

Suggestive Analysis of National Education Policy (2020) as a Scope and Challenge for Sanskrit Universities

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the relevance and potentiality of implementing National Education Policy-2020 in various Indian Sanskrit Universities. Thus this article highlights various ways of generating internal resources of fund and brings into light the necessity of implementing NEP-2020 in all Sanskrit Universities in India. As long as Sanskrit Shastras and language will be keep apart from other Modern disciplines so long as the existence of this enriched language and its Shastras will remain tacit for the general public. This enriched language must have to get rid of its previous tag of the language of the Gods and Goddesses and pujas (worships). Instead time has come to unearth the scientific thinking embedded in Sanskrit Shastras and include the same in the Modern subjects for the welfare of the Modern society. In addition to this, this article also emphasizes the necessity of translating modern theories and concepts in Sanskrit and thus bridges the gap between Ancient Sanskrit Shastras and Modern Disciplines. All the mentioned points have been discussed in this article through comparative points of view in between NEP-2020 and National Policy on Education – 1986.

Key words – NEP- 2020, NPE-1986, Bloom’s Taxonomy.

INTRODUCTION

Education is potential enough to create a good human resource for any nation. It paves the way of upliftment and development for any nation. True potential resource of any nation is its self reliant and conducive human resource that has the well defined physical and intellectual means to show the right path of development and in making that path hassle-free for any nation. Education must be treated as a mean of making a nation burden free by its knowledge. Whenever education is solely considered as a mean of grabbing a government job, the main purpose of education gets vitiated. Education must be potential enough in creating livelihood for every individual with its knowledge and here lies the true sense of education. John Dewey rightly comments - “Education is not preparation for life, education is life itself”. True essence of Dewey’s comment lies in the fact that the duration of education should not be treated only as the time period of preparation for future life and sparing that important period of life just by memorising theoretical knowledge and expecting a good job either from government or private sector after completion of formal education.

National Education Policy-2020 breaks that age old concept of education and strives to making education a tool of upliftment for our nation. The holistic and multidisciplinary approach in this education policy needs to be implemented and adopted by all Higher Education Ministries and Higher Educational Institutions of every state in India. Here onwards the key proposals in this education policy will be discussed and the same will be compared with Education Policy-1986 prevalent prior to National Education Policy 2020 and from the perspective of the present day NAAC criteria

National Education Policy-2020& its impact in Sanskrit Universities

The vision of this policy includes the following key changes to the current system:

“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” (NEP, 2020, p.34)

The above mentioned provision in NEP-2020 gives ample scope to Sanskrit institutions in promoting Sanskrit Shastras and Sanskrit language at mass level by adopting multidisciplinary course structure in these institutions.

Adoption of multidisciplinary course structure in Sanskrit universities will imbibe interdisciplinary studies which may lead to ample translation work of Sanskrit Shastras and thus giving this heterogeneous society a scope to study the vast trove of knowledge embedded in Sanskrit Shastras. In this regard a suitable syllabus structure may be adopted in which at least one paper in Sanskrit language may be made compulsory for the students those who will be pursuing courses other than Sanskrit. For example –A student who has opted B.A. in English, B.A. in Bengali or B.A. in Political Science may be suggested a paper in Sanskrit Grammar or Sanskrit literature as compulsory as a part of the course. This multidisciplinary approach will prove conducive for Sanskrit universities in inculcating interest in Sanskrit language and Shastras at large level.

In addition to this, Sanskrit universities will find a suitable scope for internal fund generation. Thus students will have the scope of learning multiple disciplines under the same roof and the number of students also in Sanskrit universities will go increased. No doubt, students those who will enrol in Sanskrit universities either for learning Sanskrit Shastras or other disciplines will have a deep understanding of national culture. In this way, NEP-2020 provides a good opportunity for Sanskrit universities to offer learners a holistic phenomenon for all round development of personality.

National Education Policy (1986) & its impact on Sanskrit universities

National Policy on Education-1986 emphasised, “Efforts will be made to delve into India’s ancient fund of knowledge and to relate it to contemporary reality. This effort will imply the development of facilities for the intensive study of Sanskrit and other classical languages. An autonomous commission will be established to foster and improve teaching, study and research in Sanskrit and other classical languages”. (NPE, 1986, point.5.33, p.19).

But the successful practical implementation of this enriching provision for Sanskrit and other classical languages in the NEP- 1986 seemed impossible as it did not keep the provision of multidisciplinary approach for HEIs. Instead NEP- 1986 emphasizes, “The need for research in Indology particularly with a view to “delving into India’s ancient fund of knowledge and to relate it to contemporary reality” (NPE, 1986, p.149). Further NPE-1986 proposed, “teaching of Sanskrit at the university stage as part of certain courses like Indology, Indian History, Archaeology etc”. (NPE, 1986, p.149). It has been stated in NEP (1986) that this “effort will imply the development of facilities for the intensive study of Sanskrit and other classical languages”. (NPE, 1986, point.36, p.157). Thus Sanskrit which was kept as a part of course in the HEIs in National Policy in Education (1986) did not provide enough scope for Sanskrit to flourish as single course of study.

