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New Education Policy 2020: Reforms in Higher Education

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Abstract

The NEP 2020 envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that directly contributes to India's long- transformation into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high quality education to all and this bridging the rich poor divide and providing a comprehensive and globally competence framework for elementary, intermediate vocational and higher education in India. NEP is more student centric, giving flexibility to students to pursue their passion at the same time enhancing their skills enabling them to become more employable and sets the framework for all future teachers and students to have the necessary abilities. The NEP 2020 undoubtedly help considerably to India's aim of becoming a global knowledge superpower, since it focuses on making education accessible, egalitarian and inclusive but only if implemented properly at all levels.

The New Education Policy 2020 launched on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India's New Education System. The New Education Policy 2020 calls for key reforms in both school and higher education. This Article mainly focuses on NEP 2020 and major reforms in higher education system as quality universities and colleges, institutional restructuring and consolidation, shift toward holistic education with less rote learning, internationalization, teacher education, professional education, promoting high quality research, transforming regulatory system of higher education, single regulatory body for higher education, multiple entry and exit programmes, E-courses in regional language and common entrance exam of all colleges.

INTRODUCTION

The New Education Policy 2020 launched on 29 July 2020, [1] outlines the vision of India's New Education System. The new policy aims to pave the way for transformational reforms in school and higher education systems in the country. This is the first education policy of the 21st century and replaces the thirty four year old National Policy on education, 1986. The New Education Policy 2020 focuses on five pillars: Affordability, Accessibility, Quality, Equity, and Accountability to ensure continual learning. It has been crafted consistent with the needs of the citizens as a demand for knowledge in society and economy called for a need to acquire new skills on a regular basis. Thus, providing quality education and creating lifelong learning opportunities for all, leading to full and productive employment and decent work as enlisted in United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030, forms the thrust of NEP 2020. [2] The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986 and forms a comprehensive framework to transform both elementary and higher education in India by 2040.

The NEP 2020 calls for key reforms in both school and higher education that prepare the next generation to thrive and compete in the new digital age. Thus, there is much emphasis upon multidisciplinary, digital literacy, written communication, problem solving, logical reasoning and vocational exposure in the document.

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STUDY OF NEP 2020

National education Policy is introduced to enhance the quality of education equally for strengthening India as the global superpower. The NEP was drafted by a panel of experts by former ISRO chief Kasturirangan, considering every issue from school to college to employment. The Policy focuses on India centered Education. The Policy was drafted concerning the heritage, history, culture, tradition and values of the country. This policy aims at providing a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary liberal education. [3]

CHANGES INTRODUCED IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By this policy, the focus of Higher Education Institutes (HIEs) is on improving the professional skills of the workforce. Higher education has been divided into the same three categories with a change in curriculum, like, [4]

• **Under-graduation Education:** The Undergraduate degrees will be of either 3 or 4 year duration. During these years' students have a choice of multiple entries and exits like a certificate upon clearing the first year, after passing the second year a diploma, or after passing the third year a Bachelor's degree. The four years undergraduate degree program comes with majors, minors, and research projects. While multidisciplinary is the final destination, the four-year undergraduate programme suggested in the NEP document is a means to that end. Undergraduate programmes in India, except professional degree, usually last three years. The new policy proposes to adjust the length of degree programmes to allow students to experience the full range of holistic and multidisciplinary education in addition to a focus on the chosen major and minors as per the choices of the student. While the NEP doesn't call for scrapping of the three-year format, it states that the four-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme shall be the preferred option.

• **Post-graduation Education:** The Master's degree will be one year or two years course based on their previous Bachelor's degree duration taken up by the student or they can choose an integrated five-year degree, the main aim of which is high-quality research in the final year. The Masters' degree will prioritize the research component to improvise professionalism in students and to prepare them for a research degree.

• **Research:** The research stage of a minimum of 3 or 4 years, consists of pursuing high-quality research leading to a Ph.D. in any core subject, multidisciplinary subject, or interdisciplinary subject and it may be full-time and part-time study. During Ph.D they will undergo 8-credit coursework in subjects or teaching/education/pedagogy which will be related to their chosen Ph. D. subject. The one year M.Phil program will hence-forth be discontinued. [5] There will be no discrimination based on subjects as arts and sciences, curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular, vocational and academic streams. This will allow students

to choose their path in life according to their interests and talent.

