

IMPACT OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020 ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: *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 announcement of NEP 2020 was purely unexpected by many. The changes that NEP 2020 has recommended were something that many educationists never saw coming. Though the education policy has impacted school and college education equally, this article mainly focuses on NEP 2020 and its impact on Higher Education.*

Keywords: *New Education Policy, Higher Education, Covid-19, Implementation strategies, Predicted implications.*

Introduction:

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation. Universal high-quality education is the best way forward for developing and maximizing our country's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the society, the country, and the world. India will have the highest population of young people in the world over the next decade, and our ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them will determine the future of our country.

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.

Background:

The need for a policy was first felt in 1964 when Congress MP Siddheshwar Prasad criticized the then government for lacking a vision and philosophy for education. The same year, a 17-member Education Commission, headed by then UGC Chairperson D S Kothari, was constituted to draft a national and coordinated policy on education. Based on the suggestions of this Commission, Parliament passed the first education policy in 1968.

A new NEP usually comes along every few decades. India has had three to date. The first came in 1968 and the second in 1986, under Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi respectively; the NEP of 1986 was revised in 1992 when P V Narasimha Rao was Prime Minister. The third is the NEP released Wednesday under the Prime Ministership of Narendra Modi.

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-reviewed academic research funding and large affiliated universities leading to low levels of undergraduate education.

Salient Features Of Nep Related To Higher Education :

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.

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 program:** 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 enrollment 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).

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.

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.

Conclusion:

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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