

# National Education Policy-2020: A Critical Study with Reference to Higher Education in India

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## ABSTRACT

In accordance with the custom and traditions, countries acquire different education system and also attain various stages in their life cycle to make it fruitful in all schools, colleges and other higher educational institutes. Recently, the Government of India under committee chaired by Dr. K. Kasturirangan and this National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, sketched out the vision of India's new education system. The policy clarified that no one will be forced to study any particular language and that the medium of instruction will not be shifted from English to any regional language. Education in India is a concurrent list subject. The NEP 2020 is marching towards achieving such objective by making innovative policies to improve the quality, attractiveness, affordability, and increasing the supply by opening up the higher education for the private sector. By encouraging merit-based admissions with free-ships and scholarships, merit and research based continuous performers as faculty members and strict monitoring of quality through biennial accreditation based on self-declaration of progress through technology-based monitoring, NEP2020 is expected to fulfill its objectives by 2030.

**[Keywords:** Accountability, Affordability, Implications, Multidisciplinary, National Education Policy2020]

## INTRODUCTION

‘Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man’ - Swami Vivekananda Education is the most fundamental thing to upgrade the national development As youth represent the present and future of the nation, it is crucial to offer quality educational opportunities. In India, it is observed that a small proportion of students get enrolled in colleges due to their poor socio-economic conditions, inadequacy of teachers and dearth of modernization and innovative practices in higher educational institutions. The National Education Policy gives emphasis on the develop-

ment of cognitive abilities to each of the students, like – problem solving and critical thinking. All students not only learn; but they also learn how to learn. The pedagogy must be holistic, discovery-based, flexible and learner-centered. The teachers are also playing a crucial role in the education system The New Education Policy aims at providing a platform to the teachers to help the students get better educational opportunities including the socially and physically disadvantaged category of students which in turn will reshape the future of the nation. The main aim of this new education policy is to give the high quality educational opportunities to all the students so that they can get

proper education. The National Education Policy of India 2020 (NEP 2020) was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020 which outlines the vision of new education system of India. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education of 1986. The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The policy aims to transform India's education system by 2040.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The present study is conducted with the following objectives:

- To understand the basic principles of NEP 2020.
- To distinguish between the NEP 1986 and NEP 2020.
- To identify the new innovation in National Education Policy 2020.
- To know the implications of NEP 2020 in Higher Education.
- To offer suggestions for improvement in the policy.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology used in this paper is descriptive and the data has been collected through secondary sources by taking help of draft NEP 2020, articles, websites and research papers. The Methodology used in this study also consists of simple discussion and arguments on National Education Policy 2020 where a few portion of NEP 2020 has been highlighted. It highlights the basic principles of this policy and tries to differentiate between the NEP 1986 and NEP 2020. An attempt has been made to provide an overview on the new inclusions of the policy; highlighting its implications and thereby offering some suggestions.

### **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020:**

The National Education Policy 2020 comprises of four parts and twenty-seven chapters, where, the

government of India drafted various obstacles and situations that concern children education in the country. Initially, the draft starts with the introduction part encompassing fundamental requirement of the children, how to accomplish human potential, development of equality in the society, national development, quality education, scientific advancement, national integration and preservation of culture. It also illustrates goal 4 of the 2030 agenda adopted by India in 2030. Goal 4 is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. The policy also discusses the quickly changing global economy and employment opportunities that create criticality to the student in learning. India also aims to provide high-quality education by 2040. This policy is drafted by the chairperson of the National Education Policy Drafting Panel Mr. Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan. It states that this policy reforms the education system and teachers' recruitment and re-establishes a new system to make teachers the most respected and essential member of society. Then the policy describes the fundamental principles like identifying, recognizing, and developing the unique capabilities of every student, achieving basic foundation level in literature and numerals by 3rd grade, flexible learning, no difference between the departments, multi-disciplinary education system with equal importance to curriculum activities, emphasizing practical understanding, creativity, critical thinking and analysis, conceptual up-gradation, developing ethics and human values through constitutional preaching, the practical skill required to manage the life righteously, use of technology and so on. Then the Policy is classified into four parts as part-1- school education, part-2- Higher education, part-3 professional education, and all other key areas, part-4 strengthening and financing various education boards, etc. Some of the basic principles of National Education Policy 2020 are as follows:

- Learners are flexible to choose the subjects and are able to choose their own way along with their own interests and own talents.

