

“Reimagining India’s Higher Education Ecosystem: A Futuristic Framework under NEP 2020”

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Abstract

National Education Policy 2020, is an attempt to address most of the grievances of the education system, which have been pending for decades. This is certainly a historic moment for all the stakeholders involved, be it the teachers, students or parents. It is intriguing to see how the norms of this policy will be implemented, but we can be sure that this is a new age for the Indian Education landscape. The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge landscape. With various dramatic scientific and technological advances, such as the rise of big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, many unskilled jobs worldwide may be taken over by machines, while the need for a skilled workforce, particularly involving mathematics, computer science, and data science, in conjunction with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, will be increasingly in greater demand.. There will be a growing demand for humanities and art, as India moves towards becoming a developed country as well as among the three largest economies in the world. Higher education plays an extremely important role in promoting human as well as societal wellbeing and in developing India as envisioned in its Constitution - a democratic, just, socially conscious, cultured, and humane nation upholding liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice for all. Higher education significantly contributes towards sustainable livelihoods and economic development of the nation. As India moves towards becoming a knowledge economy and society, more and more young Indians are likely to aspire for higher education. This paper highlights a New and futuristic idea for India’s Higher Education System under National Education Policy 2020.

Introduction

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India’s continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation.. With the quickly changing employment landscape and global ecosystem, it is becoming increasingly critical that children not only learn, but more importantly learn how to learn.. This National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. The new education policy must provide to all students, irrespective of their place of residence, a quality education system, with particular focus on historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. Education is a great leveler and is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. Initiatives must be in place to ensure that all students from such groups, despite

inherent obstacles, are provided various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system. Given the 21st century requirements, quality higher education must aim to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals. It must enable an individual to study one or more specialized areas of interest at a deep level, and also develop character, ethical and Constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, spirit of service, and 21st century capabilities across a range of disciplines including sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, as well as professional, technical, and vocational subjects. A quality higher education must enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to the society. It must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and enable economic independence.

Objectives

The National Education policy 2020 has many initiatives to improve the quality and the broadness of the education system in India. The objectives of this study on National Education Policy 2020 are :

- (1) To highlights and overview the New Education Policy 2020
- (3) To discover the innovations in new national higher education policy 2020.
- (4) To predict the implications of NEP 2020 on the Indian higher education system.
- (5) To discuss the merits of Higher Education Policies of NEP 2020.

Principles of NEP 2020

- Recognizing, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres
- According the highest priority to achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by all students by Grade 3
- Flexibility, so that learners have the ability to choose their learning trajectories and programmes, and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests
- No hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc. in order to eliminate harmful hierarchies among, and silos between different areas of learning
- Multidisciplinary and a holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world in order to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge
- Emphasis on conceptual understanding rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams
- Creativity and critical thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation

- Ethics and human & Constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice
- promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning
- Life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience
- Focus on regular formative assessment for learning rather than the summative assessment that encourages today's 'coaching culture'
- Extensive use of technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for Divyang students, and educational planning and management
- Respect for diversity and respect for the local context in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject
- Full equity and inclusion as the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system
- Synergy in curriculum across all levels of education from early childhood care and education to school education to higher education
- Teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process – their recruitment, continuous professional development, positive working environments and service conditions
- a 'light but tight' regulatory framework to ensure integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system through audit and public disclosure while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment
- Outstanding research as a corequisite for outstanding education and development
- Continuous review of progress based on sustained research and regular assessment by educational experts; National Education Policy 2020
- A rootedness and pride in India, and its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions
- Education is a public service; access to quality education must be considered a basic right of every child
- Substantial investment in a strong, vibrant public education system as well as the encouragement and facilitation of true philanthropic private and community participation.

Some of the major problems currently faced by the higher education system

Quality higher education must aim to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals. It must enable an individual to study one or more specialized areas of interest at a deep level and also develop character, ethical and Constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, spirit of service, and 21st century capabilities across a range of disciplines including sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, as well as professional, technical, and vocational subjects. A quality higher education must enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to the society. It must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and enable economic independence.

- (a) A severely fragmented higher educational ecosystem
- (b) Less emphasis on the development of cognitive skills and learning outcomes
- (c) A rigid separation of disciplines, with early specialization and streaming of students into narrow areas of study
- (d) Limited access particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, with few HEIs that teach in local languages
- (e) limited teacher and institutional autonomy
- (f) Inadequate mechanisms for merit-based career management and progression of faculty and institutional leaders
- (g) Lesser emphasis on research at most universities and colleges, and lack of competitive peer reviewed research funding across disciplines
- (h) Suboptimal governance and leadership of HEIs
- (i) An ineffective regulatory system
- (j) Large affiliating universities resulting in low standards of undergraduate education

Overcome of the Problems currently faced by the higher education system

This policy envisions a complete overhaul and re-energising of the higher education system to overcome these challenges and thereby deliver high-quality higher education, with equity and inclusion. The policy's vision includes the following key changes to the current system:

- (a) Moving towards a higher educational system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with at least one in or near every district, and with more HEIs across India that offer medium of instruction or programmes in local/Indian languages
- (b) Moving towards a more multidisciplinary undergraduate education

- (c) Moving towards faculty and institutional autonomy
- (d) Revamping curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support for enhanced student experiences
- (e) Reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through merit appointments and career progression based on teaching, research, and service
- (f) Establishment of a National Research Foundation to fund outstanding peer-reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges
- (g) Governance of HEIs by high qualified independent boards having academic and administrative autonomy
- (h) “Light but tight” regulation by a single regulator for higher education
- (i) Increased access, equity, and inclusion through a range of measures, including greater opportunities for outstanding public education; scholarships by private/philanthropic universities for disadvantaged and underprivileged students; online education, and Open Distance Learning (ODL); and all infrastructure and learning materials accessible and available to learners with disabilities.

Conclusion

After a gap of 34 years, on 29th July 2020, the union cabinet approved the National Education Policy 2020. The new policy aims to pave way for transformational reforms in higher education systems in the country. Additionally, the cabinet has also approved the renaming of the Ministry of Human Resource Development to the Ministry of Education. It is only a policy, not a law and as education is a concurrent subject, implementation of the proposals under the new NEP 2020 depends on further regulations by both States and the Centre.

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