



Impact of NEP 2020 implementation in higher education in India

Dr. Vibha Bhardwaj

Associate Professor, A K (P.G) College, Hapur, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

India with the leadership of its current prime minister and an expert team with members of varied backgrounds has developed and planned to implement a new education policy during the next decade of the 21st century called Indian National Education Policy (NEP-2020). The aim, objectives, and details are well known to practitioners and the public. NEP-2020 is an innovative and futuristic proposal with both positive and negative aspects, framed with the objective to provide a quality school education and higher education to everyone with an expectation of holistic & research-oriented progress. This paper initially depicts an overview of NEP-2020, distinguish the strengths & weakness of the policy at higher education & research part, evaluation of the implementation suggestions given in the policy, identifying and analyzing possible generic strategies for implementation of NEP-2020 to fulfill its objectives based on focus group discussions. Well defined and futuristic education policy is essential for a country at school and college levels due to the reason that education leads to economic and social progress. The paper also includes many predictive proposals on issues like developing quality universities & colleges, institutional restructuring & consolidation, more holistic & multidisciplinary education, optimal learning environment & student support, transforming the regulatory system of higher education, technology usage & integration, and online & digital education. Finally, some recommendations are made to implement the NEP2020 effectively irrespective of various constraints. This article can be considered as a reference to the policy implementation teams of Govt. of India.

Keywords: NEP 2020, transforming the regulatory system of higher education, Indian Higher Education Policy, Implementation Strategies of NEP 2020, Research and innovation focus

Introduction

NEP 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century. Built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability, this policy is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower by making both school and college education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, suited to 21st century needs and aimed at bringing out the unique capabilities of each student.

With the vision of creating a platform to provide quality school & higher education to every citizen of the country with Indian ethos and values to transform the country as an equitable and vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower by improving the quality of education at every stage by creating a new ideal system through the revision and revamping the current education structure including, policies, regulations, and control systems, the new policy NEP-2020 is designed^[1-2]. Thus, it is expected that the new policy NEP-2020 is a thorough revision with less content but more skills for problem solving, creativity for innovation, multidisciplinary and holistic for unity and integrity. The policy expects a new set of regulations to make the education pedagogy more experimental, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented learner centered, analysis-based, flexible, enjoyable, and futuristic so that the educated output can support countries economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, cultural preservation, and national integration.

In August 2020, Sunil Kumar *et al* highlighted a new instructional procedure to see huge movements in schools and advanced edification. He has pointed the void between vision and mission would require more than the action plans

and the strategy for execution. Therefore, it takes the right measures to ensure that implementation meets expectations^[3].

In August 2020, Aithal, P. S. *et al* further published a paper on “Analysis of the Indian National Education Policy 2020 toward Achieving its Objectives” and highlighted various policies announced in the higher education system and compared them with the currently adopted system. Various innovations and predicted implications of NEP 2020 on the Indian higher education system along with its merits are discussed. Some suggestions are proposed for its effective implementation towards achieving its objectives^[4].

Deb, P. (2020)^[5] published an article on “Vision for Foreign Universities in the National Education Policy 2020: A Critique” that deals with the internationalization of Indian higher education as one of the stated aims of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020^[5].

Highlights of nep 2020 in higher education

1. THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY:
2. THE VISION OF THIS POLICY
3. QUALITY UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES: A NEW AND FORWARD-LOOKING VISION FOR INDIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM
4. INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING AND CONSOLIDATION
5. TOWARDS A MORE HOLISTIC AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION
6. OPTIMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS
7. INTERNATIONALIZATION
8. STUDENT ACTIVITY AND PARTICIPATION

9. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS
10. MOTIVATED, ENERGIZED, AND CAPABLE FACULTY
11. EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION
12. REIMAGINING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
13. CATALYSING QUALITY ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN ALL FIELDS THROUGH A NEW NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION
14. TRANSFORMING THE REGULATORY SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION
15. CURBING COMMERCIALIZATION OF EDUCATION
16. EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
17. PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
18. PROMOTION OF INDIAN LANGUAGES, ARTS, AND CULTURE

The NEP-2020 is developed by considering the wide and deep historical heritage of the country and the contributions of many scholars to different subjects as the founding stone to build high quality multi-disciplinary liberal education at both school and higher & professional education level. The National Education Policy-2020 envisions an India centered education system by incorporating its tradition, culture, values, and ethos to transform the country into an equitable, sustainable, and vibrant knowledge society. By means of radical changes in the existing education policies and governance systems by introducing accountability in each stakeholder.