- Students can choose any subjects from different streams as because there is no hard separation.
- This policy finds out the various capabilities of each student in academic as well as in non-academic areas.
- Facilitation of multidisciplinary studies so that the students are able to gain knowledge from different functional areas.
- Instead of rote-learning; new policy gives emphasis on conceptual understanding.
- In the teaching-learning process; the multilingualism and the power of the language must be raised.
- In this policy, main focus is put on critical thinking and innovative thinking.
- Instead of summative evaluation; the main focus is given on formative evaluation in a regular manner.
- The students can able to develop some life skills like – Teamwork, Communication, Co-operation and Resilience.
- In the teaching-learning process; the emphasis is given on maximum use of technology.
- The Constitutional values and ethics will be developed in students such as-respect for others, scientific temper, spirit of service, cleanliness, empathy, and respect for public property, liberty and responsibility.

## DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL STAGES

NEP 2020 Highlights Different Educational Stages: a range of stages of education are being highlighted as follows. This revised education policy enlarged the term of compulsory education from 6-14 years to 3-18 years. The government also intends to afford free education for economically backward students under this scheme. The new system consists of 12 years of schooling along with the 3 years of Anganwadi and pre-schooling. The new academic structure consists of the following classifications.

**Foundation Stage:** Foundational stage is for five

years. In this stage the basic education is being provided and the education will be flexible, discovery-based, activity-based, play-based and multi-level. The emotional and cognitive level of a child must be continuously improved by the research.

**Preparatory Stage:** Preparatory stage is of three years which is activity-based, play-based and discovery based and the children gradually link up with normal classroom learning along with some textbooks. This stage focuses on introducing various subjects so that children can develop knowledge from them.

**Middle School Stage:** The middle school stage is for three years and this stage has given focus on the abstract concepts of all subjects such as arts, mathematics, sciences, humanities and social sciences and the technique of learning is experimental learning at all specialized subjects along with subject teachers having semester system.

**Secondary stage:** The secondary education stage is for four years with the subjects of multidisciplinary and the approach of curriculum will be always greater critical thinking, greater depth and greater flexibility. In this stage, there will be a semester system and each semester the students will study 5 to 6 subjects. At the end of class 10th and 12th the board exams will be held.

**Under-graduation stage:** The duration of under-graduation degrees will be either three/four years duration. After passing first year the students will get a Certificate, after passing second year a Diploma and after third year a Bachelor degree. Major and minor research projects are basically preferred in four year undergraduate degree programme.

**Post-graduation Stage:** The students who have four years B.A degree have one year M.A degree, three years B.A degree have two years M.A degree. In M.A degree there must be a research com-

ponent; so that the competence in the professional areas will increase and the students will prepare for a degree of research.

**Research Stage:** The least period of Ph.D. degree for a full-time and part-time is three to four years and in this stage, students will be allowed to pursue high quality research in any multidisciplinary subject. In Ph.D., course work in research or teaching pedagogy in context of respective subject domain must be provided. The M. Phil. program will be removed from the education structure and the introduction of the mother tongue medium of instruction in the system of education.

**Lifelong learning:** The new policy NEP 2020 opines for a lifelong learning so that all human beings are not deprived from having an experience, skills and knowledge in a society and have a comfortable life. It has believed that at any stage the education and research gives a satisfaction for a whole life.

Further, in addition to the above, it is also laid that the 360-degree holistic progress card will be introduced to evaluate the students as well as to keep track of the student's achievement and establishments. It is also proposed that National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2021 will be formed and new degree qualifications for teachers will be introduced.

#### **MAJOR CHANGES IN THE NEP 2020 POLICY:**

Following 1968 and 1986 education policy, the NEP 2020 is the novel policy that aims to transform teachers' quality as well as students'. The NEP 2020 mostly aims at students' empowerment with universal knowledge. In this 2020 NEP policy, the government had substituted the 34 years old national education policy. There are 10 fresh key changes brought in the new policy as follows.

- The schooling starts from age 3 in the form of Anganwadi or kinder garden.
- The education structure had changed from 10+2 to 5+3+3+4.

- The differentiation and inflexibility between science, arts, and commerce had been removed.
- The schemes of internship and vocational education had been introduced with effect from class 6th onwards which will empower student to gain clarity and experience regarding the work environment as well helps them to improve their social skills as well as practical knowledge.
- The NEP 2020 had brought changes in board exam models also. Although, the class 10th and 12th board exam will continue, the model of the exam has been changed and the exam will not be focused on the syllabus but on the evaluation of the core subject knowledge.
- The NEP 2020 had brought back the four years undergraduate program system.
- The main reforms had been targeting to 50% of the gross enrollment ratio by 2035.
- The College fees will be fixed by the government and a separate committee will be organized to supervise the college fees and ensure that no colleges charged any fees above the cap fixed.
- The Common College Entrance Test will be conducted in all forms of the graduation program.