Based on the above format of the curriculum the HIEs will be divided as below [6]:

1 Research Universities: With the priority of research, these universities will have a curriculum based on cutting-edge research and encouraging new researches. The Universities will have programs from Undergraduate to Ph.D. The aim is to have world-class research universities and compete globally.

2 Teaching Universities: The aim here is to provide high-quality education across all HIE courses like Undergraduate, Masters, Doctoral; may these be Professional, Vocational, Certificate, or Diploma programs.

3 Colleges: These institutes will focus on providing education to masses with courses across disciplines and fields like undergraduate programs, with the diploma and certificate programs included, including vocational and professional.

By, 2035 Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) will increase to 50% from 26.3% by NEP [7] aiming at increasing the GER. 3.5 crore new seats will be added in higher education according to the NEP.

TEACHING FACULTY

To match the curriculum and have an improved teaching standard, the below steps have been taken:[8]

- B.Ed. programs will be of four years with a multidisciplinary setting.
- For those from different master's degree or four-year bachelor's degrees, the B.Ed. course will be for one year.
- B.Ed. and D.El.Ed will be considered under the banner of B.Ed.
- Teacher education in universities will be stage-specific; based on the educational stage they wish to teach.
- Specialized teachers, for arts and vocational courses or local art, literature, crafts are trained with a special course of one year.
- All B.Ed. programs will include education on subjects like FLN, Multidisciplinary teaching and evaluation, tutoring specially –abled Children, technology in education and more.
- Standalone teacher education institutions will be closed or merged or converted to HEIs.

REGULATIONS

The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be established as a single and comprehensive coordinating body for all higher education, except for medical and legal education. HECI will have four Independent verticals:

- 1.The National Council for the Regulation of Higher Education (NHERC) for regulation.
- 2.The General Council of Education (GEC) for standardization.

3. The Council for Higher Education Grants (HEGC) for funding.

4. The National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation.

Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards.

HECI will operate through faceless intervention through technology and will have the power to penalize higher education institutions that do not conform to norms and standards. [9]

INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Defining a university can allow the creation of a range of establishments starting from research-intensive universities to education-intensive universities and independent degree-granting colleges. Affiliation of colleges is to be phased out in 15 years and a stage wise mechanism is to be established for granting graded autonomy to colleges. Over some time, it is envisaged that every college would develop into either an Autonomous degree granting College or a constituent college of a university. [10]

OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

GER will be given importance by increasing open and distance learning. Based on credits measures will be taken such as digital repositories, research funding, online courses, student service improvement for keeping the highest standard of education and quality of education.

ONLINE EDUCATION AND DIGITAL EDUCATION

Continuous importance is provided in National Education Policy for the promotion of online educational in the wake of the COVID outbreak to ensure the proper and best alternative of education mode to students from anywhere to anywhere.

Special unit for continuous development of digital content and infrastructure for future goals for e-education for higher education and schools.

FINANCIAL EDUCATION

The NEP aims at increasing the current GDP to 6% higher at the earliest. State govt. and Centre govt. will work together to promote public investment in the education sector.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

All types of occupational education and training will be a fundamental part of the higher education system, to strengthen the base of the students for different professions. An internship of 10 days in a year will also be provided to the students in local vocations according to the area or region. Autonomous technical universities, universities of health, sciences, legal and agricultural universities etc. they aim to become multidisciplinary institutions.

ACADEMIC BANK OF CREDIT (ABC)

The University Grants Commission (UGC) had introduced a choice-based credit system (CBCS) before the National

Education policy. Under this system, students will earn credits for each course they opt for during the degree program. The Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) proposed by the National Education Policy is where higher education institutions will digitally deposit credits earned by students for courses they studied. Academic Bank of Credit is expected to have a flexible entry and exit system as well as multidisciplinary in higher education.

