

NEP 2020: A Study of Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education

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Abstract: *The Indian Education system is the third largest Education system in the world. From the past several decades, India has been antagonistically advancing in the education field. Despite the fact that India's advanced education system has faced a number of challenges, there are also a number of opportunities to overcome these challenges and improve the advanced education system. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced by the Government of India predominantly focuses upon five points, Affordability, Accessibility, Quality, Equity, and Accountability. NEP 2020 recommends improving human's mental, cultural, social, physical, emotional, and moral capacities through an integration of holistic and multidisciplinary education. Institutional restructuring and consolidation aims to end higher education fragmentation by transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary institutions, producing well-rounded and innovative individuals, and transforming other countries educationally and economically, with the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education, including vocational training, increasing to 50 percent by 2035. This paper mainly focuses on the salient features of NEP 2020.*

Keywords: NEP 2020, Higher Education, Multidisciplinary, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Vocational Skills, Opportunities, Challenges

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is National Education Policy?

National Education Policy lays the foundation for the development of the education system in the country. It is a comprehensive framework designed to improve potential capabilities in each individual which leads to the socio-economic development of the Society. The consistent purpose of education policy is to develop such minds which would possess the qualities of rational thoughts, scientific temper and innovation having solid ethical grounding and values. It always aims to produce citizens who would contribute towards the development of the Society.

1.2 NEP 2020

Education is a fundamental need for the development of human beings and to achieve heights in one's life. In order to meet these requirements, the Government of India has introduced National Education Policy 2020 in the month of July with much emphasis on digital literacy, multidisciplinary, logical reasoning, and vocational exposure for all-round development of the students. To ensure Continual learning, the NEP 2020 focuses upon five points, Affordability, Accessibility, Quality, Equity, and Accountability which were missing in previous policy of education. The new policy replaces the previous education policy of 1986. The NEP aims to bring enormous changes in India's existing Higher education system. The previous Education Policy was passed and implemented in 1986, and after 34 years National Education Policy for India has been updated, revised and approved on 29th July 2020. NEP 2020 is the first Educational Policy of the 21st Century which envisions to make India an attractive hub for Higher Education worldwide. Its approach of making education multidisciplinary and research oriented in Higher Education would help India to fulfill the needs of its Stakeholders. It is up to States and Institutions to decide how to implement NEP.

The intention of NEP 2020 is to increase spending of the government on Education from around Four percent to Six percent of GDP as soon as possible.

1.3 Features of NEP 2020 in Higher Education Institutions

The National Education policy is expected to bring long lasting and positive changes in the Higher education system. Considering the developing scenario globally, education content will center on key concepts, ideas, and problem solving approaches. The idea of introducing multidisciplinary institutes will result in a renewed emphasis on all fields such as arts and humanities, and this type of education will help students learn and grow holistically. As a result, students will have a more solid knowledge base.

- NEP 2020 has set a huge goal of increasing GER in higher education from 26.3 percent in 2018 to 50 percent by 2035 with an aim to develop students' overall personalities by improving infrastructure for open and distance learning, online education, and increasing the use of technology in education.
- The most important recommendation of NEP 2020 is to transform Higher Education institutions into big multidisciplinary Universities. Implementing this recommendation would be a crucial stage for India towards getting back the significance of Indian tradition to produce skilled human beings.
- To make education more holistic in nature; the NEP recommended to integrate Arts and Humanities with Science, Technology and Engineering. For positive outcomes Engineering will also move to Arts and Humanities.
- The Vocational courses received the required spotlight in NEP 2020; wherein it is recommended to bring Vocational Courses into Mainstream education to all education institutions in a phased manner. Quality Vocational education will be merged smoothly in Higher education only if the students of middle and secondary schools will be exposed to it at an early stage. This will ensure that every child in this country learns at least one or more vocational skills. This would lead to a greater emphasis on the dignity of labor and the significance of various vocations involving Indian arts and artisanship.
- The National Research Foundation (NRF) will be established to promote research in the country. A National Accreditation Council (NAC) will be established as a single regulator for higher education institutions across the country.
- The NEP envisions to set up the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as a Single Regulatory Authority for Higher Education in India, excluding medical and legal education.
- Undergraduate education can be of 3 or 4 years. Multiple entry and exit programmes are introduced in NEP 2020 for those students who wish to leave the course in the middle. Their credits are transferred to the Academic Bank of Credits.
- Creating an Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) is a solid idea for storing the academic credits that are earned by the students by taking courses at various recognized higher education institutions. By completing a course, a student can earn points that will be credited to their ABC account. A student can transfer these credits even after changing college. If a student leaves the course for some reason, his/her credits will be secured through ABC.
- In order to provide high-quality technology based adult learning; various apps, online modules/ courses, e-books, ICT equipped libraries and Adult Education Centers will be developed.
- As NEP 2020 is emphasizing on digital literacy; so the education planning, teaching, learning, assessment will be done with the help of Technology. E-Courses will be available in regional languages.
- The government's decision to allow foreign universities to set up campuses in India is a commendable one. This will allow students to experience global education quality in their own country.
- The faculty will be given the authority to make curricular decisions for their courses and to conduct research with academic freedom. To keep faculty members up to date on the latest trends in discipline, pedagogy, and research; all institutions should develop continuous faculty development programmes.

