

Future of Higher Education in India: In the Lens of National Education Policy 2020

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ABSTRACT

Higher education plays an extremely important role in promoting human as well as societal well-being 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 younger Indians are likely to aspire for higher education. This paper discuss about current problems in higher education in India, visions of NEP 2020 to overcome from those problems. Different aspects like towards more holistic and multidisciplinary education, optimal learning environment and support for students, motivated, energized and capable faculty, equality and inclusion in higher education, teacher education, vocational education, research in education, regulatory system of higher education in India according to National Education Policy 2020. This paper also tries to discuss critically on this points on higher education of NEP 2020. This paper also tries to find out how it will be happens and how it will be implemented in India.

KEYWORDS: National Education Policy 2020, Higher Education, India

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays an extremely important role in promoting human as well as societal well-being 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 younger Indians are likely to aspire for higher education.

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.

For the purpose of developing holistic individuals, it is essential that an identified set of skills and values will be incorporated at each stage of learning, from pre-school to higher education.

At the societal level, higher education must enable the development of an enlightened, socially conscious, knowledgeable, and skilled nation that can find and implement robust solutions to its own problems. Higher education must form the basis for knowledge creation and innovation thereby contributing to a growing national economy. The purpose of quality higher education is, therefore, more than the creation of greater opportunities for individual employment. It

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represents the key to more vibrant, socially engaged, cooperative communities and a happier, cohesive, cultured, productive, innovative, progressive, and prosperous nation.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

This study helps to identify the current problems of Indian higher education system. After study this paper readers should know the Policy's perspective on Higher education of India, how policy should be implemented, the challenges of implementation etc. This study helps to identify how NEP 2020 should help to improve the Indian Higher education system.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- 3.1. To find out the current problems of Indian higher education system.
- 3.2. To find out the policy's vision on key changes of higher education of India.
- 3.3. Highlighted features of national education policy 2020 on higher education of India.
- 3.4. To find out the possible way out and implementation strategies.

4. CURRENT PROBLEMS OF HIGHER EDUCATION OF INDIA:

Some of the major problems currently faced by the higher education system in India include:

- 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 specialisation 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; and
- J. Large affiliating universities resulting in low standards of undergraduate education.

5. POLICY'S VISION ON KEY CHANGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION OF INDIA:

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. (iv) 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.

6. HIGHLIGHTED FEATURES OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 ON HIGHER EDUCATION OF INDIA:

6.1. Institutional Restructuring and Consolidation:

- 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 3,000 or more students. This would help build vibrant communities of scholars and peers, break down harmful silos, enable students to become well-rounded across disciplines including artistic, creative, and analytic subjects as well as

sports, develop active research communities across disciplines including cross-disciplinary research, and increase resource efficiency, both material and human, across higher education.

- Moving to large multidisciplinary universities and HEI clusters is thus the highest recommendation of this policy regarding the structure of higher education.
- Research-intensive Universities, those that place greater emphasis on teaching but still conduct significant research i.e. Teaching-intensive Universities. Meanwhile, an Autonomous degree-granting College (AC) will refer to a large multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that grants undergraduate degrees and is primarily focused on undergraduate teaching though it would not be restricted to that and it need not be restricted to that and it would generally be smaller than a typical university.
- By 2040 all Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions.
- By 2030 at least one multidisciplinary higher education institution (HEI) in or near every district. The aim will be increase Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% to 50% by 2035.
- Institutions will have option to run Open Distance Learning (ODL) and online programmes. Top institutions accredited for ODL will be encouraged and supported to develop high quality online courses. Such qualities will integrate in curriculum of HEIs and blended mode of learning will be preferred.
- Single-stream HEIs will be phased out over time, and all will move towards becoming vibrant multidisciplinary institutions or parts of vibrant multidisciplinary HEI clusters, in order to enable and encourage high-quality multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary teaching and research across fields.
- The overall higher education sector will aim to be an integrated higher education system, including professional and vocational education.
- University, worldwide, means a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate, graduate, and Ph.D programmes, and engages in high-quality teaching and research. The present complex nomenclature of HEIs in the country such as 'deemed to be university', 'affiliating university', 'affiliating technical university', 'unitary university' shall be replaced simply by 'university' on fulfilling the criteria as per norms.

