose of developing holistic individuals, it is essential that an identified set of skills and values will be incorporated at each stage of learning, from pre-school to higher education.

At the societal level, higher education must enable the development of an enlightened, socially conscious, knowledgeable, and skilled nation that can find and implement robust solutions to its own problems. Higher education must form the basis for knowledge creation and innovation thereby contributing to a growing national economy. The purpose of quality higher education is, therefore, more than the creation of greater opportunities for individual employment. It represents the key to more vibrant, socially engaged, cooperative communities and a happier, cohesive, cultured, productive, innovative, progressive, and prosperous nation.

The new NEP has been introduced with an aim to formalize changes in the system from school level to college/university level. Keeping in mind the developing scenario, education content henceforth, will focus on key-concepts, ideas, applications and problem-solving angles. The National Education Policy is expected to bring positive and long-lasting impact on the higher education system of the country. The fact that foreign universities will be allowed to open campuses in India is a commendable initiative by the government. This will help the students experience the global quality of education in their very own country. The policy of introducing multi-disciplinary institutes will lead to a renewed focus on every field such as arts, humanities and this form of education will help students to learn and grow holistically. Thus, students will be equipped with stronger knowledge base.

The introduction of single common entrance test is another positive step which will reduce the stress of multiple competitive exams and ease off the pressure of preparing for so many of them. It will also ensure a level playing ground for all student applicants going forward. Establishing Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) is definitely a robust idea to store the academic credits that students earn by taking courses from various recognized higher education institutions. A student can earn scores by completing a course and these will be credited to the ABC account. One can then transfer these credits if he/she decides to switch colleges. If a student ever drops out for some reasons, these credits will remain intact which means he/she can come back years later and pick up from where the student had left.

The new higher education regulatory structure will ensure that distinct administrative, accreditation, financing, and academic standard-setting roles are performed by separate, autonomous, and empowered bodies. These four structures will be established as four independent verticals within a single umbrella institution, India's Higher Education Commission (HECI). There are a lot of reforms and new developments which have been introduced by NEP in the higher education sector. Some of the salient features are:

• **Single regulatory body for higher education:**

The NEP aims to establish Higher Education Commission of India which will be the single regulatory body except for legal and medical education.

• **Multiple entry and exit programme:**

There will be multiple entry and exit options for those who wish to leave the course in the middle. Their credits will be transferred through Academic Bank of Credits.

• **Tech- based option for adult learning through apps, TV channels:**

Quality technology-based options for adult learning such as apps, online courses/modules, satellite-based TV channels, online books, and ICT-equipped libraries and Adult Education Centres, etc. will be developed.

• **E-courses to be available in regional languages:**

Technology will be part of education planning, teaching, learning, assessment, teacher, school, and student training. The e-content to be available in regional languages, starting with 8 major languages – Kannada, Odia, Bengali among others to join the e-courses available in Hindi and English.

• **Foreign universities to set-up campuses in India:**

World's top 100 foreign universities will be facilitated to operate in India through a new law. According to the HRD Ministry document, "such (foreign) universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India."

• **Common entrance exam for all colleges:**

The common Entrance exam for all higher education institutes to be held by National Testing Agency (NTA). The exam will be optional.

• A Higher Education Council of India (HECI) will be set up to regulate higher education. The council's goal will be to increase gross enrolment ratio.

The HECI will have 4 verticals:

- a) National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), to regulate higher education, including teacher education, while excluding medical and legal education.
- b) National Accreditation Council (NAC), a "meta-accrediting body".
- c) Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), for funding and financing of universities and colleges. This will replace the existing National Council for Teacher Education, All India Council for Technical Education and the University Grants Commission.
- d) General Education Council (GEC), to frame "graduate attributes", namely the learning outcomes expected. It will also be responsible in framing a National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF). The National Council for Teacher Education will come under the GEC, as a professional standard setting body (PSSB).

III. Detailed Analysis of Impact of NEP On Higher Education

Regulatory System of Higher Education:

A significant change in NEP 2020 is the proposal to set up the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), as an umbrella body for higher education, excluding medical and legal education. This will usually bring out a question that what will happen to the present UGC and AICTE? HECI is aiming at reforming the higher education sector; the Bill will separate the Academic and Funding aspects of the sector. According to the new Bill, HECI will not have any financial powers. The funding processes which were handled by the University Grants Commission (UGC) will be taken care by the Ministry of Education, previously known as the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). This change however is expected to clear the regulatory mess in India's Higher Education system. HECI is expected to have four independent verticals - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulation, General Education Council

(GEC) for standard-setting, Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding, and National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation. To have uniformity in education standards, a single umbrella body was always a requirement and this has been a vision of numerous educationists. This is considered as the right step in streamlining education policy. However, to ensure quality of higher education, institutes must be measured based on relevant parameters like research, industry linkages, placements and academic excellence, etc. If the HECI can manage this, the benefits to its biggest stakeholder, the youth of India, might be significant.

Graded Accreditation and Graded Autonomy:

The concept of "empowerment and autonomy to innovate" is one of the key features in NEP 2020 which supports a "phasing out" strategy from Affiliated Colleges to Autonomous Institutions. The increased flexibility offered to autonomous institutions also gives hope in curriculum enrichment. It also says that with appropriate accreditations, Autonomous degree granting Colleges could evolve into Research-intensive or Teaching-intensive Universities, if they so aspire. The announcement of setting up Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) in the country gives more hope. These institutions will be at par with the existing IITs and IIMs and will aim to showcase multidisciplinary education for the Indian students.

