

NEP 2020- Transforming the Regulatory System of Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

National Education Policy-2020 visualized to provide a quality education which is beneficial to meet the growing economy in India. The new policy is aiming to achieve majorly three aspects such as highest quality, equity and integrity in the education system from schooling to higher education. Keeping in mind the developing scenario, education content henceforth, will focus on key-concepts, ideas, applications and problem-solving angles. The National Education Policy is expected to bring positive and long-lasting impact on the higher education system of the country. The fact that foreign universities will be allowed to open campuses in India is a commendable initiative by the government. This will help the students experience the global quality of education in their very own country. The policy of introducing multi-disciplinary institutes will lead to a renewed focus on every field such as arts, humanities and this form of education will help students to learn and grow holistically. Higher education is an important aspect in deciding the economy, social status, technology adoption, and healthy human behaviour in every country. Improving GER to include every citizen of the country in higher education offerings is the responsibility of the education department of the country government. National Education Policy of India 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 and at the same time with strict controls to maintain quality in every higher education institution. Higher education system will transform itself as student centric with the freedom to choose core and allied subjects within a discipline and across disciplines. Faculty members also get autonomy to choose curriculum, methodology, pedagogy and evaluation models within the given policy framework. These transformations will start from the academic year 2021-22 and will continue until the year 2030 where the first level of transformation is expected to be visible. Hence, the Indian higher education system is moving from teacher centric to student centric, information centric to knowledge centric, marks centric to skills centric, examination centric to experimental centric, learning centric to research centric, and choice centric to competency centric.

Keywords: Higher Education, National Education Policy 2020, Implementation Strategies, Quality Education

INTRODUCTION

The National Policy on Education was framed in 1986 and modified in 1992. Since then several changes have taken place that calls for a revision of the Policy.

The NEP 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and replaces the thirty-four year old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, 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.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) is a policy formulated by the Government of India to promote education amongst India's people. The policy covers elementary education to colleges in both rural and urban India. The first NPE was promulgated by the Government of India by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1968, the second by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986, and the third by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July

2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 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 2021. The language policy in NEP is a broad guideline and advisory in nature; and it is up to the states, institutions, and schools to decide on the implementation. The NEP 2020 enacts numerous changes in India's education policy. It aims to increase state expenditure on education from around 4% to 6% of the GDP as soon as possible.

The vision of the National Education Policy is:

"National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all."

Quality higher education must aim to develop individuals who are excellent, thoughtful, well- rounded, and creative. It must enable a person to study one or more specialized areas of interest at an in-depth level and develop character, ethical and constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, service spirit, and the skills of the 21st century across a range of fields, including sciences, social sciences, the arts, humanities, languages, personal, technological the vocational subjects. The new education policy brings some fundamental changes to the current system, and the key highlights are multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with at least one in or near every district, revamping student curricula, pedagogy, evaluation, and support for enhanced student experience, establishing a National Research Foundation to support excellent peer-reviewed work and effectively seed study at universities and colleges.

The main problems faced by the Indian higher education system includes enforced separation of qualifications, early specialization and student streaming into restricted research areas, less focus on research at most universities and schools, and lack of competitive peer-reviewed academic research funding and large affiliated universities leading to low levels of undergraduate education.

Salient features of the NEP 2020

(A) School Education

- **Ensuring Universal Access at all levels of school education**

NEP 2020 emphasizes on ensuring universal access to school education at all levels - Preschool to Secondary. Infrastructure support, innovative education centres to bring back dropouts into the mainstream, tracking of students and their learning levels, facilitating multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes, association of counsellors or well-trained social workers with schools, open learning for classes 3, 5 and 8 through NIOS and State Open Schools, secondary education programs equivalent to Grades 10 and 12, vocational courses, adult literacy and life-enrichment programs are some of the proposed ways for achieving this. About 2 crores out of school children will be brought back into main stream under NEP 2020.