#### **NEP 2020 AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS:**

In higher education, there were various controlling institutions like AICTE, UGC, MCI, etc. But as per NEP, these controlling institutions will be merged with Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as a single controlling agency for Higher Education Institutions. The Higher Education Institutions are divided into two types – one is Multidisciplinary Universities (MU) and second is Multidisciplinary Autonomous Colleges (AC). By 2040 there will be more than 3,000 students. Presently, NAAC and NAB are the current Accreditation Institution, but NEP 2020 suggested that it

will be replaced by National Accreditation Council (NAC). There will be two types of Multidisciplinary Universities – one is Research intensive Universities and second is Teaching-intensive Universities. In Higher Education, along with vocational education the Gross Enrolment Ratio will be increased to 50% by 2035 from 26.3 % in 2018. It is recommended that in the underserved regions, many higher education institutions shall be developed and established so that all students can access the education. It is expected that the Higher Education Institutions get more incentives from the government agencies. Regarding research activities, NEP suggested that in the undergraduate and postgraduate level, the research work must be included along with multidisciplinary and holistic approach of education and the pedagogy will mainly focus on the discussion, debate, presentation, communication, research and multidisciplinary thinking. There will be Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) for recording all the academic credits of all registered students.

In Higher Education Institutions, the curricular structure will be made more flexible and imaginative which enable creative combinations of disciplines for study. It suggested that the curriculum, assessment and pedagogy must be structured in a new way for increasing the experiences of the students. In Higher Education Institution, there must be encouragement for Online Distance Learning (ODL) and to help the financial needs of meritorious students; there must be increase in National Scholarship Portal. Scholarships to the students must be encouraged in private Higher Education Institutions. Presently, the end semester system has been going on, but this policy says that there will be continuous evaluation examination system by revising the Choice Based Credit System; and also there will be a Competency Based Credit System.

Additionally, each higher education Institutions must have centers for career counseling for all the students; so as to make them physically, emotionally and psychologically competent. The topic-centered clubs and some activities which are

to be organized by the students with the help of faculty in all Higher Education Institutions must support, develop and fund in the area of music, debate, sports, literature, poetry etc. The NEP 2020 opines that the process of learning will be made student-centered instead of teacher-centered where each Higher Education Institutions must focus on some innovations and research by setting up the Interdisciplinary Research Centers including humanities and social sciences research, Start-up incubation centers, Centre in frontier areas of research, technology development centers, Centre for Industry-academic linkage. The Bachelor degree of Four years with different options will be opened in Colleges and in accordance with the number of years spent in bachelor degree, the master's degree will be based on that. All higher education institutions must support and encourage the students who are belong from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Higher education institutions must have to provide some basic facilities and infrastructure such as labs, libraries, clean drinking water, blackboards, clean toilets, offices, proper teaching supplies, the space of classroom must be enough and each classroom must access the latest educational technology; so that the learning experiences of the students get better.

#### **FEW POSITIVE FACETS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020:**

- **Comprehensiveness:** The NEP 2020 seeks to address the entire gamut of education from pre-school to doctoral studies, and from professional degrees to vocational training. In adopting a 5+3+3+4 model for school education starting at age 3, the New Education Policy recognizes the primacy of the formative years from ages 3 to 8 in shaping the child's future Early Childhood Education:
- **Easy on Regulations:** NEP 2020 makes a bold prescription to free schools, colleges and universities from periodic "inspections" and place them on the path of self-assessment and voluntary declaration
- **The main goal of United Nations Sustainable**

Development Goals is to give Quality Education to all students and so in NEP 2020, the private sector must give 20% free-sit and 30% scholarship to all meritorious students whobelong to economically disadvantages groups; so that they can get opportunities to study. This free education system will help to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at Higher Education level in the country.

