

National Education Policy of India: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The Success story of the post – independent India turns out bleak when the question of quality is raised. Higher Education has been finding it difficult to meet the issues of unplanned expansion, educated unemployment, uneven growth, commercialization of education, financial crises, teacher burn out and the digital divide of quantity Vs quality, equity Vs excellence, creativity Vs conformity are posing continuous threats to higher education. At this Juncture, the education must be teaching every individual how to classify and reclassify information, how to look at problems from new direction and finally how to teach himself/herself. Teachers are the best trained manpower for a nation. Because, they produce Technologists, Scientists, Doctors, Engineers, Policy makers, Businessmen and Teachers. Therefore, through quality assured training programs it has become necessary to produce, competent, professionals to meet the ever – growing demands of liberalization and globalization. Hence, the emerging Indians society needs to make the system of education must innovative and futuristic in order to the changing demands of the modern Indian Society. The existing education should be improved according to the needs of the time. It has to fulfil the demands of one's own country and the changing scenario of the world. It must be competitive and co-operative. Looking into these factors the education from primary to higher and even technical education needs to be improved from time to time, to transform the capacity of the people's vision for society. Every system of education aims at moulding the individuals to play their roles in the society most effectively.

Key words: *Indian Higher Education, regulatory reform, quality, collaboration, investment*

Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) has been one of the most significant proposals of the Hon. Prime Minister of India since 2014. This has assumed great importance during the last month and is expected to be initiated within the first 100 days of the second term of the government of the Prime Minister. The NEP, also known as National Education Policy, will be handed over to the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) and scrutinized thoroughly before implementation. The last NEP was released in 1986, with a revision in 1992. Since education needs periodic reforms, rapid implementation of this will be in line with

the accelerated growth of India. While the details of the policy are still unclear, the focus is likely to be on improving the quality of education, curriculum and roping in new technology. There will be clarity as continued discussions take place across the nation and feedback obtained from students, teachers, educational administrators and intelligentsia.

As a sequel to NEP, Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme (EQUIP) is another ambitious policy the government has planned. The Rs. 1.5 lakh crore action plans are in the pipeline, with an aim to improve the quality and

accessibility of higher education over the next five years. EQUIP is planned to be to higher education what the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was to school education. EQUIP was crafted by ten committees led by experts within the government such as NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, principal scientific advisor K. Vijay Raghavan and former revenue secretary Hasmukh Adhia, as well as some corporate chiefs. Education under 10 different broad areas, including accessibility, accreditation, employment, research, teacher recruitment process for colleges and universities, are some of the areas the HRD Ministry plans to work on. NEP also recommends a Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog chaired by the Prime Minister. It will have on board the Chief Justice of India, Lok Sabha Speaker, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Education Minister and top academia. It also recommends that the HRD ministry be renamed as the Ministry of Education.

In order to promote the NEP, the Ministry of HRD (MHRD) initiated an unprecedented collaborative, multi-stakeholder, multi-pronged, bottom-up people-centric, inclusive, participatory consultation process. The extensive consultations undertaken across multiple levels of online, expert and thematic, and from the grassroots ranging from village, block, urban local bodies, district, state, zonal and the national level, provided an opportunity to every citizen to engage in this massive exercise. The basic aims of the NEP are: 1. To equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge; 2. To eliminate the shortage of manpower in science, technology, academics and industry; and 3. The Draft National Education Policy, 2019 is built on the foundational pillars of Access,

Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability.

Issues in Indian Higher Education

The Report of National Commission of Excellence in Education (1983) in the United States warns that the “educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens the very future of a nation and a people”. In the context of multinational entering into the field of education, quality assurance has become a necessity. India will have to decide on what knowledge and /or skills would be most helpful to prepare students for encountering the continuing change. The student of today learning a specific content of information will find to his amazement that he is not prepared to face the life which he has to live for the next five decades because the knowledge furnished with, has become outdated long back. The coming few decades will be miracles in space craft, satellites, internets and others offshoots of scientific enquires. The recent developments in communication technologies have helped to cross the barriers of time and distance and those boarders have become porous and the sky open. The methods of teaching through lectures will have to be supplemented with the methods that will focus on self-study, personal consultation between teachers and students and informative sessions of seminars and workshops. In engineering Indian society, knowledge creation, exchange, networking and highest utilization have become most vital for the advancement of higher education. India needs to make the system of education innovative and futuristic in order to respond to the changing demands of the modern society.