In other words, a student's deposit of credit in the ABC should help to move laterally from one higher education institution to other bases on credit score. Designating credits to each course would also mean that courses or projects in areas such as community engagement and service, environmental education, sciences, mathematics, art, sports and value-based education would carry weight. This, according to the NEP, would go a long way in "attainment of a holistic and multidisciplinary education". [11]

REGIONAL LANGUAGES

The new education policy lays emphasis on promoting Indian languages, arts and culture through education. One of the ways it proposes to do so is by getting higher education institutions to adopt regional languages or the local tongue as the medium of instruction in the classroom. To begin with, the government has allowed 14 engineering colleges to teach selected engineering programmes in five languages: Marathi, Tamil, Bengali, Telgu and Hindi. This, the policy states, will help increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education as students who are not proficient in English will be encouraged to pursue further studies in regional languages. [12]

NATIONAL ENTRANCE TEST

Another proposal that could change the higher education experience of students is a single university entrance exam to be conducted by National Testing Agency. If it is implemented, students will not have to appear for multiple entrance tests. This will enable universities to have a common entrance exam instead of having multiple exams for each university. It will also reduce the burden on students, universities, and colleges, and the entire education system. [13]

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Every teacher will have to participate in the continuous professional development program for at least 50 hours every year for their development by their interest. CPD will cover latest pedagogies concerning foundational acquisition & acquirement. Formative & accommodative assessment of learning outcomes, competency-based learning connected pedagogies. Platforms are developed for lecturers to share ideas/best practices. [14]

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION

India will be promoted as a global study hub with the best and affordable education. Good performing universities will

be allowed to set up their campus outside India also and similarly, good universities will be allowed to operate in India. These were all the changes in detail that were proposed and introduced in the New Education Policy 2020.

CHALLENGES OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020

Expensive Education: The New National Education Policy paves the way for admission to foreign universities. Various academics believe that admission to foreign universities is likely to be expensive for Indian educational system. As a result, it can be challenging for lower class students to pursue higher education. Admission to foreign universities will lead to the migration of skilled Indian Teachers.

Financing: Ensuring funding will depend on how strong the will power to spend the proposed 6 percent of GDP as public expenditure on education.

IMPROVEMENTS TO BE INTRODUCED TO NEP 2020

Every good thing seems to have flaws. Though NEP 2020 seems to be perfectly drafted without flaws, it needs improvement. The improvements are hence suggested below:

- Retired professors are to be allowed to educate and guide research students irrespective of their age.
- Publication or patent must be made compulsory during post graduation courses to encourage research.
- Earn while learn must be introduced with vocational training.
- HIEs must be encouraged to take up Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) or Online Distance Learning (ODLs) to allow them to explore their capabilities.
- Based on teaching capabilities, teachers must be evaluated regularly.
- Though completely unavoidable, lobbying and favoritism must be kept in check at the stage of appointment and accreditation.
- Scholarship students must be awarded tech facilities to help them improve.
- Online-contents like books, journals, papers, patents, etc. must be made freely available to every student registered to HIEs.
- Multiple entries and exits in the undergraduate system may be misused hence for re-entry the student must be made to attend exams based on the curriculum of their previous class.

CONCLUSION

New Education Policy 2020 is a big revolution replacing the 34 year old policy idea and envisioning to bring about the much needed modification in the Indian Education System. The Policy has maintained a delicate balance between the traditions and the interdisciplinary approach, which is the need of the 21st century.

The government of PM Narendra Modi has set a target of 2040 to accomplish the entire Policy. Moreover, sufficient funding is imperative for the full implementation of the NEP 2020 as a shortage of funds crippled the 1968 NPE. The central and state governments should substantially

increase the spending on education to attain the goals with excellence and the corresponding multitude of socio-economic benefits.

With a multidisciplinary approach to curriculum, Students get to study subjects of their choice. Due to attractive scholarship offers, study methodology, credit-based system, and curriculum, the percentage of enrollment is expected to increase. NEP has potential to revamp the skills of the youth of our country and has all the right tools that are needed to be competitive at the global level. Needless to say, the New Education Policy is undoubtedly a progressive and ambitious policy that India is waiting for. The success of this new education policy will depend on how it is implemented. Therefore, it can be said that India is the country with the youngest population and India's future will depend on providing high quality educational opportunities to these youth.

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