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THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY (2020): A PARADIGM SHIFT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

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. It is well known fact that a well-defined, visionary and futuristic education policy is a must for every country because education is the key driver of economic and social progress. Taking into account their respective traditions and culture, different countries have adopted varied education systems. Recently Government of India announced its New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which intended to transform our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all. It is a welcome step, which will bring about a paradigm shift India's education system and will transform it into a modern, progressive, and equitable one. This conceptual research article is based on NEP 2020 focuses on Higher Education (HE). Authors of the article intends to discuss background and emergence; to highlight vision, focus thrust areas and principle guidelines; and necessarily to bring out features, impact areas and opportunities to stakeholders as well. Finally, they are emphasizing the need for planned, systematic and careful implementation of the policy.

Keywords: *National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), Strengths & Weakness of the policy at higher education*

INTRODUCTION

"Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think."

Albert Einstein

The National Policy on Education (NEP) is a policy formulated by the Government of India to promote education amongst India's people. The policy covers pre-primary to higher in both rural and urban India. The first NEP was promulgated by the Government of India by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1968, the second by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986, and the third by Prime Minister NarendraModi in 2020. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which has been 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 vision of the National Education Policy is:-

"National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that contributes

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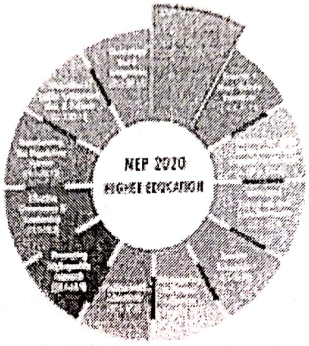
directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all."

New Education Policy is not just about the degree. It is all about focus on life skills and vocational courses. It is based on student centric approach where affordability and accessibility are be there and where the students can leverage the most out of education. Increased access, equity, and inclusion through open schooling, online education and open distance learning can be promoted. But to check the reality, we have to understand its background. International trends and situations are already influencing Indian higher education From the last number of years, India is attracting good number of foreign



students that includes NRIs in bigger numbers; joining various skilled, tutorial and academic programs. Also, many foreign universities are offering to get their degrees without leaving India from their home (Kugiel, P., 2017). There are trends to liberalize university systems that could to reduce gap among universities. The natures of programmes offered by HEIs are undergone massive transformation and acquisition of mastery level skills and competencies that are in larger demand. Degrees generating employment opportunities would be most likely to be opted in future (Hiremath, S. S., 2020). In this prevalent scenario, NEP 2020 is brought to give thrust to Indian education system and propel it to next level.

NEP for Higher Education – Key Highlights

- Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to be raised to 50 % by 2035
- Around 3.5 crore seats to be added in higher education
- Undergraduate education can be of 3 or 4 years with multiple exit options and appropriate certification different stages
- Academic Bank of credits to be established to facilitate Transfer of credits for lateral admission to other institutes
- Multi disciplinary Education and research universities (MERUs), at par with IITs and IIMs, to be set up as models of best multi disciplinary education of global standards in the country.
- The National Research Foundation will be created as an apex body for fostering a string research culture and building research capacity across higher education.
- Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for the entire higher education system, excluding medical and legal education. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards.
- Afiliation of colleges is to phased out in 15 years and a stage-wise mechanism is to be established for granting graded autonomy to colleges

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NEP 2020 FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: KEY FEATURES

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.
Merit based Student admissions, Faculty Selection & Promotion: NEP 2020 stresses on the importance of student admission based on merit by giving importance to social justice. It also comments that the quality of higher education and research can be improved only if all faculty selections and promotions are merit based. All kinds of reservations and lobbies should be 13 curbed at individual institution level by means of appointing highly qualified and proven leaders as members of the Board of Governors. It also stresses that merit-based appointments are essential at all policy formulating and regulating levels of Higher Education Councils.
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 Centers, etc. will be developed.
The government will also set up an autonomous body – National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), which will work as a platform for free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, and administration.
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.
Multiple entry and exit programme: As per the NEP 2020, the students will now have options of multiple exits during their UG programme. For example

Option No	Options	Academic Recognition
1	After 1st Year of UG Programme	Certificate
2	After 2nd Year of UG Programme	Advanced Diploma
3	After 3rd Year of UG Programme	Bachelor's Degree
4	After 4th Year of UG Programme	Bachelor's with Research

- The NEP-2020 is futuristic and expected to fill the gap between the current status of national innovativeness and the desired state of national innovativeness.
- The draft contains a comprehensive proposal on all aspects of education for all levels of the people.
- Private HEIs will prosper due to full autonomy for admission, choosing the curriculum, freedom in teacher's appointment without the need of following reservation policy, research funds support, and ability to retain only performers through accountability models.
- Private HIEs will get the freedom of admission whereas Public HEIs admit students through NEA ranking & counseling.
- All types of HEIs will be multidisciplinary, accredited, and autonomous degree granting institutions at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
- Mark scored by each student in each subject is based on the continuous evaluation by the concerned faculty

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members of the department so that the performance grade of the student will be based on true academic scores not based on his/her fate or luck.

