

15.0 Salient Features of New Education Policy 2020 and It's Impact on Higher Education System of India

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Abstract

The union cabinet paved the way for transformative reform in the school and higher education system by launching the New National Education Policy (NEP) on 29th July 2020. They also renamed MHRD as the Ministry of Education. After the old national education policy which was launched way back in 1986, this is the first education policy of the 21st century that has replaced 34 years old education policy. The new NEP is based on four pillars which are Access, Equity, Quality, and Accountability. In this new policy, there will be a 5+3+3+4 structure which comprises 12 years of school and 3 years of Anganwadi / pre-school replacing the old 10+2 structure. Though the education policy has impacted school and college education equally, this article mainly focuses on salient features of NEP-2020 and its impact on Higher Education. This paper will also focusing on impact of using regional language in technical and medical disciplines.

Introduction

The very first NPE was rolled out 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 Narendra Modi in 2020. The National Policy on Education (NPE) is a policy formulated by the Government of India to promote education amongst all people of India. The policy covers school education to colleges across the India.

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 has replaced the earlier National Policy on Education, 1986. The policy is a comprehensive framework for basic education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The language policy in NEP is a broad an advisory in nature; and it is rest with the states, institutions, and schools to decide on its implementation. It aims to increase state expenditure on education from around 4% to 6% of the GDP. 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 Shri Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, the former chief of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). The Draft New Education Policy (DNEP) 2019 was later released by Ministry of Human Resource Development, followed by a number of public consultations. The Ministry undertook a comprehensive consultation process in roll out 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."

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 changes to the present education 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 are 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. Institutional restructuring and consolidation aim to end the fragmentation of higher education by transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary individuals, increasing the gross enrolment ratio in higher education, including vocational training, from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. In the long term, such a comprehensive education shall be the method for all undergraduate programs, including those in, technical and medical disciplines.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this research paper is to study the salient features of NEP-2020 and its impact on Higher Education. This paper is also focusing briefly on impact of using regional language in technical and medical disciplines.

Research Methodology

This research is a qualitative, descriptive and historical in nature hence the major portion of the study is reliance on secondary data which was obtained 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 conclusions.

Salient Features of NEP-2020 Related Elementary to Higher Education

Through new education scheme, the government trying to bring more than 2 crore students into the mainstream and with the help of this, they aim to achieve 100% GER (Gross enrollment ratio) from preschool to secondary by the end of 2030. Through this NEP 2020 government is looking forward to making India a “global knowledge superpower” and it will be only done by making the education system for schools and colleges more flexible, holistic, and multi-disciplinary which will bring out their unique capabilities. The new NEP has been introduced with an aim to formalize changes in the system from school level to college/university level. 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. Establishing Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) is 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:

- ❖ 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).
- ❖ Technology 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.
- ❖ Single regulatory body: The NEP aims to establish Higher Education Commission of India which will be the single regulatory body except for legal and medical education.
- ❖ 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.”

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ 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.

Regional Languages in Higher Education With Reference to Technical and Medical Disciplines

National Education Policy (NEP) suggests that no student should be discriminated against due to language preference. Hence, some institutes offering technical and medical courses in regional languages. However, the government emphasized that the technical and medical terms of Engineering, IT and medical courses will still be English as these are scientific terms and should be used uniformly by all the students. The benefits of learning courses in regional languages: Incredible learning experience. It will be easier to grasp the concepts in regional language, which will make the learning experience a notch higher. This will lead to a higher level of optimism among students and boost their self-confidence too. More participation: More students interested in pursuing higher study in India in regional languages will take admission in institutes that offer courses in regional languages. So the deserving students who previously were reluctant to study further due to the language barrier will be interested in pursuing higher studies. Building an equitable education system. Teaching courses in regional languages will ensure unbiased education and will be culturally and academically inclusive too. This will promote fairness in education system, bringing all the students at par. At the same time, the quality of education will be standard for all the students.

This student-centric approach will lead to easy information sharing between teachers & students and even among peers. Better learning outcomes. According to a director of one of the top Indian management colleges, only 10% of Indians can speak English fluently. This means that a large number of students might not be comfortable attending classes that are primarily taught in English. So, introducing courses in regional languages will encourage a larger student population to access quality education leading to better academic scores. Theory subjects will be easy to absorb. If theory-based subjects, who are usually, taught in the English language in most of the higher education institutions, if taught in regional languages, students proficient in their mother tongue might find it more interesting and impactful.

As per some respective field specialist learning courses in regional languages may help rural student initially, but will gravely limit their scope for growth and knowledge. Dr. J A Jayal has made his comments on using regional language in medical discipline “What we are talking

about modern medicine, it is universal medicine; it is not only practised in India. It is practised throughout the world. If you are trained in a regional language, you cannot expect to go outside to study and update your knowledge and skill”

Detailed Analysis of Impact of NEP-2020 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 degreegranting 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. 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. Towards the attainment of such a holistic and multidisciplinary education, the flexible and innovative curricula of all HEIs shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education. Environment education will include areas such as climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, management of biological resources and biodiversity, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development and living. Value-based education will include the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal human values of truth (satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (shanti), love (prem), nonviolence (ahimsa), scientific temper, citizenship values, and also lifeskills; lessons in

seva/service and participation in community service programmes will be considered an integral part of a holistic education. 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.

Conclusion

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 requisite 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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