

## National Education Policy and Strategies for Promoting Research in Higher Education

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### Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) focuses on multidisciplinary approach to education, with the goal of developing analytical or critical thinking abilities and research aptitude. Current policy also emphasis affordability and quality education for the promotion of research in institute of higher education. The study highlights the need to train research in higher education and how the policies were framed to promote research in higher education system which is the need of the hour. Present NEP policy recommended to setup an independent National Research Foundation for funding and facilitation the quality research in India. To promote research, we need to encourage faculty staff and interrelate with bounding culture that will encourage innovative thinking. Now, as we observe the least interest in research by higher education institutes except universities. India must require to develop research culture in the institutes to promote research. We need a positive research culture that will support all individual policies and programmes. The study discusses on approaches and way forward to promote research integrity and multidisciplinary education system.

**Key-wards:** Research, National Education Policy, Qualitative Education and Development.

### 1. Introduction

The National Education Policy, which came after 34 years in the country, is going to change the face of college education completely. In the year 1986, the National Education Policy was formulated and later it was partially revised in 1992. It was over three decades since the previous policy of 1968. In these three decades, significant changes took place in the economy of our country, society, and cultural too. There was a need to reform the education sector due to the demands of the 21st century and the needs of the country. There are three points that will focus to reform in NEP they are quality, innovation, and research. Considering these approach Minister of Human Resource Development Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal announced the new National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020).

Earlier on 1 May, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed the new Education Policy 2020, for which the draft was prepared by a panel of experts led by former Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) chief K. Kasturirangan. The aim of the New Education Policy 2020 is to make "India a global knowledge superpower". Due to the corona virus epidemic, the new academic session 2020-21

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started in September-October and NEP implementation were also be delayed. The vision of NEP-2020 is to develop an India-centric education system that provides high quality education to the citizens. Thereby transforming India sustainable knowledge into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society in the world.

## 2. Higher Education and NEP-2020

The NEP-2020 is the first education policy of the twenty-first century and aims to address our Indian current developmental imperatives. After the gap of 34 years, government has put in place a deal of educational reforms in both the higher and school education system. It intends to bring a systematic reform in the education sector rather than an incremental reform. The Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the current education structure, including its regulation and governance, to forge a new education system. The New Policy also renamed the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) as the Ministry of Education (MoE) to bring the focus back on education and learning objectives.

India has one of the largest networks of higher education institutions in India. There were around 38 million students enrolled in higher education in the last academic session 2022-23 with gross enrolment ratio of 26%. According to UNO report on education the literacy rate among the 15-24 age group is around 91%; among the above 15 years it is 74.37%; and among more than 65 years it is 45.38% only. As per the Indian education market size it is estimated to almost double to USD 180 billion by 2023. The foundational principles of NEP 2020 are access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability. The following major reform are targeted in the draft of NEP-2020 to fulfil the objective of policy:

- Holistic and Multi-disciplinary education in an undergraduate program with multiple entry-exit options where the graduation degree can be 3 to 4 years. Thereafter P.G. courses or programs can be 1 or 2 years optionally.
- Ph.D. is continuing, whereas M.Phil. (Master of Philosophy) courses to be discontinued.
- Increasing Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education from the current 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035 and target of adding 3.5 crore seats in higher education.
- Setting-up multidisciplinary education and research universities (MERUs) as models of best multi-disciplinary education of global standards.
- The National Testing Agency (NTA) will conduct an entrance examination for admission to Higher Education Institutes.
- Establishment of Academic Bank of Credits to facilitate Transfer of Credits for the degree.
- Establishment of National Research Foundation (NRF), an apex body for fostering a strong research culture and building research capacity across higher education.

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- Establishment of Higher Education Council of India (HECI) to regulate higher education by preparing the same set of regulations, accreditation, and academic standards for private and public institutions. The HECI will have four independent verticals. The HECI will replace the existing National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the University Grants Commission (UGC).
- A National Evaluation Centre named PARAKH will be established.
- National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for the regulation of higher education, except medical and legal education.
- Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding and financing of institutions, colleges and universities.
- National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation of educational institutions. With the provision of phasing out the 'Affiliation System' at university level over a period of 15 years.

### 3. Major Features for Higher Education in NEP

The major change is that the institute will be given graded autonomy instead of affiliation to award degrees. On many of these aspects of the National Education Policy (NEP), experts say that if the changes involved in the policy are implemented properly, the level of quality education will certainly be higher but assurance of cheap education should be given. The way policy proposes for autonomy of higher education will privatize education. But some expert academics says that when the format and final framework of autonomy is revealed in detail, only the positive and negative aspects will be known in depth.

**(i) Financial Autonomy to the Institutes:** Financial autonomy is another provision in NEP for the higher education institutes. The policy has promoted education system to run on loan rather than grant. graded autonomy, autonomous colleges, board of governance is being shown as a major improvement. But when the grant is not available, then fee hike is only option for colleges to generate fund and this situation will critical for the financial weak students. This policy will increase outsourcing of teaching-learning to private institutes. Education will be expensive by bringing Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the education sector even as government target to invest 6% of GDP in education system.

**(ii) Four-year Graduation trend:** As our new policy introduce a Four-year graduation program is like the foreign countries bachelor system. Four-year graduation is a good concept for students who wish to join the higher education institutions in abroad. It gives an opportunity to explore many subjects at every level. In addition, the multidisciplinary and integrated course is a great idea for higher education system of India. By doing bachelors from many good universities, it saves time and a lot of syllabi is repeated in masters at other universities too. Apart from this, it also opens the window of direct research opportunities.