6.2. Towards a More Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education:

- Research through holistic and multidisciplinary education approach.
- Focused on Environmental Education and Value Education.
- The Undergraduate degree will be 3 or 4 year duration, with multiple exit options within this period, with appropriate certifications (Multiple entry-exit)
- After 1 year- a certificate, after 2 years- a diploma, after 3 years- bachelor's degree. After 4 years- honours degree will be given to the students.
- HEIs will have the flexibility to offer different designs of Master's programmes: (a) there may be a 2-year programme with the second year devoted entirely to research for those who have completed the 3-year Bachelor's programme; (b) for students completing a 4-year Bachelor's programme with Research, there could be a 1-year Master's programme; and (c) there may be an integrated 5-year Bachelor's/Master's programme. Undertaking a Ph.D. shall require either a Master's degree or a 4-year Bachelor's degree with Research.
- The M.Phil. Programme shall be discontinued.

6.3. Optimal Learning Environments and Support for Students:

- Curriculum will be interesting and relevant.
- Focus will be on development of student's fitness, health, psycho-social well being and sound ethical grounding are also critical for high quality learning.
- CBCS revised for innovation and flexibility.
- Continuous and comprehensive evaluation will be occurs.
- Career counselling will be occurs from school stages. Counselling for physical, psychological and emotional well being.
- ODL and online education provide a natural path to increase access to higher education.
- MOUs with foreign countries will be signed for internationalization of education.
- Focused on improve student activity and participation.
- Starting counselling system for handling stress and emotional adjustment of students.
- Ensure quality medical facilities for all students.
- Gives proper amount of scholarships for SC, ST, OBC students.

6.4. Motivated, Energized and Capable Faculty:

- All HEIs will be equipped with the basic infrastructure and facilities, including clean drinking water, clean working toilets, blackboards, offices, teaching supplies, libraries, labs, and pleasant classroom spaces and campuses. Every classroom shall have access to the latest educational technology that enables better learning experiences.
- Use Educational Technology for better learning experiences.
- Maintain proper teacher student ratio.
- Empowering the faculty to conduct innovative teaching, research, and service as they see best will be a key motivator and enabler for them to do truly outstanding, creative work.
- Empowering the faculty to conduct innovative teaching, research, and service as they see best will be a key motivator and enabler for them to do truly outstanding, creative work.
- Outstanding and effective institutional leadership is extremely important for the success of an institution and of its faculty.

6.5. Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education:

- Making quality higher education opportunities available to all individuals must be among the highest priorities. This Policy envisions ensuring equitable access to quality education to all students, with a special emphasis on SEDGs.
- Approach to equity and inclusion must be common across school and higher education.
- Steps to taken by **Governments** for equity and inclusion-
 - A. Earmark suitable Government funds for the education of SEDGs
 - B. Set clear targets for higher GER for SEDGs
 - C. Enhance gender balance in admissions to HEIs
 - D. Enhance access by establishing more high-quality HEIs in aspiration districts and Special Education Zones containing larger numbers of SEDGs
 - E. Develop and support high-quality HEIs that teach in local/Indian languages or bilingually
 - F. Provide more financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs in both public and private HEIs
 - G. Conduct outreach programmes on higher education opportunities and scholarships among SEDGs
 - H. Develop and support technology tools for better participation and learning outcomes.