- Higher Educational Institutions have freedom to do any kind of innovation in regard to curriculum, examination, courses, pedagogy and evaluation system; as the quality of education will also improve. If the institutions do not have anyfreedom, then the motivation and quality of faculty members and students get more affected.
- In Higher Education level; NEP 2020 replaces teacher-centric learning to student-centric learning. In teacher-centric, the teachers should decide about the curriculum, pedagogy, courses and evaluation system whereas in student-centric, students have right to choose their own subject for their studies and the students can also appear for competency-based evaluation according to their own speed of learning.
- NEP 2020 make over the Higher Education System from information centric to innovation or research centric. All higher education institutions must have the objective to create a new innovation or knowledge; so that all problems of the society can be solved easily.
- NEP 2020 gives emphasis on competency-based credit system, which will evaluate the skills of students along with their experience and knowledge and it also helps to find out the new problems on the areas of a study.
- It has been observed that many teachers who are upgrading their administrative positions forget their responsibility in research and publication related work. Professors who hold the administrative positions should also give their free time as a role model to young researchers who get motivated by seeing the

leaders so they can perform very well.

- The NEP 2020 gives more emphasis on the admissions of students, faculty selections and promotion according to merit-based. This policy say that the quality of higher education and research are only depend upon the faculty selections and promotion and the members of Board of Governors must be highly qualified.
- In NEP 2020, the productivity of a teacher will be based on research output. Since in higher education system research is a very important thing, so faculty members must have motives and experiences in research work so they can be a role model for their students. Their performance only depends on their research work and publication work.
- The objective of NEP 2020 is to solve the social status hierarchy which is related with vocational education and it is necessary to all education institutions to merge the vocational education programmes into mainstream education and will make sure that all children can learn at least one vocation.
- NEP is holisticpolicy which aims to eliminate problems of pedagogy, structural inequities, access asymmetries and rampant commercialization. The Policy proposes the creation of 'inclusion funds' to help socially and educationally disadvantaged children pursue education

#### **SOME CONCERNS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020:**

Few of the concerns expressed about the NEP 2020 are as follows:

- The panel's report fails to address and include ideas based on contemporary global thinking such as emphasis on creativity, critical thinking, need for learning in a non-competitive and non-hierarchical ecosystem and discovering one's passion without any sense of fear.
- The suggestions of volunteer teachers, peer tutoring, rationalization of the system of

schools and sharing of resources do not seem like long-term solutions.

- Delivering the changes proposed related to anganwadis may be complex despite the focus given to early childhood care and schooling.
- Lack of clarity in government strategies in regard to public sector like municipal schools, state-run institutions, Kendriya Vidyalaya, etc.
- The creation of a National Testing Agency (NTA) has generated skepticism. The NTA, though visualized to serve as a premier, expert, autonomous testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for admissions and fellowships in higher educational institutions may, in reality, lead to loss of autonomy among the universities and departments over admissions.
- The sharpest criticism of NEP 2020 is that it would lead to the privatization of higher education, as it has changed the affiliation system and proposed to grant autonomy to colleges after 15 years which will certainly open the doors to privatization.
- In the NEP 2020, language may be a negative factor as there is inadequate teacher - student ratio in India, thus introducing mother languages for each subject in academic institutes is a problem. Sometimes, finding a competent teacher becomes a problem and now another challenge comes with the introduction of the NEP 2020, which is bringing study material in mother languages.
- According to NEP 2020, students willing to complete their graduation have to study for four years while one can easily complete his/ her diploma degree in two years. This might encourage the pupil to leave the course midway.
- According to the NEP 2020, students of the private schools will be introduced to English at a much earlier age than the students of the Government schools. The academic

syllabus will be taught in the respective regional languages of the Government school students. This is one of the major new education policy drawbacks as this will increase the number of students uncomfortable in communicating in English thus widening the gap between sections of the societies.

### **SOME SUGGESTIONS FORWARDED TOWARDS NEP 2020 REGARDING HIGHER EDUCATION:**

In my view, there is certain requirement of amendments in current educational policy. Considering the Educational Institution Amendment Act 2016 and education policies of many states, the amendments should be brought for the educational institutions and their provision of facilities to the students. Some recommendations are:

- Introducing online platform for conduct of classes and setting up cells for lodging complaints in educational institutions.
- The education institutions license should be renewed every 3 years only after inspection and scrutiny made by the concerned department authorities.
- Education ombudsman must be appointed for every district to solve the disputes that arise regarding the education system and educational institutions.
- Every multidisciplinary institution must have at least five disciplines. The main objective of multidisciplinary institutions is to give multidisciplinary experience and choice. Some disciplines are as follows – Computer Science, Languages, Social Science, Basic Science, Education, Engineering, Medical Science, Dental science, Indology, Indian Medicines etc.
- In this policy, it is said that the Ph. D will be compulsory, so there will be a large requirement in Ph.D. degree and the demand for research guide will also increase. Therefore, all universities must reappoint the retired professors as research guides for assisting scholars in Ph.D. programmes which will reduce dearth of

research guides.