- College affiliation will be phased out over the next 15 years, and a stage-by-stage mechanism for granting colleges graded autonomy will be established. The increased flexibility provided to autonomous institutions raises the prospect of curriculum enrichment.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to study the salient features of Higher Education laid down in New Education Policy 2020 and the challenges in the current Higher Education system of India. The study also put its focus upon the opportunities that NEP 2020 will bring out to the Higher Education system in India.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive study. The necessary secondary data was collected from various websites including those of Government of India, Magazines, Journals, Other Publications, etc. This data was then analyzed and reviewed to arrive at the inferences and conclusions

2.1 Challenges of Higher Education in India

Various governments during the past seven decades implemented various education policies to enhance the education system. UGC is persistently focusing to improve the quality education in the higher education sector. Basic Challenges in Higher Education System of India are:

- The Higher Education system in India is severely fragmented;
- The HEIs gave less emphasis on the development of cognitive skills and learning outcomes;
- a rigid separation of disciplines, with early specialization and streaming of students into narrow areas of study;
- There is a limited access to socio-economically disadvantaged areas, with few HEIs that teach in local languages
- Numbers of teachers are less and autonomy of institutions is also limited;
- There is an insufficient system for the advancement of faculties and merit-based career management.
- Most universities and colleges place a lower priority on research, and there is a shortage of competitive peer-reviewed research funding across disciplines;
- HEI governance and leadership aren't up to par.;
- HEIs regulatory system is ineffective.
- The standards of undergraduate education is low in most of the affiliating universities.

2.2 Opportunities of Higher Education in India

India is a country, with an estimated population of people aged between 18 to 24 years to be around 150 million. India has more than 35,000 Colleges and 750 universities, which has been quite a remarkable growth during the last six decades. India has the 3rd largest educational system in the world. Despite all of the government spending in the educational sector, it is just not enough to fulfill the expanding demands. As a result, the higher education sector has been highlighted as one of the most attractive areas for both domestic and international investment. The Indian higher education system is growing very fast with the help of new-age learning tools and it is easy for the country to overcome these problems and bring transformation in the country's higher education sector. With such a large population, the options are unlimited, and knowledge is given utilizing advanced digital teaching and learning technologies, as well as society's awareness of where we currently fall behind. There are opportunities for strategic engagement and capacity building in higher education leadership and management at the state level as well as at national and international level in areas of systemic reform, quality assurance, international credit recognition, and unified national qualifications framework.

In order to take advantage of these opportunities, the Government of India has introduced National Education Policy 2020 with much emphasis on digital literacy, multidisciplinary, logical reasoning, and vocational exposure for all-round development of the students. To give exposure of global education to Indian students, the NEP also focuses on

Internationalization of Education where those from among the top 100 universities in the world will be allowed to operate in India. . NEP 2020 is an integration of academics and vocational skill programs to enhance the employability of the students. To increase quality in research NEP 2020 recommends the establishment of the National Research Foundation.

III. CONCLUSION

Education is the most important factor for the development of cognitive and vocational skills in human beings. The NEP 2020 introduces the whole gamut of reformations in the current Education system in India. Higher education plays a vital role in deciding the economic, social, technology adoption status and healthy human behavior environment in every country. The Education Ministry of every Country's government has the responsibility of improving GER to include every citizen to receive higher Education offerings. NEP 2020 is marching towards achieving its objectives by making Higher Education attractive, affordable and improving its quality, and also at the same time opening its supply to the private sectors with strict control to maintain quality in the institutes of higher education. Currently connected colleges will either expand as multidisciplinary independent colleges with degree-granting authority or become constituent colleges of their affiliated universities. The National Research Foundation will be established to fund innovative projects in priority research areas of basic sciences, applied sciences, social sciences & humanities. NEP 2020 recommends to make education systems more multidisciplinary and holistic where in higher education institutes students will have freedom to choose core and allied subjects within and across disciplines. Within the policy framework, faculty members also have the freedom to choose curriculum, methodology, pedagogy, and evaluation approaches. These transformations will begin in the academic year 2021-22 and will last until 2030, when the first stage of transition will be noticeable.

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