- Steps to be taken by **HEIs** for equity and inclusion-
 - A. Mitigate opportunity costs and fees for pursuing higher education
 - B. Provide more financial assistance and scholarships to socio-economically disadvantaged students
 - C. Conduct outreach on higher education opportunities and scholarships
 - D. Make admissions processes more inclusive
 - E. Make curriculum more inclusive
 - F. Increase employability potential of higher education programmes
 - G. Develop more degree courses taught in Indian languages and bilingually
 - H. Ensure all buildings and facilities are wheelchair-accessible and disabled-friendly
 - I. Develop bridge courses for students that come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds
 - J. Provide socio-emotional and academic support and mentoring for all such students through suitable counselling and mentoring programmes
 - K. Ensure sensitization of faculty, counsellor, and students on gender-identity issue and its inclusion in all aspects of the HEI, including curricula
 - L. Strictly enforce all no-discrimination and anti-harassment rules
 - M. Develop Institutional Development Plans that contain specific plans for action on increasing participation from SEDGs, including but not limited to the above items.

6.6. Teacher Education:

- Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions including tribal traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest advances in education and pedagogy.
- According to the Justice J. S. Verma Commission (2012) constituted by the Supreme Court, a majority of stand-alone TEIs - over 10,000 in number are not even attempting serious teacher education but are essentially selling degrees for a price. So in order to raise standards and restore integrity, credibility, efficacy, and high quality to teacher education system stand alone teacher education institutions are not more. Those will be merging with multidisciplinary universities.
- By 2030 only educationally sound, multidisciplinary and integrated teacher education programmes shall be in force.

- All teacher education programmes must be conducted within composite multidisciplinary institutions.
- All multidisciplinary universities and colleges - will aim to establish, education departments which, besides carrying out cutting-edge research in various aspects of education, will also run B.Ed. programmes, in collaboration with other departments such as psychology, philosophy, sociology, neuroscience, Indian languages, arts, music, history, literature, physical education, science and mathematics.
- All stand-alone TEIs will be required to convert to multidisciplinary institutions by 2030, since they will have to offer the 4-year integrated teacher preparation programme.
- The 4-year integrated B.Ed. offered by such multidisciplinary HEIs will, by 2030, become the minimal degree qualification for school teachers.
- All fresh Ph.D. entrants, irrespective of discipline, will be required to take credit-based courses in teaching/education/pedagogy/writing related to their chosen Ph.D subject during their doctoral training period.
- All Ph.D students will also have a minimum number of hours of actual teaching experience gathered through teaching assistantships and other means. Ph.D. programmes at universities around the country will be re-oriented for this purpose.
- The use of technology platforms such as SWAYAM/DIKSHA for online training of teachers will be encouraged, so that standardized training programmes can be administered to large numbers of teachers within a short span of time.

6.7. Reimaging Vocational Education:

- The 12th Five-Year Plan (2012–2017) estimated that only a very small percentage of the Indian workforce in the age group of 19–24 (less than 5%) received formal vocational education Whereas in countries such as the USA the number is 52%, in Germany 75%, and South Korea it is as high as 96%. These numbers only underline the urgency of the need to hasten the spread of vocational education in India.
- By 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education, for which a clear action plan with targets and timelines will be developed.
- Vocational education will be integrated into all school and higher education institutions in a phased manner over the next decade.

6.8. Catalysing Quality Academic Research in All Fields through a new National Research Foundation:

- Rise of machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI).
- Research will be occurs in multidisciplinary universities settings.
- GDP in research will be increased. Only 0.69% of GDP used in research purpose currently which was less compare to 2.8% in USA, 4.3% in Israel and 4.2% in South Korea.
- Transforming quality and quantity of research in India.
- Build National Research Foundation (NRF) for improvement in research.
- The primary activities of NRF will be-
 - A. Fund competitive, peer-reviewed grant proposals of all types and across all disciplines.
 - B. Seed, grow, and facilitate research at academic institutions, particularly at universities and colleges where research is currently in a nascent stage, through mentoring of such institutions.
 - C. act as a liaison between researchers and relevant branches of government as well as industry, so that research scholars are constantly made aware of the most urgent national research issues, and so that policymakers are constantly made aware of the latest research breakthroughs; so as to allow breakthroughs to be optimally brought into policy and/or implementation.
 - D. Recognise outstanding research and progress.