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**(iii) Year based degree options:** Four-year bachelor program is not new for Indian University system because University of Delhi started 4 Year Degree program (CBCS) till 2014 but after UGC decision University reintroduced 3-year degree program. There is not much difference in this policy you will get a degree 3 years, and in the fourth year, the same student who wants to go in entrepreneurship or research field may get graduation (research). We do not know yet what the name of the degree will be. But its structure is kept multidisciplinary, which is very beneficial.

**(iv) Invitation to foreign Universities:** The new National Education Policy also invites best 50 foreign universities of the world to come to India. This will be beneficial only when the university with quality education reaches and their fees will be in the limit of the common child. It is very important to take care of this in the new policy that higher education should not be expensive for economically weaker students. Unless every student has access to quality education, otherwise there is no benefit. It is important to note that many universities abroad are not providing good education. We should have monitoring agency or policy to assure the quality education for the Indian students.

**(v) Intake capacity of IITs/IIMs will Increase:** The multi-disciplinary approach is most important in the policy. An engineer and management need many skills and must have knowledge of different fields. The new education policy will now give all IITs/IIMs an opportunity to explore new areas other than science. Also, the policy is talking of reaching a 50% gross enrolment ratio. That means the intake capacity of all IITs/IIMs will increase and we will be able to expand our campus too.

#### **4. Strategies for Promoting Research in Higher Education**

A strategy is a set of plans to ensure implementation of NEP-2020 with its planned objectives of 100% literacy and GER of more than 50% (2035) to higher education in a country that have regional, religion, economic, and cultural diversity is not an easy task. So, the implementation of NEP-2020 needs various strategies to develop action plans to fulfil various objectives with expected success. Successful implementation of National Education policy in a country can be divided into various implementation strategies under strategies for its stakeholders.

The stakeholders of the implementation process of National Education policy of a country include government, universities, colleges, faculty members, students, aspirants, and parents of the country. Top-Down or trickle-down approach is suitable because the implementation of new education policy is government oriented, government directed, involved heavy planning elements, and government monitored. Success or failure of implementation is government responsibility because it takes responsibility for effective or ineffective implementation of policy. The central government should follow an innovative leadership strategy to constitute various high-level committees with competent leadership.

As per the draft NEP-2020, it was mentioned that central government follows a light but tight regulatory strategy to control the quality and competency of students graduating from these HEIs in terms of their immovability, entrepreneur ability, and employability that includes:

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- Improving the GER from current undergraduate education from 28% to 50% and postgraduate education from 4% to 20% by lowering the unit education cost from student's point of view and increasing the number of quality higher education institutions as per anticipated demand.
- To increase in annual budget allocation from 4.6% of GDP to 6% of GDP, the central government invest more from public funds for which a separate education cess can be imposed on direct and indirect taxpayers.
- Creating world-class digital infrastructure with integrated digital content under a single National digital library with the objective of one nation-one library with availability all books and journals of all subject areas in electronic form for all citizens of the country.
- Increasing the percentage of subsidized education from private institutions and universities. The central government should ensure that 20% of the seats in each course is offered free for meritorious students and 30% of students in each course should get 50% scholarship. Alternately, the government can ensure that all students who get admission to higher education programmes will get education loans from banks without interest.
- Providing merit-based scholarships and education loans to every aspiring student to pursue higher education irrespective of their religion, caste, social background, and economic background. Such education loans can be recovered at a later stage once they start earning without any annual interest.
- Here scholarship should be given to only to the students scored distinction marks in previous exams and education loan with no interest should be offered to every eligible candidate.
- Innovativeness of the country mostly depends on access to quality higher education to the citizens of the country. When more people are involved in the research, more new ideas and new knowledge will be created which directly contributes to the innovativeness of the country. Consequently, the central government, through its policies to create awareness on higher education and research should create an environment for enhancing the innovativeness of the country.
- Attracting the top 100 foreign universities to India by offering free land in the outskirts of cities is an implementation strategy of the central government and will attract foreign investments and hence a good number of job opportunities and physical infrastructure development in the country.
- Through suitable policies, creating a competitive atmosphere between government, private, and foreign universities, and institutions to improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of higher education institutions towards nation building.
- Internationalization of higher education by providing open competition opportunities to them in India may decrease the student's travel to other countries for higher education thereby decreasing the money transfer like as foreign exchange to other countries.

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Creating Higher Educational Commission of India (HECI), a lobby free, corruption-free system and creating four verticals for regulation, accreditation, funding, and academics standard settings by excluding all office-bearers of existing accrediting agencies/councils need a black ocean strategy. NEP-2020 will utterly fail if it gives old wine in a new bottle. The members of such policymaking and regulating committees should be role-models with proven records in the last five years.

## 5. Conclusion

The research-based quality higher education has the objective of developing human beings who are responsible for creating better society by means of improved human value-based discipline, and respecting each other for development and prosperity. Quality education also makes everyone to contribute to discovering new technology, adopting, or promoting new technology which can contribute to the progress of society. It is expected that the new education policy which is research focussed, will accelerate the accomplishment of the policy objectives, and makes every stakeholder as innovator. The systematic implementation of the proposed policies by creating an atmosphere of innovative and lateral thinking. To make the implementation is effective, a top-down approach among the stakeholders is suggested.

The new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, is a policy with the better suggestions as it aims at making the education system holistic, more practical, flexible, multidisciplinary, aligned to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Creation of 'inclusion funds' in the policy will help economically, socially, and educationally weaker students to pursue education, but same time the financial autonomy may affect the spirit of idea. In light all the provisions the intent of policy seems to be ideal in many ways but it is the implementation where lies the key to success. The NEP 2020 is a big step to replacing the 35-year-old education policy idea and picturing to bring about the most awaited modification in the Indian education system. The Policy has maintained a balance between the traditions and the multidisciplinary approach, which is the need of the twenty first century.

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