NEP (2020) from the perspective of improvement in the understanding of the taught/learned subject

NEP (2020) keeps the provision of medium of instruction or programmes in local/Indian languages in HEIs. Thus the matter of improving knowledge in taught/learned subject of students in higher educational institutions has been given due importance. In this way, the matter of improving competence in subjective domain has been prioritised. In this context, the role of Sanskrit universities become very crucial as the society has the expectation of creating a human resource with sound knowledge of ancient and modern Indian culture. Mere knowledge of Sanskrit language will not fulfil the ambitious project of this policy. So Sanskrit universities must include the units in modern history in its academic structure and it is possible only through adopting multidisciplinary approach of NEP 2020 as stated clearly in point- 10.1 “The Main thrust of this policy regarding higher education is to end the fragmentation of higher education by transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary universities colleges and HEI clusters/knowledge Hubs, each of which will aim to have 3000 or more students.” (NEP, 2020, point. 10.1, p. 34)

Concept of holistic education in NEP (2020)

NEP (2020) strives to convert higher educational institutions into a hub of multidisciplinary knowledge so that students do have an easy access to the vast trove of knowledge in multidisciplinary fields. In this way, the future citizens will have wide scope to choose their professional field as per their choice in any particular field and will be able to shun their knowledge in the concerned field with the passage of time through experience. Prior to NEP

(2020) education policies in India stressed the importance in gaining skill in any particular discipline and thus constrained the future scope of professional field only in a single arena of gained knowledge. For example- a student of Civil engineering in a particular institution of the concerned subject used to have a fixed arena of knowledge and thus he or she used to have a specific area of professional development. But NEP (2020) keeps the provision of multidisciplinary studies which goes reflected in the following lines –

“India has a long tradition of holistic and multidisciplinary learning, from universities such as Takshashila and Nalanda, to the extensive literatures of India combining subjects across fields. Ancient Indian literary works such as Banabhatta’s Kadambari described a good education as knowledge of the 64 kalas or arts; and among these 64 ‘arts’ were not only subjects, such as singing and painting, but also ‘scientific fields, such as medicine and engineering, as well as ‘soft skills’ such as communication, discussion, and debate. The very idea that all branches of creative human endeavour, including mathematics, science, vocational subjects, professional subjects, and soft skills should be considered ‘arts’, has distinctly Indian origins. This notion of a ‘knowledge of many arts’ or what in modern times is often called the ‘liberal arts’ (i.e. a liberal notion of the arts) must be brought back to Indian education, as it is exactly the kind of education that will be required for the 21st century”.(NEP, 2020, p.36).

The National Policy on Education (1986) too emphasizes the “need for research in Indology, particularly with a view to “delving into India’s ancient fund of knowledge and to relate it to contemporary reality. (NPE, 1986, p. 157)

But the basic difference between NEP-2020 and National Policy on Education-1986 is that the latter expected to synthesise the modern education with ancient cultural history whereas NEP-2020 strives to adopt the glorious educational system of ancient universities such as Takshashila and Nalanda to convert the modern HEIs into large multidisciplinary universities where learners will have easy access to all fields of knowledge and thus will remain always intact with the cultural roots of the country.

In connection to this, Sanskrit universities in India can play a crucial role. Sanskrit scholars need to explore the ancient works in the field of engineering, medical science and management and should bridge the gap between ancient and modern education by exploring the possibilities of implementation and research of great ancient thoughts in the modern context. Sanskrit universities can fulfil this target by implementing multidisciplinary approach and providing proper phenomena for interdisciplinary studies by bringing necessary changes in course structure and syllabus thereafter. Dr. Saroj Mallik rightly comments –

“With the intensive stress on multidisciplinary education and industrial education, the policy is expected to revamp the Indian education system by 2030” (Mallik, 2020, p. 5)

The above mentioned quotation truly highlights the potentiality of this education policy in reforming the age-long education system/structure prevalent as per NPE-1986. This policy strives to change the perspective towards education which is generally considered as a mean of grabbing a Government job. Instead this policy proposes to make education as a tool of burden reducer of nation and nurtures the expectation of making people self-reliant by their gained knowledge. Full-fledged implementation of NEP-2020 in Sanskrit Universities will provide a scope for Sanskrit universities to promote enriched ideas in Sanskrit Shastras in a large platform and will prove conducive in carrying out inter-disciplinary studies thereafter. The present trend of Sanskrit universities makes them detached from the field of Modern disciplines and creates a human resource purely based on traditional knowledge of Sanskrit Shastras and among them also only few Sanskrit Scholars indulge themselves in bridging the gap between Sanskrit Shastras and Modern disciplines. Thus the writings or works in bringing Sanskrit in the larger platform seem very less and not up to the mark of expectation. NEP-2020 with its multidisciplinary approach does have the potentiality in providing Sanskrit a large platform and in establishing it in the world platform.