RESTRUCTURING SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY IN A NEW 5+3+3+4DESIGN

- The curricular and pedagogical structure of school education: guided by a 5+3+3+4 design corresponding to the age ranges of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years, respectively.
- It will consist of:
 - **Foundational Stage** (in two parts, that is, 3 years of Anganwadi/pre-school + 2 years in primary school in Grades 1-2; both together covering ages 3-8): with flexible, multilevel, play/activity-based learning and the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE.
 - **Preparatory Stage** (Grades 3-5, covering ages 8-11): with the introduction Experiential learning across the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities.
 - **Middle Stage** (Grades 6-8, covering ages 11-14): with a subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style.
 - **Secondary Stage** (Grades 9-12 in two phases, i.e., 9 and 10 in the first and 11 and 12 in the second, covering ages 14-18) : with greater depth, greater critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations, and greater flexibility and student choice of subjects, and option to exit at grade 10 and re-enter at a later stage in grade 11.

- **Early Childhood Care & Education with new Curricular and Pedagogical Structure**

With emphasis on Early Childhood Care and Education, the 10+2 structure of school curricula is to be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure corresponding to ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively. This will bring the hitherto uncovered age group of 3-6 years under school curriculum, which has been recognized globally as the crucial stage for development of mental faculties of a child. The new system will have 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi / pre schooling.

NCERT will develop a National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) for children up to the age of 8. ECCE will be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of institutions including Anganwadis and pre-schools that will have teachers and Anganwadi workers trained in the ECCE pedagogy and curriculum. The planning and implementation of ECCE will be carried out jointly by the Ministries of HRD, Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW), and Tribal Affairs.

- **Attaining Foundational Literacy and Numeracy**

Recognizing Foundational Literacy and Numeracy as an urgent and necessary prerequisite to learning, NEP 2020 calls for setting up of a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by MHRD. States will prepare an implementation plan for attaining universal foundational literacy and numeracy in all primary schools for all learners by grade 3 by 2025. A National Book Promotion Policy is to be formulated.

- **Reforms in School Curricula and Pedagogy**

The school curricula and pedagogy will aim for holistic development of learners by equipping them with the key 21st century skills, reduction in curricular content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking and greater focus on experiential learning. Students will have increased flexibility and choice of subjects. There will be no rigid separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams.

Vocational education will start in schools from the 6th grade, and will include internships. A new and comprehensive National Curricular Framework for School Education, NCFSE 2020-21, will be developed by the NCERT.

- **Multilingualism and the Power of Language**

The policy has emphasized mother tongue / local language / regional language as the medium of instruction at least till Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond. Sanskrit to be offered at all levels of school and higher education as an option for students, including in the three-language formula. Other classical languages and literatures of India also to be available as options. No language will be imposed on any student. Students to participate in a fun project / activity on 'The Languages of India', sometime in Grades 6-8, such as, under the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' initiative. Several foreign languages will also be offered at the secondary level. Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized across the country and National and State curriculum materials developed, for use by students with hearing impairment.

- **Learning outcomes / Assessment Reforms**

NEP 2020 envisages a shift from summative assessment to regular and formative assessment, which is more competency-based, promotes learning and development, and tests higher-order skills, such as analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity. All students will take school examinations in Grades 3, 5, and 8 which will be conducted by the appropriate authority. Board exams for Grades 10 and 12 will be continued, but redesigned with holistic development as the aim. A new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), will be set up as a standard-setting body.

- **Equitable and Inclusive Education**

NEP 2020 aims to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background. Special emphasis will be given on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) which include gender, socio-cultural, and geographical identities and disabilities. This includes setting up of Gender Inclusion Fund and also Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups. Children with disabilities will be enabled to fully participate in the regular schooling process from the foundational stage to higher education, with support of educators with cross disability training, resource centres, accommodations, assistive devices, appropriate technology-based tools and other support mechanisms tailored to suit their needs. Every state/district will be encouraged to establish "Bal Bhavans" as a special daytime boarding school, to participate in art-related, career-related, and play-related activities. Free school infrastructure can be used as Samajik Chetna Kendras

- **Robust Teacher Recruitment and Career Path**

Teachers will be recruited through robust, transparent processes. Promotions will be merit-based, with a mechanism for multi-source periodic performance appraisals and available progression paths to become educational administrators or teacher educators. A common National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed by the National Council for Teacher Education by 2022, in consultation with NCERT, SCERTs, teachers and expert organizations from across levels and regions.