- Supports to fulfill the United Nations Sustainable development goals by 2030.
- Liberalization in choosing the subjects in school and college education allows for all-round development with innovating abilities and critical & design thinking.
- The policy of 20% free education and 30% subsidized education in private HEIs will give opportunities for availing free education lifelong for brilliant students.
- Autonomy is given to Type 3 HEIs to decide their curriculum may lead to contemporary education as per industry requirement.
- Multiple entries and multiple exits in the under-graduate system allow students to redefine their career path based on their interest and external opportunities.
- Quality of B.Ed. will improve due to the fact that only type 1, and type 2 HEIs are able to offer teacher education and is the basic qualification required to all levels of school education.
- Digitization of the libraries leads to online information on any subject for students and faculty in support of the liberal education model
- Intensive research in every subject is supported at undergraduate, post-graduate, and research levels through extensive funding support to all HEIs by National Research Foundation.
- Autonomy is given to teachers both for innovations in curriculum and innovations in evaluation methods
- Students have the liberty to choose subjects both from specialization areas and across many multidisciplinary subject areas.
- Priority is given to research based customized education at all levels by involving both students and faculties.
- A compulsory social engagement for each student equal to at least a full one semester course across the duration of an undergraduate programme so that every student is exposed to the problems of the underprivileged and learns a sort of social responsibility in their life.
- Drastic improvement in the quality & exposure of school teachers by making four years integrated B.Ed. as a minimum qualification for them.
- Opportunities to provide ODL mode of offering degree programmes for all accredited HEIs
- The objective of providing education to all and higher education GER to at least 50% from the current 28% by 2030.
- The proposed student faculty ratio in the HEIs is increased from 20:1 to 30:1 and this liberalization allows HEIs to use more industry experts (field practitioners) for part time experience sharing
- 360-degree feedback-based faculty evaluation is given importance to assess the contribution to teaching, research, and practice.
- Further encouragement for research is provided by proposing a policy for National research foundation to retain IPR with the researchers..
- Multiple regulatory bodies are merged into a single regulatory body to remove the corruption by agencies and lobbying by HEIs. Light but tight regulations are suggested.
- The research fund proposed for NRF (Rs. 20,000 crores) is substantially impressive and may contribute enhanced research output in all important areas of human development.
- All private HEIs will be treated equally with public institutions for research funding so that researchers will get equal importance and encouragement for their research contributions irrespective of the type of institution they work.

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Weakness of the NEP-2020 in reference Higher Education

Some of the weakness of Indian National Education Policy 2020 are identified and they can be as listed below. Implementation details are also not clear.

- The three years exit with a degree and four years exit with a research project-based degree is also confusing to get a government job under a similar degree qualification.
- One year and two years Master's Degree programmes are also suggested but it is not clear that under what circumstances these different duration Master degree programmes have to be offered.
- If all types of HEIs start offering ODL programmes the system will become worse due to unhealthy competitions.
- Online Distance Learning (ODL) permission is kept restricted to only universities instead of autonomous colleges too.
- Less importance and information is given for diploma programmes under higher education.
- No substantial support to improve the quality for contributing to global ranking of HEIs
- Accumulating required land and infrastructure for affiliated colleges to be transformed into multidisciplinary autonomous colleges is a major constraint.
- Since top class foreign universities are allowed to enter and offer educational services in India with huge investments, sustainability for Indian organizations will be a challenge.
- Encouragement & motivation for lifelong research by suggesting Post-doctoral degrees is not visible.
- No strong & effective suggestion on faculty performance measurement is included for determining accountability
- Promotion of open system leads to ignoring of proprietary software and proprietary knowledge.
- Regulatory policies may support lobbying & corruption.
- The transition from the current system to the proposed future system is not progressive but disruptive.
- Removing affiliated colleges leads to chaos and confusion.
- The proposed binary accreditation system leads to no incentives for the achievers except graded autonomy.
- Proposed compulsory one semester equivalent social engagement in the form of the internship is difficult for certain professional programmes.
- Specific procedure to increase patent filing and scholarly publications in the country is not suggested apart from encouragement for research based on enhanced funding.

CONCLUSION

In the end, it can be said, that these policies have all been proposed, and there is a long way to go before the implementation rolls out. The policies and the suggested changes look great on paper, and they would change the face of the Indian education system in the years to come, but that would depend on how they are approached and implemented.

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