Initiatives have been taken by the MHRD to promote digital education literacy in the country. With the use of information and communication technology (ICT), SWAYAM is designed to provide one integrated platform and portal for online courses to cover all higher education subjects and skill sector courses. More than 28 lakhs learners so far have been enrolled in 1000+ MOOCs courses that run through SWAYAM, SWAYAM Prabha is designed to provide 32 high quality educational channels through DTH (Direct to Home) across the length and breadth of the country on 24*7 basis.

National Digital Library is another initiative of the government to develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility. So far, about 1.5 crore e-books and documents are available on NDL, contributed by 160 content contributors and over 30 lakh users from 9 thousand educational institutions were registered on the NDL. E-Shodh Sindhu is the project of the government aims at providing access to quality electronic resources including full-text, bibliographic and factual databases to academic institutions at a lower rate of subscription. The MHRD has designed this project by merging three consortia initiatives such as UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, NLIST and INDEST-AICTE Consortium.

FOSSEE is designed by the MHRD, the Free and Open-Source Software for Education (FOSSEE) project aims at promoting use of open-source software in educational institutions to improve the quality of education, reducing dependency

on proprietary software. This project is part of the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology and MHRD. The Virtual Lab aims at providing remote-access to laboratories in various disciplines of Science and engineering for students at all levels from under-graduate to research. This project also plans to develop a complete Learning Management System where students can avail various tools for learning, including additional web-resources, video-lectures, animated demonstrations and self-evaluation.

Investment for Higher Education - The opportunities for higher education has been recently increased many folds due to the private participation. As soon as India signed GATs foreign universities started to enter the country and now there are more than 100 western universities established in the country. Recently our Indian Prime Minister has announced that within 2022, 1 lakh crore rupees will be invested for education. Similarly, India is in the process of setting Indian universities in the foreign lands. The higher investment in education is really a boast to the social, economic and technological development of the country. The growth of higher education has led to the higher investment in higher education. A large number of private colleges and universities cropped up and are in the recent years providing quality higher education from degree to doctoral degree in variety of fields. The MHRD has taken several initiatives to ensure that the benefit of the scheme is availed by all the deserving students. As a result of various initiative including inviting of online application, online counseling and online allotment of

seats, creation of supernumerary quota seats in Engineering, Medical, Architecture, Agriculture, Pharmacy and Nursing institutions, a greater number of students are taking admissions in professional courses and thereby improving their employability.

Ensuring the Quality of Higher Education

Built on centuries of values, the Indian Education system is the world's third largest higher education system, having a rich mix of premier Government and private institutes with a network of 38000 colleges and 800 universities. Higher Institutions in India offers degrees that are competitive in the world market in terms of quality but are delivered at 1/4th the cost hence guaranteeing value for money. India offers quality education and research, and students will earn internationally renowned degree. Students will have a range of courses to choose from the latest advancements of science and technology like Virtual and Augmented Reality, Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Computing to traditional subjects. For quality improvement in order to extend the vision of India is a hub for higher education, the enrolment and bureaucratic systems in universities should be simplified. The foreign students should be given various concessions and scholarship to increase the intake of foreign students. In this line UGC has work with other countries in getting more students to Indian universities. The quality society can be produced only through quality education. In this line, the higher education of India needs mechanisms to improve the quality of education provided through universities and other degree awarding institutions. The mechanism

should pay attention on refining, diversifying, and upgrading higher present education and research programmes.

New Education Policy: Salient Features

The Government of India is currently investigating the feasibility of implementation of a revised education system called New Education Policy (NEP) in order to modernize and streamline education right from the early elementary or preliminary schooling system for children and adults. The NCERT will devise curricula from pre-primary to Class 12 to bring in some flexible approach and focus on numeracy, critical thinking, languages and knowledge of India, among other aspects. The idea is to replace the traditional 10+2 system. Some of the major recommendations of the NEP are:

1. Replacing the 10+2 system, (replacing high stake Class 10 and 12 exams) with subject-wise modular assessments anytime between Classes 9 and 12.
2. Census Examinations for classes 3, 5 and 8 to track progress throughout the school experience.
3. Deregulating higher education to allow students to opt for courses, exit them mid-way and resume them at fully autonomous public and private institutes.