- As per NEP, integrated B.Ed. course is compulsory for teaching in foundation, preparatory, middle and secondary school. Likewise, the Ph. D degree should be compulsory for getting a job for Assistant Professor in colleges and universities as per NEP 2020; because the research is going to be an important part in bachelor's degree as well as master's degree.
- In Higher Education institutions need for adopting technology-based training methods for imparting vocational, industry linked and skill-based courses exist. Moreover, provision for learning subjects through MOOCs platform must be provided.
- In all higher educational institutions, the IPR generation must be compulsory to avoid faculty obsolescence. So, it is very necessary for all faculties to publish at least two open access scholarly research papers and must have with copyright certificates from Government of India.
- In Higher Education levels, greater focus should be made on vocational education so that students may identify their individual areas of interest and engage in productive activities thereby creating self-reliance.
- It will be very helpful for the students if the publication of papers made compulsory in their post-graduation courses. In undergraduate courses, the awareness which is related to IPR must be provided. It has observed that research-oriented activities are getting discouraged due to lack of financial help. So, it is very important to all universities to have their own publication unit in a proper or systematic way to publish high quality research work and sharing with global indexing agencies.
- Emphasis should be given on strict evaluation of the project or research work which was funded by National Research Foundation (NRF) by making research output based credit bank for all NRF members.

Few further steps maybe followed by all Higher Education Institutions to make NEP2020 more effective and successful:

- The curriculum should be designed more comprehensively.
- For pursuing higher education, all institution should provide fees to all financially deprived students.
- The process of admission should be more all-encompassing.
- No-discrimination and anti-harassment rules will be sternly enforced.
- Institutions on must develop degree courses and it will be taught in bilingual and in local Indian languages.
- There must be an appropriate counselling and mentoring programmes to deprived students.
- Proper care should be taken for divyangjan students.
- Institutions must develop an Institutional Development Action Plans;

## CONCLUSION

The NEP 2020 came after 34 years and is all set to change the existing academic structure of India with the purpose of making it at par with the international standard of academics. The Government of India aims to set up the NEP by the year 2040. Till the targeted year, the key points of the plan are to be implemented one by one. The proposed reform by NEP 2020 will come into effect by the collaboration of the Central and the State Government. Subject wise committees will be set up by the GOI with both central and state-level ministries for discussing the implementation strategy. With the introduction of NEP 2020, many changes have been made and one of those is the discontinuation of the M. Phil course.

The new education policy proposes measures to recruit the very best and brightest to enter the teaching profession at all levels, by ensuring livelihood, respect, dignity, and autonomy, while also instilling in the system basic methods of quality control and accountability. It is



believed that by implementing these changes, the Indian academic system will be taken a step higher. With the view of the current education system and the stakeholder's expectation, it is believed that the NEP 2020 will bring a new revolution in the educational policy and also there is larger capacity to improve the rate of literate in India. This NEP 2020 also helps students from dropping out of education between the age of 3- 18. This may help students in pursuing a flexible system of education without any constraints. The NEP2020 will be the first policy that possesses various changes that benefits the students. The most admirable part of the policy is that their aim of goal4 making Indian students equipped with universal knowledge is the best part which will help the students to launch themselves in the international platforms. The outline of NEP is expected to revise the regulatory avatar of the Higher Education Commission of India ("HECI") being set up with a wide role in Indian higher education. The HECI is likely to have four verticals under its umbrella, such as (a) National Higher Education Regulatory Council, intended to be a single point regulator for the higher education sector; (b) National Accreditation Council, which will deal with accreditation of institutions; (c) Higher Education Grants Council, which will be tasked with carrying out funding and financing of higher education; and (d) General Education Council, the final vertical, is expected to have a more academic based-role, as it will structure expected learning outcomes for higher education programmes. Foreign universities coming into the country will also fall under the purview of this framework. While the Universities Grants Commission and the All- India Council for Technical Education have played a major role in this direction until now, questions pertaining to the role of the UGC and AICTE remain unanswered under the new policy. It is expected that NEP 2020 will opens up avenues for home-schooling and foreign universities alike, in India.

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