Another important change the NEP 2020 suggests that the National Testing Agency will serve as a premier, expert, autonomous testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for undergraduate and graduate admissions and fellowships in Higher Education Institutions. The high quality, range, and flexibility of the NTA testing services will enable most universities to use these common entrance exams - rather than having hundreds of universities each devising their own entrance exams - thereby drastically reducing the burden on students, universities and colleges, and the entire education system. It will be left up to individual universities and colleges to use NTA assessments for their admissions. It also surely helps the students to easily transfer their degrees and credits to universities abroad. Another important change the NEP 2020 suggests that the National Testing Agency will serve

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Internationalisation at home:

NEP 2020 also allows foreign universities and colleges to come to India and this brings out a challenge for the native institutions to improve the quality of education provided by them. The Indian higher education sector is buzzing all around as the opportunity of paving the way for foreign universities to set up campuses in the country. India has one of the largest networks of higher education systems in the world, with more than 900 universities and 40,000 colleges. But GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) of India in higher education is 26.3%, which is significantly low when compared to other BRICS countries like Brazil (50%) or China (51%), and very much lower when compared with European and North American nations which would be more than 80%. India must achieve a significant growth in the area of global higher education for obtaining a sustainable economic growth, which should not be driven by natural resources, but by knowledge resources. As per the reports, India will need another more than 1,500 new higher education institutions by 2030 to accommodate a huge inflow of students, that's why the Indian government wants to promote FDIs (Foreign Direct Investment) and open up the ECB (External Commercial Borrowing) route to strengthen the capital investment for the education sector.

The ministry is also trying to boost India's image as an education center because already more than 7 Lakhs of Indian students are studying abroad. So, the intention of this policy is that, allowing

foreign universities will enable world-class education available locally at a significantly lower cost without travelling and will considerably reduce the human capital migrating to other countries for study and job prospects. According to the different global surveys, cross-border education is beneficial for the economy and brings a wider level of global awareness, culturally perceptive, and competitiveness. Foreign collaborations enable local institutes to design their curriculum in alignment with international pedagogy and offer a diverse portfolio of subjects and specialization to students.

More Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education:

The NEP 2020 claims that, a holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings -intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner. Such an education will help develop well-rounded individuals that possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication, discussion and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields.

The NEP 2020 envisions one large multidisciplinary Higher Education Institution (HEI) in or near every district, by 2030. 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. Finally, as part of a holistic education, students at all HEIs will be provided with opportunities for internships with local industry, businesses, artists, crafts persons, etc., as well as research internships with faculty and researchers at their own or other HEIs/research institutions, so that students may actively engage with the practical side of their learning and, as a by-product, further improve their employability.

The structure and lengths of degree programmes:

In the context of the National Education Policy 2020 scheme, any undergraduate degree in any

institution will be of duration of three or four years. One can leave the degree within this period. Any educational institution will have to give to the student a diploma degree after the student completes two years of study, a degree after the student completes three years of study and a certificate to those students who complete one year of study in any professional or vocational course of their choice. The Government of India will also help in establishing an Academic Bank of Credit for storing the academic scores digitally. This will enable the institutions to count the credit at the end and put it in the degree of the student.

This will be helpful for those individuals who might have to leave the course mid-way. They can start the course later on from where they left off and not start from the beginning once again. Even though NEP 2020 says that Higher education institutions will be given the freedom to start PG courses there may be some difficulty in designing One Year PG Degree for students who have completed 4 Year UG Degree and a Two Year PG Degree for students who have completed 3 Year UG Degree.

IV. Conclusion

The policy introduces a whole gamut of changes and reads largely as a very progressive document, with a firm grasp on the current socio-economic landscape and the prospect of future uncertainty. Education for a new generation of learners has to essentially engage with the increasing dematerialisation and digitalisation of economies, which requires a completely new set of capabilities in order to be able to keep up. This seems to be an even more vital prerequisite now, with the trend towards digitalisation and disruptive automation being quickened by the pandemic. Overall, the NEP 2020 addresses the need to develop professionals in a variety of fields ranging from Agriculture to Artificial Intelligence. India needs to be ready for the future. And the NEP 2020 paves the way ahead for many young aspiring students to be equipped with the right skillset.

The new education policy has a laudable vision, but its strength will depend on whether it is able to effectively integrate with the other policy initiatives of government like Digital India, Skill India and the New Industrial Policy to name a few, in

order to effect a coherent structural transformation. Hence, policy linkages can ensure that education policy addresses to and learns from Skill India's experience in engaging more dynamically with the corporate sector to shape vocational education curriculum in order to make it a success.

There is also a necessity for more evidence-based decision-making, to adapt to rapidly evolving transmutations and disruptions. NEP has reassuringly provisioned for real-time evaluation systems and a consultative monitoring and review framework. This shall empower the education system to constantly reform itself, instead of expecting for a new education policy every decade for a shift in curriculum. This, in itself, will be a remarkable achievement. The NEP 2020 is a defining moment for higher education. Effective and time-bound implementation is what will make it truly path-breaking.

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