- **School Governance**

Schools can be organized into complexes or clusters which will be the basic unit of governance and ensure availability of all resources including infrastructure, academic libraries and a strong professional teacher community.

- **Standard-setting and Accreditation for School Education**

NEP 2020 envisages clear, separate systems for policy making, regulation, operations and academic matters. States/UTs will set up independent **State School Standards Authority (SSSA)**. Transparent public self-disclosure of all the basic regulatory information, as laid down by the SSSA, will be used extensively for public oversight and accountability. The SCERT will develop a **School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (SQAAF)** through consultations with all stakeholders.

(B) Higher Education

The new NEP has been introduced with an aim to formalize changes in the system from school level to college/university level. Keeping in mind the developing scenario, education content henceforth, will focus on key-concepts, ideas, applications and problem-solving angles. The National Education Policy is expected to bring positive and long-lasting impact on the higher education system of the country. The fact that foreign universities will be allowed to open campuses in India is a commendable initiative by the government. This will help the students experience the global quality of education in their very own country. The policy of introducing multi-disciplinary institutes will lead to a renewed focus on every field such as arts, humanities and this form of education will help students to learn and grow holistically. Thus, students will be equipped with stronger knowledge base.

The introduction of single common entrance test is another positive step which will reduce the stress of multiple competitive exams and ease off the pressure of preparing for so many of them. It will also ensure a level playing ground for all student applicants going forward.

The new higher education regulatory structure will ensure that distinct administrative, accreditation, financing, and academic standard-setting roles are performed by separate, autonomous, and empowered bodies. These four structures will be established as four independent verticals within a single umbrella institution, India's Higher Education Commission (HECI). There are a lot of reforms and new developments which have been introduced by NEP in the higher education sector. Some of the salient features are:

- **Single regulatory body for higher education:**

The NEP aims to establish Higher Education Commission of India which will be the single regulatory body except for legal and medical education.

- **Common entrance exam for all colleges:**

The Common Entrance exam for all higher education institutes to be held by National Testing Agency (NTA). The exam will be optional.

- **Establishing Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)**

Establishing Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) is definitely a robust idea to store the academic credits that students earn by taking courses from various recognized higher education institutions. A student can earn scores by completing a course and these will be credited to the ABC account. One can then transfer these credits if he/she decides to switch colleges. If a student ever drops out for some reasons, these credits will remain intact which means he/she can come back years later and pick up from where the student had left.

- **Multiple entry and exit programme:**

There will be multiple entry and exit options for those who wish to leave the course in the middle. Their credits will be transferred through Academic Bank of Credits.

- **Tech- based option for adult learning through apps, TV channels:**

Quality technology-based options for adult learning such as apps, online courses/modules, satellite-based TV channels, online books, and ICT-equipped libraries and Adult Education Centres, etc. will be developed.

- **E-courses to be available in regional languages:**

Technology will be part of education planning, teaching, learning, assessment, teacher, school, and student training. The e-content to be available in regional languages, starting with 8 major languages – Kannada, Odia, Bengali among others to join the e-courses available in Hindi and English.

- **Foreign universities to set-up campuses in India:**

World's top 100 foreign universities will be facilitated to operate in India through a new law. According to the HRD Ministry document, "such (foreign) universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India."

- **A Higher Education Council of India (HECI) will be set up to regulate higher education**

A Higher Education Council of India (HECI) will be set up to regulate higher education. The council's goal will be to increase gross enrollment ratio. The HECI will have 4 verticals:

- a) National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), to regulate higher education, including teacher education, while excluding medical and legal education.*
- b) National Accreditation Council (NAC), a "meta-accrediting body".*
- c) Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), for funding and financing of universities and colleges. This will replace the existing National Council for Teacher Education, All India Council for Technical Education and the University Grants Commission.*
- d) General Education Council (GEC), to frame "graduate attributes", namely the learning outcomes expected. It will also be responsible in framing a National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF). The National Council for Teacher Education will come under the GEC, as a professional standard setting body (PSSB).*