The NEP is driven by an emphasis on a liberalised and flexible education system which allows for mobility as well as exposure to the liberal arts. It underlines the glory of ancient Indian universities of Nalanda and Takshashila and their liberal approach to education. It underlines the need to bring in the rich Indian culture, tradition and knowledge systems as well as "ethics",

constitutional values and contribution to community or “sewa” in the education system. The salient features of School Level and Post-School Level Education as proposed in the NEP are described below.

School Level Education

For NEP, the salient features of school education are:

1. The policy recommends replacing the 10+2 format with a 5+3+3+4 structure. This implies five years of a “Foundational Stage” that will include three years of Pre-primary and Classes 1 and 2.
2. It will be followed by three years of “Preparatory Stage”, three years of Middle School and four years of Secondary Stage.
3. All students will take “State Census Examinations” in grades 3, 5 and 8 where they would be tested on core concepts, knowledge and higher order skills. The grade 3 census examination, for instance, would test basic literacy numeracy and other foundational skills.
4. Each year of the Secondary Stage will be divided into two semesters. Each student would take five to six subjects in each semester.
5. To counter “the harmful effects of board and entrance examinations”, the panel recommends restructuring them to a “modular” format allowing students to take the board examination in each subject at the end of the semester in which they take that subject.
6. Students will be expected to take a total of at least 24 subject board examinations or on average three a semester instead of final examinations.
7. Language is a key focus of the policy which strongly recommends making the mother tongue the mode of instruction at

least until class five and preferably till at least class eight. It recommends Sanskrit be offered at all levels of school and higher education as one of the optional languages on par with all Schedule 8 languages.

8. All students will be asked to take at least two years of a classical language of India in classes 6-8, with the option to continue through secondary education and University too.

Post School Higher Education

The post-school level features for the NEP are as follows:

1. The panel suggests that higher education system be brought under a single regulator National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA). While University Grants Commission (UGC) will become a purely grant providing body. Entities like All India Council for Technical Education, Medical Council of India and National Council for Teacher Education should evolve into professional standard setting bodies.
2. The policy suggests three types of universities: Research focussed universities, comprehensive teaching and research universities and teaching-focused universities.
3. Emphasizing on liberal arts and liberal education tradition of Takshashila and Nalanda, the committee has recommended a four-year bachelor of liberal arts or bachelor of liberal education degree.
4. The panel suggests that undergraduate courses may move to a three- or four-year duration with multiple exit options, allowing for say, an advanced diploma in a discipline after completing two years of

study or a diploma after completing one year.

5. Different designs of Masters programme are proposed from a two year programme with the second year devoted entirely to research or an integrated five year bachelor's/master's programme besides a one year master's programme for those who have completed a four year programme.
6. Institutes will be permitted to offer PhD with either a master's degree or a four year bachelor's degree with research.

A 'Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy' under the Chairmanship of Late T.S.R Subramanian, Former Cabinet Secretary, was constituted, which submitted its report in May, 2016. Based on this report, the ministry prepared 'Some Inputs for the Draft National Education Policy, 2016. Some of the changes proposed are (India Today, 2019).

1. The committee has proposed to rename MHRD as Ministry of Education (MoE).
2. In school education, a major reconfiguration of curricular and pedagogical structure with Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as an integral part of school education is proposed.
3. The committee also recommends Extension of Right to Education Act 2009 to cover children of ages 3 to 18. 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure based on cognitive and socio-emotional developmental stages of children, Foundational Stage (age 3-8 yrs), 3 years of pre-primary plus Grades 1-2; Preparatory Stage (8-11 years), Grades 3-5; Middle Stage (11-14 years), Grades 6-8;

and Secondary Stage (14-18 years), Grades 9-12. Schools will be re-organized into school complexes.

4. It also seeks to reduce content load in school education curriculum.
 5. There will be no hard separation of learning areas in terms of curricular, co-curricular or extra-curricular areas and all subjects, including arts, music, crafts, sports, yoga, community service, etc will be curricular.
 6. It promotes active pedagogy that will focus on the development of core capacities: and life skills, including 21st century skills.
 6. The committee proposes for massive transformation in teacher education by shutting down sub-standard teacher education institutions and moving all teacher preparation/education programmes into large multidisciplinary universities/colleges.
 7. The 4 year integrated stage specific B.Ed. programme will eventually be the minimum degree qualification for teachers.
 8. In higher education, a restructuring of higher education institutions with three types of higher education institutions is proposed
- Type 1: Focused on world-class research and high-quality teaching
- Type 2: Focused on high quality teaching across disciplines with significant contribution to research;
- Type 3: High quality teaching focused on undergraduate education. This will be driven by two Missions- Mission Nalanda & Mission Takshashila.
9. There will be re-structuring of Undergraduate programs (e.g., B.Sc, B.A., B.Com, and B.Voc) of 3 or 4 years

duration and having multiple exit and entry options.

