

**HIGHER EDUCATION AND NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020**

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**Abstract:**

*The NEP 2020 is defining moment for higher education. Effective and time-bound implementation is what will make it truly path-breaking. The concept of empowerment and autonomy to innovate is one of the key features in NEP 2020 which supports a phasing out strategy from Affiliated Colleges to Autonomous Institutions. The increased flexibility offered to autonomous institutions also gives hope in curriculum enrichment. It also says that with appropriate accreditations, autonomous degree granting colleges could evolve into research-intensive or teaching-intensive Universities. In this paper, there is an attempt to give a theoretical analysis of National Education Policy 2020 for higher education.*

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**Introduction:**

Education is base for endowing full human potential, developing an equitable 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. Universal high-quality education is the best way forward for developing and maximizing our country's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the society, the country, and the world. India will have the highest population of young people in the world over the next decade, and our ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them will determine the future of our country.

The Indian education system produced great scholars, who made seminal contributions to world knowledge in diverse fields such as mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical science and surgery, civil engineering, architecture, shipbuilding and navigation, yoga, fine arts, chess, and more. Indian culture and philosophy have had a strong influence on the world. These rich legacies to world heritage must not only be nurtured and preserved for posterity but also researched, enhanced, and put to new uses through our education system. The teacher must be at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system. The new education policy must help re-establish teachers, at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly shape our next generation of citizens. It must do everything to empower teachers and help them to do their job as effectively as possible.

**Objectives of the study**

The primary objective of this research is

- 1) To study the importance of New Education Policy 2020 in higher education.
- 2) To summaries the salient features of NEP
- 3) To analyses the effects of NEP on the existing education system.

### **Research methodology**

This research is a descriptive study. The necessary secondary data was collected from various websites including those of Government of India, magazines, journals, other publications, etc.

### **New Policy:**

The 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. This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspiration goals of 21st century education, including SDG4, while building upon India's traditions and value systems. The National Education Policy gives emphasis particular on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities - both the 'foundational capacities' of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions. The rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought has been a guiding light for this Policy. The pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, and truth was always considered in Indian thought and philosophy as the highest human goal. The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for the complete realization and liberation of the self. World-class institutions of ancient India such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabhi, set the highest standards of multidisciplinary teaching and research and hosted scholars and students from across backgrounds and countries.

The new education policy must help recruit the very best and brightest to enter the teaching profession at all levels, by ensuring livelihood, respect, dignity, and autonomy, while also instilling in the system basic methods of quality control and accountability. The new education policy must provide to all students, a quality education system, with particular focus on historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups.

Education is a great leveller 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. These elements must be incorporated taking into account the local and global needs of the country and with a respect for and deference to its rich diversity and culture. Instilling knowledge of India and its varied social, cultural, and technological needs, its inimitable artistic, language, and knowledge traditions, and its strong ethics in India's young people is considered critical for purposes of national pride, self-confidence, self-knowledge, cooperation, and integration.

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.

Institutional restructuring and consolidation aim to end the fragmentation of higher education by transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary, creating well-rounded and innovative individuals, and transforming other countries educationally and economically, increasing the gross enrolment ratio in higher education, including vocational training, from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.

Holistic and multidisciplinary education should strive in an integrated way to improve all human capacities-mental, cultural, social, physical, emotional, and moral. In the long term, such a comprehensive education shall be the method for all undergraduate programs, including those in medical, technical, and vocational disciplines. Optimal learning environments and support for students offer a holistic approach including adequate curriculum, interactive pedagogy,

consistent formative assessment, and adequate support for students.

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. This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspiration goals of 21st century education, including SDG4, while building upon India's traditions and value systems. The National Education Policy gives emphasis particular on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities - both the 'foundational capacities' of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions. The rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought has been a guiding light for this Policy. The pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, and truth was always considered in Indian thought and philosophy as the highest human goal. The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for the complete realization and liberation of the self. World-class institutions of ancient India such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabhi, set the highest standards of multidisciplinary teaching and research and hosted scholars and students from across backgrounds and countries.

#### **Feature of New Education Policy – 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 hence forth, 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. 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. 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:

1. Single regulatory body for higher education:
2. Multiple entry and exit programme:
3. Tech- based option for adult learning through apps, TV channels:
4. E-courses to be available in regional languages:
5. Foreign universities to set-up campuses in India:

### **Monitoring System of Higher Education:**

A significant change in NEP 2020 is the proposal to set up the Higher Education Commission of India as an umbrella body for higher education, excluding medical and legal education. This will usually bring out a question that what will happen to the present UGC and AICTE? HECI is aiming at reforming the higher education sector, the Bill will separate the academic and funding aspects of the sector. According to the new Bill, HECI will not have any financial powers. The funding processes which were handled by the University Grants Commission will be taken care by the Ministry of Education, previously known as the Ministry of Human Resource Development. This change however is expected to clear the regulatory mess in India's Higher Education system. HECI is expected to have four independent verticals - National Higher Education Regulatory Council for regulation, General Education Council for standard-setting, Higher Education Grants Council for funding, and National Accreditation Council for accreditation. To have uniformity in education standards, a single umbrella body was always a requirement and this has been a vision of numerous educationists. This is considered as the right step in streamlining education policy. However, to ensure quality of higher education, institutes must be measured based on relevant parameters like research, industry linkages, placements and academic excellence, etc. If the HECI can manage this, the benefits to its biggest stakeholder, the youth of India, might be significant.