6.9. Transforming the Regulatory System of Higher Education:

- Regulation, accreditation, funding and academic standard setting will be set up as four independent verticals within one umbrella institution, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).
- The first vertical of HECI will be the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), the second vertical of HECI will be National Accreditation Council (NAC), the third vertical of HECI will be Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) and the fourth vertical of HECI will be General Education Council (GEC).
- For controlling all professional education there will be Professional Standard Setting Bodies (PSSB).

6.10. Effective Governance and Leadership for Higher Education Institutions:

- It is effective governance and leadership that enables the creation of a culture of excellence and

innovation in higher education institutions. The common feature of all world-class institutions globally including India has indeed been the existence of strong self-governance and outstanding merit-based appointments of institutional leaders.

- Each institution will make a strategic Institutional Development Plan on the basis of which institutions will develop initiatives, assess their own progress, and reach the goals set therein, which could then become the basis for further public funding. The IDP shall be prepared with the joint participation of Board members, institutional leaders, faculty, students, and staff.

7. MAKING IT HAPPEN:

Strengthening the Central Advisory Board of Education:

- Achieving successful implementation of this policy demands a long-term vision, availability of expertise on a sustained basis, and concerted action from all concerned encompassing National, State, institutional, and individual levels. In this context, the Policy recommends strengthening and empowering the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) which will have a much greater mandate and not only a forum for widespread consultation and examination of issues relating to educational and cultural development. The remodelled and rejuvenated CABE 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. It shall also create and continuously review the institutional frameworks that shall help attain this vision.
- To bring the focus back on education and learning, it is desirable that the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) be re-designated as the Ministry of Education (MoE).

Financing- Affordable and Quality Education for All:

- The Policy commits to significantly raising educational investment, as there is no better investment towards a society's future than the high-quality education of our young people.
- Invest 6% GDP in Education.
- The Policy also calls for the rejuvenation, active promotion, and support for private philanthropic activity in the education sector.
- 'Light but tight' regulation.

8. IMPLEMENTATION:

- Any policy's effectiveness depends on its implementation. Such implementation will require multiple initiatives and actions, which will have to be taken by multiple bodies in a synchronized and systematic manner. Therefore, the implementation of this Policy will be led by various bodies including MHRD, CABE, Union and State Governments, education-related Ministries, State Departments of Education, Boards, NTA, the regulatory bodies of school and higher education, NCERT, SCERTs, schools, and HEIs along with timelines and a plan for review, in order to ensure that the policy is implemented in its spirit and intent, through coherence in planning and synergy across all these bodies involved in education.
- Since education is a concurrent subject, it will need careful planning, joint monitoring, and collaborative implementation between the Centre and States.
- Timely infusion of requisite resources - human, infrastructural, and financial - at the Central and State levels will be crucial for the satisfactory execution of the Policy.
- Yearly joint reviews of the progress of implementation of the policy, in accordance with the targets set for each action, will be conducted by designated teams constituted by MHRD and the States, and reviews will be shared with CABE.
- In the decade of 2030-40, the entire policy will be in an operational mode, following which another comprehensive review will be undertaken.

9. CONCLUSION:

So it is clear that our new policy on education which is named as National Education Policy 2020 was very high on vision. This policy knows the weakness of our current education system. This policy try to improve quality of education, holistic and multidisciplinary education, students activity based education, equity and inclusion on higher education, try to improve quality of teachers by quality teacher education, try to focus on vocational education, try to improve research in education, effective governance and leadership on higher education. This policy's main vision to aware students about their fundamental duties and try to improve on ethics and morality of students. This is very important for us in current situation and if helps us for good future. We all know that any policy was good when it implement properly. For implementation this policy central and state government have work hardly on it. For proper

implementation of this policy we need more investment. That's why this policy said that 6% of our total GDP will use on education sector only. If this 6% of GDP will use in education sector properly only then this policy have a chance to implement properly. I think this policy was good in theoretically but when in practical situation we try to implement this policy then there may be some problems that we have face. So it is totally depend on our government how they try to implement this and also on us how we co-operate our government to implement this policy properly.

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