Relevance of implementation of NEP-2020 in Sanskrit universities from the perspective of Bloom’s taxonomy

Benjamin Bloom introduced a classification system of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational objectives in 1956. This system aims to make students aware of what they are learning and thus strives to attain more sophisticated levels of learning with six cognitive learning categories. Adams summarises the six levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy of cognitive learning objectives as

(i) Knowledge–It entails foundational cognitive skill that requires students to retain specific, discrete pieces of information.

NEP-2020 provides this scope of retaining specific discrete pieces of information as it contains the provision of teaching and learning in mother language and thus will prove conducive for the Sanskrit learners to acquire more specific knowledge in his or her language of comfort. Sanskrit Shastras and the vast trove of knowledge embedded in these Shastras will achieve a proper channel to generate their ideas in this modern era.

(ii) Comprehension–It requires students to paraphrase the content of knowledge in their own words, classify items in groups, compare and contrast items with other similar entities or explain a principle to others.

NEP 2020 proves conducive in this aspect also as Sanskrit learners have the comfort of learning in their own mother language and the scope of comparing the attained knowledge with other branches of knowledge in a multidisciplinary learning phenomena.

(iii) Application – Learners of Sanskrit shastras will have the enough scope of applying the attained knowledge in other branches of knowledge. For example – A student of Sanskrit Sahitya will have the scope of applying Bharat Muni's theory of Natyashastra in Shakespearean tragedies and thus will be able to uphold the relevance of Natyashastra in this modern era too.

(iv) Analysis–It requires students to distinguish between fact and opinion and identify the claim upon which an argument is built.

NEP-2020 with its multidisciplinary approach provides enough scope to the Sanskrit learners to analyse their learnt content in a broad learning phenomena as this policy imbibes interdisciplinary studies too.

(v) Synthesis–It entails the need to create a novel product in a specific situation.

NEP-2020 provides this scope as it promotes research oriented studies. This policy contains the flexibility to offer different designs of Master's programmes: (a) there may be a 2 year programme with the second year devoted and thoroughly to research for those who have completed the three year Bachelor's programme.

(b) For students completing a four year Bachelor's programme with Research, there could be a one year Master's programme.

c) There may be an integrated 5-year Bachelor's or Master's programme. Undertaking a PhD shall require either a Master's degree or a four year Bachelor's degree with research.

(vi) Evaluation – It requires the students to critically appraise the validity of a study and judge the relevance of its results for application.

NEP-2020 keeps the provision of catalysing quality academic research in all fields through a new National Research Foundation. This policy makes it clear that “knowledge creation and research are critical in growing and sustaining a large and vibrant economy, uplifting society and continuously inspiring a nation to achieve a even greater heights” (NEP, 2020, p. 45). Thus evaluation process has been given a new dimension in this policy.

CONCLUSION

After going through the pros and cons of the National Education Policy-2020, it can be said that the implementation of this policy in the Sanskrit Universities will widen the scope of its objectives and prove conducive in promoting Sanskrit at mass level. Further this policy will promote research oriented inter-disciplinary studies and thus will bring the enriched and vast trove of knowledge embedded in ancient Sanskrit Shastras for the welfare of mankind. The ambitious project of this National Education Policy gets reflected in its below mentioned provision too –

“An autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration”. (Drishti, 2020, p.5)

It has become pertinent for Sanskrit Institutions in India to adopt the provisions of National Education Policy (2020) in their academic and administrative structure and thus attaining the utmost benefit of it and giving the best to the society.

But in addition to this, some inclusions as mentioned below in its enriched provisions in this National Education Policy-2020 will prove conducive for all the HEIs in India –

BRIEF BIO-NOTE

Dr. Suman Acharjee, Assistant Professor (English) at Central Sanskrit University, Ekalavya Campus, Agartala, Tripura, does have the teaching experience of more than 10 years. He has given lecture in many other institutions also as Guest faculty. In addition to this, he has published many articles in reputed national and international journals too.

- i) Experienced renowned retired professors are to be given the task of teaching and research.
- ii) Publication from the side of learners at Master Degree level can be made mandatory.
- iii) Proper provision of encouragement is to be kept for inter-disciplinary studies.
- iv) Provision of translation work of enriched thoughts in Sanskrit Shastras can be made mandatory for Sanskrit Scholars.
- v) Sanskrit Universities can be encouraged to introduce Ayurveda as a course of study.
- vi) Sanskrit Universities can be asked to introduce Yoga as a course of study and give community service to the neighbourhood.
- vii) Sanskrit Universities can be encouraged to find out proper source of generating fund so that this language and Sanskrit Shastras appear as a discipline of professional upliftment.
- viii) All the HEIs can be asked to open training centre for national and state level competitive examinations.
- ix) All the Sanskrit Universities can be asked to keep the provision of research in Modern Subjects and languages also.
- x) Sanskrit Universities can be encouraged to introduce online courses to attract large number of learners from all over the world so that this language receives a large platform for propagation.

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