### **The structure and distances of degree program:**

In the context of the National Education Policy 2020 scheme, any undergraduate degree in any institution will be of duration of three or four years. One can leave the degree within this period. Any educational institution will have to give to the student a diploma degree after the student completes two years of study, a degree after the student completes three years of study and a certificate to those students who complete one year of study in any professional or vocational course of their choice.

The Government of India will also help in establishing an Academic Bank of Credit for storing the academic scores digitally. This will enable the institutions to count the credit at the end and put it in the degree of the student. This will be helpful for those individuals who might have to leave the course mid-way. They can start the course later on from where they left off and not start from the beginning once again. Even though NEP 2020 says that Higher Education institutions will be given the freedom to start PG courses, but there may be some difficulty in designing one year PG degree for students who have completed 4 Year UG degree and a two year PG degree for students who have completed 3 year UG degree.

### **Importance to Higher Education in context to autonomy**

It's important to view the policy in context of what has been happening in public universities, and recent disaster of universities of eminence. There has been continuous erosion of university autonomy by the state. Perverse state violence unleashed upon one of the best public universities in India didn't happen in some distant past. Political appointments of university leaders, who are at best the instruments of state, as opposed to being focused on teaching, learning, research or administration. Though the document highlights regulatory autonomy, it would be worrisome if the document also meant financial autonomy.

- 1) This 'imagined' autonomy is envisaged through replacement of UGC and AICTE. New Body Higher Education Commission of India is based on the idea of division of functions and separation of activities.
- 2) Policy also argues against commercialization of education. However, in the same breadth allows for foreign universities to come to India. There has been significant increase in number of private universities by Indian providers. If the idea was to increase competition, it makes sense. However, insertion of the statement doesn't.
- 3) Focus on futuristic curriculum makes sense, and a separate body dedicated to focus on integrating technology in

institutions is necessary direction.

- 4) National Research Foundation is another great idea. However, if these spaces get filled by individuals who are driven by ideological agendas, little could be expected.
- 5) Indian Universities will be allowed to set up campuses elsewhere in the world - there is a strong potential for this to develop in gulf -markets. There is a huge demand for quality education by Indian diaspora.

### **Conclusion:**

The policy introduces a whole gamut of changes and reads largely as a very progressive document, with a firm grasp on the current socio-economic landscape and the prospect of future uncertainty. Education for a new generation of learners has to essentially engage with the increasing dematerialization and digitalization of economies, which requires a completely newest of capabilities in order to be able to keep up. This seems to be an even more vital requisite now, with the trend towards digitalization and disruptive automation being quickened by the pandemic. Overall, the NEP 2020 addresses the need to develop professionals in a variety of fields ranging from Agriculture to Artificial Intelligence. India needs to be ready for the future and the NEP 2020 paves the way ahead for many young aspiring students to be equipped with the right skill set.

The new education policy has a laudable vision, but its strength will depend on whether it is able to effectively integrate with the other policy initiatives of government like Digital India, Skill India and the New Industrial Policy to name a few, in order to effect a coherent structural transformation. Hence, policy linkages can ensure that education policy addresses to and learns from Skill India's experience in engaging more dynamically with the corporate sector to shape vocational education curriculum in order to make it a success. There is also a necessity for more evidence-based decision-making, to adapt to rapidly evolving transmutations and disruptions.

NEP has reassuringly provisioned for real-time evaluation systems and a consultative monitoring and review framework. This shall empower the education system to constantly reform itself, instead of expecting for a new education policy every decade for a shift in curriculum. This will be a remarkable achievement.

The announcement of setting up Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) in the country gives more hope. These institutions will be at par with the existing IITs and IIMs and will aim to showcase multidisciplinary education for the Indian students. Another important change the NEP 2020 suggests that the National Testing Agency will serve as a premier, expert, autonomous testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for undergraduate and graduate admissions and fellowships in Higher Education Institutions. The high quality, range, and flexibility of the NTA testing services will enable most universities to use these common entrance exams - rather than having hundreds of universities each devising their own entrance exams - thereby drastically reducing the burden on students, universities and colleges, and the entire education system. It will be left up to individual universities and colleges to use NTA assessments for their admissions. It also surely helps the students to easily transfer their degrees and credits to universities abroad.

All higher education institutions with current classification 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 too visible.

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