10. A new apex body Rashtriya Shiksha Ayog is proposed to enable a holistic and integrated implementation of all educational initiatives and programmatic interventions, and to coordinate efforts between the Centre and states.
11. The National Research Foundation, an apex body is proposed for creating a strong research culture and building research capacity across higher education.
12. The four functions of standard setting, Funding, Accreditation and Regulation to be separated and conducted by independent bodies: National Higher Education Regulatory Authority as the only regulator for all higher education including professional education.
13. Creation of accreditation eco-system led by revamped NAAC.
14. Professional Standard Setting Bodies for each area of professional education and UGC to transform to Higher Education Grants Commission (HEGC).
15. The private and public institutions will be treated on par and education will remain a 'not for profit' activity.
16. Several new policy initiatives for promoting internationalization of higher education, strengthening quality open and distance learning, technology integration at all levels of education, adult and lifelong learning and initiatives to enhance participation of under-represented groups, and eliminate gender, social category and regional gaps in education outcomes were also recommended.
17. Promotion of Indian and classical languages and setting up three new

National Institutes for Pali, Persian and Prakrit.

18. Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) has been recommended.

The path breaking reforms recommended will bring about a paradigm shift by equipping our students, teachers and educational institutions with the right competencies and capabilities and also create an enabling and reinvigorated educational eco-system for a vibrant new India.

Right to Education (RTE) Act of India

On 3 January, 2019, parliament amended Section 16 of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, popularly known as the “No Detention Policy” (NDP) (Natasha Joshi, 2019). The policy guaranteed promotion through class 1-8 for all children, irrespective of their readiness. The now amended policy allows states to frame rules that could re-introduce detention in class 5 or class 8. The rationale provided for the amendment is as follows: with guaranteed promotion, students and teachers feel no compulsion to learn or teach which has an adverse impact on learning. The implication is: high stakes exams help drive learning. This notion was tackled by the original framers of RTE, who argued that exams create unnecessary pressure, and detention as a consequence of exams, is unhealthy for children. Holding children back in classrooms where they have failed to learn, without changing anything about the teaching-learning process, doesn't improve learning. It leads to children dropping out. Additionally, detention in early classes labels children as “failures” too soon; and for that reason alone, detention in elementary school should be prohibited.

National Achievement Survey (NAS) data shows that between 2003 and 2007, 19 out of 28 states with a no-detention policy showed improvements in learning. In other words, states improved their results in 2007 without detaining students. Positive trends in reading were reported in the early Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER) surveys of 2005-2007 as well. Curiously, learning outcomes dipped soon after. ASER series data (Fig. 1) has captured a falling trend in learning, and the ASER 2012 report noted a correlation between the passing of RTE, and slide in learning levels (Joshi, 2019). One silver lining in NDP amendment is that states have been given a choice on whether to detain students, or continue with a no-detention policy. The hope is states will examine evidence, confront the real issues plaguing education, and do what is right by children. ASER (2019) gives a detailed account of current educational scenario in rural India.

Conclusion

In finding solution to the issues in higher education, the co-operation of international communities should be sought to share their experiences. Moreover, higher education provided in Indian universities and colleges must suit the need of the education in ICT Era. There will be meaningless to give out date education. On the part of the Indian government a lot of changes were brought to the curriculum of higher education absorbing the global demand for receiving skilled manpower. Similarly, the present quality of higher education should be improved on par with global standard. Broadening the concept of making India a global hub for higher education is the need of the hour and the systems, procedure must be

simplified to attract more foreign students to Indian institutions. By and large, there are more future prospects for the Indian higher education in the years ahead. The students of all categories have more opportunities for the latest and modern education. After independence, there has been tremendous increase in institutions of higher learning in all disciplines. India today, is one of the fastest developing countries of the world. However, it has to create more opportunities for increasing the number of institutes and the quality of higher education to achieve the future requirements. Given the present situation of Higher education, there has been significant improvement in the recent years. The investment in higher education, which has more potentiality, should be motivated to provide better higher education in the country.

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