Increase GER in higher education to reach at least 50% by 2035.

The aim will be to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.

Holistic Multidisciplinary Education

A holistic and multidisciplinary education will help develop well-rounded individuals who 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 policy envisages a broad-based multi-disciplinary holistic education at the undergraduate level for integrated, rigorous exposure to science, arts, humanities, mathematics and professional fields having imaginative and flexible curricular structures, creative combinations of study, integration of vocational education and multiple entry/exit points. Such a holistic education shall be, in the long term, the approach of all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines.

The undergraduate degree will be of either 3 or 4-year duration, with multiple exit options within this period, with appropriate certifications- a certificate after completing 1 year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas, or a diploma after 2 years of study, or a Bachelor's degree after a 3-year Programme. The 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme shall be the preferred option since it allows the opportunity 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. An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) shall be established which would digitally store the academic credits earned from various recognized HEIs so that the degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into account credits earned.

Model public universities for holistic and multidisciplinary education, Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) will be set up and will aim to attain the highest standards for multidisciplinary education across India.

All institutions and faculty will have the autonomy to innovate on matters of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment within a broad framework of higher education qualifications that ensures consistency across institutions and programmes' and across the ODL, online, and the traditional 'in-class' modes. A number of initiatives will be taken to ensure optimal learning environments are created that are engaging and supportive, and enable all students to succeed. HEIs shall move to a criterion-based grading system that assesses student achievement based on the learning goals for each programme, and also move away from high-stakes examinations towards more continuous and comprehensive evaluation. Universities and colleges will set up high-quality support centers and will be given adequate funds and academic resources to encourage and support students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Professional academic and career counseling will be available to all students, as well as counselors to ensure physical, psychological and emotional well-being.

Rationalized Institutional Architecture

Higher Education Institutions will be transformed into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and HEI clusters/Knowledge Hubs, each of which will aim to have 3,000 or more students. A university will mean a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate programmes, with high quality teaching, research, and community engagement. The definition of university will allow a spectrum of institutions that range from Research-intensive Universities, Teaching-intensive Universities and Autonomous degree-granting Colleges (ACs). Over a period of time, it is envisaged that every college would develop into either an Autonomous degree granting College, or a constituent college of a university.

National Research Foundation (NRF)

The NRF will competitively fund research in all disciplines. Successful research will be recognized, and where relevant, implemented through close linkages with governmental agencies as well as with industry and private/philanthropic organizations. A new entity will be set up to catalyze and expand research and innovation across the country. Financial support for students: Efforts will be made to incentivize the merit of students belonging to SC, ST, OBC, and other SEDGs. The National Scholarship Portal will be expanded to support, foster, and track the progress of students receiving scholarships. Private HEIs will be encouraged to offer larger number of free ships and scholarships to their students.

Measures such as online courses and digital repositories, funding for research, improved student services, credit-based recognition of MOOCs, etc., will be taken to ensure it

is at par with the highest quality in-class programmers. Open and distance learning will be expanded, thereby playing a significant role in increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio to 50%. Internationalization of education will be facilitated through both institutional collaborations, and student and faculty mobility and allowing entry of top world ranked Universities to open campuses in our country.

Motivated, Energized, and Capable Faculty

NEP 2020 recognizes that the success of higher education institutions is the quality and engagement of its faculty. HEIs will have clearly defined, independent, and transparent processes and criteria for faculty recruitment. Faculty will be given the freedom to design their own curricular and pedagogical approaches within the approved framework. Excellence will be further incentivized through appropriate rewards, promotions, recognitions, and movement into institutional leadership. Faculty not delivering on basic norms will be held accountable.