- The current Accreditation Institutions like NAAC and NAB will be replaced by a robust National Accreditation Council (NAC).
- Establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund research in universities and colleges.
- The Gross Enrolment Ratio in HE including Vocational education will increase from current 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.
- All existing affiliated Colleges will eventually grow autonomous degree-granting colleges with the mentoring support of affiliated University by improving and securing the prescribed accreditation level.
- Research will be included in UG, PG, level and have a holistic and multidisciplinary education approach.
- Pedagogy in HEIs will focus on communication, presentation, discussion, debate, research, analysis, and interdisciplinary thinking.
- Four years Bachelor degree with multiple exit options, one to two years Master's degree based on the number of years spent in Bachelor degree as four or three respectively, and option to do Ph.D. for four years Bachelor degree with research are possible.
- Two years Master degree with full research in the second year, One year Master degree for four years Bachelor degree holders, and Five years integrated Bachelor/Master degree.
- Student Centred teaching & learning process instead of Teacher centred teaching model.
- Choice Based Credit System is revised by an innovative and flexible Competency Based Credit System.
- Examination system will change from high-stakes examinations (Semester End system) towards a more continuous and comprehensive evaluation examination system.
- Encouragement for Online Distance Learning (ODL) courses as a part of degree programmes to include the credit system.
- HE quality will be improved to global quality level to attract more international students and the credits acquired in foreign universities will be counted for the award of a degree.
- National Scholarship Portal will be strengthened and expanded to help the financial needs of merit-based students. Private HEIs will be encouraged to offer larger numbers of free ships and scholarships to their students.

(C) Teacher Education

- All stand-alone Teachers Education Institutions should convert themselves as Multi-disciplinary HETs by 2030 to offer only four years integrated B.Ed. programme.
- All schools of foundation, preparatory, middle, and secondary level should appoint 4-years integrated B.Ed. degree holders as teachers with dual major specialization (Education & Subject).
- Till 2030, there will be two years B.Ed. programme for 3 years UG and one-year B.Ed. for four years UG and those who have Master's degree in other subjects.
- M.Ed. will be one year with research focus. The faculty profile in Departments of Education will be diverse with Ph.D.'s in different areas.

- All interested senior or retired faculty will be utilized short or long term for guiding, mentoring, or professional support for research/training/innovation. A separate National Mission for Mentoring will be established.

(D) Private Institutions :

- All private universities are eligible for graded autonomy based on their accreditation status.
- All private universities / autonomous colleges have to maintain an openness in their financial dealings and the BoG is responsible for any irregularities in the accounting system. BoG should contain eminent people well reputed in their professional area to guide the speedy development of the HEIs.
- All HEIs have autonomy in deciding their fees structure and surplus if any should be reinvested in the expansion projects with a transparent accounting system.
- All private HEIs should offer 20% free-ship and 30% scholarship in the course fee for meritorious students in every course which they offer during a given academic year and this should be checked and confirmed by the accreditation process.
- National Research Foundation will treat all private HEIs in par with public HEIs for granting research funds which is only based on the merit of the proposals.

CONCLUSION

Higher education is an important aspect in deciding the economy, social status, technology adoption, and healthy human behaviour in every country. Improving GER to include every citizen of the country in higher education offerings is the responsibility of the education department of the country government. National Education Policy of India 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 and at the same time with strict controls to maintain quality in every higher education institution. By encouraging merit-based admissions with free-ships & scholarships, merit & research based continuous performers as faculty members, and merit based proven leaders in regulating bodies, and strict monitoring of quality through biennial accreditation based on self-declaration of progress through technology-based monitoring, NEP-2020 is expected to fulfill its objectives by 2030.

All higher education institutions with current nomenclature of affiliated colleges will expand as multi-disciplinary autonomous colleges with degree giving power in their name or becomes constituent colleges of their affiliated universities. An impartial agency National Research Foundation will fund for innovative projects in priority research areas of basic sciences, applied sciences, and social sciences & humanities. HE system will transform itself as student centric with the freedom to choose core and allied subjects within a discipline and across disciplines. Faculty members also get autonomy to choose curriculum, methodology, pedagogy and evaluation models within the given policy framework. These transformations will start from the academic year 2021-22 and will continue until the year 2030 where the first level of transformation is expected to be visible. Hence, the Indian higher education system is moving from teacher centric to student centric, information centric to knowledge centric, marks centric to skills centric, examination centric to experimental centric, learning centric to research centric, and choice centric to competency centric.

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