Effective Governance and leadership in HEIs

All HEIs in India will aim to become independent self-governing institutions pursuing innovation and excellence. Institutional governance based on autonomy - academic, administrative and financial -is envisioned with each higher education institution having a Board of Governors. Measures will be taken at all HEIs to ensure leadership of the highest quality and promote an institutional culture of excellence.

Regulation

Regulation will be 'light but tight' to ensure financial probity and public-spiritedness to eliminate conflicts of interest with transparent self-disclosure as the norm not an inspectorial regime. The regulatory body will function through a faceless intervention through technology for regulation& will have powers to penalize HEIs not conforming to norms and standards There will be a single overarching umbrella body for promotion of higher education-the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)-with independent bodies for standard setting- the General Education Council; funding-Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC); accreditation- National Accreditation Council (NAC); and regulation- National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC).. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards.

Teacher Education

A new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021, will be formulated by the NCTE in consultation with NCERT. By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4- year integrated B.Ed. degree that teaches a range of knowledge content and pedagogy and includes strong practical training in the form of student-teaching at local schools. The 4-year integrated stage-specific, subject- specific Bachelor of Education offered at multidisciplinary institutions would be the way forward. Stringent action will be taken against substandard stand-alone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

A National Mission for Mentoring

shall be established, with a large pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty – including those with the ability to

teach in Indian languages – who would be willing to provide short and long-term mentoring/professional support to university/college teachers.

Professional Education

Stand-alone technical universities, health science universities, legal and agricultural universities, or institutions in these or other fields, will aim to become multi-disciplinary institutions. All professional education will be an integral part of the higher education system.

Technology in Education

Appropriate integration of technology into all levels of education will be done to improve classroom processes, support teacher professional development, enhance educational access for disadvantaged groups and streamline educational planning, administration and management. HEIs will play an active role in conducting research on disruptive technologies and in creating instructional materials and courses including online courses in cutting-edge domains.

Online Education and Digital Education

A dedicated unit for the purpose of orchestrating the building of digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building will be created in the MHRD to look after the e-education needs of both school and higher education. A comprehensive set of recommendations for promoting online education consequent in the recent rise in epidemics and pandemics in order to ensure preparedness with alternative modes of quality education whenever and wherever traditional and in-person modes of education are not possible, has been covered.

Financing Education

All education institutions will be held to similar standards of audit and disclosure as a 'not for profit' entity. Education is a public service and must not be a commercial activity or a source of profit. Multiple mechanisms with checks and balances will combat and stop the commercialization of higher education.

The remodeled and rejuvenated CAGE shall also be responsible for developing, articulating, evaluating, and revising the vision of education in the country on a continuous basis, in close collaboration with MHRD and the corresponding apex bodies of States. The Central Advisory Board of Education will be strengthened to ensure coordination to bring overall focus on quality education.

Conclusion

The quality higher education has the objective of developing human beings who are responsible for creating better society by means of improved human value-based discipline, and respecting each other for growth and prosperity. Quality higher education also makes everyone to contribute to discovering new technology, adopting new technology, or promoting new technology which can contribute to the progress of society. It is expected that the new education policy which is research focused, will accelerate the attainment of the above objectives and makes every stakeholder as innovator. It is known that technology which is an application of scientific thinking has the capabilities to improve the quality of life of everyone in this universe and quality education is the foundation for it. With the objective of providing value based, knowledge based,

and skill based higher education for everyone in the country, the new education policy has many intrinsic propositions to improve the quality of school and higher education to creating interest in their chosen area to find challenges and converting them into opportunities by discovering innovative solutions to make life comfortable and successful with expected happiness. India is geared up to implement the guidelines of National Education Policy 2020 throughout the country to reform and make radical changes in school education and higher education with an objective of creating a new education system which should empower the youngsters and boost their confidence to create new knowledge, new skills, along with human values to solve current and future problems and challenges of the civilized society by means of their enhanced innovative ability and tech-savvies.

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